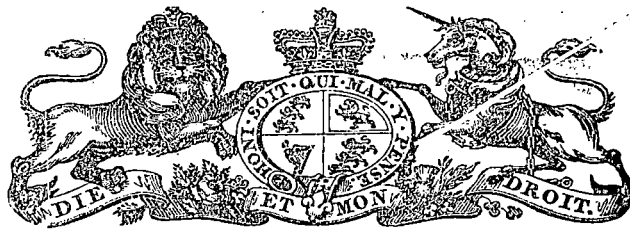


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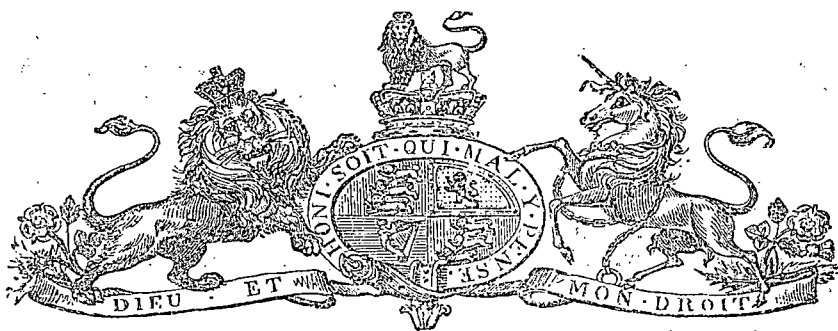
ROUTE TO THE WEST COAST:

REPORT OF MR. SURVEYOR INNES UPON THE TRACK FROM  
MOLE CREEK TO ROSEBERY, MOUNT REID.

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Presented to both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command.

Cost of printing—£6 10s.



## MR. INNES'S REPORT.

### TRACK FROM MOLE CREEK TO ROSEBERY.

*Hobart, 31st July, 1897.*

SIR,

IN accordance with your instructions, dated 17th of October, 1896, to cut and mark a track from Mole Creek to Mount Reid, West Coast of Tasmania, over a route supposed to have been found by Mr. C. Russell who had been sent out for that purpose by the Launceston and North-West Direct Route Association, and also to furnish a plan and report upon the same, I have the honour to submit the accompanying plan and report as follows.

Having obtained a party of good bushmen, with the necessary outfit of tents, provisions, &c., I left Hobart on Monday evening, 19th October, and proceeded to Launceston by rail, where I was instructed to meet and confer with the Committee of the Launceston and North-West Direct Route Association, and also to enable Mr. Russell, who was to accompany the expedition as guide, to join the party.

I met the Committee on Tuesday, and having examined the charts in their possession, decided to take the southern, or route *via* Mount Pelion West and Granite Tor, that being the route indicated by the Committee as the one they wished me to test first.

Mr. Russell joined the party at Launceston, and we proceeded thence by rail to Mole Creek, reaching there upon Thursday evening.

The same night I made arrangements with Mr. Wm. Aylett, of Mole Creek, to undertake the packing of our outfit of tents, tools, provisions, &c., as far along the line of route as he could get with his horses.

The following morning (Friday, 23rd October), the party left Mole Creek at 7 A.M., and took the first load of provisions to the bridge over the River Mersey at Liena, Aylett returning to Mole Creek for a second load.

I left Mole Creek with Aylett the next morning, and reaching the Mersey found the camp pitched and all in readiness to commence work the following week.

Taking the bridge over the Mersey as my starting-point, I commenced the chainage of the track from there, proceeding by what is known as Griffin's Road (a road recently constructed by the Public Works Department), a distance of some 3 miles 30 chains to the summit of Gad's Hill.

At this point I decided to leave this road, and finding I should have to go through some private property, I marked the track along what had apparently been an old road formerly cleared by the Public Works Department, but now blocked with fallen timber, scrub, and rubbish.

This we followed for some 50 chains, and then came on to land that is cleared and fenced, and owned by Mr. John Field, of Deloraine, forming what is known locally as Gad's Hill station.

On Monday, October 26, I found and re-cleared some of the boundary lines of the Gad's Hill blocks, and as they proved fairly level took the line of track along them, to avoid unnecessarily

cutting up private land, and continued to follow the boundaries until I reached the south-east angle of the measured lots, and had Crown land ahead.

On Tuesday, 27th, taking Aylett for a guide, I went on an exploring expedition in a southerly direction, along the plateau upon the top of Gad's Hill, for some 9 or 10 miles, and found there was no serious obstacle for that distance.

We then commenced cutting and marking the line, at a bearing a little to the west of south, over undulating country, timbered with stringy-bark (*E. sieberiana*), with here and there a patch of open, covered with what is known to stockmen as white grass. This country extended to a small creek flowing into the Mersey, at 7 miles 50 chains from our starting-point, or  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Gad's Hill station.

Here there was a change, in the shape of a quartzite hill, running directly across our course, timbered with peppermint gums (*Euc. amygdalina*), and covered with a dense prickly scrub, and known locally as the Lemontine Hill.

From Gad's Hill station to this point we had been practically following the old track used by stockmen, crossing and recrossing it at the grade required; but finding that it led over this hill at a gradient of about 1 ft. in 6 ft., I made a deviation, and took the new line over this obstacle at 1 in 13.

In a break in this hill, where there was some water, we made our third camp, eight miles and fifty chains from the Mersey bridge at Liena. While at this camp we had a couple of days on which it was snowing heavily, with hail and sleet, making matters rather unpleasant for track marking.

From this point I followed the old track (which was the one followed by Russell), crossing and recrossing to straighten it, until the northern edge of the Berriedale Plain was reached, 11 miles from Liena, where, finding the old track turned away in a north-westerly direction and passed over some broken ugly country until the Mackenzie Plain was reached, and then turned again south, I left it, and, still keeping a southerly course, skirted the side of the hill at an easy grade, through a country covered with a dense growth of myrtle (*Fagus cunn.*) and pepper-tree, until the south end of the Mackenzie was reached, at what is known as the Divide between the Mackenzie and the Oakley range, 18 miles 70 chains from Liena, and 3550 ft. above sea level. Here we again touched the old track, and followed it through open grassy country for a couple of miles, when I had again to leave it, and keeping a little more south, wound around the south-eastern spurs of Mount Oakley, and obtained an easy grade down into the lower country in the vicinity of Lake Ayr, at the head waters of the River Forth, and near Mount Pelion East.

At 25 miles 43 chains from Liena we found the old marked line of the Mole Creek-West Coast railway survey, made some years since by Mr. Stewart, and clearing it out, followed it until we reached the old camp of that party at Mount Pelion East. We reached this point with our camp, &c., on Saturday, November 28, 1896, having marked and measured  $27\frac{1}{2}$  miles of track.

The whole of the next week was occupied in cutting and marking the track to tributary of the Forth flowing at the foot of Mount Pelion West, and by Saturday, December 5, we had moved our camp to this stream,  $30\frac{1}{4}$  miles from Liena.

At Mount Pelion West I was given to understand the difficulties of road-making would commence; and the rugged old mountain, frowning down upon us with his sides clothed with a dense growth of all the rubbish indigenous to this portion of Tasmania, certainly did look a formidable obstacle standing directly across our path.

However, Pelion West did not prove so formidable a customer as he looked; for, after having ascended to what is known as Pelion Saddle, upon the northern side of the mountain, taking my aneroid and noting approximate distances, which proved upon being measured to be fairly correct, I found that I could reach that point from my camp in the valley below at an approximate gradient of 1 in 20.

This was done, and Pelion Saddle was reached at 3249 feet above sea-level,  $34\frac{1}{4}$  miles from Liena.

From Pelion Saddle to Lake Will, at the foot of Barn Bluff Mountain, the track passes generally over open button-rush country, broken in a series of deep ravines and water-courses, but presenting no serious difficulties in the way of road-making, the ruling grades being easy, and the country as a rule sound, with a shallow peaty formation on top, underneath a bottom of white gravel. On Wednesday, November 16, had the camp moved to the foot of Barn Bluff; and on Sunday, the 20th, taking three of the party with me, I went to the summit of that mountain,

hoping to obtain a good view of the country to the westward. By aneroid I made the summit of Barn Bluff 5045 feet above sea, but failed to get a good view of the country I wanted to see, owing to the dense volume of smoke arising from numerous bush fires enveloping the country in almost every direction.

On Monday, 21st of December, I went with Russell, examined the country north of Mount Inglis, and found it practicable, but very densely wooded with stunted myrtle and peppermint gums until the Second Divide, between the waters flowing into the Fury and Bluff Rivers, is reached. Here the country is again open, being destitute of timber of any kind.

I objected to this part of the route, owing to the great height above sea—some 3859 feet—but as Russell informed me that he had tried to pass upon the south side of the mountain, and found it impracticable owing to perpendicular cliffs, I decided to go this way. (I afterwards found Russell's information to be incorrect.)

December the 25th, 1896, (Christmas Day), found us in camp at Barn Bluff, and all hands had a day's liberty.

On the 26th (Boxing Day) we were again at our work. The weather, which had hitherto been fine, now broke, and about noon on that date it commenced to rain in torrents, and continued to do so until the evening of Monday, December 28.

On the 29th we were again at work, and the next day finished the marking of the route to the foot of Mount Inglis.

Thursday, the 31st of January, 1896, proving fine, taking Russell as a companion, I made an early start for the Cradle Mountain, on whose summit I hoped to find the old trig, and test my observations as to aneroid heights, and also obtain a view of the country ahead to the westward.

We reached the foot of the basaltic cliffs forming the cap of the mountain at about 12:30 P.M. Had a billy of tea, some lunch, and a short rest. 2:30 P.M., found us upon the summit, where I found the old trig in a fairly good state of preservation.

The correct height of the Cradle Mountain by the trig survey is 5069 feet above sea, and as I made it by aneroid 5085, it may be fairly assumed that the observations taken and the heights given over my line of route are substantially correct, the difference of 16 feet noted being practically nothing, when it is remembered that my observations had extended over a number of weeks, and in all sorts of weather.

We regained our camp at 8:30 that evening, found the remainder of the party had arrived just before us, they having been engaged in chaining the marked line during the day.

At 40½ miles the track crossed the Bluff River close to its source in Lake Will; this is here only a small, shallow stream, with a hard gravelly bottom, fordable at all times. At 41½ miles the track enters a belt of dense scrub, consisting of fagus, myrtle, and horizontal; this continues for about half a mile, when it again emerges on to the open at Fury Saddle, No. 1 on the plan, 3550 feet above sea, and 42 miles 28 chains from Liena.

This point was reached, and the track completed to it on Saturday, January 9, 1897. In the meantime the weather had been very bad, heavy rains, snow, and dense fogs greatly retarding operations. Sunday, January 10, broke fine, and we took advantage of it to move our camps some distance ahead to the western slope of Mount Inglis. The same day I went to the summit of that mountain, made its height by aneroid 4200 feet above sea, and also obtained a fine view of the country to the westward, over which the track had to pass.

From Fury Divide, No. 1, the track as marked winds around the northern spurs of Mount Inglis through a dense scrub, until it emerges on to the open at Fury Divide No. 2, 3850 feet above sea, 44 miles 23 chains from Liena.

On Monday, January 11, taking Aylett for a guide, I went over the proposed route as far as Granite Tor; found it terribly broken by gorges and ravines, formed by the numerous small streams flowing into the rivers Fury and Bluff, but perfectly practicable. This day again proved bad, a heavy rain and dense fog setting in while we were upon the Tor, making it somewhat difficult to find our camp upon the return journey.

This continued for the next ten days, making the work of marking the track very difficult, as it was literally feeling our way during the fogs.

On January 24 I moved my camp to Granite Tor, having completed the line thus far, 49 miles 47 chains from Liena, 3010 feet above sea level.

From the saddle on Granite Tor, Mount Black, which ultimately proved our destination, was in sight, and viewing the country between the two points, it apparently consisted of a series of mountain chains intersected with deep gullies and ravines.

After Russell had indicated the route he proposed to take, and I had examined a portion of it, I informed him that it was impracticable for a road of any sort, and proceeded to explore the country in the vicinity of the Tor with the view of finding a way down on to the lower ground in the vicinity of the tributaries of the Pieman, the dense scrub on all sides making this a difficult operation.

On one occasion, noticing some apparently fairly open country in the vicinity of Sophia Peak, I asked Russell if I managed to get down to it if I could get through between that peak and the spurs of Granite Tor, where I supposed the Sophia River to flow, but he replied that I could not, as at that point there was a tremendous gorge through which it was impossible to take a road, and that if I got down into the open country I should only have to climb up again to get over the spur of the Tor.

Supposing that this information would be correct, I proceeded to work my way down the side of the Tor through a densely wooded, broken country. I commenced to descend at a gradient of about 1 in 15, and after having proceeded at this for about  $3\frac{1}{4}$  miles, came to a large creek flowing to the south west, a tributary of the Sophia River. Having noted a break in the mountain some distance ahead, and knowing that I was now about upon a level with it, I altered the grade to almost level, and made for the break mentioned, where I expected to find a pass.

Finding that Russell was of little use as guide, he knowing little or nothing about the country over which I could see we must pass, I decided to dispatch an advance party, consisting of J. Innes and W. Aylett, with orders to push through to Mount Black, noting the description of country they passed over, and then return, so that I might have some reliable information to work upon, and to enable either of the two men mentioned to act as guide as occasion required, Russell, at his own request, being employed in packing the provisions along the route.

Aylett and Innes carried out their instructions well. Leaving my camp upon Granite Tor on February 2, they pushed through to Mount Black, firing the country anywhere there was a chance to burn it, went right through to the bridge over the Stit, on the Ringville track, and rejoined me on Granite Tor on Tuesday, February 9, having been absent just seven days.

They reporting a practicable route *via* the Sophia Valley and Mount Farrell, into the valley of the River Mackintosh, I continued the track at an easy gradient into the pass before mentioned, Aylett and Innes having come through that way on their return journey, and cutting our way through it, struck the head of a small creek flowing down the north-western slope of the Tor, towards the Sophia. The Track now follows the course of this creek through a broken, difficult country, consisting of granite hummocks and deep ravines. This was covered with a dense growth of ti-tree (*Melaleuca*), bauera, horizontal, and button-rush, and although the fires started by Aylett and J. Innes had run over it, being damp underfoot, they had only burned the leaves, the blackened sticks remaining, and being nearly as bad as the green scrub to deal with. I followed the course of this creek until the 60th mile was reached, when, finding I could get better country by again taking to the spurs of the Tor and following them down, at 63 miles from Liena came on to the low land near the Sophia, and 1060 feet above sea.

On Tuesday, February 16, I moved my camp to the bank of the Granite Creek, near the junction of that stream and the Sophia River, having roughed out the line thus far, but the track was not completed to the camp until the 30th of the same month; our progress having become of a necessity slow since leaving the saddle on Granite Tor, all our supply of provisions, tents, etc., having now to be carried upon the men's backs, and the track, running through a very densely wooded country, had to be well cut out to enable them to get along with their loads.

During the time the men were engaged clearing out and marking the line to the new camp I had occupied my time in examining the surrounding country for further proceedings, and I now discovered that I had been put to needless trouble in getting from Granite Tor to the point where I was then camped, as there was a perfectly practicable and easy route obtainable by striking the head of the north branch of the Sophia, near its source upon Granite Tor, and following down the Sophia Valley, instead of passing over the rough, broken country before mentioned.

I also tried to cross the Victoria Range near Victoria Peak, thence into the valley of the Murchison River, but found it could not be done owing to the rugged nature of the country upon the Murchison side of the range, so I abandoned the attempt, and decided to take the route indicated by J. Innes and Aylett as the best.

On March 3 the weather, which had been very bad for some days past, became much worse, and from that date to the 13th of same month the surrounding mountains were snow-clad, and the rain falling in torrents, all the streams became flooded, and we were confined to the tents.

On the 13th Russell left the camp for the depôt on Granite Tor to meet Aylett, who was packing our supplies from Mole Creek to that point with horses; but on the 17th Russell returned to camp, Aylett not having arrived; weather very bad, still raining heavily.

The following Saturday I again despatched Russell, and with him J. Innes and Bradshaw, to the depôt, keeping Rowe with me, and went on marking the line towards a gorge between the Victoria Range and High Tor, through which I was aware the line must pass.

Russell and party reached the Tor that evening; Aylett arrived the next morning, and reported having lost one of his horses upon the journey.

They had the first supply of provisions in camp by the 23rd, and on Wednesday, 24th, we moved our camp into the pass before mentioned, the track having in the meantime been cleared to that point 65 miles 50 chains from Liena, and 1100 feet above sea level.

From this point the line gradually descends through a heavily-wooded country into the flats in the vicinity of the confluence of the Sophia and Mackintosh rivers, and is a very easy grade until the Sophia is reached.

At 67 miles 33 chains a small tributary of the Sophia was crossed, with low banks and a hard, gravelly bottom; is easily fordable. At 68 miles 8 chains we crossed another large tributary, one and a quarter chains wide, but like the former it is easily fordable, except in flood time, when it would be dangerous. Sixty-nine miles thirty-three chains (69 miles 33 chains) brought us to the bank of the Sophia itself. This is a fine, large stream, flowing through a flat country, with some good land and fine timber upon its banks. It could be easily bridged, there being plenty of good timber available for that purpose close at hand. At the fording-place where the track crosses the Sophia is one chain thirty links wide, with banks about six or eight feet above the normal water level; has a good hard bottom of small stones, and is easily fordable.

I caused a large tree to be felled across this stream, so that unless in a very high flood, when the water might possibly be over the tree, it is crossable at any time.

By Saturday, March 27, 1897, the track was cut and marked to the ford, and all our camp equipment moved up. On Sunday, the 28th, taking J. Innes with me, I made my way to the junction of the Sophia and Mackintosh Rivers, thence following the course of the Mackintosh for a mile or two, passed around the north end of Mount Farrell, and then went to the summit of that mountain. From there I obtained a good view of the country between my camp and the Murchison River.

The following Sunday, April 4, found two men and myself upon the north bank of the Murchison, about half a mile from its confluence with the Mackintosh, where it forms the Pieman, the remainder of the party being behind engaged in packing camps, &c. along.

The weather, which had kept fine up to the 4th, now broke, and the following morning it was raining heavily, and the Murchison, which is here a fine broad stream, flowing over a stony bed some 20 feet below its natural banks, began to rise, making our chances of getting across for some days look rather doubtful.

The track was completed to the banks of the Murchison, 74 miles 48 chains from Liena, on April 6th, and on Wednesday, the 7th, Aylett, who had been assisting with the packing, left us for Mole Creek, now some 86 miles distant by our route. He took a mail with him, and delivered it at the Mole Creek Post Office on the evening of Friday, April 9, having done the journey, in terrible weather, in three days.

Bad weather had now set in, and it rained more or less every day until Saturday, April 17. This day broke fine and the river commenced to fall rapidly, so that by the next morning (Easter Sunday) it was apparently fordable. Having got all our equipment close to the bank of the river, J. Innes and myself went into the river, Russell following, each having a load, and after a stiff struggle with the current, which was very swift, landed them safe upon the opposite side. We had to make three trips each way, and found it much more difficult to keep upon our feet when recrossing without a load than when we had 60 lb. or 70 lb. weight upon our backs. The water was not at any time higher than our waists, and two or three inches deeper, with the same current, none of us could have stood up to it. We had all hands safely landed upon the south bank by midday, but before we could get camps pitched it again commenced to rain, and the Murchison was once more rising. We had been detained 12 days by the river, and all hands had been upon short allowance, as it was necessary to husband our supplies until we got within reach of Mount Black mines, which were still a good many miles away.

It continued to rain heavily until the 22nd, when we again got to work and commenced cutting our way through a dense scrub, down the valley of the Mackintosh or Pieman. The track from

this point follows the valley of the Pieman through a broken country heavily timbered with stringybark (*E. gigantea*), and also stringy-bark gumtop (*E. sieberiana*), blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*), and myrtle (*Fagus cunn.*), the undergrowth being chiefly tree ferns (*Dicksonia antarctica*), horizontal, ti-tree (*Melaleuca*) and banera, until it reaches the surveyed claims in the vicinity of Mount Black, where the Rosebery mine is situated.

By Saturday, May 1, we had reached the first of these claims, and found upon inquiry that we were within some three miles in a direct line from the bridge over the River Stit—our destination.

From this point I despatched J. Innes to Ringvillè to obtain supplies and forward letters to say we were within measurable distance of civilisation.

We were now having terrible weather, the surrounding mountains being covered with snow, rain, hail, and sleet, with high winds, being the order of the day, but with a willing party the work was kept moving.

By Monday, May 10, we had marked and measured  $82\frac{1}{4}$  miles of track, and this day proving fine, we moved our camps to within four miles of the Stit.

The following morning it was raining again, and we had now to encounter some of the heaviest scrub upon the whole line, a dense mass of horizontal, the track having literally to be cut through almost a solid mass; but my men got it through, and we connected to the Ringville track at the bridge over the Stit on the evening of Wednesday, May 19.

We had our camps, etc., moved into the Rosebery claim by Saturday the 22nd, and were hospitably received by the Manager, Mr. Echberg, and his miners.

We stayed at the Rosebery until Monday, the 24th, when all hands proceeded to Ringville, where we found good accommodation with moderate charges at Hart's Hotel. Stayed there that evening, and the following day took the North-East Dundas tram for Zeehan, the silver city of the West, arriving there after dark.

Here we found good accommodation at the Shelverton Hotel, Main street; stayed that night, proceeding next morning by rail to Strahan. Obtained passages in the s.s. *Australia*; left Strahan the same evening, and reached Hobart on Thursday, May 27, after an absence of seven months and a half.

The general course of the track, and the features of the country over which it passes, are as follow:—

After leaving Gad's Hill station, about 4 miles from Liëna, the general course for the next 20 miles is about south, and is over a comparatively lightly-timbered country, with plenty of good grass, especially on the Berriedale Plain and its immediate vicinity. It has a good, hard bottom, with easy gradients, varying from level to 1 in 13, with very little of the latter. This brings us to the southern extremity of the Oakley Range.

From this point to Mount Pelion West, a distance of about seven miles, the course is about west; the country is partly open, part densely wooded, but with the exception of a few scattered basaltic boulders upon the slopes of Mount Oakley there is nothing to make track-forming expensive. The gradients upon this portion vary from 1 in 14 to 1 in 40 to level, and the country, with the exception of a few soft patches near Lake Ayr, is sound.

From the foot of Mount Pelion West the line runs in a northerly direction for about three miles, at an ascending grade of 1 in 20, the country rock being sandstone (coal measures), and the cross sections, which hitherto had been immaterial, are steep, varying from 10 deg. to 30 deg. This portion of the route is through a dense scrub, but as it is generally small stuff, it would not be costly to clear.

From this point to Fury Saddle No. 2, the course is about W.N.W.; the country is fairly open until nearing Mount Inglis, where heavy belts of scrub are met with.

The country rock consists of the coal measures near Mount Pelion; quartzite, with conglomerate and limestone, as the vicinity of Barn Bluff is reached; and coal measures again in the vicinity of Barn Bluff and Mount Inglis. The gradients are easy, 1 in 13 to 1 in 20 being the rule.

From Fury Saddle, No. 2, to the 51st mile-peg on Granite Tor the country is very broken, consisting of hummocks open on top, their sides and gullies between being full of scrub and rubbish. The country rock, as a rule, is grey granite, with here and there an outcrop of quartzite or schist. The ruling grades between Fury Saddle, No. 2, and Granite Tor are from 1 in 13 to 1 in 20, with

one short piece of a few chains at 1 in 11. Some of the cross sections are as high as 25 deg., but as a rule they are slight. The general course from Fury Saddle, No. 2, to the 51-mile peg, on the slopes of the Tor, is about south-west.

From the 51-mile peg to the 63rd, near Granite Creek, the general course is about east. This is the most rugged and costly portion of the whole route, the country rock being a hard, grey granite, cropping up in huge boulders, making track-forming expensive; the clearing would be the heaviest upon the whole line, owing to the dense nature of the scrub, which, when nearing the Sophia Valley, is thickly studded with heavy timber. The ruling grades are, however, easy, ranging from 1 in 16 to 1 in 30, with here and there a short piece at 1 in 12 or 13.

From Granite Creek, through Alexandra Pass, thence to the north end of Mount Farrell, the course is about north-west; the country as a rule covered with heavy scrub, the grades easy, and the cross-sections the same.

The country rock is generally a soft schist, with here and there an outcrop of quartz or granite.

At the north end of Mount Farrell a few huge conglomerate boulders are encountered, through which a track will require to be blasted for a short distance, some two or three chains; but from this point to the crossing at the Murchison, at 74 miles 48 chains from Liena, there is no obstacle worth mentioning, the whole distance being comparatively level. The general course from the north end of Mount Farrell to the Murchison crossing is about south by west.

After crossing the Murchison, the line is cut through a heavily timbered country around the slopes of Mount Black and in the valley of the Pieman, but the grades are very easy, and with the exception of a few ravines and watercourses, such as are generally to be met with in this description of country, there is nothing to prevent a good road being made at a moderate expense.

#### *Distance.*

The total distance from Mole Creek to the bridge over the Stit is 98 miles; from Liena to the Stit 86 miles 39 chains. The distance from the Stit bridge to Ringville by the Ringville track is about 6½ miles. The present terminus of the North-East Dundas tramway is within a few minutes' walk of Ringville.

#### *Marking.*

The track has been well cut out through all heavy scrub, so that there is no difficulty in carrying an ordinary swag along it. All timber within easy reach is marked upon either side with a large blaze or horseshoe mark; all logs crossed have a large notch cut on centre of track. In any open country the route is indicated by stout stakes, seldom less than 4 inches in diameter, from 5 feet to 6 feet high, firmly planted in the ground at intervals of about 5 chains where the line is straight, and much closer where it makes a sudden turn. In a few places where stakes are not easily available the route is indicated by cairns of stone, with a short stout stake firmly planted in the summit of the cairn. At each 10 chains a short stout peg is driven, with the distance in miles and chains plainly marked upon it. At every mile a stout post is firmly fixed in the ground, showing about 3 feet above the surface, and the mileage marked upon it.

The fording-places at all creeks are well and plainly marked by finger-posts and directions upon the nearest tree. At the Sophia Crossing a track is also cut down the east bank of that river to its confluence with the Mackintosh, where there is a good ford across that stream, a finger-post marked upon a tree giving directions where it is to be found.

#### *Land.*

In several places along the line of route some fine agricultural land was met with, notably so in the vicinity of Lake Ayr, the Sophia, and its main tributary, and in the valley of the Murchison, but especially in the valley of the first-mentioned stream and on the surrounding hills upon the eastern side of the river.

The flats in the vicinity of the river and its main tributary are a rich chocolate soil, very deep, and are covered with a dense growth of tree ferns (*Dicksonia antarctica*), the undergrowth being generally a small fern known as cathead; the standing timber being chiefly myrtle (*Fagus cunn.*) of a large size, with here and there a solitary white gum. I had not the time to make any estimate of the probable area, but, viewing it from the summit of Mount Farrell, there was apparently a large area available suitable for agriculture, it being only some 760 feet above sea level.

Near the confluence of the rivers Mackintosh and Murchison the track passed through some splendid land of the same description. This is well sheltered from the prevailing winds, and should make good homesteads for small farmers.



The land in the vicinity of Lake Ayr consists of rich bottom land covered with a rank growth of white grass, which our jaded pack-horses seemed to greatly enjoy. The whole of the way from Gad's Hill station patches of good feeding land are to be met with.

#### Timber.

All the way from the Liena to the Berriedale Plain there is a fair amount of fine timber, consisting of swamp gum (*E. amygdalina*), gumtop (*E. sieberiana*), and stringybark (*E. obliqua*).

From the Berriedale Plain to the foot of Mount Oakley there is very little timber of any value, what there is being chiefly peppermint (*E. amygdalina*), and very stunted. At the foot of Mount Oakley and on the lower spurs of Mount Pelion East, we have stringybark (*E. obliqua*) of fair quality, and some gumtop, fine young timber, myrtle (*Fagus cunn.*), and King William pines (*Athrotaxis*).

Upon the south-western slopes of Granite Tor, and upon the lower slopes of the mountain known as High Tor, there are some belts of gumtop (*E. sieberiana*), fine lofty clean timber, so far untouched by fires and the bushman's axe.

In the valley and low hills near the Sophia River we have timber of the same quality, and the same occurs again in the valley of the Murchison, especially near the confluence of that river and the Mackintosh. In this vicinity we came across some fine blackwood trees (*Acacia m.*), intermixed with the gumtop, and in some few instances quite as lofty.

There is a little King William pine upon the higher spurs of Mount Black, and upon its lower spurs and outlying hills myrtle of splendid quality abounds.

#### Minerals.

At or near Mount Pelion East this route enters what may be termed the great mineral belt which runs from north to south along the western portion of Tasmania, and from there to the bridge over the Stit, our terminus, the whole country passed over gives indications of being a valuable mineral field. Near Mount Pelion East a Northern company have discovered a pyrites lode containing silver, copper, and gold, and they are now driving to strike the lode at a lower level to test its value.

Upon the spurs of the Pelion West the coal measures appear, and what is apparently a seam of valuable steam coal has been found.

Near Barn Bluff there are vast quantities of valuable cannel coal lying about, upon and just under the surface of the ground, the seam apparently having been broken up by some convulsion of nature.

All the creeks having their source on Granite Tor, which were crossed by the track, carried tin in small quantities. And in the valley of the Sophia, upon the steep sides of the Victoria Range, and in the deep gorges and gullies about Mount Farrell, huge outcrops of iron gossan, and in some places pyrites, were noticed.

In the bed of the Murchison River almost every stone you can break carries a mineral of some sort, from shining galena to dull looking copper pyrites, all tending to show that this splendid stream, with its enormous water power, has been for ages past gradually wearing its way through rocks carrying metals of all descriptions.

#### Bridges.

The only bridge of any magnitude that would be required upon this route would be one over the River Murchison. This is a large rapid stream, three chains wide where the track crosses, and although fordable in many places when at its summer level, still, with only a very moderate amount of rain it becomes impassable without a bridge of some description. When detained upon its banks my party felled no less than nine large trees, most of which reached the opposite bank, but to no purpose, for as soon as any portion of them touched the water they were at once broken off and swept away. There is a fine site for a suspension bridge a few chains above where the track crosses, and the span would not be more than about 100 feet, with plenty of good timber within easy reach.

The Sophia and its largest tributary are the only other streams that would be likely to require a bridge over them; in both cases in their normal condition they are only shallow sluggish streams, with hard gravelly bottoms and low banks, and as there is plenty of good timber available in both instances, the cost of bridging should not be anything very considerable.

#### Deviations required.

Upon the accompanying plan I have indicated two deviations which are required to obtain the best line. The first is at Mount Inglis, the line as marked, for reasons stated in a former portion

of this Report, was taken upon the northern side of the mountain, where I found afterwards that it could and should have gone upon the southern side, as in that case I should have been in at least at 500 feet less altitude, with plenty of shelter in the shape of timber, &c., which is a consideration where snow is likely to be encountered.

The second one marked is more important still, as, by taking the route indicated upon the plan, easy grades can be obtained, and some 14 miles of the worst country upon the whole route be avoided, and a very material difference be made in the cost of construction for this portion of the line.

Some mile and a half of this deviation, commencing near Granite Creek, and running up the Sophia Valley, has already been marked, and before I left it I satisfied myself that it could be done, and the track altered to pass that way.

As a rule the health of the whole party was good until nearing the end of our journey, when one of the party had a severe attack of rheumatism, which threatened to lay him up, and during the last fortnight, when near the Rosebery, I was an invalid myself, having a severe attack of low fever, brought on by long exposure to damp and cold. With these exceptions, and sundry cuts and bruises, there was nothing serious to complain of.

Mr. Aylett, who undertook to pack our supplies as far he could get with his horses, carried out his task in a very satisfactory manner, and to him the party are indebted for many little kindnesses in the shape of parcels and letters delivered. When he had done with the horses, he assisted my men to pack the rations as far as the Murchison, crossing where he left us, on April the 7th, carrying with him the good wishes of the whole party, and when anything is done towards making this route available for traffic I can confidently recommend him as the right man to form the guide for the party having the work in hand.

The weather during the first part of the journey was all that could be desired, but with the beginning of the new year it broke up, and at least one-half the remainder of the time occupied was wet and bad.

In the months of March and April we had no less than 36 days' heavy rain, and up to the date of our leaving in May we had had 11 wet days.

At Mount Black, the Mine Manager at the Rosebery informed me that he had noted the same number of wet days that I had during those months, and that from February 20 to May 20, according to his rain gauge, 2 feet of rain had fallen.

Taking the track as a whole, from start to finish it passes over a country well worth opening up, and once a practicable line of traffic is formed it should prove an attraction for tourists, as, for mountain and lake scenery, especially in the vicinity of Barn Bluff and the Cradle Mountain, it forms one of the most beautiful portions of the Colony, and with a decent track of any sort would easily be reached.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

E. G. INNES, *District Surveyor,*  
*in charge of Track Party.*

*The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works, &c.*



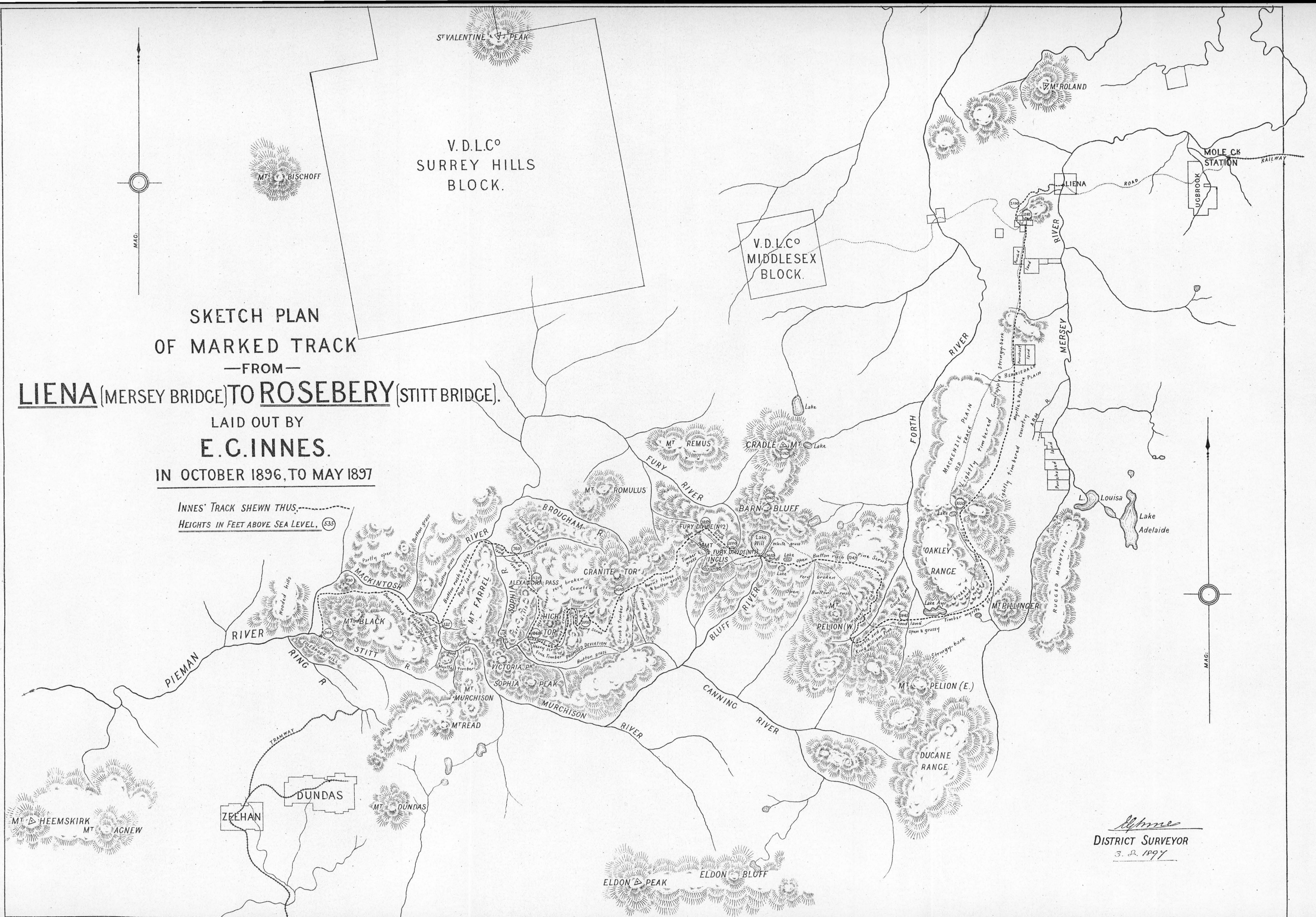
V.D.L.C.<sup>o</sup>  
SURREY HILLS  
BLOCK.

V.D.L.C.<sup>o</sup>  
MIDDLESEX  
BLOCK.

SKETCH PLAN  
OF MARKED TRACK  
—FROM—  
**LIENA** (MERSEY BRIDGE) **TO ROSEBERY** (STITT BRIDGE).

LAID OUT BY  
**E.C. INNES.**  
IN OCTOBER 1896, TO MAY 1897

INNES' TRACK SHEWN THUS:  
HEIGHTS IN FEET ABOVE SEA LEVEL, (535)



*E.C. Innes*  
DISTRICT SURVEYOR  
3.2.1897