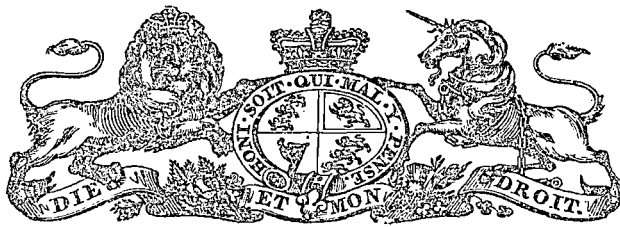


(No. 14.)



1860.

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T A S M A N I A.

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**EXPLORATION OF NORTH-WESTERN  
COUNTRY.**

**MR. R. C. GUNN'S REPORT.**

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Laid upon the Table by Mr. Henty, and ordered by the Council to be  
printed, 2 August, 1860.



*Circular Head, 2nd January, 1860.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I SEND you a short Report of my proceedings, rather than delay until after my visit to the Forth.

I am endeavouring to collect all the information I can wherever I go, as there are no end to the rumours and reports of wonderful discoveries of metals along the Coast. I find, however, that on examination they usually turn out to be very unimportant.

Pray let me know, as soon as convenient, about Mr. Lette's "Tin Ore." I forward it as received from him.

I propose returning to Launceston from the Forth, and then take my final departure, with my party, for the Surrey Hills.

Emmett's track to the Hellyer will become the most accessible route for parties to visit the unsettled lands lying south—not seen since 1828, and marked in old maps as "apparently good country."

Yours very faithfully,

RONALD C. GUNN.

*The Honorable F. M. INNES, Esq.*

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*Circular Head, 2nd January, 1860.*

SIR,

I BEG leave to report that I left Launceston on 20th ultimo for Torquay, where, by appointment, I met Mr. M'Arthur, Police Magistrate, and Mr. Dooley, the District Surveyor. After conferring with them upon the various reports of gold having been discovered on the River Forth, &c., I deemed it unnecessary to delay my visit to the Inglis, where it had been announced in a recent Hobart Town newspaper that a large party of men from Circular Head were obtaining gold at the rate of half an ounce per day per man.

I was unable to see Mr. Lette until the 22nd, as he was in the bush with his party clearing the track to the River Calder. On the 23rd, accompanied by Mr. Lette, and one man to carry tent, provisions, &c., I proceeded to that river, where I understood the diggers to be at work,—the distance estimated by Mr. Lette at 18 to 20 miles from Wynyard. For the first 7 miles the route was easy on horseback, but then the track ceased, and the rest of the way was through the usual dense forest of myrtle, sassafras, stringy bark, fern trees, &c.,—travelling extremely difficult, as no fires had for very many years, if ever, passed through the forest. We encamped at the junction of the Rivers Calder and Inglis, but could find no diggers.

Next day, by proceeding about half a mile up the Calder, we came upon the place where the Circular Head party (as it was called) had been at work; but no one was there, and I afterwards learned that they had passed us by another track through the forest on the 23rd. This I regretted extremely, as I was most anxious to have seen them work out a ton or two of stuff. Here I found they had made a dam across the river 70 feet long, a race 340 feet, to carry off the water of the river so as to leave its bed dry, and spouting, made of sawn timber cut on the spot, 140 feet long in which to wash the stuff. After expending so much time and labour in these works, I regretted to learn that the party, consisting of ten men, had determined to abandon them, as the total quantity of gold obtained by the whole party did not exceed one pennyweight altogether. Having taken a pickaxe, shovel, and tin dish with us, Mr. Lette washed out several dishes of soil and gravel from the most likely places to yield gold. In every dish some gold was found, but the quantity was very small, and the particles exceedingly minute. After spending some time on the Calder we returned to the Inglis, where Mr. Lette washed out several dishes from the places where he had previously obtained gold. The specks continued excessively minute, and varying in number to twenty per dish. Seven or eight large holes had been dug varying in depth from 7 to 10 feet to the blue clay and rock below, so I think the spot has been fairly tried, although I am informed some men intend to give it a further trial.

I do not think that gold will be found in sufficient quantity in this locality to repay the labour expended in obtaining it. From the exceedingly minute character of all the specks obtained by me, I think it probable it has been brought down the rivers from some considerable distance; and that if a payable gold-field exists in this quarter, it will be found more to the south on Campbell's Range. Campbell's Range (*omitted by name from the recent Map*) is a range of hills running for many miles parallel to and north of the River Hellyer, and is the range from which both the Inglis and Calder must take their rise. To this range, therefore, I have directed the attention of both Messrs. Lette and S. B. Emmett,—the one to examine the *northern* flanks yielding the head waters of the Inglis and Calder, the other to proceed up the Hellyer on its right bank from a point south of Circular Head, examining the *southern* face of the range, and the streams running from it into the Hellyer,—as this range divides the waters running into Bass's Strait from those running to the west by the Hellyer.

I see no reason whatever at present to exclude the lands of this district from the operation of the Lands Act, or to include them amongst the "gold-bearing." Within a week or two Mr. Lette's track will give easy access to the Calder, as a great part of it is wide enough for a bullock dray; and as a considerable portion of the land through which this track passes is of good quality, with timber of a superior character for splitting, I imagine that the greater portion will be purchased at an early day. I entirely concur in the opinion expressed by Mr. Lette in the 6th paragraph of his letter to the Surveyor-General, dated 17th November last. On the subject of lands, roads, and bridges, however, I shall address you separately.

"I know that nothing has so much retarded the settlement of the coast lands generally as the want of even a bridle road; as, from experience, I know that very many persons have declined taking land behind those already settled for the reason that they have no access, and justly argued that to make a road would exhaust their means, and leave them incapable of improving the land when they had acquired it."

I have requested Mr. Lette not to cut the track beyond the Calder for the present, the distance to which from Wynyard I estimate at considerably less than Mr. Lette; but when completed the exact distance can be ascertained. It is almost, or quite, impossible to estimate the distance travelled in these dense forests with any approach to accuracy.

Mr. Lette has proceeded to examine Campbell Range, intending, if possible, to pass through Dipwood Marsh, which has not been visited, so far as I know, since 1827. In that year Mr. Hellyer describes it as "an extensive flat, four to five miles in length, and about half a mile wide, with abundance of fresh young grass and herbage, (although very coarse);" and as open grassy land is very much wanted by the settlers on the coast for sheep and cattle, I have requested Mr. Lette to re-examine it if practicable. I am most anxious that, in searching for Gold, the important point of opening up land should as far as practicable be carried on in conjunction with it.

Mr. S. B. Emmett is at present cutting a bridle track south from this to the Hellyer, as from the scrubby character of much of the country it would be quite impossible for a small party to carry a sufficient quantity of provisions to enable them to explore many miles. When the track is completed (which I hope will be the case in a few days) a depôt of provisions will be made on the Hellyer; and from that point Mr. Emmett will proceed to examine the southern face of Campbell's Range, until he reaches its eastern extremity, which bears by compass about S. W. by W. from Table Capé. Thence he will return by Table Capé.

I beg leave to forward herewith a packet of Ore, supposed by Mr. Lette to be Tin, which I received from him to send to you. He obtained it, before my arrival, in the Flowerdale, a few miles from Wynyard.

I return immediately to the River Forth, and will lose no time in reporting upon the alleged discoveries of Gold in that neighbourhood.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

RONALD C GUNN.

*The Honorable the Colonial Treasurer.*

*Launceston, 13th January, 1860.*

SIR,

On 6th instant I arrived at Torquay from Circular Head, and next day visited Mr. James Smith, the reported discoverer of the Gold on the River Forth. I ascertained from him that the locality whence the Gold had been obtained by himself and others (called by them "Golden Point") is on the right bank of the Forth, and only  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 miles below the V.D.L. Company's old track, and therefore more accessible to me from Middlesex Plains than from any part of the Coast. As my plans are to proceed immediately with my party to the Surrey Hills and Middlesex Plains, I have deferred my visit for the present. Mr. Smith informed me he had also obtained Gold about 5 miles lower down the river, but that neither of these localities had been fairly tested. At all events the quantity obtained has been exceedingly small. Pending my own visit to these places I have availed myself of

the offer of an old digger, who has already been there, to go with two other men for four weeks, to give them a fair trial. As he is a mechanic (wheelwright), and I undertake to find *rations only*, without any wages, for the above period, I feel satisfied that there is no inducement for them to waste time, and that they will not continue longer than to test the spots thoroughly. I propose meeting them there.

On the River Wilmot traces of Gold only have been found.

At the Mersey, Forth, Emu Bay, Inglis, and Circular Head, I put myself into communication with every person likely to afford me any information; and I have enlisted the co-operation of many who are most anxious to develop the mineral resources of their respective Districts. As there are a great number of practical miners living on the North Coast who have had experience at California, New South Wales, and Victoria, I have every reason to believe that if any valuable metal or mineral exists on or near the Coast it will be discovered at an early date—more especially as an unusual stimulus to research has been induced by my visit.

I have had every information and assistance freely given me by every one with whom I came in contact; and I trust that before the season is out the question as to the existence or non-existence of Gold in payable quantities in this quarter will be, to a certain extent, set at rest. I say to a *certain extent*, as, from the densely timbered and scrubby character of the country, much of it must necessarily remain unexamined for many years to come.

My arrangements are nearly completed for starting to the Surrey Hills to examine Cattley Plain, Bond's Plain, &c., where it has been reported, from time to time, that Gold has been found. My subsequent course of operations will be influenced by what I see there.

I have the honor to be,  
Sir,

Your very obedient Servant,  
RONALD C. GUNN.

*The Honorable F. M. INNES, Esq.*

*Launceston, 14th January, 1860.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I ENCLOSE the account of my labours in exploration and research since I left Circular Head, as also my Report on the best means of expending the Grant of £5000 in the Devon District so as to make that expenditure reproductive.

I shall be glad to answer any questions on my Reports, so as to render them as complete as possible,—as I am aware how likely I am to omit from them many details which might be interesting to others merely because they are not new to myself.

I propose sending my specimens of fossils, rocks, &c. to Dr. Miligan, as Curator of the Museum, where Mr. Gould will be enabled to name them. I shall also send him any new plants I may discover, but as yet I have not seen one of the latter. I shall probably throw together any Natural History observations I may make, and forward them to the Royal Society, in whose Proceedings they may be published if found of any interest.

Believe me,  
Yours very faithfully,

RONALD C. GUNN.

F. M. INNES, *Esq.*

P.S.—Since writing the preceding, I have thought it best to hand my remarks on roads, &c. to Mr. Falconer for his observations.

*Surrey Hills, 18th February, 1860.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I ARRIVED at Surrey Hills on 31st ultimo, having been delayed a day or two at Emu Bay in making arrangements for the conveyance of the stores, implements, &c. for my party to this place. On 2nd February the party mustered at Thomson's Park, an unoccupied hut kindly lent me by Mr. T. W. Field, and which I made into a Depôt. Thomson's Park is situate as nearly as possible at the point where the counties of Wellington, Devon, and Russell meet.

Next day we started for Cattley Plain, and after search found the spot where Mr. Law had been digging for gold. The holes were 2 to 6 feet deep. Leaving the men to bottom one of these holes, and to sink others in various parts of the plain indicated to them, accompanied by Mr. Lette I proceeded across the Black Bluff Mountain to visit Golden Point on the River Forth. From the Ford on the Van Diemen's Land Company's old track there is no difficulty in finding the way, as the trees are all marked. It is about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 miles down the river on the right bank. I felt much disap-

pointed at finding no traces of the men I had engaged at the Mersey having been there. Mr. Lette found gold in the crevices of the rocks, as also in the soil on the bank. After remaining there all night and a considerable portion of next day, we returned to Cattley Plain. No gold whatever had been found by the party on Cattley Plain during our absence. The holes in all cases were sunk to the trap rock, the deepest about 12 feet. Mr. Lette also tried the beds of the rivulets (sources of the Leven); but found no gold.

On 9th February I removed the party, and encamped on a spot west of Bond's Plain, and near the place described by Mr. Stevenson. Here there are apparently three large quartz reefs, running nearly north and south, and which can be traced for some distance. We carefully examined them, but could see no traces of gold. Mr. Lette also washed from the streams running both north (into the Forth) and south (into the Mackintosh), but without success. Leaving the men to sink holes near the reef, Mr. Lette and I proceeded again to visit the Forth, intending to reach it by following the River Iris from Middlesex Plains until it joined that river. We proceeded to the summit of Storm Mount, and thence descended to the river, through almost impenetrable scrub and thickets of cutting grass, *Bauera*, &c. Next day we continued our course down the river; passed the junction of the river Lea (from the lake in the Vale of Belvoir) until 3 p.m., when, finding no immediate prospect of the Iris uniting itself with the Forth, we altered our course; and on the third day struck the Forth, a little to the north of west of the summit of Roland Mount. Here Mr. Lette obtained gold in crevices of the rock, but the particles were smaller and finer than that procured some miles higher up at Golden Point.

Proceeding up the River Forth, and fording it, we found the remains of an encampment, and soon came upon a marked tree track which led us over Claude Mountain (at an elevation of about 3500 feet) to Golden Point, and thence we returned to Bond's Plain. The men found no gold in the holes they had sank. I accordingly returned here preparatory to starting for the Coast through the tract of country between the Rivers Leven and Blythe.

The result of my investigations may be thus briefly summed up:—

1. There is no gold-field at Cattley Plain.
2. That the gold in quartz stated to have been found by Messrs. Wilson, of Circular Head, at Cattley Plain was not, in my opinion, found there.
3. That there is no gold-field at Bond's Plain, or in that vicinity.
4. That no payable gold-field will be found on the northern portion of the Surrey Hills Block,—say from the Black Bluff to Mount Pearse, and thence to St. Valentine's Peak.

Of course these are my own personal opinions.

On 16th instant I ascended St. Valentine's Peak to examine the country, as far as practicable, which I am about to traverse. It seems rough and unpromising for travelling, not having been burned, I presume, since the times of the Aborigines. My point of departure will be from this, entering this comparative *terra incognita* by about the N.E. corner of the V.D.L. Company Surrey Hills grant. My party consists of three men, Mr. Lette, and myself. We will start carrying 14 days' provisions, tent, bedding, tools, &c., by the termination of which time we ought to strike the Coast.

I shall send you, in some respects, a more detailed report on closing my labours in this quarter, accompanied by specimens of the rocks collected, and which can be named by Mr. Gould or Dr. Milligan, the latter gentleman being intimate with the geology of this part of the Colony.

I shall reserve my observations on the Forth until after further research and investigation.

I regret to say that Mr. Lette failed in hitting Dipwood Marsh, or in going along Campbell's Range, in consequence of the illness of one of his men, and the severity of the weather. He, however, reached the River Hellyer, there a large stream about 2 chains wide and several feet deep. He found no gold on its banks. The fresh rumours of success at the Inglis will induce me again to visit that locality, and I hope to find the reports true.

My best thanks are due to Mr. T. W. Field, who has been most liberal in his offers of assistance.

I beg to remain,

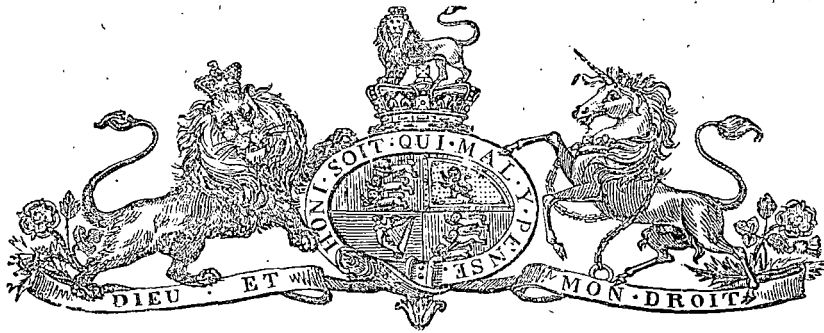
My dear Sir,

Yours very faithfully,

RONALD C. GUNN,

*The Honorable F. M. INNES, Esq.*

P. S.—Since writing the preceding, I find the *Lea* river of Hellyer is the Fall river of Sprent. The *Lea* joins the Iris, and both form the "*Wilmot*," as I found to my cost. The other river north of Stormount does not exist, nor do they join the Forth where laid down. The river or rather stream in the Vale of Belvoir flows to the south into the Mackintosh, and not to the north into the Lake, as laid down in the new Map.



*Launceston, 25th April, 1860.*

MY DEAR SIR,

HAVING, in compliance with your letter of 2nd December, 1859, availed myself of every opportunity which presented itself, of furnishing you with a Report as detailed as practicable of the progress of the Expedition under my charge, I now proceed to communicate a few matters almost necessarily omitted in the hurried letters which, from time to time, I forwarded to you. I think it unnecessary here to enter into any repetition of what you already know, and so shall confine myself to the points left out.

Having already forwarded to Hobart Town all the geological specimens collected, I shall merely quote the numbers attached when I have occasion to refer to them.

I shall also send herewith a Map of the north-western part of the Island published by the Van Diemen's Land Company, and by which my routes were guided. It is much more accurate than any Map subsequently published.

I left Launceston for the second time on 25th January, taking with me three men only to form my party, together with provisions, tools, &c., for digging and blasting, and all I conceived necessary for an absence of two or three months. At Emu Bay Mr. P. L. Lette met me by appointment, from whose practical experience in the gold-fields at California for upwards of five years I hoped to derive the most valuable assistance. I also anticipated that his professional skill as a Surveyor would be of essential service. In both respects I was not disappointed, and feel deeply indebted to him for his zealous and cordial co-operation.

It was the 30th before I got all started from Emu Bay for the Surrey Hills, where I proposed commencing my explorations; and it occupied four days to reach Thomson's Park, which, as already mentioned, I made my Depôt.

Mr. Lette and I occupied a day in ascending Mount Pearse, being the most western mountain at the Surrey Hills, and very near the western boundary of the Van Diemen's Land Company's grant, with an elevation of about 3500 feet above the sea level. Our object was to examine the country lying to the westward between the Rivers Pieman and Arthur; a course I was most anxious to follow, had time permitted, after completing the examination of the country along the north coast. The result of my investigation was, that it would be unsafe for any ordinary party to attempt to penetrate to the west coast from the Surrey Hills, without having previously had a depôt of provisions made at some point between the Arthur and Pieman. The country seems quite impracticable for horses; and if it is as scrubby as I have every reason to suspect it to be, it would be impossible for men to carry on their backs more than 14 days' provisions, with blankets, tent, &c.; and I calculate it would take about that time to reach the sea. That country remains unexplored and almost unknown, but I believe it could be crossed without much difficulty by the means I have suggested.

The rock of Mount Pearse is a conglomerate (No. 11), as is also that of St. Valentine's Peak, elevation 3637 of Sprent (No. 41), Native Track Tier (No. 45), of Mount Cattley (Nos. 8 and 9), Black Bluff Range (No. 16), Lower Black Bluff Range, Storm Mount, Claude, and Vandyke; all these mountains ranging from 3500 to 4500 feet high, except the Native Track Tier, which is lower. This conglomerate varies very much in its constituents, and in the size of the pebbles and particles of which it is composed.

The prevailing rock of the Surrey Hills from the base of the Black Bluff Range to St. Valentine's Peak, and thence to Mount Pearse is (No. 42) trap. The rock of Cattley Plain is also trap (No. 10); and the bottoms of all the holes, some six or eight in number, sunk on and about the plain are a decomposed trap (No. 14<sup>1</sup>).

The Surrey Hills are a series of thinly wooded, grassy, open forests and plains, forming a sort of plateau, some 14 miles from E. to W., and about the same from N. to S. The elevation of this plateau has, in my opinion, been understated by Strzelecki, as it is but little below that of the Vale of Belvoir,

fixed by him at 2930 feet; but as he gives only 3331 feet as the height of the Black Bluff, whereas Mr. Sprent makes the northern end 1000 feet more—viz. 4381 feet—it may fairly be assumed that some of this error would be carried westward. I believe therefore that the Surrey Hills may be estimated as at least 2500 feet above the sea level. This would, in a great measure, account for the character of the vegetation, and the severity of the climate.

From a summit of the Black Bluff Range, south of the track, Mr. Lette took the bearings of many prominent points as far as Circular Head. Circular Head itself bore N. 40° W.

The Cradle Mountain, which bore from the track above mentioned S. 34° E., is quite accessible from Bond's Plain,—open country extending all the way,—the "Hounslow Heath" of the V. D. L. Company's Maps. This would be about the best line for marking out a track, to enable the southern flockowners to take sheep to depasture during the summer months in this quarter. There is much open, grassy country south and west of Middlesex Plains, equal in quality to Middlesex Plains themselves, as also at the Vale of Belvoir and Cattley Plains, all Crown land. Its great drawback is its elevation above the sea, and consequent severity of climate, rendering it available for only a few months in the year. What difficulties, if any, exist between Cradle Mountain and Marlborough I cannot say, but there are none north of that mountain. On the northern end of the Vale of Belvoir, near the Lake, we saw some large herds of Messrs. Fields' cattle. The rock in the middle of the Vale is a limestone (No. 38), and the others east to Middlesex Plains are Nos. 17, 18, 33, 31, 32, 34, 27.

The *Eldon* Range, of Sprent's Map, was visible from the Black Bluff; but this range of mountains, now so called, is obviously not the range originally so called by Mr. Hellyer in 1823. In one of his Reports he speaks of it as running nearly north and south, and the Barn Bluff bore from it east by south.

On the summit of Storm Mount (or Stormont) I found one of Mr. Hellyer's old stations, and from this elevated point—about 4000 feet—had a complete view of the course of the River *Lea* of Hellyer (now called the Fall River), from its rise at the Vale of Belvoir to its junction with the Iris River, which flows through Middlesex Plains. The two, united, then flow through a rocky gorge, and become, I believe, the present River Wilmot. I followed the Iris until I saw the junction of the *Lea*, and thence northwards far beyond the position fixed for their junction with the Forth. Finding no indication of the River Iris trending eastward, I left it, and keeping a course south of east for about five miles, came upon the Forth N. W. by N. from Vandyke. There is an extensive flat of good but heavily timbered land above the junction of the Iris and *Lea*, but it is rather inaccessible. I also passed through a considerable extent of good land, covered with musk tree, &c., between the Iris and Forth.

The rocks in the Iris below Storm Mount are similar in character to those on the Forth, with, however, the addition of limestone. No granite boulders were visible. All my specimens from this locality were unfortunately lost. Bubbling springs occur in the Iris, resembling those in the Deep Creek near Circular Head. (*Vide Tasmanian Journal*, Vol. 1, p. 77.)

From the River Forth a marked tree track heads Philip's Rivulet, going over the summit of Claude Mount, between it and Vandyke, at an elevation of at least 3000 feet, dipping thence rapidly down to the river at Golden Point, which, as already described, is about two miles below the Van Diemen's Land Company's crossing-place on the Forth. The Forth in this quarter runs between lofty hills, or rather mountains, ranging from 1500 to 2000 feet above the bed of the river. Small flats occasionally occur on each side, but they are limited in extent,—the river usually having its course between steep banks of rock.

On both my visits to the Forth from the Surrey Hills, I felt much disappointed at not finding any traces of the parties I had engaged to test the flats on the river by sinking to the bed-rock, and who were to have met me there, as mentioned in my letter to you of 13th January.

On afterwards communicating with Mr. M'Arthur, at Torquay, I ascertained that the men had gone in another direction, and not near Golden Point at all. I annex Mr. M'Arthur's Memorandum; but did not think it worth while to prosecute the man Russell for non-fulfilment of his agreement, although it prevented my obtaining other parties to do this work. I again put myself in communication with Mr. M'Arthur, to find some trustworthy person to take charge of a party to sink on the flats above mentioned; but it was not until my return from Circular Head, on 30th March, that I could make the necessary arrangements with a Mr. Downie. I then requested him to visit the locality, and to ascertain what he would require for three or four weeks for a party. The weather suddenly breaking up immediately after that date, induced me reluctantly to abandon all hope of doing anything this season, more especially as the supplies would have had to be taken over "Claude." Mr. Lette found Gold wherever he looked for it near the margin of the river, as high up as the Van Diemen's Land Company's track; but principally in the crevices of the rocks in the bed of the stream. As there is a marked tree track from Kentish's Plain, it may be visited with facility, so far as finding the way, by persons desirous of prospecting; but the general inaccessibility of this part of the Forth would at all times be a serious drawback to diggers, even if the flats were sufficiently extensive to hold out a prospect of anything like a gold-field. I hope, however, a party will be sent next summer to test the value of this locality.

*Leven.*—From the summit of the Native-track tier in a north-easterly direction to the Leven, the country is uniformly poor and valueless, covered throughout with dense scrubs of various kinds. These scrubs I do not attempt to describe, as they baffle description; the greater portion of the country, however, being covered with the horizontal scrub (*Anodopetalum biglandulosum*), a small tree growing horizontally, or with an inclination down-hill, the trunks 50 to 70 feet long, with a diameter of a few inches. From the horizontal trunks upright branches, having somewhat the aspect of young poplar trees, shoot up to a height of 30 or 40 feet. A forest of this plant can only be compared to a pile of drift wood washed up against some obstruction in a river, to a depth of 10 to 18 feet; the only means of progress being that of crawling on all-fours under the trunks, or walking many feet above the ground, cutting the smaller branches out of the way as you proceed. The wire scrub (*Bauera rubioides*) is even more difficult to make progress through than the horizontal. This plant grows 6 to 10 or 12 feet high, in one dense mass; the stems like wire, tough and interlacing in every direction. I found it usually associated with cutting grass. Many other shrubs, such as *Melaleuca*, formed thickets,—but they usually covered smaller tracts of country, and were sooner got through.

From the summit of a rocky mountain a few miles north of Mount Everett, and only a little less elevated, I had a good view of the country in all directions; and it seemed all equally rugged and unpromising as the part I had gone through.

Over the greater portion of the country between the Surrey Hills and Leven there were no indications of any fires having ever passed. As we approached the Leven the older trees bore marks of fire, which must have occurred some 25 or 30 years previously; and this fire seems to have spread over many miles of country,—indeed, my impression is, that nearly all the level land which I saw lower down the Leven must at that time have been open *grassy plains*, as the greater portion of the trees seem to be under that age. A very considerable extent of the Surrey Hills is also becoming rapidly covered with forests of young *Eucalypti*, so as to render it probable that they will also in time become useless for pasture purposes. The want of the usual and regular aboriginal fires to clear the country seems to be the cause.

From a rough sketch Map kindly lent me by Dr. Milligan, I find “Ring’s Plains” marked in about the position where the country I described in my letter of the 7th March is situate. I do not know the circumstances under which Mr. Ring saw this land, but I believe it to be identical with that described and supposed to have been discovered by me. His plain is, however, marked as on the west side of the river, whereas I travelled on the east, so it is possible the extent of open country may be much greater than I saw. The soil was throughout of fine quality. Limestone rock (No. 51.) occurs on the Leven near the northern extremity of this tract of land, and must become of value to the Settlers.

*Inglis, Table Cape, Hampshire Hills.*—The sketch Map of Dr. Milligan’s, already alluded to, has shown me that the plain mentioned in my letter of 4th April, and which I supposed to be his “Temperance Plain,” is one called by him “Henrietta Plain,” or at least they are probably the same. A track made from the Coast almost due south by compass would open up a considerable extent of good country. It might with facility be continued to Henrietta Plain, and thence ultimately to Sheffield Plain. The latter is of a superior character, and is outside of the Van Diemen’s Land Company’s grant. Such a track would not be expensive, and would I think prove highly remunerative by the sale of lands.

My anxiety to re-examine the Inglis, and to visit Circular Head, prevented my going over the country between the Hampshire Hills and the Sea-coast, and between the Rivers Emu and Leven. There is a considerable extent of good land, and some open country, not included in the Company’s grant. This portion requires examination, and would not occupy much time at a favorable season.

I enclose Mr. Lette’s Report, which will explain satisfactorily the reasons why he was unable to visit Dipwood Marsh and examine Campbell’s Range, as I had requested him to do,—as per my letter to you of 2nd January.

*Circular Head.*—Lying south of the Van Diemen’s Land Company’s grant there is some good land of the usual heavily timbered myrtle and musk tree character, but the quantity is uncertain. I would suggest the continuation of the track already cut to the River Hellyer in a southerly direction, so as to cross the River Arthur, and thence to branch off to the coast between the Arthur and Pieman. This would open up a country of which little is known, and of which no portion has been seen since Mr. J. H. Wedge’s arduous journey round from Woolnorth to Circular Head in 1828, as laid down in the old Maps. If good land exists it would soon find occupants; and, under any circumstances, it would be very desirable to have access to the West Coast.

The Hellyer can be forded in summer, or bridged where it is confined between rocky banks. £3 or £4 per mile would make a bridle track, which, if necessary, could easily be widened at any subsequent period.

I enclose copy of my written instructions to Mr. S. B. Emmett, as mentioned in my letter of 2nd January, but which he failed in carrying out. I also forward his Reports to me, upon which I have found it necessary to append a few marginal notes.



*Boundaries of Counties.*—My attention during my rambles was forcibly drawn to the error which had been committed of making the Van Diemen's Land Company's *old track* the boundary between the Counties of Wellington, Russell, Devon, and Lincoln. From Emu Bay to the Hampshire Hills the road has in many places been very much altered; and it would be most difficult, *if not quite impossible*, to find the old one. Near Emu Bay the county boundary *now* passes through the middle of fields and farms without anything to indicate its position. From Hampshire Hills to Burghley the track has for so many years been entirely disused that I do not think it could be traced. With the assistance of a very old resident I found one or two of the old marked trees, but all indications of the track had become obliterated. From Burghley (which now only exists in name) to Middlesex Plains over the Black Bluff Mountain, the track, as far as the Black Bluff, has long ceased to be used; and from the latter to Middlesex Plains new routes have been adopted. At best it was but a mere *cattle track* of a foot wide or so, but now it is overgrown with grass and shrubs; the marked trees have decayed, fallen down, or been burned, and, as already observed, it would be most difficult to trace. Considerable inconvenience must arise if at any future period these County boundaries are made those for Electoral, Police, Road, or Municipal purposes; and I would therefore strongly recommend, if not too late, that natural boundaries (such as rivers) should be selected; or straight lines from one Trigonometrical Station to another, in the mountainous region from St. Valentine's Peak to Roland.

*Old Reports and Journeys of Surveyors.*—As considerable confusion may arise from the re-naming of mountains, rivers, &c. which had been discovered by our early explorers,—whose labours of some thirty years ago seem to be generally forgotten,—I would submit, for the consideration of the Government, the desirability of publishing the old Journals of Discovery of the Government Surveyors, those of the Van Diemen's Land Company and others. These would be interesting as elucidating the early history of discovery in Tasmania, and much of the country then passed over has never since been visited. I fear also much confusion in the nomenclature of our rivers and mountains, more especially in the west. Mr. Hellyer in one report describes the large rivers Canning and Brougham—tributaries of the Pieman,—but no such rivers are named on our Maps. Mr. Hobbs made a Boat Survey round the Island in 1824. And Mr. Wedge, in the Report of his journey from the West Coast to Circular Head in 1828, describes land not since seen. He obviously passed over, and accurately describes, the plains south from Circular Head supposed to have been discovered by Mr. S. B. Emmett. At this time these Reports would be of value, more especially if printed with notes. The cost ought to be inconsiderable.

*Timber.*—Timber of very superior quality and in vast abundance exists inland along the North Coast, but usually too remote from the shipping places to pay for the cost of making roads and carting, at least at present prices. It consists of various species of *Eucalyptus*, Myrtle (*Fagus Cunninghamii*), Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*), Sassafras (*Atherosperma moschata*), and some smaller kinds suitable for cabinet-maker's purposes. The Celery-topped Pine (*Phyllocladus rhomboidalis*) was found dispersed over nearly all the country visited by me; but in no case did I find it sufficiently abundant in one locality to justify the opening of roads for its transport, or even the expenditure of the labour necessary to float it down the rivers.

Believe me,

Yours very faithfully,

RONALD C. GUNN.

*The Hon. the Colonial Treasurer.*