

(No. 56.)

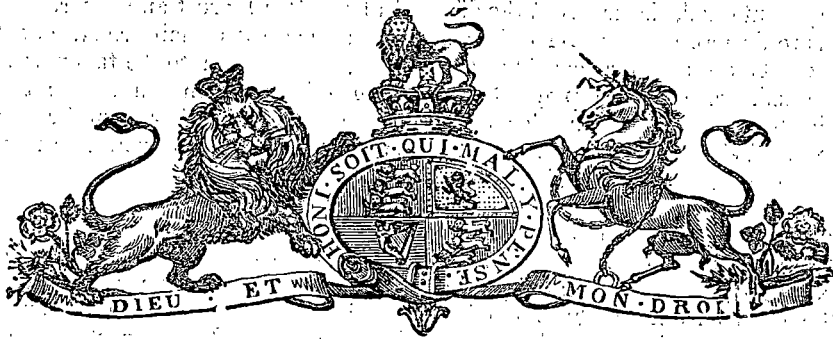


1870.

T A S M A N I A.

H U O N R O A D.

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Butler, and ordered by the House to be printed,
September 1, 1870.



Franklin, 1st June, 1870.

SIR,

I HAVE now the honor to address you upon the subject of roads in the Huon District, in accordance with your suggestion (that I should reduce my views to writing) at a recent interview, in which I was accompanied by Mr. John Judd.

Our object in thus waiting upon you was to urge the inadequacy, in our opinion, of the means at present available for duly providing proper means of access to and from unoccupied land situated some distance from convenience of water-carriage or a main line of road.

The importance of the subject, as regards extension of settlement, increase of population, and the general progress of the Huon District, together with the fact that I am now and have for many years been associated with the Road Trust and Board of Works, will I trust be considered sufficient warrant for my directing your attention thereto.

Since the formation of a Road Trust, about 15 years ago, very much has certainly been done towards construction and improvement of means of communication; and as the district has taxed itself at the maximum rate of 1s. in the pound (excepting during the past 3 years reduced to 9d.), a very considerable sum of money, amounting in the aggregate to £3232, has been expended by the Trust,—but owing to the peculiar character of the country and other causes, which I shall presently indicate, all that has been done falls lamentably short of the requirement of the district.

On referring to the peculiar character of the country, I would point out the special disadvantages under which we labour in two particular instances, viz: 1st—The enormous cost of clearing roads as compared with lighter-timbered localities. 2nd—The increased lengths of road required in consequence of the hilly and broken nature of the surface of the land, which tends to confine the advantages of a line of road to a very limited distance on either side, thus involving the necessity for parallel roads at much shorter intervals than would otherwise be required.

Another very material influence in retarding our progress may be found in the fact, and it is to this that I desire specially to direct your attention, that during all these years our moneys have been expended in clearing, constructing, and maintaining what may with perfect propriety be termed the main line of road, being that from Hobart Town, passing through our district, affording ourselves and the settlements below us the necessary overland communication with the capital. As a natural consequence all our secondary roads, or those designed for conveyance of produce from the back lands to our natural highway the river, have either been constructed and maintained, with great hardship, by the settlers using them, or otherwise have up to the present time been entirely neglected and unprovided for.

As an instance, I may remark that there are no less than 6 distinct lines of road under the control and supervision of the Huon Road Trust, which I will separately enumerate as follows:—

1st—The main road before referred to, and leading from Victoria along the course of the Huon to Shipwrights' Point and Honeywood.

2nd—Road known as Swamp Road, extending 3 or 4 miles from water carriage; in very bad order, and almost impassable in winter season.

3rd—Barnett's Road, constructed for 2½ miles at considerable expense by the Government, but much requiring an outlay to maintain it in reasonable repair.

4th—Lloyd's Road, about 2 miles long.

5th—Fitzpatrick's Road, about 3 miles long.

6th—Castle Forbes Bay Road, about 3 to 4 miles long—the last three having been, and also the 2nd, constructed and kept up entirely by private individuals.

As previously mentioned, the funds at the disposal of the Road Trust and Board of Works have proved insufficient to do more than provide for works necessary upon main road, but the time has now arrived for it to be almost indispensably necessary for some action to be taken with respect to the other roads named, not only in repair and maintenance but also in extension; the fact being that the lands adjacent to the river, and for a short distance back, having been for many years in occupation, prove insufficient for the requirements of the population, who would take up new land further back, but are prevented by the difficulty of access to the same.

I am unable, with the limited information at my disposal, to indicate the existence of extensive tracts of valuable lands which the extension of these roads would open for sale, nor would I even urge upon the Government the desirability of any extraordinary outlay; simply suggesting the expediency of relieving us from the burden of constructing and maintaining the main line of road by making it a charge upon the General Revenue, thus leaving the Road Trust free to expend the funds in works of a more strictly local and legitimate character.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Your very obedient Servant,

HENRY CHESTERMAN.

To the Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

Office of Lands and Works, 29th August, 1870.

SIR,

REFERRING to the concluding paragraph of your letter of the 1st instant, on the subject of roads in the Huon District, in which you suggest "the expediency of relieving the district from the burden of constructing and maintaining the main line of road by making it a charge upon the General Revenue, thus leaving the Road Trust free to expend the funds in works of a more strictly local and legitimate character," I regret to inform you that the Government cannot propose to Parliament a special vote for the maintenance of the road in question.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your very obedient Servant,

E. W. BOOTHMAN,

(For Minister of Lands and Works.)

Mr. HENRY CHESTERMAN, Franklin.