

(No. 135.)



1886.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

MOUNT CAMERON HYDRAULIC COMPANY:

CORRESPONDENCE.

Return to Order, Legislative Council, October 6, 1886. (Mr. Crosby.)

Laid upon the Table by Dr. Agnew, and ordered by the Legislative Council to be printed, October 13, 1886.



Office of Lands and Works, 12th January, 1886.

SIR,
REFERRING to the Correspondence which has taken place on the subject of the proposed purchase of the Mount Cameron Hydraulic Tin Mining Company's Water Race by this Government, I have the honor to inform you that the conditions imposed in Clause 3 of the Act 49 Vict. No. 42 preclude the Government from entertaining the proposal made by you. The Government are impressed with the importance of the work being carried out and will take immediate steps to secure fuller and more accurate information with a view to again submitting the question to Parliament during the next Session.

I have, &c.

NICHOLAS J. BROWN,
Minister of Lands and Works.

JAMES FOWLER, *Esq.*, *Secretary Mount Cameron Hydraulic Tin Mining Co.*,
56, *Queen Street, Melbourne.*

Lands and Works Office, 7th September, 1886.

Proposed Sale to Tasmanian Government of Mount Cameron Company's Water-race.

SIR,
REFERRING to previous Correspondence on the above subject, I have the honor to inform you that since the matter was under consideration last year further enquiry has shown that a better race than that constructed by your Company can be obtained at a moderate cost; such a race will possess many advantages superior to those which could be obtained by the purchase of your Company's race.

Before arriving at a decision as to exact shape in which the proposal to complete the race shall be submitted to Parliament during the Session, the Government will be glad to be placed in possession of your Company's views as to the present value of the race to you, bearing in mind the alternative proposal above alluded to.

I have, &c.

NICHOLAS J. BROWN,
Minister of Lands and Works.

H. J. DEAN, *Esq.*, *Launceston.*

Launceston, September 9th, 1886.

SIR,
I HAVE the honor to acknowledge receipt of your favour of the 7th instant, and note contents. Communicated with Melbourne, and wired you this day. Have your reply, to which I hope to wire a definite answer on Saturday, or will see you personally on Monday evening.

Referring to the subject-matter of your favour of 7th instant, I would beg respectfully to remind you that it was considered by the Company that their offer to the Government last Session met with their approbation, the vote only being thrown out by opposition in the Legislative Council, consequently no other value had been considered, such not having been thought required; however, your favour of the 7th is now under consideration. If you would kindly supplement your favour of the 7th by affording some idea of what sum would be deemed sufficient, it would tend to

expedite a conclusion. I would respectfully submit that the officers and engineers of the Company state that no better route exists for a race than that surveyed for the Company and partly constructed, which construction gives an immediate revenue almost sufficient, I have been informed, to pay interest upon the purchase of Company's race. The race now constructed is available for a large area of stanniferous ground, so that an immediate benefit would be afforded claim-holders, whilst the construction of a new race would mean a delay of from quite eighteen months to two years, possibly longer.

I have, &c.

H. J. DEAN,
Agent Mt. Cameron Hydraulic T. M. Co.

HON. N. J. BROWN, *Minister of Lands, Hobart.*

Mount Cameron Tin Mining Company, Limited,
56, Queen-street, Melbourne, 9th September, 1886.

SIR,

Now that Parliament has assembled for business, I have the honour to request that the purchase of the Mount Cameron Race be as quickly disposed of as possible.

The high price of tin should render all doubt as to the value of the property at an end; and the great advantage of a cheap and liberal supply of water to the success of mining in the district, both away in the terrace land near the intake and also in that richer land below the "saddle," can be easily and permanently secured.

I have, &c.

To the Honorable NICHOLAS J. BROWN,
Minister of Lands, Hobart.

JAMES FOWLER.

TELEGRAM.

Hon. N. J. BROWN, *Minister of Lands.*

HAVING communicated with Melbourne *re* Water Scheme, when is the latest time for an answer to your favour of the seventh? Kindly reply by wire.

H. J. DEAN.
Launceston, 9th September, 1886.

TELEGRAM.

H. J. DEAN, *Esq., Launceston.*

As I make my Public Works Statement at 4 o'clock Wednesday next, I should like to have reply as to water-race as long before that time as possible.

NICHOLAS J. BROWN.
9th September, 1886.

TELEGRAM.

H. J. DEAN, *Esq., Launceston.*

IN reply to your letter of the 9th inst., I am advised that the portion of the race constructed by the Company would, under altered circumstances, be worth about three thousand five hundred pounds to the Government.

NICHOLAS J. BROWN.
10th September, 1886.

Launceston, 11th September, 1886.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge receipt of your telegram of this day, contents of which wired Company, to which I expect instructions to negotiate in person. Might I trespass on your kindness further by asking you to wire me, on receipt of this, the latest time that would be convenient for me to visit your city? I could be in Hobart to-morrow night, but would prefer Monday night; however, am at your command.

I have, &c.

H. J. DEAN,
Agent Mount Cameron Hydraulic T. M. Co.

Hon. N. J. BROWN, *Minister of Lands, Hobart.*

To His Excellency Major SIR G. C. STRAHAN, Governor, and to the Members of the Executive Council of Tasmania.

WE, the undersigned, Miners and Residents of Mount Cameron, herewith humbly petition—

That the Mussel Roe Water Scheme, which was passed last Session by Parliament, shall again be brought before Hon. Members at an early date, so that there shall be no more delay in completing the work than is actually necessary.

During the recess we have used our utmost endeavours to show that the Race is of vital importance to the success of the district, and have also courted the strictest investigation as to the value of the large area of stanniferous ground lying idle for the want of water.

Amongst others who were invited to see and judge for themselves, were the Hon. the Minister of Lands and the Hon. James Smith, M.L.C. These gentlemen accepted our invitation, and in the limited time at their disposal visited part of the district commanded by the proposed Race.

With such a large amount of evidence in favour of the scheme, your Petitioners would humbly pray that the matter be laid before Parliament at as early a date as possible.

And your memorialists will ever pray.

[Here follow 48 signatures.]

Launceston, 22nd September, 1886.

Re Mount Cameron Hydraulic Company's Water-race.

SIR,

In continuation of correspondence upon the above subject, I have the honor to inform you that since my interviews with you, have been in communication with the Company, and also forwarded them a copy of Mr. Burke's Report.*

I am authorised to state that in the opinion of the Company's Directors the report is unfair, and in part contradictory of the evidence given last year. It will be in your recollection, probably, that many of the witnesses, including Mr. Burke, spoke highly of the Company's race and the route it traversed, the surveyors or engineers who laid it out being complimented upon their work.

In conversation with yourself last week on the subject of the Company's water-right, the Great Mussel Roe was mentioned, when, if I am correct, you stated the Company had no right to water from that source. The manager of the Company wires that you must have been under a misapprehension as they possess the right to sixty (60) sluice-heads from that river, and upon these rights the rent is paid to the 1st of July next. Under these circumstances the Company consider the concession they proffered to make off last year's agreed price a very liberal one, and only conceded because, owing to expected sale to the Government of the race, the mining business of the Company has virtually closed. I am therefore authorised to offer to the Government the Company's races and water-rights for the sum of five thousand five hundred pounds sterling (£5500) cash, the purchase to be ratified by the Government immediately upon the vote passing the Houses of Parliament, and payment to be made to the Company upon satisfactory transfers of the property being tendered by the Company to the Government.

Should you desire the offer made more fully, or any other information regarding same other than you now have, I shall be most happy to forward it.

I am, &c.

H. J. DEAN,

Agent Mt. Cameron Hydraulic T. M. Co.

Hon. N. J. BROWN, Minister of Lands, Hobart.

* Parliamentary Paper No. 94, Session of 1886.

REFERRED to the Secretary of Mines for his remarks upon the claim herein set forth for 60 sluice-heads from the Great Mussel Roe River; also for a statement of the whole of the legal rights possessed by the Company.

NICHOLAS J. BROWN.
23. 9. 86.

THE Mount Cameron Hydraulic Tin Mining Company hold two grants, one for 60 heads from the Mussel Roe River, upon which rent is paid to 1st July, 1887, and the other for eight heads from the Little Mussel Roe River, upon which rent is paid to 1st July, 1886. Both rights are still in force,

but under the conditions of the grants both are liable to forfeiture,—the 60-head right for the reason that the grantees have failed to use the water-right for a period of six months without permission (as a fact it never has been used), and the 8-head right for non-payment of rent in advance.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

F. BELSTEAD, *Secretary of Mines.*
24. 9. 86.

Launceston, 24th September, 1886.

Re Mount Cameron Hydraulic T. M. Co.'s Water-race.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to enclose for your perusal accompanying letter from the Manager of the Company to myself. In addition to the remarks upon Mr. Burke's report, I would respectfully draw your attention to the comments upon the good already attained by the construction of the Company's race, which has proved the practicability of the route and open country, that unless for the Company's energy might have still lain dormant.

I am, &c.

H. J. DEAN,
Agent Mount Cameron Hydraulic T. M. Co.

Hon. N. J. BROWN, Minister of Lands, Hobart.

*Mount Cameron Hydraulic Tin Mining Company, Limited,
56, Queen-street, Melbourne, 23rd September, 1886.*

DEAR SIRS,

MY Directors are greatly disappointed that the Hon. the Minister could not see his way to recoup the Company the water-right rents at least, or to have added to the amount. Regarding Mr. Burke's report, which I have just read, I beg to point out that it is admitted by him that the "race is well adapted for its purpose;" that the physical features of the country admit of dam construction to conserve night water. He pays a high tribute of praise to Mr. Clerk for his survey, which, altogether with checking, cost this Company several hundred pounds. He acknowledges in high terms Mr. Brown's intimate knowledge of the locality, and the obligations he was under to him for assistance, "the value of which can only be understood by an Engineer who has to explore a broken and bushed country." For the knowledge thus gained this Company has had to pay. I do not understand Mr. Burke to *recommend* a new race, but simply that there would be no difficulty in constructing one, but, he adds, the "cost would be greater (how much?) and the present race would be practically useless, which seems a pity, seeing that on the whole it is well adapted for the purpose." In fact, he practically approves of the purchase, but wants a substantial reduction in the price, on the ground that the Company's business was conducted in a most unbusinesslike and wasteful manner. I cannot but regard this to be a most unjustifiable assertion, and utterly at variance with the facts, when due allowance is made for the inauguration of a scheme of this magnitude in an unexplored country. Mr. Burke goes on to say that this Company did positive injury to mining; &c. I have frequently pointed out the causes of the delay in finishing the water-race,—viz., no means of enforcing the mine-owners to work; the policy enunciated and approved that the Government should take the water supply into their own hands, and the last two years' negotiations.

It is really too bad that the weight of an officer of the Government should so adversely criticise without any foundation the operations and business of this Company, by whose enterprise and capital it has been demonstrated that water from a high level can be gravitated from the intake at the Mussel Roe to the port of Ringaröonia, and this has been the active means of opening up a large tin-bearing district of immense extent.

Yours truly,

H. J. DEAN, *Esq., Launceston.*

JAMES FOWLER, *Secretary.*

Melbourne, 27th September, 1886.

DEAR SIR,

IN continuation of a few hurried remarks under date 23rd September, I think it would be well to bring under notice of the Honorable the Minister the following, if you have not already done so:—

- 1st. Mr. Burke alleges that the new race would have certain advantages, viz. increased capacity. It was the intention of this company to increase the capacity of race above its present intake to its intake on the Great Mussel Roe, in order to obtain, especially at flood times, water to supply the land lying between the Mussel and Blue Rivers;

the present capacity of race for the land past the saddle, with dams to conserve the right, is ample for all purposes for years to come, but if it were not the race could be very easily enlarged, and the fluming increased by side-boards: all this has been well thought out by the company. As for erecting a better class of fluming, I can only say that the construction as recommended by Mr. Craven, a very high Victorian authority, has been carried out, and notwithstanding some pretty severe tests, the erection has stood, and has cost practically nothing for maintenance—indeed, I believe nothing; at all events the spare time of Mr. Brown is all it has cost, and that has been employed chiefly, if not altogether, in repairing the excavations in times of heavy floods.

2nd: Mr. Burke alleges that in the event of a new race being constructed, that the present one would be practically useless. I imagine he has overlooked the fact that this company has secured the full volume of the summer supply in the Great Mussel Roe River, and on the completion of the present race any other race constructed to the same source of supply would be practically useless for a great portion of the year. This company has recognised the policy of the Government in the direction of assuming the water supply, but if the negotiations for sale and purchase be not completed I scarcely think that the shareholders will hesitate in proceeding. The supply of tin does not keep pace with the demand, and everything is favourable to the future prospects of the scheme being carried out.

Yours truly,

JAMES FOWLER, *Sec.*

H. J. DEAN, *Esq.*

Launceston, 29th September, 1886.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to forward for your perusal the enclosed letter from the Manager of the Mount Cameron Hydraulic Tin Mining Company in further refutation of Mr. Burke's report. I would respectfully draw your attention also to the fact that as the company was under the impression the Government would have renewed to Parliament the vote to purchase the company's water-races and rights for the sum of £7000, they did not take any steps to form a company to purchase in London, which they otherwise would have done, and carried through successfully, having received overtures from influential persons there to do so. Probably you will have noted through the Press a company has been formed in London to work the Montagu Tin Mining Company, West Coast, and as it was from the persons who floated this that overtures were received from (*sic*), you will understand the company were in a position to carry out all they state, refraining from doing so owing to what was considered by them an engagement with your Government. I would respectfully request that if the vote passes the Legislatures you will give me an assurance that the Government will be prepared at once to close with the company at the reduced price offered by them to be accepted. Requesting an answer at your earliest convenience,

I am, &c.

H. J. DEAN, *Agent Mount Cameron Hydraulic T. M. Co.*

Hon. N. J. BROWN, Minister of Lands, Hobart.

Lands and Works Office, 5th October, 1886.

The Mount Cameron Hydraulic Company's Water-race.

SIR,

REFERRING to the Correspondence on the subject, and more especially to your letter of 22nd September last, in regard to the claim of the Company to 60 sluice-heads from the Great Mussel Roe River, I desire to point out that the Manager of the Company is in error in stating that the Company has any right to 60 sluice-heads of water from that source.

The grant under which he claims this has been for a long time liable to forfeiture, the grantees having failed to use the water-right for a period exceeding six months,—in fact the water never has been diverted or the race cut under that right.

In reply to your letter of the 29th ultimo, I have the honor to inform you that I have brought the subject of the purchase of your Company's Race by the Government under the consideration of the Cabinet, and I now offer you, subject to the approval of Parliament, the sum of £4000 (Four thousand Pounds) for the race constructed by your Company, and all rights and interests connected therewith.

I shall be glad to have a reply at your earliest convenience, as the proposed vote for the work of completing the race, or of constructing an entirely new race, will have to be considered in Parliament within a few days.

In the event of your accepting this offer the Government will be prepared to pay the amount named, £4000 (Four thousand Pounds), in cash after the proposal has been approved by Parliament, and as soon as the money is legally available.

I have, &c.

NICHOLAS J. BROWN,
Minister of Lands and Works.

H. J. DEAN, *Esq.*, *Launceston.*

TELEGRAM.

H. J. DEAN, *Esq.*, *Launceston.*

MINISTER would like answer not later than this day week.

T. R. ATKINSON.
Lands and Works Office, Hobart, 6. 10. 86.