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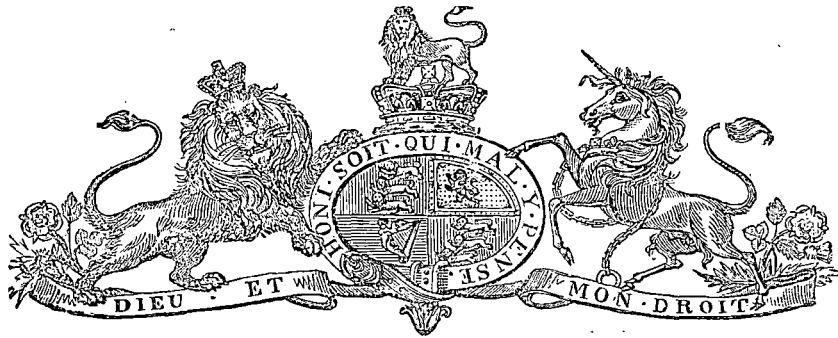
REPORT OF AN EXPLORATION OF THE  
HUON DISTRICT.

RETURN TO AN ORDER OF THE HOUSE.

(*Mr. Chapman, 14 August, 1860.*)

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Laid upon the Table by Mr. Colonial Treasurer, and ordered by the House to be  
printed, 16 August, 1860.



*Franklin, Huon, December 1st, 1859.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to report for your information the result of the expedition undertaken by Captain Gourlay and Mr. R. Hill, for the purpose of ascertaining the possibility of connecting Hospital Bay, Huon, with the Picton River and the country to the westward, by a shorter and more practical route than the present one by way of the She-oak Hills, which expedition I before intimated to you it was my intention to accompany.

Our party, consisting of Messrs. Gourlay and Hill, myself, and four men, started from Hospital Bay on Tuesday, the 22nd ultimo, proceeding along the tramroad which runs from the coast to the lands of Messrs. Scott and Sorell to its termination. From thence we followed a surveyed line running due west, and forming the southern boundaries of Lot 599 (Captain Gourlay's) and other sections, encamping about two miles from its commencement upon Scott's River. From the top of a high hill, over which the line runs, we obtained a good view of the country in the direction of our intended route, viz.—Mount Picton, the Haty Range, and the range between us and the Valley of the Arve. We could also see Adamson's Peak, Mount Anne, and the Huon River.

The next day, 23rd, in a few hours, we reached the end of the surveyed line. Our work here began; and we commenced cutting our way, and continued doing so that day and the following one, in the same due west direction, until we reached the Arve River, about noon on the 24th, having travelled by estimation four miles.

About half a mile from the commencement of our track crossed a small stream bearing in a south-westerly direction, land slightly falling, then for about a mile and a half perfectly level. Crossed two other creeks each bearing north west, soil tolerably good but rather wet, of a light nature but of considerable depth, could be cleared at comparatively trifling cost, timber being small and consisting of tall tea-tree and young swamp gum, with a very little myrtle, sassafras, and stringy bark, with an undergrowth principally of high, fine cutting grass; land then began to rise, continued so for about three-quarters of a mile, then fell towards the Arve, country bearing the usual characteristics of rich agricultural land, timber not very heavy and the tree fern abounding. The Arve at this point is a considerable river, running with a shallow stream over a gravelly bed, width about one chain. Rocks principally greenstone. Specimen of coal found here.

After crossing the Arve we altered our course to north west and by west, camped on the evening of the 24th about half a mile beyond the Arve. Rained heavily all night. Next day, 25th, rainy and scrub too wet to proceed any distance. 26th.—Still very wet; crossed a stream about one and a half miles from the Arve, not shown upon the chart but evidently a tributary of that river, bearing easterly and westerly, width half a chain, bed very rocky, principally greenstone boulders, and running with greater rapidity than the main stream. From its course should suppose it to rise in the northern part of the Hartz Mountains. Land between the two streams flat and rather swampy, could be made available for pasture. Continuing the same course, after crossing between it and the Huon River the country again changes in its character, being of a very rich description and similar to that upon the eastern bank of the Arve, rising to the north of our course into a high and rather remarkable hill, a saddle of which we crossed, the country being also rather more broken in its general features.

At noon on Monday, 28th November, after having travelled about four and a half miles from the Arve, we reached Cotton's track at a point about two miles from the Picton, to which river we proceeded, but found it too high to cross.

The main object of the expedition being now accomplished, the following morning we commenced our homeward journey viâ Cotton's track, reaching She-oak Hills same night. Our reason for returning by Cotton's track was, our wish to examine the comparative advantages of the respective routes. In the first place, the distance to the Picton from the nearest shipping place by Cotton's track is twenty-two to twenty-three miles; to Hospital Bay (our starting point) thirty-five to forty.

2nd. The country traversed by Cotton's track is all of a most inferior description, there being little, if any, land available for agriculture.

3rd. The engineering difficulties in the way of forming a line of road are very considerable, more particularly in that portion between the Arve Rivers and the She-oak Hills, the country being very hilly and broken.

In concluding this Report I beg to remark that, from the observations which I have been able to make, I am of opinion that a practicable line of road could be laid out from Hospital Bay to the Picton; making the distance about seventeen to eighteen miles, and passing over a comparatively level country, the whole of which would be available either for agricultural or pastoral purposes.

The advantages which would accrue to the public generally, and to the Huon District in particular, by the foundation of such a line of road are manifold.

For instance; Hospital Bay is suitable for the accommodation of vessels of a large tonnage; and a considerable trade is already carried on between that place and Sydney and Melbourne direct. A line of tramway is laid down and in working order extending from the shipping-place, a distance of two to three miles, into the back lands; and it is, I believe, in contemplation to extend it further. (I may here state, that this road has quite answered the expectation of the projectors as a commercial speculation.) The road would cause the opening out, and rapid settlement of, from twenty to thirty thousand acres of the finest agricultural land, at present, from the want of any means of communication, quite shut out from selection. But, perhaps, the most important consideration is the fact, that a ready means of access would thereby be provided to the whole of the country to the westward, which is considered by so many to be auriferous; and the pine and other fine timber with which this country abounds would thereby be brought within reasonable distance of a market.

I have the honour to be,  
Sir,

Your very obedient Servant,

GEORGE INNES, *District Surveyor.*

*The Surveyor-General.*