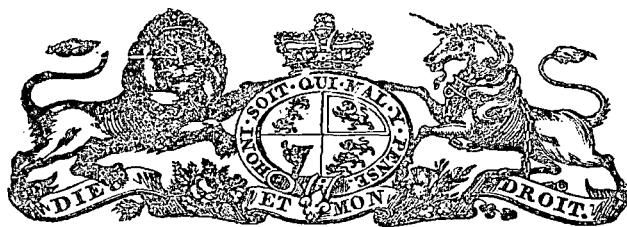


(No. 92.)



1882.

T A S M A N I A.

H O U S E O F A S S E M B L Y.

**ROAD BETWEEN WYNYARD AND MOUNT
BISCHOFF:**

MR. SURVEYOR SPRENT'S REPORT.

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Minister of Lands, August 25, 1882; and ordered by
the House to be printed.



*REPORT on selected Line of Road between Wynyard and Mount Bischoff, by
Mr. Surveyor SPRENT.*

Table Cape, 5th May, 1881.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to furnish you with the following Report upon the result of my examinations to obtain a line of road to connect the towns of Wynyard and Waratah.

The examination was merely a flying survey of the country, and did not extend to the work of actually marking off a road on the ground: it was undertaken mainly for the purpose of ascertaining whether a practical road could be obtained across the Hellyer Valley, and whether it is possible to obtain a line without going on the V.D.L. Co. property.

Before going into details, I may explain that the gradient at the Hellyer Valley was not to exceed 1 in 20, and as this gradient would be a very fair one I did not make any attempt to obtain an easier one, leaving such work for a more detailed survey, supposing the construction of the road to be determined upon.

Route.

Some six years ago a packhorse track was cut from Wynyard to Waratah. It passes through Moore's Plain, and crosses the V.D.L. Co.'s land near the Wandle River. The total distance along this road is 39 miles. There is a dray road open for the first 11 miles, very roughly cleared and not well laid out. The route is a very good one, and could be very easily converted into a road with easy gradients. The land is inferior for the first six or seven miles, then it improves, but is broken and steep.

Another road going in the same direction is available,—the Mount Hicks Road. About six miles of this road is open for vehicles, and about a mile of it has been metalled. The gradients are not good, but might be improved by going on to private property. The construction of a road through the Mount Hicks settlement would benefit a number of farmers, and would be cheap to make. A continuation of the Mount Hicks Road passes through Henrietta Plains: this is going rather too much to the east; the only advantage to be derived is that Henrietta Plains might be laid out as a township, and the grass land would be eagerly taken up.

A more direct line could be obtained by following up the valley of Camp Creek so as to pass between Moore's Plain and Henrietta Plain: this line would shorten the road about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles. I think the choice of route should be between Mount Hicks Road and a new line up the valley of Camp Creek. On the Mount Hicks route the Crown lands are forests of stringy-bark, myrtle, and sassafras; the soil is of fair quality, not first-class, but such lands would be readily sold if a road were made through them. I can hardly speak positively of the land up Camp Creek. I believe there are patches of good land in the valleys, and that the general nature is forest land of medium quality.

Whatever line of road is adopted for the first 12 miles, the choice is more limited as we get further on. By passing to the east of the present track the Calder River is crossed on flat ground, and the line then passes along a narrow ridge dividing the waters of the Cam and Inglis. Portions of this ridge are very fair land, myrtle and stringy-bark forest. From the Calder to the Hellyer there is abundance of basalt on the surface ready for breaking into metal.

Passing along the dividing ridge for about 6 miles we come to the cross ridge dividing the North-West Coast Rivers from the Hellyer. Up to this point the selection of a road is easy enough, but the Hellyer Valley is very troublesome to examine.

After some thought I fixed upon a place where the road should cross the river, close to the mouth of a large creek. The water on one side is deep, on the other side is a shallow point of shingle. The bridge would be about 150 feet long, and 14 feet high—one opening would clear the rush of deep water and allow timber to pass free. On the north side no approaches are required; on the south side an earthwork of some six feet in height and four chains long would be necessary to prevent flood-waters from stopping the traffic.

Commencing from the crossing-place, I set out a gradient of 1 in 20, and worked it round the hill sides till it attained an elevation of 540 feet above the river. At that elevation the road would be sufficiently high to escape the gullies, and the gradient might be eased off. The highest point on the present track is about 800 feet above the river: the highest point on the proposed road would not exceed 700 feet above the river. On the south side of the river the same gradient was worked round the spurs for an elevation of 580 feet; after that, the line can be eased so as to rise steadily to an elevation of 1000 feet above the river, and be on the level of the table land. On both sides of the river the road would be very crooked, and would cross several small creeks and points of spurs. In setting out the road I allowed such turns to be flat.

The side-slopes are not at all steep, seldom exceeding 1 in 7; the cuttings will be in earth, except about two chains of rock-cutting.

The rock in the vicinity of the river is conglomerate, but the cap of the hill is basalt, where any quantity of metal can be obtained. There is plenty of good timber at the river for bridge purposes.

After crossing the Hellyer, the road passes through about five miles of level land, myrtle, sassafras, and fern-tree: all this land would be taken up if a road passed through it.

About 6 miles from the Hellyer we come to the boundary of the V. D. L. Co.'s land, and an important point has to be decided,—namely, whether it would be better to keep on the crown land and make the road a little more costly, or go on the Company's ground and take advantage of the grassy plains.

The V. D. L. Co.'s boundary crosses two deep gullies; in one runs the Wandle River, in the other, Deep Gully Creek. The Wandle Gully is about 250 feet deep, and the other is 450. By keeping on the Company's land both these gorges can be avoided, but, in my opinion, the route through the crown lands should be taken. Both gullies can be crossed by gradients not exceeding 1 in 22, and the distance is about the same; the extra cost would not exceed £2000; and it would open up some fair land for sale.

But the most important reason for adopting the more expensive route through the crown lands is, that ultimately an extension of the road will be necessary to reach the West Coast; and this route is the most direct, and offers important advantages, as will presently appear.

Adopting the route through the Crown lands, the line would cross the Wandle River close to the Company's line; the bridge would be a small affair, as the stream is narrow and very rapid. There would be about a mile of side-cutting on each side of the river. After clearing the Wandle the line would come out on Stringy-bark Forest and Pepper-tree Scrub. There is some grassy land outside the Company's line, but I have not ascertained its extent; probably there is 2000 acres besides the Pepper-tree Scrub. By keeping well to the west the road will be a little below the table land, and in a position to reduce the drop into Deep Gully. At Deep Gully another gradual sideling will be necessary,—say two miles on either side. The river itself is similar to the Wandle. On the south side of Deep Gully the road would gradually rise to a ridge separating the creek from Waratah River, and on this ridge the road should be carefully set out. The ridge tails out gradually to the Arthur River, and, in my opinion, a main road to the West Coast should follow the same direction. And here the advantage of the route through the Crown lands is apparent; for not only would the West Coast road branch off at this point, but other roads,—from places such as the North Valley, Silver-Lead, Bischoff Alluvial,—would be connected.

The line would pass over the ridge, and, crossing Fall's Creek on level ground, would enter the township of Waratah wherever a convenient street met the line.

Distance.

I estimate the total distance at 39 miles by the shortest route.

Bridges.

Bridges would be necessary over the Calder, Hellyer, Wandle, and Deep Gully, besides small bridges over the creeks. I would estimate the cost of these bridges as, Calder, £100; Wandle, £250; Deep Gully, £250; Hellyer, £500. These figures are, of course, approximations.

Cost.

As I have very little experience in such matters, my estimate of cost must be of very little value. If a road is constructed it should be a first-class work; metal 15 feet wide, well blinded. I am certain £1000 a mile would make a really good road. This would give a total of £40,000, including bridges. A well-known road contractor informs me that it could be done for £800 a mile.

By using stone-breakers at intervals along the line the metal could be cheaply broken: for instance, one machine could be taken up the tramroad and across the open country to the vicinity of the Wandle; another could be placed near Waratah; a third near the Calder River. There is abundance of excellent stone along the line, and, except for the first six miles from Wynyard, the metal would not require much cartage. I am certain that the cost of this road would be covered by the sale of Crown lands. The traffic of Bischoff has increased so much, and is likely to so much further increase, that a large population would spring up along the line. At the present moment there must be a sum of £14,000 a year passing out of the Colony, and if this amount alone were expended in the district it would give a great impetus to settlement. I would estimate the cartage of the Bischoff Company alone at 5000 tons a year, and that £3 a ton would give employment to a large number of men and horses. I believe it would pay carters to carry at £2 a ton, and I do not think the tramroad could do it for less.

I would propose to lay out three new townships—one about ten miles from Wynyard, another near the Hellyer, and a third one on the open ground south of the Wandle. After a few years the sale of allotments on these townships would help materially to pay for the road. There is plenty of land yet unsold on the Townships of Wynyard and Waratah.

It is easy to foresee that, as the mineral wealth of the Colony is opened up, new lines of communication will be necessary; and, in my opinion, the day is not far distant when a main road will be constructed from the North-West Coast to Macquarie Harbour, and ultimately to the Huon. Few men now will question the richness of the recent discoveries at the Pieman and Mt. Heems-kirk, and the ultimate discovery of minerals in the great unexplored regions south of Macquarie Harbour. Communication by sea will always be uncertain and dangerous,—roads will be absolutely necessary. I look on a road from the North-West Coast to Bischoff as the first step towards attaining such a result.

I forward a tracing to illustrate this report.

I have, &c.

CHARLES P. SPRENT.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

NOTE.—Copy of tracing is appended to Paper No. 88 of the present Session.