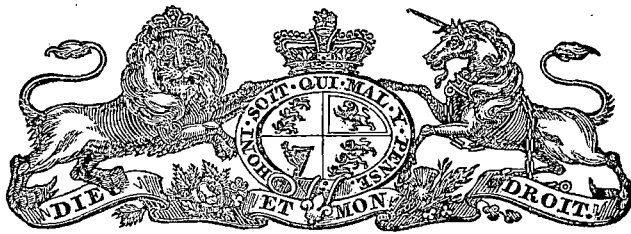


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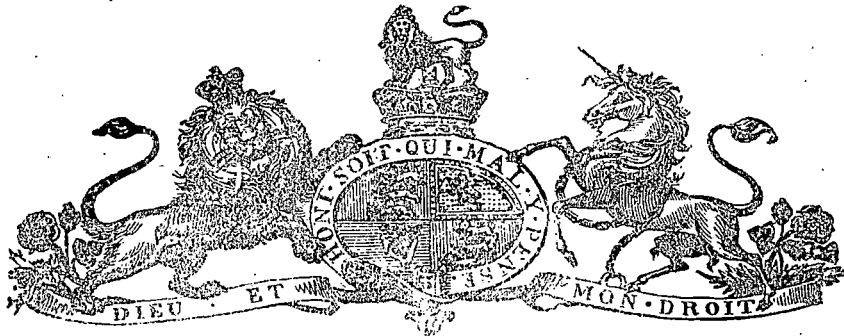
T A S M A N I A.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

ROAD FROM MARLBOROUGH TO PIEMAN
RIVER:

MR. COUNSEL'S REPORT.

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Moore, and ordered by the Council to be printed,
August 6, 1878.



5, Davey-street, Hobart Town, 31st May, 1878.

SIR,

HAVING been compelled to postpone the completion of the work at which I have been engaged for the last four months, viz., improving the road from Marlborough to Derwent River near Lake St. Clair, and thence cutting, marking, and clearing a track towards the deep waters of the Pieman River, travelling over a portion of route over which the track has not been cut, and reporting on same, I have the honor to furnish you with the following information anent the country passed over, &c. while so employed.

From Lake St. Clair the track follows the late Hon. James Reid Scott's route (diverging therefrom where necessary) as far as the junction of the Eldon Rivers. Leaving St. Clair the track takes a north-westerly course for about three-quarters of a mile, when the Cuvier River is crossed, and some low basaltic spurs; thence the N.E. bank of the river is followed nearly to Lake Petrarch where the river is again crossed. The vegetation in the Cuvier Valley is principally button-grass with small gum scrubs in places, and in parts the ground is boggy during the winter season. Going westerly for about $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles Lake Mingundic is passed on the left, whence the country rises pretty gradually till top of spur between Gould's Sugarloaf and Coal Hill is ascended: specimens of coal are attainable at the latter place, while a little granite is visible on surface to the S.E. The travelling for the next three miles is tolerably good, the ground being firm and fairly level; a short but rather steep pinch to descend and Black Camp is reached, distant about 20 miles from Derwent River ford. From Black Camp the track runs along a button-grass ridge for about a mile, after which scrubby banks intercepted by small streams and patches of button-grass extend for about three miles to the foot of spur leading up to the Pyramid, where I found it necessary to run the track in a zig-zag form to get up the steepest part. A bare ridge is now followed for about three miles which divides the South Eldon and Collingwood River watersheds: the travelling is good along the ridge, there being only one pinch at all steep, which is got over by the same method as the last similar occurrence. Rocky Hill is now arrived at, and while encamped at this locality I went on to top of hill, and also on to top of Pyramid, and took the bearings of many mountains which quite agreed with their positions as shown on Mr. Scott's plan; and it is therefore not necessary I should specify the bearings. I took a trip down a spur to the south of Rocky Hill, for about three miles down Collingwood Valley, and observed the formation to be quartzite. There is a slight deviation from the former route rounding Camp Hill, as in many other places, so as to render the track less steep than the old line. The land over which the track is marked for the next three miles from Camp Hill is pretty sound, when a low tea-tree flat is entered upon, about a mile across, and boggy in places during the wet season; thence is a fall of about 2000 feet to the South Eldon River: the distance by track is about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles down a narrow spur which is of firm soil and slopes pretty evenly; slate crops out in places on spur, and greenstone shows freely in creek at bottom (which runs into the South Eldon), and continues down to junction of the Eldons: I have estimated the distance between where the track approaches the South Eldon and ford of Derwent at $34\frac{1}{2}$ miles. About $3\frac{3}{4}$ miles over a narrow flat of pretty good soil and the river is forded at a tolerably good fording place, the stream is about seventy feet wide; another mile and three-quarters and the junction is reached, making the distance from starting point at Derwent forty miles or a mile less than Mr. Scott's estimate. The North Eldon is forded here at a very suitable place; and thence the track departs from Mr. Scott's route, and runs down the west bank of King's River over a narrow flat similar to the one along the South Eldon for about three miles, when it crosses a river as large as either of the Eldons, which rises out of some of the small lakes in the West Coast Range, and flows into King's River: some small creeks are crossed before coming to river in which schist and a little quartz are conspicuous. The river here referred to runs rapidly and would be difficult to ford in flood time, owing to the conglomerate boulders that are embedded in the river and the force of the current, but is quite practicable when low. I would respectfully request that this river

be named Dante River, and a lake through which I observed it runs, about half a mile above the crossing, be known as Lake Beatrice, in keeping with the other names in the vicinity. By thus designating rivers, lakes, and hills, accurate description is much facilitated, and information from persons traversing the country rendered more explicit and reliable. Greenstone crops out again on the saddle between Mounts Lyell and Sedgwick, which is crossed at an elevation of about 1165 feet above sea level; from this point the track passes over a spur of Mount Sedgwick, along which schist shows on surface in places, with conglomerate on top: this, I believe, extends through the West Coast Range, as on passing over it several miles to the north of Sedgwick, when returning from Mount Heemskirk, I observed the same formation existed with a considerable amount of iron-stone occurring at intervals.

After going down the last spur of Mount Sedgwick, which falls very gradually, some small streams are met with showing quartz freely. It was here I was reluctantly compelled to discontinue cutting the track, being short of provisions and fairly baulked by wet weather, after completing about fifty-four miles of track, and improving about 20 miles of road, from Marlborough to Derwent River, within three months from the time of leaving Hobart Town.

I think the locality now arrived at worth examining for gold, being the most promising country I met with going through for prospectors' operations, and likely to draw attention next summer. When coming over the spur of Sedgwick I climbed into a tall tree and thereupon fixed the course I would take, being able to get a good view of the country to the west. After crossing a river, which I have named Nicholas River, rising near Mount Reid and flowing into the Henty River, (which name it is known by, though incorrectly according to Mr. Scott's plan,) the scrub is much thicker and so dense in places that one could not travel a mile per day with an ordinary load; but by keeping more to the south until the open plateau (mentioned in Mr. Moore's report) is reached, I believe the country would be found much more favourable, and a better crossing place at the river secured. Owing to reasons already stated I was unable to traverse the route suggested.

While going over the long spur of Mount Dundas running in a southerly direction to the low-lying country along the coast, I saw quartzite, schist, and greenstone in several instances exposed on the surface.

We reached the open hills in the vicinity of Mount Zeehaan, (*vide* Mr. Moore's report), on 30th ultimo, after a rough trip through much bauera, cutting-grass, and tea-tree, which constitute one of the worst scrubs of the West Coast to penetrate. While enveloped in one of these lakes of "boiling water," (so called by a Mount Heemskirk prospector,) the man whom I had with me became ill, which was doubtless brought on from being so much exposed to the inclemency of the weather, and added considerably to the difficulties of travelling; in fact he had to stop one day while I went on cutting a track to further us on our next day's journey: however, a day's rest improved matters so that we were near the Little Henty River, which passes round the S.E. end of Mount Zeehaan, by 2nd May. As so much rain had recently fallen I judged the river would be flooded; and being recently informed there was no likelihood of getting a tree to span the current, I deemed it advisable to travel towards its source and cross its branches, which we did, coming on to Mr. Scott's route east of Parting Creek. Similar kind of conglomerate to that observed in the West Coast Range, with a little quartz in the creeks prevailing for the last few miles and continuing on to Mount Heemskirk, where we arrived by Mr. Scott's line on Monday, 6th May, putting in our first appearance at Messrs. Moore and Andrew's camp, the property of the Corinna Company, where we were very hospitably received. On Tuesday, 7th, I walked down to the Pieman River Heads, (distant from Corinna camp about 20 miles,) to see what the country and track were like; the following day Mr. Andrew and self went up the Pieman in a small punt as far as the Donaldson River, and thence up the latter nearly as far as it is navigable, being about a mile from the mouth, which is about nine miles from the Heads. Thursday forenoon was very wet, and on Friday we returned to Corinna Company's works. The object of my trip being to enable me to furnish you with information relative to tracks, I shall confine myself to that matter, as you have in all probability already received full particulars of the nature of the country from a geological point of view.

Starting from Pieman Heads and going towards Mount Heemskirk the track passes over an open ridge for about four miles, which is of a firm description, thence it runs along the sea-beach for about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles; this beach is pretty hard in fine weather, but very soft on stormy occasions. I think a good road could be got inside the sand bank at a low cost.

After leaving the seashore the track crosses some sandy low ridges for about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles, which are intercepted by a few soft hollows to this point, which is called half-way to Corinna sections: there are about five creeks require bridging, with a small amount of clearing to render the track practicable for a cart. As the bridges required are only small, I think the first ten miles could be so improved for about Seven Pounds per mile. This appears to be the most necessary work of the kind in the district, being one to benefit the entire mining community in the vicinity of Mount Heemskirk, as most of the companies will probably have carts conveyed to the mines by next summer; and already the Corinna Company has horses running on the coast, and expected a cart

by the craft *Ann*, due long since at the Pieman River with supplies, &c. The track for the next three miles runs through a belt of myrtle forest of pretty good soil, and thence across button-grass patches, between strips of low tea-tree scrub, another mile of forest similar to the last, when open button-grass ridges are again met with extending for about two miles to the Emu Bay and Pieman River Prospecting Company's selection. The track to this point was, I believe, cut by Messrs. O. Meredith (former manager of the last-named company) and Moore's parties conjointly. The next two miles were cut by the Great Western Company, represented by Mr. Charles Donnelly, and runs through a myrtle belt of timber, to the latter company's mining operations. This will be beyond doubt the main outlet for the claims on the northern side of Mount Heemskirk, while those to the south will most likely find Macquarie Harbour to be the most convenient place of shipping. The track from main track to "tenth rapid," on Pieman River, (about 3 miles) was fitted for use by Messrs. Moore and Meredith's parties. The Great Western Company cut a branch track from this line to Donnelly's depôt about three miles in length, with about two miles through belt of heavy scrub to great bend in Pieman. M'Caviston's party cut track through same belt of timber more to the south, which is the one used by those who know it, being much better walking than the former; same party also cut a track from claims being worked towards the mount, the length of which I was unable to learn, but believe it was about three miles. The Great Western Company also cut a track through from Heemskirk to Macquarie Harbour, which I believe runs along the beach most of the way. The tracks above mentioned are the only ones in use; and I believe the Manager of the Great Western Company (Mr. Bell) has expressed his intention of giving up the track to Macquarie Harbour and adopting the one to Pieman Heads.

Finding provisions very short at Mount Heemskirk and the Pieman Heads, with no prospect of any arriving for some time, we started for Lake St. Clair on Monday, 13th May, going *via* Mr. Scott's route, accompanied by Mr. Moore and three of his men. We travelled about fourteen miles the first day, and met Conlan and party the following morning who had been fourteen days on the way from New Norfolk. We advised them to turn back, (owing to the scarcity of rations at the Pieman,) which, however, they refused to do; but, before separating, they informed us that there were tea, sugar, and flour at Ashmore's depôt at the Pyramid, where they had camped coming through. We made top of spur between Mounts Dundas and Read that night; while ascending this point I observed a large quantity of iron-stone. I intended to visit the summit of Dundas, an elevation of about 3922 feet above sea level, whence a good view of the surrounding country is obtainable on favourable occasions; but as the weather was very misty the trip would have been an entirely useless one, and therefore the idea was abandoned. On Wednesday morning there was about six inches of snow on the ground. After a fearfully rough night, as we had to journey over the top of Mount Read, the roughest piece of track from Mount Heemskirk to Lake St. Clair, the day's march must be experienced to be understood: however, after several hours tumbling about in the snow, we finally made Ashmore's tent, in the locality of Lake Roleston, by dark, where we expected to renew our stock of provisions, as Mr. Ashmore had instructed Mr. Moore to get some flour, meat, and other things at said tent, and thus save unnecessary carrying; but the tent was down and not a single bit of anything we could make use of except for the dogs, though our appetites were considerably sharpened by this time. Matches, papers, etc., were lying on the wet ground quite exposed to the weather, notwithstanding that there were signs to show that persons had camped there recently. The snow ceased falling on the evening of Wednesday, and on Thursday we had a fine day after a very severe storm the previous night, the first fine day since the 6th of May, or the third fine day since the 19th April. We reached the junction of the Eldons on 16th, where we got a little flour, previously planted by Mr. Moore, which though damp and rather lumpy was a treat to us.

On the afternoon of the 17th the dogs caught a wombat at Rocky Hill, which incident cheered all hands and gave us a good meal at the Pyramid, where we arrived by dark. On finding another depôt arranged by Mr. Ashmore, we were surprised to see the contents lying about in a most improvident manner, more particularly because there was a place in the rocks to secure them from damage, where they had been secured from the ravages of wild animals in the first instance.

We made a fair start for St. Clair on Saturday, and reached there by four o'clock. A rather strange circumstance occurred on the way, which is perhaps worth relating, *viz.*, that we killed a whipsnake that was out sunning itself at about 10 o'clock in the forenoon, while the ground was almost covered with snow.

Being desirous of taking a trip to the head of the lake, and being told there were some provisions in a tent close to the water's edge, round first point past the mouth of Cuvier River, Mr. Moore and I decided to have a turn round in the boat, the rest going on for Marlborough. We failed to find the rations as anticipated; but had a pull up to the mouth of the Narcissus River, which carries a good stream of water. From the centre of St. Clair, when nearly abreast of Mount Ida, where Mounts Olympus, Byron, and the head of the DuCane Range come into view, the scenery is indeed very grand. On Monday we reached Marlborough, and arrived in Hobart Town on 22nd instant.

In conclusion, I can only remark that the prospects of the West Coast are indeed very promising; and from recent rich discoveries of tin in the vicinity of Mount Heemskirk and other localities it may reasonably be inferred that that tract of country will be inundated with prospectors next summer, and that rich deposits of tin and other minerals will reward their enterprise.

I have not entered upon the subject of the claims at work, or that have raised tin for market in the neighbourhood of Mount Heemskirk, leaving that to the Mining Surveyor of the district.

A sketch plan is being prepared showing the course of track as far as completed, the route thence travelled to Mr. Scott's line of track, and a line I suggest should be marked in the supposed best direction *via* Mount Zeehaan for the remaining portion of the track to Heemskirk, with notes on the formation of the country passed over, which I trust will convey some useful information to the Department. I regret to state that I am unable to speak more decidedly about the proposed line of track, being prevented from further inspecting the country by very wet weather during my trip.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

EDWD. A. COUNSEL, *Surveyor.*

*The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works,
Hobart Town.*