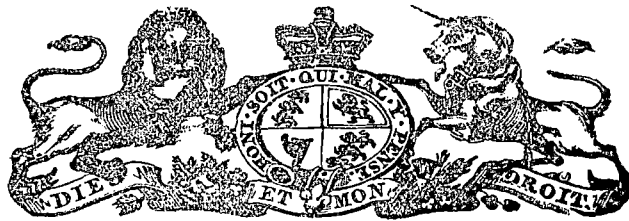


(No. 88.)



1882.

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**PROPOSED ROAD FROM WYNYARD  
TO WARATAH:**

**MR. DISTRICT SURVEYOR SPRENT'S REPORT ON THE  
NATURE OF THE CROWN LANDS IN THE VICINITY.**

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Laid upon the Table by the Minister of Lands, August 16, 1882, and ordered by  
the House to be printed.



*Mr. District Surveyor Sprent's Report on the nature of the Crown Lands in the Vicinity of the proposed Road from Wynyard to Waratah.*

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SIR,

I HAVE the honor to furnish you with a Report upon the nature of the Crown Lands in the vicinity of the proposed road from Wynyard to Waratah.

In the first place I may remark that it is a difficult matter to estimate, even approximately, the area of good land, seeing what a vast extent of country along the route is almost unexplored. The Waste Lands of the Crown at the back of the present settlements are but little known, except to a few gold diggers. Speaking generally, we may say that the whole country between Waratah and Wynyard consists of basaltic soils, except where deep gullies have cut down to the slates; these gullies are too rough for cultivation; dozens of them have been worked for alluvial gold. Wherever the overlying basalt occurs the soil varies from first-class agricultural land to a medium quality; the basaltic soil is never bad. Millions of acres of this land are to be found in the country at the back of the present settlements, and as far as my travels extend there is not much variety in their qualities.

Comparisons have been drawn between the lands at the head of the Pine Road, along the V. D. L. Co's. tramway, and along the Table Cape tracks, but to me they all seem the same class of lands; they are all equally adapted for settlement. Hitherto it has been the good fortune of settlers in this vicinity to get the pick of the choicest of the lands in the Colony, but that condition of things is now changed, and settlers are glad to get good lands which they would have despised ten years ago.

I may instance the lands along the new line of road between Jacobs' Boat Harbour and Detention River. Those lands could not have been given away a few years ago, but now that a main road is made through them they are all being sold rapidly enough. Now there are hundreds of thousands of acres of similar lands back of these settlements, and large areas very much better; but hitherto there has not been any prospect of roads, so that people have considered them as inaccessible.

In my last year's report upon the route and engineering work of the proposed road I pointed out that there were three routes to select from in order to leave the town of Wynyard,—1st, Connor's Road; 2nd, Mount Hicks Road; 3rd, a new road by way of Camp Creek. The first road is open for a dray for a distance of 10 miles, but in my opinion the route is too far to the westward, and it passes for eight miles through very bad land. The Mount Hicks Road is open for six miles, and is partly metalled; it passes through cleared farms for the distance it is opened. If a few alterations were made this road would answer very well, and it would open up the most good land. The third road is the shortest, most direct, and offers good gradients, but the land for the first five miles is inferior. These three roads or, rather, choice of roads, would come together about ten miles back. On the map accompanying this report I have sketched in the chief features of the country and the nature of the lands along the routes.

The Mount Hicks Road passes through about six miles of farms, all occupied and partly cleared. It is the outlet to about 7000 acres of land of good quality, and in the event of a road being constructed to Waratah these farms would be in a position at once to supply produce. Beyond the last farm on this road there is some first-class land. I cannot say its extent, but I have been through it in various directions and have seen upwards of 2000 acres within a mile on each side of the track; and as the land at the head of the Cam Road is good also, I have little doubt there is a very large area of good land in the space between the Mount Hicks Road and the Cam Road. This land continues as far as Henrietta Plains; here and there it is clayey and not so good, but on the whole it is sound, strong land, well adapted for cultivation. On Connor's Road the land for the first four miles is very poor, then it is patchy up to the eighth mile; after that there is the usual forest of stringy bark and myrtle, and judging from the crops grown on Moore's Plain the soil is good

enough for anything. The myrtle forest continues south of Moore's Plain from the 11th mile to the 14th, and the soil is all the same quality, varying from good to medium. To the westward the land is too broken to be of much value. One can only guess at the nature of these forests, for, with the exception of the small paddock on Moore's Plain, no attempt has yet been made to cultivate. At 14½ miles the Calder River is crossed, and some patches of stony ground occur. There is some good land above the crossing towards Henrietta Plains, but how much I cannot say. From 14½ to 17½ the land is good, though broken by numerous small gullies; most of it would be readily taken up for settlement. From 17½ to 23 the land is very rough and broken; patches of good land amongst a quantity of inferior stony ridges. At 23 miles there is some good land on the top of the Hellyer Hill, and I believe that to the westward there is a large extent of good land. This portion of the country is known as Campbell's Range, and forms the watershed of the Hellyer and Arthur from their junction to the sea. I have crossed the Range in several places and found the usual myrtle and stringy-bark forest, and soil of the average quality. In this Range there is some first-class land, but it is likely to remain undisturbed for many years unless gold discoveries give an impetus to settlement. The Hellyer Valley is about two miles across, and as a general rule the land is too steep for the purposes of settlement. There are some patches near the river fit for farms, but the slopes are generally rough and poor. On the south side of the Hellyer there is a great table-land extending for about six miles along the route. It is about three miles wide, and must contain at least 10,000 acres of good land. The forest is composed of large myrtle trees, stringy-barks, sassafras, and large fern trees; it is intersected by numerous creeks, but it is little known except near the track. This stretch of good land extends as far as the boundary of the V. D. L. Company's Surrey Hills block at 31 miles.

As I explained in my report upon the route of the proposed road, there is a deep gorge at the Wandle River and another at Deep Gully creek. It would be quite possible to get a good gradient across these gorges without much increasing the total length of the road. To avoid them altogether it would be necessary to go upon the V. D. L. Co's land. Outside the western boundary of the V. D. L. Co. there is a narrow strip of land, part of it open and grassy, and the remainder pepper-tree scrub and forest; this strip is bounded by the gorges of the Wandle, Arthur, and Deep Gully creek; it comprises about 1000 acres. It would be all eagerly taken by the residents of Mount Bischoff. To avoid Deep Gully Creek it would be necessary to make a detour inside the V. D. L. Company's land, and the crown lands would not be reached until the road came to Rouse's Camp. Supposing it were decided to avoid the V. D. L. Company's lands altogether, the road would pass through the usual myrtle forest, most of it steep and broken: there are some patches of good land, but as they are similar to the lands round the town of Waratah, they are not likely to be sold for many years to come.

If a road is made from Waratah to Wynyard there will be a good sale for township lands, and fortunately the lands at Waratah have not been rushed into the market. There would be no difficulty in disposing of lands to the value of £5000 in the town of Waratah, and still leave plenty for sale in the future. At Wynyard there is a large open button-grass plain still unsold. No one can be induced to buy it at present, for settlement here is stationary, but if this road be made it will go off without any difficulty. I would propose that three new townships be reserved if the road is made,—one near the Calder River, a second near the Hellyer, and a third on the open ground near the Wandle.

I have now given particulars of the lands as far as I well can, but, as I have already mentioned, one can only guess at the value of lands unless some in the vicinity have been cultivated. As long as the prime lands were to be had settlers would not take the myrtle forest, but some of the farms at the head of Mount Hicks Road prove that the best myrtle land is quite as good as the gun land. Climate, too, would influence cultivation. The high lands on the level of the Surrey Hills are not suitable for cereals, but they grow excellent root crops.

On the whole, I think there need be no fear about disposing of land along the route of the proposed road: if lots are offered for sale when the road is made, there are scores of men, myself amongst the number, prepared to purchase, and as settlement progresses more lands will be opened up. A good road will induce people to take up even bad land. Along the road from Latrobe to Elizabeth Town I notice lands being cleared far poorer than the worst between Table Cape and Waratah.

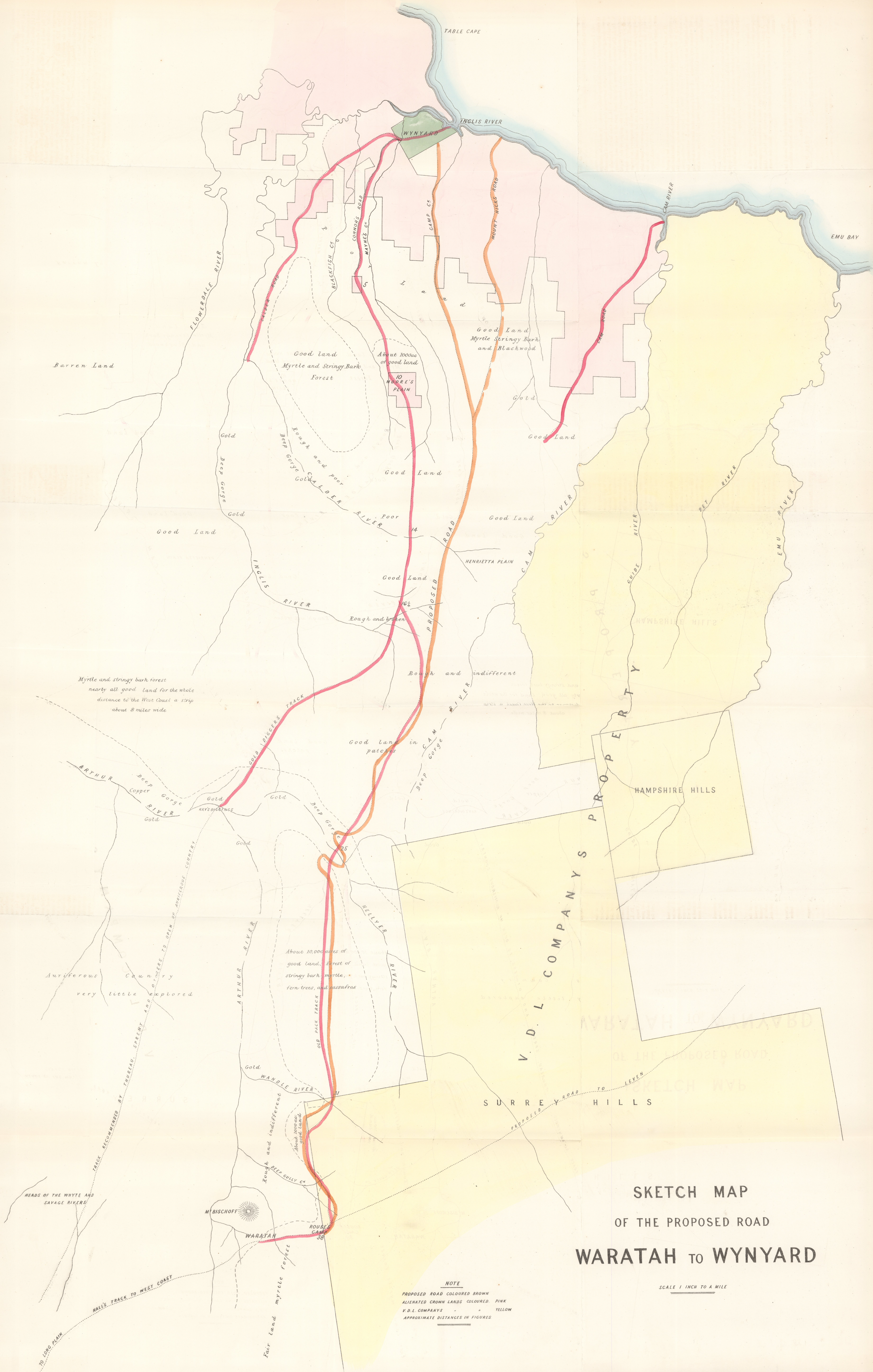
The accompanying plan will explain the situation of the lands I have referred to. It is a very hurriedly prepared plan; but I was anxious to get it way before this question comes before Parliament.

I have, &c.

CHAS. P. SPRENT, *District Surveyor.*

*To the Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.*





SKETCH MAP  
OF THE PROPOSED ROAD  
WARATAH TO WYNYARD

NOTE  
PROPOSED ROAD COLOURED BROWN  
ALIENATED CROWN LANDS COLOURED PINK  
V.D.L. COMPANY'S " " YELLOW  
APPROXIMATE DISTANCES IN FIGURES

SCALE 1 INCH TO A MILE