

(No. 127.)



1883.

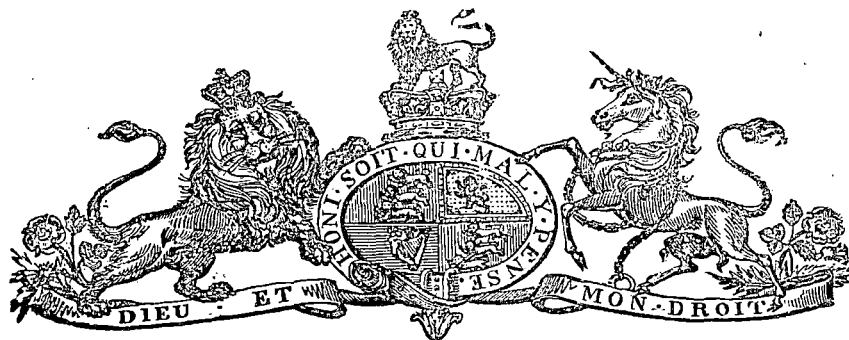
T A S M A N I A.

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

W E S T C O A S T:

REPORT OF ENGINEER OF ROADS UPON ALL THE WORKS
EXECUTED UNDER OVERSEER CLAY'S SUPERINTENDENCE.

Laid upon the Table by the Minister of Lands, and ordered by the House to be
printed, October 3, 1883.



7th July, 1883.

As the steamer *Wakefield* is now running regularly to the West Coast, I wish the Engineer of Roads to proceed there as soon as his other more pressing duties will permit, and report upon all the works executed under Overseer Clay's superintendence. This report should, if possible, be available before the end of the first month of the Session of Parliament.

NICHOLAS J. BROWN.

The Engineer-in-Chief.

3420 $\frac{11}{8}$

Public Works Office, Hobart, 31st August, 1883.

MEMO. for WM. DUFFY, Esq., Engineer of Roads.

BE good enough to proceed by next trip of s.s. *Wakefield*, for the purpose of examining and reporting upon the under-mentioned matters:—

1. All works carried out by Overseer Clay on West Coast, both with regard to cost and manner of construction.
2. Buildings and Jetty erected for the Government on West Coast.
3. Work now being done by Government under Overseer Sansom between Waratah and turn-off to Specimen Reef, and the work being done under direction of the Committee on Specimen Reef Track.
4. Take notes for preparation of contracts at once for expenditure of money sanctioned for improvement of track between Corinna and Waratah, £3500 (less cost of Overseer Sansom's work).

JAMES FINCHAM, *Engineer-in-Chief.*

P.S.—Also to enquire into certain charges contained in a letter from Mr. Conrad, of Trial Harbour, and which letter has been forwarded to you.

J. F.

Public Works Office, Hobart, 18th September, 1883.

(Forwarded through the Engineer-in-Chief.)

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to report that, in obedience to written instructions (*vide* Memo. 3420 $\frac{11}{8}$ of 31st August, 1883), I left Hobart for the West Coast by s.s. *Wakefield* on 1st September.

My instructions directed me to report—

1. On all works carried out by Overseer Clay on West Coast, and manner of construction.
2. Buildings and Jetties erected for the Government on the West Coast.

3. Work now being done by the Government under Overseer Sansom between Waratah and turn-off to Specimen Reef, and the work being done under direction of the Committee on Specimen Reef Track.

4. Take notes for preparation of contracts at once for expenditure of money sanctioned for improvement of track between Corinna and Waratah.

5. To enquire into certain charges contained in a letter from Mr. Conrad, of Trial Harbour.

6. To examine line of road adopted on the plateau west of Heemskirk and running towards the sea coast, instead of the Gap Road.—Complaint of Mr. T. H. Moore, of Hamilton.

7. To examine and report on Track from Peripatetic claim to Tasman timber forest reserve.

To the Honorable the Minister of Lands and Works.

WEST COAST.—REPORT OF ENGINEER OF ROADS.

1. Road from township of Strahan (Macquarie Harbour) to Trial Harbour is 22 miles in length. From Strahan jetty to sea beach for the first two miles the road has been formed and made by cutting away the peat for a width of 12 feet to a gravel drift of quartz or coarse granite sand that lays and coats the bed-rock. This drift is from 2 feet to 6 inches in depth, and the overlaying peat is an average depth of 17 inches. The surrounding peat is filled with water, which flows freely down the sides of the cut track, and, where the bed-rock is deeper than the usual run, holes are quickly gouged out, and the track would be dangerous if wheel-traffic prevailed. Orders have been given to Overseer Clay to cut off the water from the formed tracks where practicable. For the next mile and 60 chains the road is cut through a scrubby sand ridge. This portion of the road is heavy, and liable to be gouged out by the fierce storms of wind that often prevail. The present track then follows the sea beach for a distance of 8 miles 60 chains to the mouth of the Big Henty River. From the mouth of the Big Henty River the track follows up the bank of the river for a distance of 60 chains through a dense scrub to the crossing-place. This portion of the road track has been badly cleared. The ford across the Henty River is very uncertain, as the sandspits and shoals are liable to be shifted with each flood. Between the two Henty Rivers the road lies very low, and is often under water for the greater part of its length; and in such portions where the track has been cut through the ti-tree scrubs the road is dangerous to foot passengers. The length of the road between the two Henty Rivers is 7 miles. The crossing of the Little Henty River is even more uncertain than that of the Big Henty River. From the Little Henty River to Reminé or Trial Harbour is a distance of 2 miles through sand ridges and low swampy land. From Macquarie Harbour to Trial Harbour the distance is 22 miles, of which 13 miles 20 chains have been cleared and partially cut and formed, at a cost of 33s. per chain.

Date up to 5th September, 1883:

	£	s.	d.
13 miles 20 chains road cut and formed, at 32s. 10d. per chain ..	1746	0	0
Bridge over Big Henty River, washed away.....	422	0	0
Jetty at Macquarie Harbour	286	0	0
Jetty at Trial Harbour	709	0	0
Crane and crab-winch, Trial Harbour.....	224	7	4
Fixing and refixing moorings (Trial).....	51	0	0
Building (labour only) Custom House, Macquarie.....	54	0	0
Re-roofing Sub-Inspector's house, Macquarie	6	0	0
Commissioner's house, Trial Harbour	157	0	0
	<u>£3655</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>4</u>

For the above works the sum of £4300 has been voted.

I would respectfully recommend that a road from one to three miles further inland be surveyed, as the present route will always be most expensive to maintain, and always liable to serious interruptions.

Road from Reminé to Heemskirk.

A track was cut by the mining managers, for which a subsidy was obtained from the Government. This road was cut on the face of the hill that leads up from Trial Harbour to the Mount Heemskirk table land. It was cut zigzag, and the gradients were so steep that practically it could only be used by horse and footmen, and not by drays and wagons. As large castings and pieces of machinery and heavy timber were required at the various tin claims of Mount Heemskirk, a second

road was cut and made round the face of the mountain, departmentally, under Mr. Overseer Clay. The length of the road is 80 chains, and is cut out of heavy sidelong ground, with a good easy gradient. The road is 14 feet in width, and well formed and metalled, and for the most part properly drained. On the steeper part of the road three more small culverts are to be put into place. The cost of this mile of road, including price of tools and supervision, is £1548 7s. 2d., or £19 7s. 3d. per chain. The work has been well done, and I consider the cost moderate. The road is a great boon to the various claimholders, and since this new road has been made most of the heavy machinery has been carted to the various claims.

Main Road, Heemskirk to North Heemskirk.

After mounting on to the Mount Heemskirk table land by the Reminé to Heemskirk road the original track from Corinna to Trial Harbour *viâ* the Gap is followed from Reminé to corner of mineral section, No. 1743, where the original track is left to the right, and the present main road trends towards the sea coast, crossing Granite and St. Clair Creek very near their mouths. This departure from the Gap Road was in consequence of instructions from Engineer-in-Chief (*vide* letter 467 $\frac{1}{2}$.) The road then runs through the Peripatetic mineral leases, and stops in the abandoned tin claims known as the Glenora. From this point it is proposed to carry the road through the Tasman forest reserve to join the surveyed road now being defined by Mr. Engineer Hoyle, who is surveying a new line of road from the Pieman River township, or Corinna, so as to avoid the forest track as much as possible. The track, or rather main road, as made up to the present, and the direction its continuation will take, meets all the requirements of the Peripatetic claimholders, and the complaints of their manager arose from misapprehension. Mr. Curtain, their manager, is satisfied that he is well served with the lay of the road. I have ridden over that part of the original road known as the Gap Road, for the purpose of reporting for the information of the Honorable the Minister of Lands, as complaint and correspondence from Mr. Thomas Moore *re* this Gap Road was handed to me for report.

I have to report that the present Main Road was adopted by Overseer Clay under instructions of the Engineer-in-Chief, and at the recommendation of Mr. Climie, C.E., who examined and levelled over this country for railway purposes as the easiest for grade, facility of making, and benefit to traffic. The present track *viâ* the Gap is over very broken country, with deep ravines and heavy mountain spurs, steep and boggy. At present there is but one tin claim at work, and its best interests can, in the shape of facilities of transport, be best served by a track from Mineral Lease 1789 to 1790 and on to the original track. I can most sincerely endorse Mr. Climie's reasons for recommending the site of the present Main Road.

The nature of the Mount Heemskirk country is open, bald, hilly country; the soil naturally of a peat nature, surcharged with water. The depth of this peat soil, until the quartz gravel and bed-rock is reached, is from six inches to three feet. The mode of construction adopted has been to cut away the top or peat soil for a width of 12 feet, and to form and round the quartz gravel into the metal of the roadway. A small grip or channel for the water has been made on each side of this stripping; but as these small side-drains have also to carry the water that flows out of the peat as well as what falls on the road, these side-channels are not large enough; as a consequence, the roadway is always wet, and the heavy wheel-tracks and ruts are converted into a source of injury to the road. I have instructed the overseer to cut side-drains, and to take advantage of the lay of the country on all occasions to cut off the water and prevent it flowing down the road. There have been 9 miles 60 chains of this road, or 780 chains, so cut and formed, at an average cost of 33s. 4d. per chain, equal to £1300, with a bridge of four openings over Granite Creek, two bridges, each of three openings, over Gap and St. Clair Creeks, one of 20 feet over Packers' Creek, and two bridges, —one at 6 miles 21 chains from Trial Harbour, and one over Rabling's Creek, and 6 culverts, —at a cost of £227. These structures are well put together, and will give good service. A short deviation in the present line of road at Gap Creek, so as to ease the present steep ascent from Gap Creek (see position on map of mineral sections) has been ordered. There has been expended on the above 9 miles 60 chains of road, and the bridges, £1527, and the sum of £4000 was voted for the main road from Heemskirk to North Heemskirk. Sufficient attention, in some instances, to the drainage of this road has not been paid, and, where the bed-rock shows near the surface, the quartz gravel in the neighbourhood should have been used to coat over these parts of the road and do away with the present bumpy nature of the track. This main road, owing to its being cut down to the gravel and bed-rock, more especially where the cutting through the peat is deeper than six inches, is reduced to a very narrow single track, 12 feet, and when heavy traffic ceases to be from the port to the claims only, and becomes heavy and frequent from the claims to the port and from the port to the claims, a wider roadway will be required. I would respectfully suggest that the present road be increased in width to 20 feet, and that side-drains on both sides of the road, to the depth of the present road, be made, so as to effectually drain the main road. I am of opinion that Overseer Clay has done the work on this main road both economically and with good judgment as a whole. Branch roads have been cut and formed in a similar manner by the different leaseholders, and have been subsidised by the Government, namely, branch road to the Orient, to the Heemskirk, to the Empress Victoria, to the Montagu, to the Cumberland, to the Cliff and Cornwall, and to the West Cumberland.

The Carn Brea, St. Clair, Carn Brea Extended, and the Peripatetic, are directly benefited by the main road, as their head quarters are only a short distance from the road.

Departmental work, in easing creek approaches, has been done on the Gap track to the value of £50.

A track from North Heemskirk to Granville Harbour has been cut through heavy forest land and a 20-foot span bridge has been erected, at a cost of £51.

Day labour in fixing and refixing moorings at Trial Harbour has cost £41.

Telegraph.

Posts have been carted from Macquarie Harbour, erected, and the track cleared for a distance of seven miles, and at Trial Harbour end of the line 150 telegraph poles have been got and hauled on to the road; the cost is £132. Sufficient telegraph wire and insulators are in store at Trial Harbour for the line from Macquarie Harbour to Corinna.

Buildings.

At Strahan, Macquarie Harbour, the Police Quarters and Lock, as well as the Custom House Shed, and Sub-inspector's Quarters, are in good repair. The house occupied by Mr. Overseer Clay, consisting of three rooms, 12 feet by 10 feet, together with two small rooms added on by Mr. Clay, might be converted at a small expense into Post and Telegraph and residence of Operator. The building is built of palings.

I inspected the Police Quarters at Reminé (Trial), and consider the work well done and in accordance with specification. Alterations, such as papering rooms, putting up skirting boards, new passages, and extra windows, and lining fireplaces with brickwork, were being proceeded with at house for the Gold Commissioner, Mr. Glover. The rooms inside the house are low, being barely seven feet four from floor to ceiling, and the materials and workmanship of the house inferior. The galvanised iron of roof and sides is a mixed lot, and some of the sheets of iron very bad.

The Post and Telegraph Office at Corinna has just been completed, and, with the exception of some earth filling in front of the office, is completed in accordance with specification.

Road between Waratah and Specimen Reef.

The clearing of new road from Township of Waratah now being done, departmentally, under Mr. Overseer Sansom, is a very heavy and expensive work, as the timber is very large and very closely congregated together. About four miles of the road has been grubbed along the centre of the road, and the timber for a width of three chains has been cut down. None of the timber has as yet been cleared from the grubbed portion of the road, as the weather has been very broken, and cattle could not be employed to haul off the timber during wet weather. A roadway about 20 feet wide has been commenced by the Committee in the direction of Specimen Reef, but very little headway has yet been made.

Mr. Conrad's Letter of complaint.

One item of complaint made by Mr. Conrad, storekeeper and publican, Trial Harbour, against Overseer Clay was that he had built the Government yard, his own house, and men's hut, on the main street, Reminé. I attach map of the township of Reminé, on which I have sketched the exact position of the Government yard and Mr. Clay's and the men's huts, and it will be readily seen that the yard and quarters are not on the main street. Complaint is made that a hut was built for the use of the men employed on the road works. The hut was built for the use of the blacksmith, who worked on the premises, and the horse-driver, who had to live near the stable. It is a small paling one room, 12' x 10'. The labouring men put up bunks ship fashion, and some six men occupied this hut when working in the neighbourhood or on wet days, and, as they had built a fire-place, it was a great convenience for them to dry their clothes. The men state that Mr. Conrad, even if willing, could not supply them in sleeping accommodation, and that the expense of boarding at an hotel was greater than they could afford. The charge of making a garden and working it at the expense of the Government, both Mr. Clay and the men deny emphatically. There is a garden in which are grown various kinds of vegetables—the only garden in Reminé. This Mr. Clay states he himself made and cultivated, in early morning and late at night for the most part. That, on one occasion, 3 of the men worked in the garden for about 3 hours each, but in their own time. I find that the neighbours have all had more or less vegetables from Clay's garden, and, in my opinion, he is to be commended for trying to add to the comfort and health of his home by the produce of his garden.

The main charge that Mr. Conrad made was that Mr. Clay, whilst in receipt of a salary as a Government officer, kept a store and supplied his men with food and other rations, and that he (Mr. Clay) would not employ any man who did not get his supplies from him. This Mr. Conrad considered very wrong, and an injustice to himself, a storekeeper, who had had to pay a large price for

the land on which his premises stand. Mr. Clay states that when he was appointed to his present position he made enquiries as to whether there were stores to be obtained for himself and the men on the West Coast, and was informed that it would be wiser to lay in a supply, as communication was uncertain and supplies often ran short; that the Government would not send stores to the West Coast. As the men could not work without food, and would not go to the West Coast to work for the Government without a certainty of being able to procure food, Mr. Clay took down a good supply, which he sold only to the men employed on the Government works. The price charged for these rations, Mr. Clay states, and Mr. Conrad admits, were Hobart prices with the cost of freight added, and this Mr. Conrad holds an injury to himself, as lessening his profits. Mr. Conrad offered Mr. Clay a commission of 5 per cent. on all accounts, that he would guarantee and stop payment from the men. This Mr. Clay refused. Two days before my arrival at Trial Harbour the stock of flour ran out, and a cart had to be sent on to Macquarie Harbour for fresh supplies. Mr. Clay states that on several occasions the inhabitants were reduced to want of both flour and beef and tea and sugar; that he lent freely to them until their supplies came to hand, and on no occasion sold either at a profit or otherwise, and that the supply he kept was as a protection to himself and his men and the public against starvation, as the Reminé storekeepers do not provide for more than ten days' supply at any time, and the visit of the steamer is often uncertain and of longer intervals.

Mr. Conrad expressed to me his regret that he had troubled the Minister of Lands and Works with his complaint, and stated that if he had his time to go over again he would not do so. I spoke to several of the men, who stated that they bought wherever they found the goods best and cheapest, whether at Mr. Conrad's or from Mr. Clay, or the mine stores, and that if they had to depend on the stores of either Mr. Gourlay or Mr. Conrad their daily rate of pay would not suffice. Whilst it is not a desirable state of things that any Government officer should be a dealer in stores or other goods to men in the Government employment, in view of the present uncertain prospects of the tin claims of Mount Heemskirk, and the consequent depression under which storekeepers labour, food and other essentials to life may run short and be absolutely wanting on any day in Reminé, and the public works may have to be put a stop to abruptly, and an unpleasant feeling of insecurity engendered. If public works are to be carried on, owing to the uncertainty of approach by steamer or sailing vessels into Trial Harbour, a store depôt for food will be required to insure against sudden scarcity.

In reply to instructions Nos. 6 and 7, see page 5 of present report.

I have &c.

WILLIAM DUFFY, *Engineer of Roads.*

