

Stewart's Route

STEWART'S ROUTE.

Launceston Examiner, **Tuesday 28 April 1896**, page 7.

In 1891 the Government started to survey a railway route from Zeehan to Mole Creek. Mr Alexander Stewart was entrusted with the work at the Mole Creek end and reached Mount Pelion, a distance of 5 miles from Mole Creek, whilst at the Zeehan end 15 miles were laid out. Mr Stewart's report on the survey is contained in the Parliamentary records of 1891 (paper 140), from which we take the following brief synopsis:-

Starting from Mole Creek the survey was taken to Liena (12 miles), and thence starting from Sassafras Creek (720ft above the sea) up the Grunter incline, a rise of 523ft in five miles. Across the Mersey flats the line rose gradually to the Mersey Gap (10 miles), and then dropped slightly, crossing the Fisher River (eight miles); thence to the foot of the Wurragara incline (seven miles), which is 1490 ft. above sea level. From this incline the route rises rapidly to the button-grass plains at the head of the Wurragara river (2800ft), and skirting Lake Ayr rounds the head of the Forth and gradually mounting arrives at the foot of Mount Pelion (13 miles), where the survey terminated, 50 miles from Mole Creek at an elevation of 3200ft. It is stated that the elevation was so high that the trouble was to get down again, whilst another reason given for the stoppage of the work is that the money voted was spent. From Mount Pelion to Lake Rolleston, 30 miles, Mr Stewart states the route is across button-grass plains for a large portion of the distance, whilst other authorities say the country is broken. At the Zeehan end the country traversed is broken. Zeehan is 600ft above sea level, and the Dundas gap 1800ft, whilst the Lake Rolleston gap is also 1800ft. The route runs through the Dundas Gap, and crosses the Little Henty River and the South Nevada Creek. The total distance surveyed was 05 miles, leaving a gap of 30 miles problematical.

Russell's Route

RUSSELL'S TRACK

Launceston Examiner, Tuesday 28 April 1896, page 7

The next northern route is that proposed to be laid out by Mr C. Russell, the pioneer of the North and West Coast Direct Route Association. He also proposes to start from Liena, but crosses the Mersey bridge, and then diverging from the Middlesex Plains route up Gad's Hill and across the Forth bridge, will take the other side of the Mersey to what Mr. Stewart followed. He will traverse the pack track, which, coming out of the valley of the Mersey, ascends on to the rising ground between that river and the Forth, and runs up towards the head of the latter, rounding it in the vicinity of Mount Pelion, a distance of 22 miles from Liena, as against 38 miles by Stewart's line. The 22 miles contained in this section he describes as a good track, which has been utilised by packers on numerous occasions. At Mount Pelion Mr Russell proposes to leave the railway survey and proceed in a more northerly direction towards Barn Bluff (eight miles), in the vicinity of which it will be remembered the Mole Creek Exploration Company's prospectus made a valuable find of cannel coal some years back. This portion of the country was prospected by Mr Will and

party to some extent; its topography is fairly well known, and there is a good pack track opened out. Granite Tor is the next landmark, a distance of ten miles, with a pack track three miles of the distance, and the remainder through open country. From Granite Tor to Mount Black is the section of which least is known. As the crow flies the two points are between seven and eight miles apart, but there are several streams to be crossed, the most important being the Murchison River. This stream rises rapidly to the height of 20 or 30 feet in flood-time, and falls as rapidly. It is between high banks, partaking in some places of the nature of a canon. Mr Russell expects to find a good ford, and once this is accomplished it is an easy track to Mount Black, where the Rosebery track joins. Mount Black is 59 miles from Mole Creek and about 21 miles from Zeehan. Portion of this latter district is traversed by the Zeehan Dundas railway, and the remainder will be served by the light railway now being constructed towards Rosebery. The total distance on this route to Zeehan is estimated at 80 miles from Mole Creek.

The Innes Route

MOLE CREEK TO ROSEBERY MINE. MR. INNES'S TRACK.

Launceston Examiner **Saturday 31 July 1897, Page 10**

HOBART, Friday. Mr. Innes. arrived in town yesterday, and his report on the Mole Creek route will be in the hands of the Minister of Lands within a very few days, so as to enable him to lay it on the table of the House next week. Mr Innes is, of course, reticent until the official document has been drafted and handed over, but it is generally understood that it will be of a satisfactory character, the grades of the track being fairly easy, and not costly to make; while there are no serious natural difficulties other than can be readily overcome, either regarded as a horse track or as a possible railway route, in the latter case deviations being necessary. Some good agricultural land is passed through, and also valuable belts of timber. This track starts from the Mersey bridge at Liena, follows what is known as Griffin's road in a southerly direction, along the plateau of Gad's Hill, on the Oakleigh range, then makes for Pelion West and from to Lake Will. at the foot of Barn Bluff mountain. It takes thence a north-westerly course past Mount Inglis, and westerly on to Granite-Tor gradually work down the spur until it gets to Supply river, north again until reaching Supply, crossing at the northern end of Mount Farrell. From there it proceeds nearly south until the crossing at the Murchison is reached. The Murchison is a large river, three chains wide where the track crosses it. Leaving the Murchison, the track traverses the spurs of Mount Black, and then the course of the Macintosh and Pieman is followed until the Rosebery claim is reached at Stitt bridge, on the Kingsville track. The total distance from Mole Creek to Stitt bridge is 98 miles, and the distance from Mersey bridge to Stitt bridge, which is the track proper, is 86 miles.

MR. INNES' REPORT.

TRACK FROM MOLE CREEK TO ROSEBERY.

The Mercury, Wednesday 4 August 1897, Page 4

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/9402380?searchTerm=Innes%20Track&searchLimits=>

The long-promised report of Mr. Surveyor Innes on the track from Mole Creek to the Rosebery district was tabled in the House of Assembly last night: Hobart, July 31, 1897.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works, etc.

Sir, In accordance with your instructions, dated 17th of October, 1896, to "cut and mark a track from Mole Creek to Mount Reid, West Coast of Tasmania, over a route supposed to have been found by Mr. C. Russell, who had been sent out for that purpose by the Launceston and North-West Direct Route Association, and also to furnish a plan and report upon the same, I have the honour to submit the accompanying plan and report as follows :

Having obtained a party of good bushmen, with the necessary outfit of tents provisions, etc, I left Hobart on Monday evening, October 19, and proceeded to Launceston by rail where I was instructed to meet and confer with the committee of the Launceston and North-West Direct Route Association, and also to enable Mr. Russell, who was to accompany the expedition as guide, to join the party.

I met the committee on Tuesday, and having examined the charts in their possession, decided to take the southern, or route via Mount Pelion (West) and Granite Tor, that being the route indicated by the committee as the one they wished me to test first.

Mr. Russell joined the party at Launceston, and we proceeded thence by rail to Mole Creek, reaching there upon Thursday evening.

The same night I made arrangements with Mr. Wm. Aylett, of Mole Creek, to undertake the packing of our outfit of tents, tools, provisions, etc., as far along the line of route as he could get with his horses.

The following morning (Friday, October 23), the party left Mole Creek at 7 o'clock, and took the first load of provisions to the bridge over the River Mersey at Liena, Aylett returning to Mole Creek for a second load.

I left Mole Creek with Aylett the next morning, and reaching the Mersey found the camp pitched and all in readiness to commence work the following week.

Taking the bridge over the Mersey as my starting point, I commenced the chainage of the track from there, proceeding by what is known as Griffin's road (a road recently constructed by the Public Works Department), a distance of some 3 miles 30 chains to the summit of Gad's Hill.

At this point I decided to leave this road, and finding I should have to go through some private property, I marked the track along what had apparently been an old road formerly cleared by the Public Works Department, but now blocked with fallen timber, scrub and rubbish.

This we followed for some 50 chains, and then came "on to land that is cleared and fenced, and owned by Mr. John Field, of Deloraine, terming what is known locally as Gad's Hill station.

On Monday, October 26, I found and re-cleared some of the boundary lines of the Gad's Hill blocks, and as they proved fairly level took the line of track along them, to avoid unnecessarily cutting up private land, and continued to follow the boundaries until I reached the south-east angle of the measured lots and had Crown land ahead.

On Tuesday, 27th taking Aylett for a guide, I went on an exploring expedition in a southerly direction, along the plateau upon the top of Gad's Hill, for some 9 or 10 miles, and found there was no serious obstacle for that distance.

We then commenced cutting and marking the line, at a bearing a little to the west of south over undulating country, timbered with Stringybark (*E. Siberiana*), with here and there a patch of open, covered with what is known to stockmen as white grass. This country extended to a small creek flowing into the Mersey, at 7 miles 50 chains from our starting point, or 3½ miles from Gad's Hill Station.

There was a change, in the shape of a quartzite hill running directly across our course, timbered with peppermint gums (*Euc. amygdalina*), and covered with a dense prickly scrub, and known locally as the Lemontine Hill.

From Gad's Hill station to this point we had been practically following the old track used by stockmen, crossing and recrossing it at the grade required; but finding that it led over this hill at a gradient of about 1ft. in 6ft., I made a deviation and took the new line over this obstacle 1 in 13.

In a break in this hill, where there was some water, we made our third camp, 8 miles and 50 chains from the Mersey bridge at Liena. While at this camp we had a couple of days, on which it was snowing heavily, with hail and sleet, making matters rather unpleasant for track marking.

From this point I followed the old track (which was the one followed by Russell), crossing and recrossing to straighten it, until the northern edge of the Berriedale Plain was reached, 11 miles from Liena, where, finding the old track turned away in a north-westerly direction, and passed over some broken, ugly country until the Mackenzie Plain was reached, and then turned again south, I left it, and still keeping a southerly course, skirted the side of the hill at an easy grade through a country covered with a dense growth of myrtle (*Fagus cun.*) and pepper tree, until the south end of the Mackenzie was reached, at what is known as the Divide between the Mackenzie and the Oakley range, 18 miles 70 chains from Liena, and 3,550ft. above sea level. Here we again touched the old track, and followed it through open grassy country for a couple of miles, when I had again to leave it, and keeping a little more south, wound around the south-eastern spurs of Mount Oakley, and obtained an easy grade down into the lower country in the vicinity of Lake Ayr, at the head waters of the River Forth, and Rear Mount Pelion East.

At 25 miles 43 chains from Liena we found the old marked line of the Molo Creek-West Coast railway survey, made some years since by Mr. Stewart, and clearing it out, followed it until we reached the old camp of that party at Mount Pelion East. We reached this point with our camp, etc., on Saturday, November 28, 1890, having marked and measure 27½ miles of track.

The whole of the next week was occupied in cutting and marking the track to tributary of the Forth flowing at the foot of Mount Pelion West, and by Saturday, December 5, we had moved our camp to this stream, 30¼ miles from Liena.

At Mount Pelion (west) I was given to understand the difficulties of road-making would commence, and the rugged old mountain, frowning down upon us with his sides clothed with a dense growth of all the rubbish indigenous to this portion of Tasmania, certainly did look a formidable obstacle standing directly across our path.

However, Pelion (west) did not prove so formidable a customer as he looked, for, after having ascended to what is known as Pelion Saddle upon the northern side of the mountain, taking my aneroid and noting approximate distances, which proved upon being measured to be fairly correct, I found that I could reach that point from my camp in the valley below at an approximate gradient of 1 in 20.

This was done, and Pelion Saddle was reached at 3,249ft. above sea level, 34¼ miles from Liena.

From Pelion Saddle to Lake Will, at the foot of Barn Bluff Mountain, the track passes generally over open button rush country, broken in a series of deep ravines and water-courses, but presenting no serious difficulties in the way of road-making, the ruling grades being easy, and the country as a rule sound, with a shallow peaty formation on top, underneath a bottom of white gravel. On Wednesday, November 16, had the camp moved to the foot of Barn Bluff, and on Sunday, the 20th, taking three of the party with me, I went to the summit of that mountain, hoping to obtain a good view of the country to the westward. By aneroid I made the summit of Barn Bluff 5,045ft. above sea, but failed to get a good view of the country I wanted to see, owing to the dense volume of smoke arising from numerous bush fires enveloping the country in almost every direction.

On Monday, 21st of December, I went with Russell, and examined the country north of Mount Inglis and found it practicable, but very densely wooded with stunted myrtle and peppermint gums until the second Divide, between the waters flow into the Fury and Bluff River, is reached. Here the country is again open, being destitute of timber of any kind.

I objected to this part of the route, owing to the great height above sea - some 3,859ft., but as Russell informed me that he had tried to pass upon the south side of the mountain, and found it impracticable owing to perpendicular cliffs, I decided to go this way. (I afterwards found Russell's information to be incorrect.)

December the 25th. 1896 (Christmas Day), found us in camp at Barn Bluff, and all hands had a day's liberty.

On the 26th (Boxing Day) we were again at our work. The weather, which had hitherto been fine, now broke, and about noon on that date it commenced to rain in torrents, and continued to do so until the evening of Monday, December 28.

On the 29th we were again at work, and the next day finished the marking of the route to the foot of Mount Inglis.

Thursday, the 31st of January, 1806, proving fine, taking Russell as a companion, I made an early start for the Cradle Mountain, on whose summit I hoped to find the old trig., and test my observations as to aneroid heights, and also obtain a view of the country ahead to the westward.

We reached the foot of the basaltic cliffs forming the cap of the mountain at about 12.30 p.m. Had a billy of tea, some lunch, and a short rest. 2.30 p.m. found us upon the summit, where I found the old trig, in a fairly good state of preservation.

Tho correct height of the Cradle Mountain by the trig. survey is 5,069ft. above sea, and as I made it by aneroid 5,085ft., it may be fairly assumed that the observations taken, and the heights given over my line of route are substantially correct, the difference of 16ft. noted being practically nothing, when it is remembered that my observations had extended over a number of weeks, and in all sorts of weather.

We regained our camp at 8.30 that evening, found the remainder of the party had arrived just before us, they having been engaged in chaining the marked line during the day.

At 40¾ miles the track crossed the Bluff River close to its source in Lake Will; this is here only a small, shallow stream, with a hard, gravelly bottom, fordable at all times. At 41½ miles the track enters a belt of dense scrub, consisting of fagus, myrtle, and horizontal; this continues for about half a mile, when it again emerges on to the open, at Fury Saddle, No. 1 on the plan, 3,550ft, above sea level, and 42 miles 28 chains from Liena.

This point was reached, and the track completed to it on Saturday, January 9, 1897. In the meantime, the weather had been very bud, heavy rains, snow and dense fogs greatly retarding operations. Sunday January 10, broke fine, and we took advantage of it to move our camps some distance ahead to the western slope of Mount Inglis. The same day I went to the summit of that mountain, made its height by aneroid 4,200ft, above sea, and also obtained a fine view of the country to the westward, over which the track had to pass.

From Fury Divide, No. 1, the track as marked winds around the northern spurs of Mount Inglis, through a dense scrub, until it emerges on to the open at Fury Divide No. 2. 3,850ft. above sea, 41 miles 23 chains from Liena.

On Monday, January 11, taking Aylett for a guide, I went over the proposed route as far as Granite Tor; found it terribly broken by gorges and ravines, formed by the numerous small streams flowing into the rivers Fury and Bluff, but perfectly practicable. This day again proved bad, heavy rain and dense fog setting in while we were upon the Tor, making it somewhat difficult to find our camp upon the return journey.

This continued for the next ten days, making the work of marking the track very difficult, as it was literally feeling our way during the fogs.

On January 24 I moved my camp to Granite Tor, having completed the line thus far, 49 miles 47 chains from Liena, 3,010ft, above sea level.

From the saddle on Granite Tor, Mount Black, which ultimately proved our destination, was in sight, and viewing the country between the two points, it apparently consisted of a line of mountain chains intersected with deep gullies and ravines.

After Russell had indicated the route he proposed to take, and I had examined a portion of it, I informed him that it was impracticable for a road of any sort, and I proceeded to explore the country in the vicinity of the Tor with the view of finding a way down on to the lower ground in the vicinity of the tributaries of the Pieman, the dense scrub on all sides making this a difficult operation.

On one occasion, noticing some apparently fairly open country in the vicinity of Sophia Peak, I asked Russell if I managed to get down to it if I could get through between that peak and the spurs of Granite Tor, where I supposed the Sophia River to flow, but he replied that I could not, as at that point there was a tremendous gorge, through which it was impossible to take a road, and that if I got down into the open country I should only have to climb up again to get over the spur of the Tor.

Supposing that this information would be correct, I proceeded to work my way down the side of the Tor through a densely wooded, broken country. I commenced to descend at a gradient of about 1 in 15, and after having proceeded at this for about 3¼ miles came to a large creek, flowing to the south-west, a tributary of the Sophia River. Having noted a break in the mountain some distance ahead, and knowing that I was now about upon a level with it, I altered the grade to almost level, and made for the break mentioned, where I expected to find a pass.

Finding that Russell was of little use as guide, he knowing little or nothing about the country over which I could see we must pass, I decided to despatch an advance party, consisting of J. Innes and W. Aylett, with orders to push through to Mount Black, noting the description of country they passed over, and then return, so that I might have some reliable information to work upon, and to enable either of the two men mentioned to act as guide as occasion required. Russell, at his own request, being employed in packing the provisions along the route.

Aylett and Innes carried out their instructions well. Leaving my camp upon Granite Tor on February 2, they pushed through to Mount Black; firing the country anywhere there was a chance to burn it, went right through to the bridge over the Stit, on the Ringville track, and re-joined me on Granite Tor on Tuesday, February 9, having been absent just seven days.

They reporting a practicable route via the Sophia Valley and Mount Farrell, into the valley of the River Mackintosh. I continued the track at an easy gradient into the pass before-mentioned, Aylett and Innes having come through that way on their return journey, and cutting our way through it struck the head of a small creek flowing down the north-western slope of the Tor, towards the Sophia. The track now follows the course of this creek through a broken, difficult country, consisting of granite hummocks and deep ravines. This was covered with a dense growth of tea tree (*Melaleuca*), bauera, horizontal, and button rush, and although the fires started by Aylett and J. Innes had run over it, being damp underfoot, they had only burned the leaves, the blackened sticks remaining, and being nearly as bad as the green scrub to deal with. I followed the course of this creek until the 60th mile was reached, when, finding I could get better country by again taking to the spurs of the Tor and following them down, at 63 miles from Liena came on to the low land near the Sophia, and 1,060ft. above sea.

On Tuesday, February 16, I moved my camp to the bank of the Granite Creek, near the junction of that stream and the Sophia River, having roughed out the line thus far, but the

track was not completed to the camp until the 30th of the same month; our progress, having become of a necessity slow since leaving the saddle on Granite Tor, all our supply of provisions, tents, etc., having now to be carried upon the men's backs, and the track, running through a very densely wooded country, had to be well cut out to enable them to get along with their loads.

During the time the men were engaged clearing out and marking the line to the new camp I had occupied my time in examining the surrounding country for further proceedings, and I now discovered that I had been put to needless trouble in getting from Granite Tor to the point where I was then camped, as there was a perfectly practicable, and easy route obtainable by striking the head of the north branch of the Sophia, near its source upon Granite Tor, and following down the Sophia Valley, instead of passing over the rough, broken country before-mentioned.

I also tried to cross the Victoria Range, near Victoria Peak; thence into the valley of the Murchison River, but found it could not be done owing to the rugged nature of the country upon the Murchison side of the range, so I abandoned the attempt, and decided to take the route indicated by J. Innes and Aylett as the best.

On March 3 the weather, which had been very bad for some days past, became much worse, and from that date to the 13th of same month the surrounding mountains were snow-clad, and the rain falling in torrents all the streams became flooded, and we were confined to the tents.

On the 13th Russell left the camp for the depot on Granite Tor to meet Aylett, who was packing our supplies from Molo Creek to that point with horses; but, on the 17th Russell returned to camp, Aylett not having arrived; weather very bad, still raining heavily.

The following Saturday I again despatched Russell, and with him J. Innes and Bradshaw, to the depot, keeping Rowe with me, and went on marking the line towards a gorge between the Victoria range and High Tor, through which I was aware the line must pass.

Russell and party reached the Tor that evening; Aylett arrived the next morning, and reported having lost one of his horses upon the journey.

They had the first supply of provisions in camp by the 23rd, and on Wednesday, 24th, we moved our camp into the pass before mentioned, the track having in the meantime been cleared to that point 65 miles 150 chains from Liena and 1,100ft, above sea level.

From this point the line gradually descends through a heavily-wooded country, into the flats in the vicinity of the confluence of the Sophia and Mackintosh rivers, and is a very easy grade until the Sophia is reached.

At 67 miles 33 chains a small tributary of the Sophia was crossed, with low banks and a hard, gravelly bottom; is easily fordable. At 68 miles 8 chains we crossed another large tributary, one and a quarter chains wide, but like the former it is easily fordable, except in flood time when it would be dangerous. Sixty-nine miles thirty-three chains (69 miles 33 chains) brought us to the bank of the Sophia itself. This is a fine, large stream, flowing through a flat country, with some good land and fine timber upon its banks. It could be easily bridged, there being plenty of good timber available for that purpose close at hand. At the fording place where the track crosses, the Sophia is one chain thirty links wide, with banks about six or

eight feet above the normal water level; has a good hard bottom of small stones, and is easily fordable.

I caused a large tree to be felled across this stream, so that unless in a very high flood, when the water might possibly be over the tree, it is crossable at any time.

By Saturday, March 27, 1897, the track was cut and marked to the ford, and all our camp equipment moved up. On Sunday the 28th taking J. Innes with me, I made my way to the junction of the Sophia and Mackintosh rivers, thence following the course of, the Mackintosh for a mile or two, passed around the north end of Mount Farrell, and then went to the summit of that mountain. From there I obtained a good view of the country between my camp and the Murchison river.

Tho following Sunday, April 4, found two men and myself upon the north bank of the Murchison, about half a mile from its confluence with the Mackintosh, where it forms the Pieman, the remainder of the party being behind engaged in packing camps, etc., along.

The weather, which had kept fine up to the 4th, now broke, and the following morning it was raining heavily, and the Murchison, which is here a fine broad stream, flowing over a stony bed some 20ft. below its natural banks, began to rise, making our chances of getting across for some days look rather doubtful.

The track was completed to the banks of the Murchison, 74 miles 43 chains from Liena, on April 6, and on Wednesday, the 7th, Aylett, who had been assisting with the packing, left us for Mole Creek now some 86 miles distant by our route. He took a mail with him, and delivered it at the Mole Creek Post Office on the evening of Friday, April 9, having done the journey, in terrible weather, in three days.

Bad weather had now set in, and it rained more or less every day until Saturday, April 17. This day broke fine and the river commenced to fall rapidly, so that by the next morning (Easter Sunday) it was apparently fordable. Having got all our equipment close to the bank of the river, J. Innes and myself went into the river. Russell following, each having a load, and after a stiff struggle with the current, which was very swift, landed them safe upon the opposite side. We had to make three trips each way, and found it much more difficult to keep upon our feet when recrossing without a load than when we had 60lb. or 70lb. weight upon our backs. The water was not at any time higher than our waists, and two or three inches deeper, with the same current, none of us could have stood up to it. We had all hands safely landed upon the south bank by midday, but before we could get camps pitched it again commenced to rain, and the Murchison was once more rising. We had been detained 12 days by the river, and all hands had been upon short allowance, as it was necessary to husband our supplies until we got within reach of Mount Black mines, which were still a good many miles away.

It continued to rain heavily until the 22nd, when we again got to work and commenced cutting our way through a dense scrub, down the valley of the Mackintosh or Pieman. The track from this point follows the valley of the Pieman through a broken country heavily timbered with stringybark (*E. gigantea*), and also stringybark gumtop (*E. Siberiana*), blackwood (*Acacia m.*), and myrtle (*Fagus cun.*), the undergrowth being chiefly tree ferns (*Dicksonia antarctica*), horizontal, ti-tree (*Melaleuca*) and bauera until it reached the surveyed claims in the vicinity of Mount Black, where the Rosebery mine is situated.

By Saturday, May 1, we had reached the first of these claims, and found upon inquiry that we were within some three miles in a direct line from the bridge over the river Slit - our destination.

From this point I despatched J. Innes to Ringville, to obtain supplies and forward letters to say we were within measurable distance of civilisation.

We were now having terrible weather, the surrounding mountains being covered with snow; rain, hail, and sleet, with high winds, being the order of the day, but with a willing party the work was kept moving.

By Monday, May 10, we had marked and measured $82\frac{1}{4}$ miles of track, and this day proving fine we moved our camps to within four miles of the Stit.

The following morning it was raining again, and we had now to encounter some of the heaviest scrub upon the whole line, a dense mass of horizontal, the track having literally to be cut through almost; a solid mass; but my men got it through, and we connected to the Ringville track at the bridge over the Stit in the evening of Wednesday, May 19.

We had our camps etc., moved into the Rosebery claim by Saturday, the 22nd, and were hospitably received by the manager, Mr. Egberg, and his miners.

We stayed at the Rosebery until Monday the 24th, when all hands proceeded to Ringville, where we found good accommodation with moderate charges at Hart's Hotel. Stayed there that evening, and the following day took the North-East Dundas tram for Zeehan, the silver city of the West, arriving there after dark.

Here we found good accommodation at the Shelverton Hotel, Main-street; stayed that night, proceeding next morning by rail to Strahan. Obtained passages in the s.s. Australia; left Strahan the same evening, and reached Hobart on Thursday, May 27, after an absence of seven months and a half.

The general course of the track, and the features of the country over which it passes, are as follow :

After leaving Gad's Hill station, about 4 miles from Liena, the general course for the next 20 miles is about south, and is over a comparatively lightly-timbered country, with plenty of good grass, especially on the Berriedale Plain and its immediate vicinity. It has a good, hard bottom, with easy gradients, varying from level to 1 in 13, with very little of the latter. This brings us to the southern extremity of the Oakley Range.

From this point to Mount Pelion (west), a distance of about seven miles, the course is about west ; the country is partly open, part densely wooded, but with the exception of a few scattered basaltic boulders upon the slopes of Mount Oakley there is nothing to make track-forming expensive. The gradients upon this portion vary from 1 in 14 to 1 in 40 to level, and the country, with the exception of a few soft patches near Lake Ayr, is sound.

From the foot of Mount Pelion (west) the line runs in a northerly direction for about three miles, at an ascending grade of 1 in 20, the country rock being sandstone (coal measures), and the cross sections, which hitherto had been immaterial, are steep, varying from 10deg, to

30deg. This portion of the route is through a dense scrub, but as it is generally small stuff, it would not be costly to clear.

From this point to Fury Saddle No. 2, the course is about W.N.W.; the country is fairly open until nearing Mount Inglis, where heavy belts of scrub are met with.

The country rock consists of the coal measures near Mount Pelion; quartzite, with conglomerate and limestone, as the vicinity of Barn Bluff is reached; and coal measures again in the vicinity of Barn Bluff and Mount Inglis. The gradients are easy, 1 in 13 to 1 in 20 being the rule.

From Fury Saddle, No. 2, to the 51st mile-peg on Granite Tor the country is very broken, consisting of hummocks open on top, their sides and gullies between being full of scrub and rubbish. The country rock, as a rule; is grey granite, with here and there an outcrop of quartzite or schist, The ruling grades between Fury Saddle, No. 2, and Granite Tor are from 1 in 13 to 1 in 20, with one short piece of a few chains at 1 in 11. Some of the cross sections are as high as 25deg., but as a rule they are slight, the general course from Fury Saddle ho. 2 to the 51-mile peg, on the slopes of the Tor, is about south-west.

From the 01-mile peg to the 63rd, near Granite Creek, the general course is about east. This is the most rugged and costly portion of the whole route, the country rock being a hard, grey granite, cropping up in huge boulders, making track forming ex. pensive ; the clearing would be the heaviest upon the whole line, owing to the dense nature of the scrub, which, when nearing the Sophia Valley, is thickly studded with heavy timber. The ruling grades are, however, easy, ranging from 1 in 16 to 1 in 30, with here and there a short piece at 1 in 12 or 13.

From Granite Creek, through Alexandra Pass, thence to the north end of Mount Farrell, the course is about north-west ; the country as a rule covered with heavy scrub, the grades easy, and the cross sections the same.

The country rock is generally a soft schist, with here and there an outcrop of quartz or granite.

At the north end of Mount Farrell a few huge conglomerate boulders are encountered, through which a track will require to be blasted for a short distance, some 2 or 3 chains, but from this point to the crossing at the Murchison, at 74 miles 48 chains from Liena, there is no obstacle worth mentioning, the whole distance being comparatively level. The general course from the north end of Mount Farrell to the Murchison crossing is about south by west.

After crossing the Murchison, the line is cut through a heavily timbered country around the slopes of Mount Black and in the valley of the Pieman, but the grades are very easy, and with the exception of a few ravines and water courses, such as are generally to be met with in this description of country, there is nothing to prevent a good road being made at a moderate expense,

DISTANCE.

The total distance from Mole Creek to the bridge over the Stit is 98 miles, from Liena to the Stit 86 miles 39 chains. The distance from the Stit bridge to Ringville by the Ringville track

is about $6\frac{1}{3}$ miles. The present terminus of the North-east Dundas tramway is within a few minutes' walk of Ringville.

MARKING.

The track has been well cut out through all heavy scrub, so that there is no difficulty in carrying an ordinary swag along it. All timber within easy reach is marked upon either side with a large blaze or horseshoe mark, all logs crossed have a large notch cut on centre of track. In any open country the route is indicated by stout stakes, seldom less than 4in. in diameter, from 5ft. to 6ft. high, firmly planted in the ground at intervals of about 5 chains where the line is straight, and much closer where it makes a sudden turn. In a few places where stakes are not available, the route is indicated by cairns of stone with a short, stout stake firmly planted in the summit of the cairn. At each 10 chains a short, stout peg is driven, with the distance in miles and chains plainly marked upon it. At every mile a stout post is firmly fixed in the ground, showing about 3ft. above the surface, and the mileage marked upon it.

The fording places at all creeks are well and plainly marked by finger posts and directions upon the nearest tree. At the Sophia crossing a track is also cut down the east bank of that river to its confluence with the Mackintosh, where there is a good ford over that stream, finger post marked upon a tree giving directions where it is to be found.

LAND

In several places along the line of route some fine agricultural land was met with, notably so in the vicinity of Lake Ayr, the Sophia and its main tributary, and in the valley of the Murchison, but especially in the valley of the first-mentioned stream and on the surrounding hills upon the eastern side of the river.

The flats in the vicinity of the river and its main tributary are a rich chocolate soil, very deep, and are covered with a dense growth of tree ferns (*Dicksonia antarctica*), the undergrowth being generally a small fern known as catheads. The standing timber being chiefly myrtle (*Fagus* Cun.) of a large size, with here and there a solitary white gum. I had not the time to make any estimate of the probable area, but, viewing it from the summit of Mount Farrell, there was apparently a large area available suitable for agriculture, it being only some 760ft. above sea level.

Near the confluence of the rivers Mackintosh and Murchison the track passed through some splendid land of the same description. This is well sheltered from the prevailing winds, and should make good homesteads for small farmers.

The land in the vicinity of Lake Ayr consists of rich bottom land covered with a rank growth of white grass, which our jaded pack horses seemed to greatly enjoy.

Tho whole of the way from Gad's Hill station patches of good feeding land are to be met with.

TIMBER

All the way from Liena to the Berridale Plain there is a fair amount of fine timber, consisting of swamp gum (*E. Amygdalina*), gumtop (*E. Siberiana*), and stringybark (*E. Obliqua*).

From the Berridale Plain to the foot of Mount Oakley there is very little timber of any value, what there is being chiefly peppermint (*E. Amygdalina*), and very stunted. At the foot of Mount Oakley and on the lower spurs of Mount Pelion east, we have stringy-bark (*E. Obliqua*) of fair quality, and some gum-top fine young timber, myrtle (*Fagus Cun*) and King William pines.

Upon the south-western slopes of Granite Tor, and upon the lower slopes of the mountain known as High Tor, there are some belts of gum-top (*E. Siberiana*), fine lofty clean timber, so far untouched by fires and the bushman's axe.

In the valley and low hills near the Sophia River we have timber of the same quality, and the same occurs again in the valley of the Murchison, especially near the confluence of that river and the Mackintosh. In this vicinity we came across some fine blackwood trees (*Acacia M*), intermixed with the gum-top and in some few instances quite as lofty.

There is a little King William pine upon the higher spurs of Mount Black, and upon its lower spurs and outlying hills myrtle of splendid quality abounds,

MINERALS

At or near Mount Pelion east this route enters what may be termed the great mineral belt, which runs from north to south along the western portion of Tasmania, and from there to the bridge over the Stit, our terminus, the whole country passed over gives indications of being a valuable mineral field. Near Mount Pelion East a Northern company have discovered a pyrites lode containing silver, copper and gold, and they are now driving to strike the lode at a lower level to test its value.

Upon the spurs of the Pelion (west) the coal measures appear, and what is apparently a seam of valuable steam coal has been found.

Near Barn Bluff there are vast quantities of valuable cannel coal lying about, upon and just under the surface of the ground, the seam apparently having been broken up by some convulsion of nature.

All the creeks having their source on Granite Tor, which were crossed by the track, carried tin in small quantities. And in the valley of the Sophia, upon the steep sides of the Victoria Range, and in the deep gorges and gullies about Mount Farrell huge outcrops of iron gossan, and in some places pyrites were noticed.

In the bed of the Murchison River almost every stone you can break carries a mineral of some sort, from shining galena to dull looking copper pyrites, all tending to show that this splendid stream, with its enormous water power, has been for ages past gradually wearing its way through rocks carrying metals of all descriptions.

BRIDGES

The only bridges of any magnitude that would be required upon this route would be that over the River Murchison. This is a large, rapid stream, three chains wide where the track crosses, and although fordable in many places when at its summer level, still, with only a very moderate amount of rain, it becomes impassable without a bridge of some description. When detained upon its banks my party felled no less than nine large trees, most of which reached the opposite bank, but to no purpose, for as soon as any portion of them touched the water they were at once broken off and swept away. There is a fine site for a suspension bridge, a few chains above where the track crosses, and the span would not be more than about 100ft, with plenty of good timber within easy reach.

The Sophia and its largest tributary are the only other streams that would be like to require a bridge over them, in both cases in their normal condition they are only shallow, sluggish streams, with hard gravelly bottoms, and low banks, and as there is plenty of good timber available in both instances, the cost of bridging should not be anything very considerable.

DEVIATIONS REQUIRED.

Upon the accompanying plan I have indicated two deviations, which are required to obtain the best line.

The first is at Mount Inglis, the line as marked, for reasons stated in a former portion of this report, was taken on the northern side of this mountain, where I found afterwards that it could, and should, have gone upon the southern side, as in that case I should have been at least at 500ft. less altitude, with plenty of shelter in the shape of timber, etc, which is a consideration where snow is likely to be encountered.

The second one marked is more important still, as by taking the route indicated upon the plan, easy grades can be obtained, and some 14 miles of the worst country upon the whole route be avoided, and a very material difference be made in the cost of construction for this portion of the line.

Some mile and a half of this deviation, commencing near Granite Creek, and running up the Sophia Valley, has already been marked, and before I left it I satisfied myself that it could be done, and the track altered to pass that way.

As a rule the health of the whole party was good until nearing the end of our journey, when one of the party had a severe attack of rheumatism, which threatened to lay him up, and during the last fortnight, when near the Rosebery, I was an invalid myself, having a severe attack of low fever, brought on by long exposure to damp and cold. With those exceptions and sundry cuts and bruises, there was nothing serious to complain of.

Mr. Aylett, who undertook to pack our supplies as far as he could get with his horses, carried out his task in a very satisfactory manner, and to him the party are indebted for many little kindnesses in the shape of parcels and letters delivered. When he had done with the horses, he assisted my men to pack the rations as far as the Murchison crossing where he left us, on April 7, carrying with him the good wishes of the whole party, and when anything is done towards making this route available for traffic I confidently recommend him as the right man to form the guide for the party having the work in hand.

The weather during the first part of the journey was all that could be desired, but with the beginning of the new year it broke up, and at least one-half the remainder of the time occupied was wet and bad.

In the months of March and April we had no less than 36 days heavy rain, and up to the date of our leaving in May we had had 11 wet days.

At Mount Black, the mine manager at the Rosebery informed me that he had noted the same number of wet days that I had during those months, and that from February 20 to May 20, according to his rain gauge, 2ft. of rain had fallen.

Taking the track as a whole, from start to finish, it passes over a country well worth opening up, and once a practicable line of traffic is formed it should prove an attraction for tourists, as for mountain and lake scenery, especially in the vicinity of Barn Bluff and the Cradle Mountain, it forms one of the most beautiful portions of the colony, and with a decent track of any sort would easily be reached,

I have, etc.,

E. G. INNES,

District Surveyor, in charge of track party.

TASMANIAN TELEGRAMS [from our own correspondent.]

THE INNES TRACK.

The Mercury, Thursday 21 October 1897, Page 3.

(<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/9407423?searchTerm=Innes%20Track&searchLimits=>)

DELORAINÉ, Wednesday.

The announcement that £5,000 for the Innes route is not likely to be granted has caused a slump in the spirits of Pelion company speculators.

That the Innes route is of no practical value has long been known here. Confirmation of this comes to hand daily. However, farmers, graziers, and others, expect Parliament to vote £1,000 for opening of a cattle track from the V.D.L. road at May Day to Rosebery. This sum will be ample, and, if spent, would give direct communication with the West Coast for all places between Longford and Ulverstone in 30 miles less distance and 1,000ft. less elevation than Innes' route via Pelton, and searching inquiry into the whole business of this track should be made now that Parliament is sitting.

There has long been a good horse track from Gad Hill via Pelion to Granite Tor, that is now used in preference to Innes' route when weather permits. This will meet all the requirements of that locality until something better than surface veins of copper and coal is found.

WESTWARD HO.

VOTE FOR INNES TRACK.

DELORLAINE, Friday.

Launceston Examiner Saturday 20 November 1897, Page 10

Much satisfaction was expressed here yesterday at the receipt of a telegram intimating that the Minister of Lands had promised to place £3000 on the estimates for the completion of Innes track.