

LAND EXPLORATION IN TASMANIA, 1824 - 1842

LAND EXPLORATION IN TASMANIA, 1824 - 1842

With Special Reference to the Van Diemen's Land Company

by

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## ABBREVIATIONS USED IN FOOTNOTES

- H.R.A.: Historical Records of Australia.
- P.L.V.: Public Library of Victoria, Melbourne.
- P.R.O.: Public Record Office, London.
- T.S.A.: Tasmanian State Archives, Hobart.
- U.T.: University of Tasmania, Library, Hobart.
- V.D.L.Co.: Van Diemen's Land Company, Burnie.

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis does not purport to be a comprehensive, definitive account of all Tasmanian exploration undertaken during the years from 1824 to 1842. Much of the exploration that was carried out during this (and other) periods was obviously not undertaken in that name, but was merely the incidental result of activities with another purpose: hunters roaming away from the settlement; settlers seeking for new lands; stockmen searching for lost cattle or sheep; or escaped convicts seeking freedom in the uninhabited and unknown wilds of the Colony. Of most of these journeys no official or non-official record now remains, or probably ever existed; for, even if they had been disposed to write down their experiences, undoubtedly a great many of these bush travellers were illiterate. In other cases, where some record does survive, the people concerned were only semi-literate, and ill-equipped to make a geographically intelligible report of their journeys.

For this reason, the limited availability of records, this thesis deals mainly with exploration undertaken in an official or semi-official capacity by Government or privately sponsored surveyors; or by settlers possessing the requisite knowledge to give accurate reports of the country they traversed. Often such men would not have been the first adventurers into some areas, but their claim to notice is based on the somewhat arbitrary



(but unavoidable) circumstance that theirs were the first written reports which are now available.

But one discovers tantalising scraps of evidence of expeditions which cannot be followed up. There is a reference on a map of 1828 to "Stanfield's track to the Derwent"; a William Stanfield, a convict, accompanied G.A. Robinson on his tour around the island in the aboriginal "mission", and was drowned in the Pieman River in 1833; Surveyor W. S. Sharland in 1832 makes a reference to "....a man named Stanfield who had been with Mr. Robinson" being upon the Belle Vue Tier recently. From such small pieces of information the man can be identified fairly certainly; but of his journey up the Derwent and its circumstances - nothing. Again, there is a reference in the Hobart Town Courier in 1833 to four men arriving in Hobart Town in an exhausted condition after journeying overland from Macquarie Harbour. Who were these men? There is no hint to their identity. It is unlikely they were convicts, but there is no indication even of the sort of men they were, or the reason for their undertaking the journey. Perhaps they were adventurers who had decided to attempt the crossing in which so few had succeeded, when the penal station at Macquarie Harbour was abandoned in 1833; but any inference can be but a guess.

Another example of a piece of information so small and unelaborated that it cannot be related to the general pattern is

the reference one finds in one of Jorgenson's manuscripts to the tracks of "Serjeant Brien" and "Corporal Rian" in the vicinity of Lake Fergus. Other documents, quite detailed, are so geographically incoherent that it is impossible to follow the explorer's route; for example there is a sketch-map of a journey made by Captain Molyneux Dalrymple to the west of Bothwell, but it is so confused as to be worthless as source material.

The roving parties sent out in search of the aborigines must have travelled many formerly untrodden paths. Many such parties were led by pardoned or ticket-of-leave convicts, and because the purpose of their reports was merely to give information of the whereabouts of aborigines, their routes are impossible to follow with any accuracy.

The main contribution of this type was that made by G.A. Robinson, who travelled very extensively over the island. In 1830 he journeyed from Hobart Town to Port Davey, to Macquarie Harbour, Cape Grim, along the northern coast and finally covered much of the north-eastern quarter. His journeys are detailed in his diaries and other papers in the Mitchell Library, but as his interest was exclusively the aborigines his papers are mainly concerned with observations and tales relating to that unfortunate people; to attempt to sift the information relevant to exploration from this mass of unorganised and nearly illegible writings is a long, difficult and unenviable task. In any case, Robinson's background was not such as to fit him to recount his

journeys accurately. He usually followed the coastline, and insofar as he did that he discovered little that had not previously been observed by the marine surveyors.

His most important inland exploration was from Port Davey to the mountain range indicated on Scott's map as a "High ridge of white topped mountains." Robinson named them in honour of the Lieutenant-Governor, Colonel Arthur. But this side of Robinson's career was given no prominence and save this, none of Robinson's nomenclature remains, and it may be that this instance is due to the fact that Alexander McGeary and Alexander McKay, two convicts who had accompanied Robinson on this journey, were later to be employed by the Survey Department and were able to identify the range as that Robinson had ascended.

This thesis, therefore, necessarily concentrates almost entirely on exploration of an official or semi-official nature, with discovery as its principal motive; in the North-West that undertaken by the Van Diemen's Land Company, and in the southern, central and western areas, by the Survey Department.

#### II

A small island, Tasmania never presented the same challenge of the unknown as did the vast areas of the Australian continent. Here there could be no conjecture of inland sea or arid central desert; but it took over a century of white occupation before the character of the whole island was known, and even then the knowledge of much of it was imperfect. The study of Tasmanian exploration

has been rather surprisingly neglected, compared with the material that has been written on the opening up of the Australian continent. Greater distances, richer rewards and larger expeditions have attracted more research on the Mainland, but the explorer in Van Diemen's land faced the same rigours, the same threats of starvation and death in the wilderness, and more severe lower extremes of climate. In terms of human endeavour, their achievements were not less than those of Oxley, Sturt and Eyre.

The original assumption that Van Diemen's land was part of the continent was disproved in 1798 by Matthew Flinders and George Bass, and their voyage and those of later marine surveyors not only made known the coastline but also gave them a hint of the general characteristics of the interior. But the nature of the country, particularly the dense forests and the rugged mountains of the North and West, presented difficult problems and made the work of the inland explorer a hazardous undertaking.

In general terms, Tasmania consists of mountainous and high rocky plateau regions in the West and centre of the island, a mountain mass in the central North-East, and between the two a long valley of plain country. Both the North-East and the far North-West, to a lesser extent, consist of low-lying hills and sandy areas. The basaltic hills of the north-western coastal region now form excellent farming country.

In addition to its mountainous nature, the heavy rainfall in the West and North-West makes it an area of dense growth, almost tropical in its jungle-like character. But in the eastern valley seasonal rains result in an area of mixed grass and woodland. The difficulties of survey and communications in the western half of the island and their comparative facility in the East inevitably determined the areas of settlement.

Before the first settlement on the banks of the River Derwent in 1803 the south-eastern coast, especially, had been much explored, for it is the natural inlet to the South of the island. Tasman, in 1642, had been the first to enter and name Storm Bay, and this one identified spot became the magnet for the later French and English explorers. The Frenchmen, Marion du Fresne in 1771, Bruny D'Entrecasteaux in 1792-3 and Baudin in 1802 did much valuable work; D'Entrecasteaux's survey of the Channel which bears his name and of the Derwent estuary were remarkably accurate. Of the Englishmen who visited the shores of Van Diemen's Land, Cook and Bligh made only cursory examinations, their purpose merely to obtain fresh supplies of water and timber before continuing what they considered to be more important work in the Pacific. Commodore John Hayes was the first really to spend much time here, but his work is characterised by a gross inaccuracy which was left to Bass and Flinders to correct. They added their own valuable observations to the mass of information which had by now been collected.

Most of the parties went ashore at some places, but nowhere did they penetrate far from the coast. A boat party sent out by D'Entrecasteaux under Lieutenant Willaumez sailed up the Derwent River to a point above Mount Direction in 1793 and later in the same year Commodore John Hayes reached the present site of New Norfolk. However it was Bass and Flinders whose description of the country in this neighbourhood enabled Governor King to send Bowen to make the first settlement in the island, at Risdon in 1803.

With only a handful of settlers to be given land no encouragement was given to exploration at first. Indeed the original intention was merely to have a token occupation as a deterrent to the French; later the island was to be a receptacle for convicts with only sufficient free settlers to give some measure of equilibrium to the society. There was, therefore, no official encouragement given either to the immigration of free settlers or to exploration to discover new land for them. While the Colony remained purely a penal station there could be no advantage in furthering knowledge of its geography, except insofar as it was necessary to have a small hinterland around the main establishments to be brought into production as a granary.

However, a surveyor was sent from Sydney in 1803. James Meehan made a journey through the Coal River district to the East Coast. The following year saw the arrival in the Colony of Robert Brown, a botanist who had formerly served with Flinders in the Investigator and who had come from Sydney to

join Collins's party, headed for the Derwent. In his wanderings about the settlement he collected much valuable information, and on one occasion he is supposed to have traced the Derwent upwards for forty or fifty miles, though the latter part of this journey probably followed the course of one of its tributaries, the Clyde or the Ouse. On another occasion, having seen the Huon River from the top of Mount Wellington, he attempted to trace it overland, but found that the stream he followed brought him to North West Bay. On his second attempt he achieved his purpose, despite the natural difficulties of the route.

Apart from Brown and his companions, hunters also roamed far from the settlement; Hugh Germaine, said to have carried only a Bible and a copy of the Arabian Nights, is supposed to have been responsible for such nomenclature as the Jordan, Jerusalem, Bagdad, Lake Tiberias and Abyssinia.

Some exploration was going on round the Tamar in the northern settlement, but the first crossing of the island was not made until 1807. This was by Lieutenant Thomas Laycock and four others who were sent to Hobart Town by Captain Anthony Fenn Kemp in the hope of procuring food for the famished northern settlement, little knowing that the settlers on the Derwent were in no better position. They journeyed by way of the Lake River, through the Western Tiers, past Lakes Sorell and Crescent to the Clyde River and then along the Derwent until they were finally picked up by a passing boat at Herdsman's Cove, the confluence of the Derwent and the Jordan. The crossing occupied eight days, though the return journey took only six.

Later in the same year Charles Grimes, another New South Wales surveyor made a similar crossing, though he kept a course further to the eastward and closer to that followed today by the main North-South highway.

Little was done during Lieutenant-Colonel Davey's administration of the colony, though in 1815 a private expedition was undertaken by James Kelly to circumnavigate the island in a whale boat. On this voyage both Port Davey and Macquarie Harbour were entered, thus paving the way for the timber trade which sprang up in the following years.

Compared with the work done during Davey's unenterprising term of office, during Sorell's administration we find much evidence of exploration, often directly encouraged or set on foot by the Governor himself. Sorell was a most capable administrator with a vision which saw the island in other terms than those of a penal station only. It was during his years in the Colony that the tide of immigration began to flow and the settlement greatly to extend. As intending settlers could emigrate only with the permission of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, these newcomers were mostly of good character, such as would be suitable to employ convicts, and these men laid the foundation for the colony's future development as a free society.

Geography had largely limited settlement to the two ports, Hobart Town and Launceston, and to the broad belt of plain country between. Generally the two great river systems of the Derwent and Tamar formed the basis for settlement, as the settlers



spread themselves along the Derwent, the Jordan, the Clyde, the Ouse and the Dee in the South, and in the North along the North and South Esk, the Meander, the Lake, the Elizabeth and the Macquarie Rivers. These areas provided the type of "savannah" country so suitable for sheep, especially fine wool production.

By constructing a network of roads in the settled parts of the Colony Sorell encouraged further location of land in these areas so that by 1824 nearly all the easily accessible land had been alienated, and pastoralists were seeking further and further abroad for their grazing runs. (See Map 1).

But perhaps Sorell's greatest contribution was through his interest in improving the quality of the wool of the Colony's sheep. Previously settlers had concentrated almost entirely on producing meat and the fleeces were held in little esteem - so little in fact that they were usually thrown away. Also the practice of non-selective breeding, while it greatly increased the sheep population, did nothing towards improving their size or the quality of the fleeces.

In 1820 Sorell, with the approval of Macquarie, imported 300 improved Merino lambs from the Macarthur stud in New South Wales for distribution among approved settlers. This marked the beginning of the improvement in the quality of the Van Diemen's Land wool, the growth of which now became the prime

consideration of the majority of the inland settlers, and between 1820 and 1830 the numbers of sheep in the Colony increased nearly fourfold.

The future which now presented itself for the wool industry in Van Diemen's Land made it necessary that further openings, especially insofar as new areas of pasture were concerned, should not be overlooked. Settlement was already spreading out beyond the Shannon and Ouse Rivers in the West, but there was still considerable land suitable for location here. However, a journey by John Beamont, Naval Officer at Hobart Town, in 1817 in the country to the westward of the Great Lake had seemed to establish the unsuitability of that area for any purposes of pasturage or agriculture. Also the increasing severity of the climate in these higher regions made it obvious that the colonists could not hope to continue their advances in that direction.

To the South the country was mountainous and heavily forested. Thus the chief hopes at this period seemed to lie in the East and it was here that Sorell first directed his attention. An expedition was undertaken in December, 1819 by Henry Rice and some companions; if, on a cursory examination, the country should appear favourable, it was Sorell's intention to visit the area himself. Rice journeyed from the Coal River to Prosser's Plains and then up the coast as far north as St. Patrick's Head. Here he turned inland, crossing the mountains to Break-o'-Day Plains and St. Paul's Plains, on both

of which he reported favourably. With the coastal areas he was less impressed, for though there were a number of plains none was of great extent. The report was apparently not sufficiently attractive to induce Sorell to carry out his intention. Most likely he had been so impressed with the amount of available land in the Clyde and Shannon districts, which he had just toured, that he did not consider the settlement of the East Coast districts would be required for some time. Settlement was dependent on ease of communication, in turn dependent on distances and terrain. This meant that East Coast settlement could not be undertaken except by people who had the means of transport.

In April and May, 1821 Governor Macquarie paid his second visit to the island dependency and took the opportunity to visit the hinterland, selecting sites for townships along the North-South road and bestowing names on many landmarks. On his previous tour in 1811 Macquarie had selected George Town as the site of the northern headquarters as he considered Launceston a bad choice. Anxious to justify this decision against adverse criticism which had been levelled at it, largely because it lacked agricultural or grazing land in its vicinity, he now ordered Sorell to have the area explored, especially along the northern coast, in the hope of encouraging its settlement, so that George Town need no longer depend on supplies from Launceston.

Thomas Scott, the Colony's assistant surveyor, was sent on this mission in December, 1821 but his report was entirely unfavourable and following Macquarie's recall the project apparently lapsed.

Thomas Scott also made other journeys in the East coast region during 1822 and 1823 but of these no record remains except Sorell's statement that it had been extensively examined by Assistant Surveyor Scott, and a few of Scott's drawings of various landmarks which have been preserved.

In 1823 Sorell instigated further explorations, this time turning to the North-West as the most likely area where grazing land might be found. Although these two journeys, by Captain John Rolland and Charles Browne Hardwicke held out but few hopes of the desired sheep country, Sorell continued to look to this area as the most likely to provide the largest extension to the Colony. It was, therefore, this area which he recommended on his return to England the following year to the group of merchants and capitalists who were interested in forming a company for the promotion of fine wool production in Van Diemen's Land.

The last expedition which Sorell sponsored was that of James Hobbs who, early in 1824, was equipped to sail around the island reporting on the rivers and harbours as well as on the description of soil and timber.

PART I

THE VAN DIEMEN'S LAND COMPANY

AND THE NORTH-WEST.

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Map 1. Chart of Van Diemen's Land, by  
Thomas Scott. 1824.

Lieut. Governor of Van Diemen's Land &c. &c. &c.

The Highway in the State of Maryland  
 built-up to the Highway to put out gas stations.  
 Several of the remaining trucks from the later  
 show in attempting to reach the Highway have  
 died on the road, another group after having killed  
 one of their comrades to preserve their own lives were  
 obliged to return and give themselves up to the shamans  
 and

[illegible][illegible]

*March Town to North side of Spring Hill* ... Miles West ... 37. 1  
*January Town to Elizabeth Town* ... 37. 4  
*Elizabeth T. to Leesylvania* ... 43. 1  
*112. 7* ... 102 Miles 7 Furlongs

*N.B. Going round by the Great March, from the Green Fields to Springhill to One Mile and Six Furlongs North*

DISTANCE OF MILES FROM ROBERT TOWN  
 TO ELIZABETH TOWN

|                                  | Miles | Furlongs | Paces |
|----------------------------------|-------|----------|-------|
| From Robert Town to the Township | 38    | 5        | 30    |
| 1st " " "                        | 40    |          |       |
| 2nd " " "                        | 40    |          |       |
| 3rd " " "                        | 40    |          |       |
| 4th " " "                        | 40    |          |       |
| 5th " " "                        | 40    |          |       |
| 6th " " "                        | 40    |          |       |
| 7th " " "                        | 40    |          |       |
| 8th " " "                        | 40    |          |       |
| 9th " " "                        | 40    |          |       |
| 10th " " "                       | 40    |          |       |
| 11th " " "                       | 40    |          |       |
| 12th " " "                       | 40    |          |       |
| 13th " " "                       | 40    |          |       |
| 14th " " "                       | 40    |          |       |
| 15th " " "                       | 40    |          |       |
| 16th " " "                       | 40    |          |       |
| 17th " " "                       | 40    |          |       |
| 18th " " "                       | 40    |          |       |
| 19th " " "                       | 40    |          |       |
| 20th " " "                       | 40    |          |       |
| 21st " " "                       | 40    |          |       |
| 22nd " " "                       | 40    |          |       |
| 23rd " " "                       | 40    |          |       |
| 24th " " "                       | 40    |          |       |
| 25th " " "                       | 40    |          |       |
| 26th " " "                       | 40    |          |       |
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| 90th " " "                       | 40    |          |       |
| 91st " " "                       | 40    |          |       |
| 92nd " " "                       | 40    |          |       |
| 93rd " " "                       | 40    |          |       |
| 94th " " "                       | 40    |          |       |
| 95th " " "                       | 40    |          |       |
| 96th " " "                       | 40    |          |       |
| 97th " " "                       | 40    |          |       |
| 98th " " "                       | 40    |          |       |
| 99th " " "                       | 40    |          |       |
| 100th " " "                      | 40    |          |       |

## CHAPTER I.

## PRELIMINARY JOURNEYS.

i. Rolland's Journey Westward from Westbury, 1823.

Until 1824 no attempt had been made to explore the North-Western quarter, although the general coastline was known from observations made by the earlier marine explorers, and no doubt the whalers and sealers sailing along the coast on their way to and from the Bass Strait islands had contributed something to this knowledge. Thus the mouths of the main rivers westward of Port Dalrymple were known, and designated the First, Second and Third Western Rivers - that is the Rubicon, the Mersey and the Forth. The rivers further west seem not to have been generally known.

Sorell, following his policy of encouraging free immigration and wool production, gave official encouragement to the exploration of the more remote parts of the island. Earlier expeditions had shown that the East and North-East Coasts were unsuitable for grazing. The mountains rising almost from the coastline on the West Coast seemed to exclude the possibility of finding sheep land there. Thus the North-West Coast area was the remaining chance, and here Sorell hoped would be found an extensive tract of good country. <sup>(1)</sup> Towards the end of 1823 two expeditions were undertaken to examine this area - the one by land and the other by sea.

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(1) Sorell-Arthur, 22nd. May 1824. Encl. in Arthur-Bathurst,



The land party, led by Captain John Rolland of the Third Buffs Regiment, then stationed at Launceston, attempted to penetrate westward to the country under the Western Tiers. As a result of an earlier reconnaissance in the area Rolland believed that he could reach the north-western coast by following a route along the northern base of the Tiers.

To find this passage he set out on 27th. November, 1823 from Mr. Leith's property near Westbury (see Map 2). Following the Meander River upstream he forded it a few miles above the present site of Deloraine and then travelled west on the line of route more or less the same as that afterwards adopted by the Van Diemen's Land Company's roadmakers - that is through Chudleigh and Mole Creek. It was in this area that Rolland first saw and remarked upon the circular ponds in the ground which they found to be numerous under the mountains. Here he turned more to the northward, skirting the base of the Barren Tier, the last outcrop of the Western Tiers, and reached the Mersey Flats. After resting for a day he attempted to penetrate across the river into a plain which some of his party had seen in the West-South-West. Progress in this direction, however, was prevented by "an impenetrable high scrub" and he returned to the Mersey. In the following days he searched in vain for a pass through the mountains; on 6th. December, when when about to return to find a passage to the Lake River, he saw a previously unnoticed pass in a lesser range, to which he ascended. From his observations to the North-West he -

"determined .....to endeavour to make a passage on the following day to the North-West by crossing over the High part of the tier in preference to proceeding by the low part which lay to the west of me..... On the 7th we started early in the morning, and though the tier was steep, and very high we got to the top without much fatigue as the passage was free from obstructions."

Therefore it appears that the previous assumption that Rolland did not reach the summit of Mount Roland, based apparently only on the fact that this mountain was originally known as "Rolland's Repulse", is not consistent with this extract from his actual report of the journey.

In the descent he was forced more to the eastward than had been his intention, and at the foot "the thickness of the woods and the height of the underwood and scrub" prevented him from further pursuing a north-westerly course. He, therefore, followed down the course of a tributary, probably the Dasher, to its junction with the Mersey, and thence made his way back to Westbury.

From Westbury Rolland again set out to trace the Rubicon, or First Western River to the coast, an area in which he had on previous examination found some good plains. There is no record of this former expedition.

Rolland considered that in general the country he had explored was of an inferior description to that of the settled districts, and though there was an abundance of some of the finest water in Van Diemen's Land, to his mind it would scarcely counteract the excessive cold due to the proximity of the Western Tiers, the inferior pasture, the wide areas of scrubby

country and the fact that much of the land was subject to floods, To the west of the Mersey he had encountered no good country at all, and only a small area in the vicinity of Kimberley. After leaving the Mersey Rolland must have skirted the rich, and now highly esteemed districts of Moltema, Dunorlan and Elizabeth Town. But his report of them was not favourable because, although it was a well watered and open country, the number of scrubby hills precluded the possibility of profitably locating large grants there. <sup>(1)</sup>

The unenthusiastic, and often very bad, reports given of the north-western districts - districts which have since proved to be some of the richest in the island - are especially noticeable in all the early accounts. At this time wool was becoming an important export, and the demand was rather for large grazing runs such as those which existed more to the eastward, than for land which, though suitable for agriculture, would involve a considerable initial expenditure before it could be brought into production. Moreover the distance from the settled districts would have made it of little value even for agriculture at this stage of the island's development. The competition from the older settled districts with their established communications and proximity to the town markets made the development of this area uneconomic.

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(1) Holland-Sorell, 21st. Jan. 1824. CSO 1/95/2276, T.S.A.

ii. Hardwicke's Coastal Reconnaissance, 1823.

The other exploratory scheme sponsored by Sorell was the marine expedition undertaken by Charles Browne Hardwicke, a retired naval man settled at Norfolk Plains (Longford). In earlier years as master of the cutter Elizabeth he had sailed the coasts of Van Diemen's Land and had formed the opinion that a large extent of excellent land existed in the far North-West. Therefore, at the end of 1823 he set out to examine it more extensively. His report of this journey and his findings addressed to the Lieutenant-Governor, William Sorell, were dated from January, 1824. He had examined the coast from Port Dalrymple to a point on the West Coast which Hardwicke thought was about forty miles south of Cape Grim. This would place him a little to the south of the Arthur River, but as it is unlikely that he would have gone this far without noticing the mouth of this river, he probably began the return journey at a point a little north of this. At some places he went ashore and examined the interior.

Of Port Sorell he reported favourably - indeed he referred to it as a very desirable situation, "because of its natural advantages, though the entrance to the harbour was "too difficult for vessels to attempt without having a previous knowledge of its dangers." On the eastern and western sides of the inlet, there was good pasture for sheep and cattle, well watered with a picturesque aspect and a fine view, and served by a navigable river within a short distance.

He entertained a poor opinion of the coastal country between the Mersey River and Rocky Cape, describing it as "mountainous, extremely barren, and totally unfit for habitation"; nor did it have the advantage of any navigable rivers. To condemn Hardwicke on the basis of this judgment of what has since become one of the richest areas in Tasmania would be a little hasty, because the heavily timbered nature of this country in its primitive state did make it unfit for pastoral or agricultural purposes in the eyes of prospective landowners of the time; the limited means of clearing the land then available made agriculture too expensive, and in any case the prevailing interest at this time was in the production of fine wool. But Hardwicke's observations, being limited to a narrow strip along the coast, were thus somewhat harsh and sweeping.

Hardwicke was impressed with the advantages of Circular Head and he examined it closely. Of it he wrote: "Nature has done everything in variagating [sic] this place with hill and dale and in making it the most picturesque and best adapted soil for cultivation on the North coast of this Island."

As soon as the forests gave way to the heathy plains west of Rocky Cape Hardwicke again became enthusiastic, especially when he spoke of the plains of Cape Grim and of the West Coast where a strip about a mile in width was covered with "rich grass pasture"; and beyond this he found "extensive plains thickly covered with a herbage a foot high having a resemblance to heath but of a very fine description." There was a diversity of soil, but the greater

part was a rich vegetable mould intermixed with a small proportion of nearly black sand, and the whole was well watered.

However, Hardwicke's views were less enthusiastic on the whole than one would suppose from reading his official report; in a covering letter to Sorell he states that he omitted remarks about the interior because they were so unfavourable that if they were made public it might cause a stoppage of immigration to the Colony. In fact he says the whole interior west of Port Sorell was "quite impenetrable and totally uninhabitable." Furthermore, even the country at Circular Head and to the west of it did not meet his expectations either in extent or in fertility. Land communication with this quarter also would be very difficult, if not impossible. Because of this Hardwicke thought there could be no expectation of directing the tide of immigration to the westward, and he said it would be desirable to explore the possibilities of the country to the east of Port Dalrymple where Governor Macquarie had thought there would be a desirable situation for a settlement. From his recollection of the area Hardwicke thought that the country about the Forester River would serve best and he offered his services for its exploration.<sup>(1)</sup> However there is no record that his offer was accepted.

Hardwicke was also anxious to explore a passage through the mountains in continuation of Rolland's efforts. The advantages of this country, should it prove suitable, and of the rivers in conveying produce would make it a desirable situation. This he<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) Hardwicke-Sorell, 23rd. Jan. 1824. CSO 1/95/2276, T.S.A.

(2) John Helder Wedge, Diary, 28th. Jan. 1825. A 1429, M.L.

never accomplished although he interested John Helder Wedge, a young surveyor recently arrived from England, in the project. In early 1825 Wedge, employed in the Survey Department, had examined the country up the Lake River and around the south-west of the Great Lake.<sup>(1)</sup> On this journey he had first met with the bushranger Brady and his followers, who had robbed his tent, and it was in quest of these men who were terrorizing the whole island that Wedge set out on his first journey to the westward in October, 1825,<sup>(2)</sup> for he believed their retreat to be somewhere in this direction. He traced the Western River to Quamby's Bluff and later, taking a course similar to Rolland's under the Western Tiers, arrived at the Mersey, still known as the Second Western River. However, unable to cross because of the depth and rapidity of the stream he was forced to return, following the course of the river down for some distance.<sup>(3)</sup>

Wedge's conjectures as to the bushranger's retreat were somewhat strengthened by the discovery of an old log bridge which had apparently been used for driving over stolen sheep. But the water level at this time was too high for it to be of any use to Wedge. Wedge described the country under the Western Tiers, over which he had passed, as good wet land and for the most part

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(1) Supra.

(2) J.H.Wedge-Secretary, 31st.Oct. 1825. LSD 1/81/670, Sub-No.12. T.S.A.

(3) J. H. Wedge, op.cit.

thinly timbered. This was probably the same country as that previously reported on by Rolland.

iii. Hobbs's Circumnavigation of the Island, 1824.

(1)

Under instructions from Sorell, James Hobbs and a party circumnavigated Van Diemen's Land in two whale boats in the first half of 1824. This was the last expedition sent out under Sorell's orders, and possibly his most ambitious, though the Lieutenant-Governor himself had departed before its results were made known. Colonel Arthur, who replaced Sorell as Lieutenant-Governor had not the same interest in the promotion of the free development of the island as his predecessor, and thus the voyage perhaps did not yield the results that it might have.

The voyage was intended to be a comprehensive survey of the coasts of Van Diemen's Land - its rivers, inlets and harbours - together with such observations of the interior as could be made without it involving undue difficulty and risk. Hobbs was on the whole a shrewd observer, and a man not easily deterred or disheartened by the many obstacles which he encountered.

The journey occupied a period of five months and five days; the party left Hobart Town on 5th. February, 1824 and returned on 10th. July. He was accompanied by twelve convicts, all under life sentence but with the promise of pardon after good behaviour.

They first examined the harbours and entrances along the south-east coast and at Southport attempted to penetrate inland;

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(1) "Memorandum of Instruction for Mr. Hobbes", 28th. Jan. 1824.



here they were impeded by thick undergrowth so that the object could not be accomplished without great loss of time. The country all along this coast seemed to present "an indescribable barrenness".

The cliff of slate at South Cape, rising sheer from the water, impressed Hobbs and he believed that should it become useful it could be conveyed from there by means of a road and canal out through to Recherche Bay where ships could call to transport it to the settlement.

Sorell's particular injunction to examine the rivers between South and South West Capes, proved a hazardous task for the party, because of its dangerous entrance, and once accomplished they were disappointed to find it was only a large lagoon fed by a small river not practicable for boats. More difficulties were experienced in retreating and they were almost lost in crossing over to Maatsuyker Island.

Nowhere so far in his voyage had he deemed it possible or useful to penetrate into the interior for it all appeared

totally unfit for any purposes useful to civilized man, being nothing but very high mountains covered to the summit with impervious brush. It is to be observed that close to this part, in Longitude 146°30" commences a distinct and remarkable difference as well as in what grows upon the mountains, as in appearances of their surfaces. All to the Eastward are...covered to the top with impassable brushwood, while all to the North West as far as [Pieman's] River, are perfectly barren, white topped rocky mountains....

Hobbs called at Port Davey, but as it had been previously surveyed by John Oxley it was not necessary for him to delay, and he arrived at Macquarie Harbour on 28th. March. The weather they had encountered had played havoc with their boats and the larger one was rendered totally unseaworthy with a broken keel. However, the Commandant at Macquarie Harbour replaced the boat and the smaller one was repaired.

During this delay Hobbs made two journeys inland: one to Mount Sorell and the other to the D'Aguilar Range. From the latter he saw ".....nothing but one mountain towering over another", and this combined with the poor quality of the land around Port Davey and Macquarie Harbour and along the coast between the two, induced Hobbs to express his opinion that"..... if a line were drawn from the head of the Huon River to Macquarie Harbour, there could not be found five acres of fertile soil to the southward of it."

But the aspect from Mount Sorell was more promising, for there appeared to be only about twenty miles of mountainous country in an easterly direction before it opened out into plains, which Hobbs thought could be reached by taking a westerly course from the south of the Great Lake where Beamont had made an expedition some years before.

Hobbs's next port of call was to be the Pieman River and it was his task to penetrate to the interior here to discover the truth of the report that there was good country. He left

Macquarie Harbour on 10th April and because of the heavy swell on the bar of the Pieman he was forced to land some distance down the coast and to carry the boat overland to the river. He journeyed eighteen miles up its course without obstacle, but then the occurrence of rapids made it necessary for the boat to be hauled. In this vicinity Hobbs climbed a high clear hill and reported that the country all around was sterile, though not so much so as that further south. As he had been instructed to examine the coast between here and Bass Strait, where it was supposed a considerable extent of good country would be found, Hobbs decided to send James Carrets and two other men overland to Cape Grim; the heavy seas on the West Coast would have made landing difficult.

Hobbs noted the mouth of the Arthur River, but the dangerous entrance again obliged him to carry the boat overland in order to navigate it; they proceeded fifteen miles upstream when they again encountered rapids. The river flowed from low-lying country about Mount Norfolk.

Though there was some good land around Cape Grim, its small extent made its value slight and Carrets agreed with Hobbs

.....that the land from Pieman's River to Cape Grim is wholly unfit for any agricultural purposes except in very small spots, not extending a mile from the coast.

Hobbs then examined Robbin's Passage and Circular Head, both from the point of view of anchorages; he found they perfectly coincided with Flinders' descriptions. His opinion of Circular Head was a reiteration of earlier ones on the quality of its soil, and he wrote that it "would make a most excellent estate for one

or two persons with capital who would engage in the whale and seal fisheries, in addition to agricultural pursuits."

One of Sorell's particular injunctions to Hobbs was ".....to find a good pass by Land between the country forming the North west angle of the Island, and some part of the present settled country." He was to examine the northern coast"....ascertaining the Entrances, Depth of Water of the Rivers, and the sort of Country and Timber on their Banks."

However, Hobbs did not give the area the detailed examination that Sorell would have liked. His remarks were brief and superficial, and compared with his earlier sound judgments, rather ludicrous in the light of subsequent developments.

The Country from Circular Head to Port Sorell is very mountainous and barren. That quantity of good land which was expected about the North West part of the Island, is not to be found. I did not think that making a pass, hence to Port Dalrymple, would be of any benefit; particularly as I should have had to return to the Boat, had I effected it, which would have occupied a very considerable time. However, I consider the waterside is the most likely to be the best road, as the Natives travel that way, and keep it burnt.....between the Second Western River, and Port Sorell there is a rocky mountain which appeared to me to be nearly as high as the Table Mountain, at Hobart Town; indicating by its barren aspect the state of the Country around it.

Hobbs arrived at George Town on 20th. May and the boats were repaired. The next area in which Sorell had been particularly interested was the country around Cape Portland. Although Scott had reported that the country east of George Town and on the East Coast around the Bay of Fires was all bad, Sorell hoped that some good pasture land might be found in the

north-eastern corner of the island. Hobbs did not think so adversely of the area as had Scott, and he reported that on the banks of the rivers there was some excellent soil, and that all along the coast, at some distance inland, there were plains suitable for the pasturage of both sheep and cattle; they were, however, often very wet. Particularly he was impressed with the area around Ringarooma River, where it appeared that there were ".....some thousands of acres of this flat fine land."

The land around Cape Portland was ".....more fit for grazing than cultivation", but ".....of the best soil, thickly covered with a sward of excellent grass."

Hobbs had now fully examined the north-eastern area in the way Sorell had instructed him to examine the North-West, that is with inland excursions and the ascent of vantage points, and from his observations of the country as far as the mountain mass of Ben Lomond he reported that the whole area consisted of plains, but that four-fifths of it were unfit for agricultural purposes.

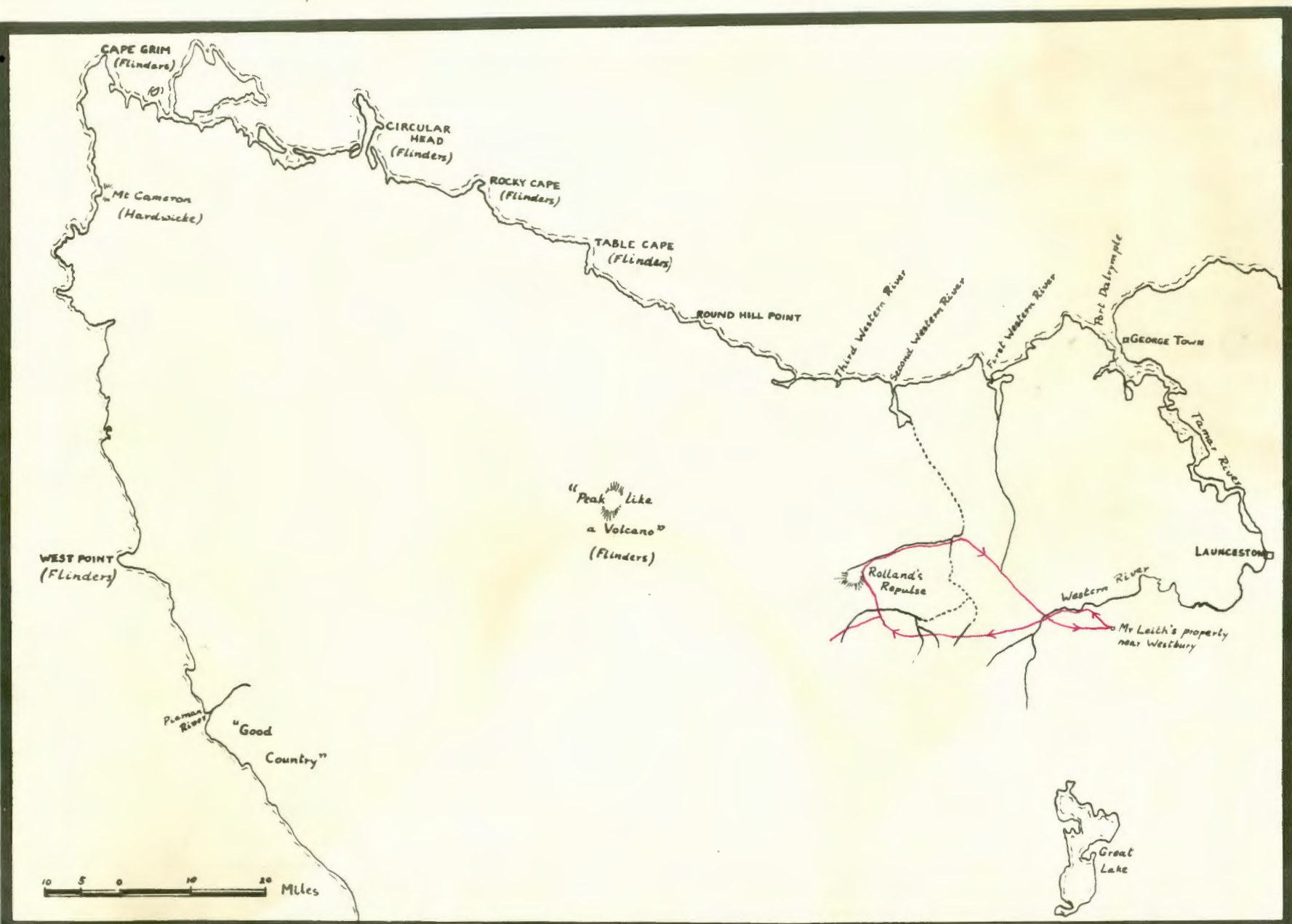
He did not examine the country further south as Scott had already done so. There was no extent of good land around George's River but around St. Patrick's Head he thought there might be three to four thousand acres of good pasture land. The remainder of the coast to Oyster Bay was mountainous and from this point back to Hobart Hobbs felt that the country was  
(1)  
too well known to need comment from him.

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(1) Hobbs - Lieutenant-Governor, 10th.Sept. 1824. CSO 1/67/1351, T.S.A.

Had Sorell been still in office to receive this report the course of Tasmanian agricultural and pastoral development might have been very different. Hobbs's condemnation of the north-western quarter of the island now added weight to Hardwicke's adverse opinion; but he had praised the North-East as being the type of country for which Sorell had looked for the extension of free settlement. Although Hobbs' examination of the North-West had been very cursory and could by no means be taken as the last word on the area, Sorell's hopes for development there must have been dampened, while he must surely have had to revise some of his ideas about the qualities of the North-East. Had he seen Hobbs's report it may well have been that the area that he recommended for the Van Diemen's Land Company's settlement would have been the North-East. Had this been the case not only would the development of the North-West have been retarded considerably in its early stages, and the opening up of the North-East correspondingly accelerated, but also the ultimate success of the Company itself might have more accorded with the high hopes of its sponsors.

Map 2. Illustrating the state of exploration, 1824, and Rolland's route, 1825.



## CHAPTER 2.

## THE VAN DIEMEN'S LAND COMPANY: BEGINNINGS.

i. Formation and Aims.

Such was the position in 1824 when the Van Diemen's Land Company was formed in London. After 1820, when the first merinos had been introduced, more and more concentration was placed on the production of sheep for fine wool rather than for meat as previously, and with encouragement from Sorell, the foundations of a profitable export trade were laid. This attracted the attention of London financiers and business men, especially those with interests in the woollen industry, and as early as May, 1824 proposals were made for the formation of a company to engage in pastoral pursuits in Van Diemen's Land. Edward Curr, who had had previous experience as a settler in the Colony, and who had recently published a book on the subject, became the secretary for the group and negotiations were begun with the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Earl Bathurst, for an extensive grant of land.<sup>(1)</sup>

Bathurst was doubtful whether such a large area of land suitable for the Company's purposes could be found in Van Diemen's Land, and sought the opinion of the former Governor, Sorell.<sup>(2)</sup> He reported in January, 1829 that the north-east

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(1) Bathurst-Curr, 15th. April, 1825. Encl. in Bathurst-Arthur, 2nd. June, 1825, No. 5. GO 1/2, T.S.A.

(2) Sorell-Bathurst, 2nd. April, 1825. Minutes of the Van Diemen's Land Company..... Hobart, 1826, p.4.



and north-west quarters of the island were the only large unoccupied areas and of these a cursory examination of the former had revealed but little good land. However, it was his opinion (based on Hardwicke's report) that the country between Port Sorell and Circular Head would be the most suitable area for an extensive alienation of land.<sup>(1)</sup> This seems at variance with Hardwicke's report of it being "totally unfit for habitation", but Sorell believed the length of coast would give the Company the required acreage even if the interior should be unpromising.

When Bathurst informed Curr of his decision in April, 1825, he did not define the area open to the Company's selection so exactly as Sorell had suggested, but said that when the Company's Charter was obtained he would recommend to His Majesty that the Company should receive a grant of 250,000 acres in the North-West, ".....that district being for the present purpose considered as bounded on the North by Bass's Straights, on the West by the ocean, and on the East and South by lines drawn from either shore so as to afford the necessary depth of Country." The land was to be selected in one tract ".....approximating to the form of a Square." The 250,000 acres was to be of "useful" land, "....that is of land capable of being used in pasturage or tillage." Whatever land that had to be included not meeting

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(1) Sorell-Bathurst, 29th. Jan. 1825. Quoted in Meston Papers, U.T.

this description would be granted gratuitously - that is, free  
 (1)  
 of quit-rent.

In September, 1825 Bathurst instructed Arthur to have the Surveyor proceed to the North-West and to make, in co-operation with Curr, "....as full and accurate survey of this Tract..... as may be possible." Natural boundaries were to be used as far as practicable. When the survey was completed, the Surveyor-General and the Company's Agent were to draw up a report describing the boundaries, after which Arthur was authorised to grant the Company an occupation licence. Arthur was given the discretion of allowing the Company to occupy some of the Bass Strait islands if it were found impossible to satisfy the Company on the mainland.  
 (2)

Meanwhile the first party of the Company's servants had left England on board the Cape Packet and arrived in Hobart Town early in March, 1826. The party consisted of the Agent, Edward Curr; three surveyors, Henry Hellyer, Joseph Fossey and Clement Powell Lorymer; an agriculturalist, Alexander Goldie; and Stephen Adey, who was to superintend the Company's land grant. It was not long before Curr and Arthur found themselves at variance because of their different interpretations of Bathurst's instructions as to the location of the Company's grant. Arthur  
 (3)  
 reported this difference to Bathurst in April, and elaborated

(1) Bathurst-Curr, 15th. April, 1825. Encl. in Bathurst-Arthur,

2nd. June, 1825, No. 5. G.O. 1/2, T.S.A.

(2) Bathurst-Arthur, 12th. Sept. 1825, No. 19. G.O. 1/2, T.S.A.

(3) Arthur-Bathurst, 4th. April, 1826, No. 12, G.O. 10/1, T.S.A.

(1)  
 the dispute in November, 1826. After stating that Curr had informed him ".....that scarcely less than one fourth of the whole island, the whole North West Quarter...." would satisfy him, Arthur enclosed correspondence between his Colonial Secretary and Curr in which the dispute was detailed. Curr referred to a communication from Sorell to Bathurst of 2nd. April, 1825 in which the area "between Port Sorell and Cape Grimm" was mentioned as that available for the Company's selection. He wrote:

14. This district, his Lordship says, shall be "considered as bounded on the north by Bass's Streights." Here I pause to ascertain the northern boundary; Bass's Streights extends from Cape Grimm to Cape Portland, and as much of the Straits as is consistent with keeping within the north west district is to be considered the northern boundary of the district within which the Company may select. If the north coast be divided into two equal parts, the division will fall about Port Sorell; all to the Eastward of that point will be both north and east or North-east, and all that is not North-East will be North-West. By a similar process we limit the Western boundary on the ocean to the North side of Macquarie Harbour.
15. These two lines are certain; the extent of the other two is uncertain and depends upon the quality of the country when that shall have been ascertained. I take it for granted they are to be drawn from the extremity of the other two lines, and they are to be drawn "so as to afford the necessary depth of country."(2)

Arthur, of course, disagreed with this interpretation; his Colonial Secretary wrote to Curr on 4th August, 1826 that it appeared to His Excellency that Bathurst's instructions

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(1) Arthur-Bathurst, 15th Nov. 1826, No. 52. GO 10/1, T.S.A.

(2) Curr-Colonial Secretary, 27th July, 1826. Encl. 9 in supra.

decidedly confine the selection of the Company to the extreme North West quarter of the Island, Bass's Straits on the North, and the Ocean on the West, being unalterable boundaries, and extending from Cape Grimm, East and South, until they comprehend a space, in which the Company may select, as far as possible in a Square Figure 250,000 acres of Land of the description His Lordship intended they should possess. <sup>(1)</sup>

However, Arthur admitted that there were at least two interpretations possible, and agreed to Curr's demands pending further clarification. <sup>(2)</sup> This came in Bathurst's despatch of 7th.

January, 1827, in which he approved of Arthur's provisional acceptance of Curr's interpretation. <sup>(3)</sup> However, a letter from Under-Secretary Hay told Arthur that it had never been intended that the Company should have its Headquarters at Port Sorell, nor that they should ever be allowed to take any land so close to the settled districts, unless the land nearer Cape Grim proved wholly unsuitable. <sup>(4)</sup> The whole question of course hinged on the quality or alleged quality of the pasturage in the area.

Meanwhile the Company had begun exploratory work in the districts they believed were open to their selection. In Curr the Company had a servant who doggedly pursued its interests at all times, and in Hellyer, the chief surveyor and architect, a kind of superman with tremendous powers of physical endurance, whose explorations in some of the most difficult country in Tasmania

(1) Acting Colonial Secretary-Curr, 4th.Aug. 1826. loc.cit.

(2) Arthur-Bathurst, 4th.April, 1826, No. 12. GO 10/1, T.S.A.

(3) Bathurst-Arthur, 7th.Jan. 1827. No. 1, GO 1/5, T.S.A.

(4) Hay-Arthur, 21st.March, 1827. H.R.A., III, v, pp.616-7.

can never fail to command admiration.

Although the party had arrived in Hobart in March, 1826 they were delayed there for over a month - a delay which Curr feared would prevent the exploration of the North-West before winter set in and heavy rains made some of the rivers impassable. However, he was led to believe, from information gleaned from several individuals, that apart from the vagaries of the weather they would not meet with any insurmountable difficulties,  
(1)  
".....at least half-way to Cape Grimm."

Curr was anxious to explore the whole of the North-West before he made any decision on the location of the Company's grant, to ensure the best possible selection; but because the first shipment of stock and implements was expected in the Tranmere within a few months, he faced a very difficult task. Normally surveyors in Van Diemen's Land were not employed in the field during the winter months, but Curr had no time to lose and the demands he made upon the surveyors and exploratory parties were very exacting; he sometimes failed to make allowance for the extraordinary difficulties of the country and for the lateness of the season.

Eventually, a party consisting of Curr and the three other surveyors left Hobart in the middle of April, travelled overland to Westbury, and spent three weeks examining the country lying under the Western Mountains which Curr believed to be within the district in which the Company's lands were to be selected,

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(1) Curr-Inglis, 14th.June, 1826, No. 8. V.D.L. Co.

and of which he reported an estimated 18,500 acres of good land of "the richest quality." But the remainder, consisted of high rocky hills and impenetrable scrub and would be of no value except for its excellent timber. Proceeding on to the mouth of the Mersey River they examined the country between it and Port Sorell, an area which Curr thought to contain about 10,000 acres, some of it of the best quality. Curr had to report to the Directors that, while the good land of this whole tract was not bettered by any in the Island, the greater part of the remainder could not be surpassed for uselessness. The heavy forests and the difficult topography of the area, intersected as it was with ravines and gulleys, and the expense of clearing and making roads, would detract greatly from the value of the good land. <sup>(1)</sup>

Meanwhile Adey, left in Hobart to complete negotiations, had bought a whale boat, hired the schooner Nelson and chartered the cutter Ellen and prepared to sail with the rest of the party, including Goldie, to the "Third Western River", which Curr had named as a rendezvous; <sup>(2)</sup> but they were delayed by contrary winds, and after putting in at Port Sorell, which Adey examined, they arrived at the Forth ("Third Western River") on 28th. May, eight days after the appointed time. In any case, through a misunderstanding Curr and his party were at this time at the mouth of the "Second Western River"; no rendezvous took place. Adey employed his time, while waiting in the hope that

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(1) Curr-Inglis, 14th. June, 1826, No. 8, V.D.L. Co.

(2) Curr-Inglis, 14th. June, 24th. July, 1826. V.D.L. Co.

Curr would arrive, in examining the coast to the east and west of the river; he also proceeded some way up the Forth where Goldie and two of the men ascended a hill affording some view of the interior, but they could discover no appearance of a passage there. Indeed, so unfavourable was their opinion of the whole country in the neighbourhood that Adey wrote to Curr that, were he to attempt to describe to him "the dreary and desolate tract which extends along the Coast 40 or 50 miles as far as Rocky Cape and from thence to Circular Head it would cost you more time to read than the whole place is worth."<sup>(1)</sup>

Finally convinced Curr would not arrive and being favoured by the weather, Adey determined to continue the examination of the coast to the westward in the whale boat in an attempt to discover an opening into the interior. But though he entered every stream and river, including the Emu and the Inglis, he was disappointed; yet he thought it possible that the line of hills forming Rocky Cape might terminate in better land towards the South-West; and the change from a dreary and forbidding prospect to a comparatively open and beautiful country around Circular Head did not fail to delight him, for it seemed indicative of an approach to a wide expanse of better country.

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(1) Adey-Curr, 27th. July, 1826. Encl. in Curr-Inglis, 31st. July, 1826.

Loc. cit. Also Tasmanian Legislative Council Journals, Vol. VI, 1861, Paper No. 16.

With Richard Frederick, the master of the boat, who had a good knowledge of the whole coast and had penetrated into the interior in some places, possibly from a working acquaintance with the sealers who frequented the islands in the area, Goldie went inland from Rocky Cape for about fifteen miles in a southeasterly direction to examine what appeared to be some clear ground; but they were disappointed when they were confronted by a marsh which prevented their reaching some more promising heathy hills beyond.

Adey went no further than Circular Head on this occasion; fearing for the safety of the Ellen which he had sent back to the "Second Western River" but which was expected to come up with the first fair wind, he returned in the boat to this river where he made contact with Curr.<sup>(1)</sup> The Ellen's arrival at the "Third Western River" had provided a seasonable supply of provisions for Hellyer's party, which had once again journeyed overland from Westbury. Curr had proceeded from George Town by sea and between 6-18th. July the whole party remained in this neighbourhood, examining the surrounding country and the harbours of the "Third Western River" (which they now named the Mersey)<sup>(2)</sup> and Port Sorell.

It was now the middle of July and as Curr had received news that the Tranmere might soon be expected from England with the Company's first shipment of stock, implements and immigrants, it became necessary that some decision as to the location of the

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(1) Supra.

(2) Curr-Inglis, 31st. July, 1826. V.D.L. Co.



grant be made promptly, so that at least some base might be fixed upon before the Tranmere's arrival. The result of Adey's examination seemed to indicate that ".....the only safe ports or anchorages westward of the Mersey were those of Circular Head and at the east end of Robbin passage, both, especially the former, affording safe anchorage to vessels of any burthen."<sup>(1)</sup>

It was obvious to Curr that some more co-ordinated policy was needed for the direction of the exploring parties, so that the decision as to the area finally selected would be based on the most perfect knowledge of the country that could be acquired; for, as he pointed out to the directors:

.....if we select any but the best situation which is open to us for the location of the Company's lands, that error will be irreparable and will remain a never ceasing source of regret as long as the Company exists. This reflection makes me feel that no pains nor any reasonable expense should be spared to obtain a perfect knowledge of the whole district reserved for the Company's selection.<sup>(2)</sup>

In his efforts to serve the interests of the Company Curr made very exacting demands upon his surveyors, and sometimes failed to appreciate the difficulties of exploring such country as this, no Sunday picnic at any time but at this season a very formidable task.

Adey's examination had only seemed to confirm the earlier reports of the unsuitable nature of the coastal land, and Curr, therefore, determined to extend his researches further inland.

(1) Curr-Inglis, 31st.July, 1826. V.D.L. Co.

(2) Curr-Inglis, 25th.Aug. 1826. V.D.L. Co.

His plan of campaign was for Fossey and Goldie to set out from Rocky Cape to examine the country in a south-westerly direction and to return to Cape Grim; then for them to travel down the West Coast to the Pieman River where, from Hobbs's information, some good country was to be found; finally to explore the area from the Pieman north-east to Circular Head.<sup>(1)</sup>

In the meantime, Hellyer, accompanied by Lorymer, was to continue exploring to the west of the Mersey and southward to the latitude of 41° 40' South, on which the mouth of the Pieman was supposed to lie. Beyond this point it was thought that the Western mountains would prevent further progress south.<sup>(2)</sup>

Curr expected these two journeys to provide him with a tolerably good idea of the whole area assumed to be reserved to the Company and within which he now believed they might have to select an area of over one and a half million acres in order to include the 250,000 acres of "useful" land they were to receive; for while the average quality of the soil of the useful land would exceed that of the older districts, it was in general low-lying and not the type of clear undulating land best suited to pastoral pursuits. Thus he expressed his opinion that the land included gratis in the Company's grant would be useless and likely to remain so, so that its only advantage would be in preventing the approach of bad neighbours.<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) Curr-Inglis, 31st. July, 1826. V.D.L. Co.

(2) Supra.

(3) Supra.

On his return to Hobart Curr completed his plan of campaign by having Jorgen Jorgenson assigned to the Company. Jorgen Jorgenson, well known in political and naval circles in England before his convict days, had been recommended to Curr by Captain Dundas, one of the directors of the Company. Curr sent him on an expedition through the central lakes district in an attempt to find a passage to Cape Grim direct from Hobart Town.<sup>(1)</sup> Curr expected him to reach Circular Head within five weeks, but as described in Part II, Chapter I he failed even to leave the Central Plateau, and thus his journey on this occasion was of no importance for making known the districts lying between the Lakes and the North-West Coast.<sup>(2)</sup> Indeed, it would have been no mean feat for Jorgenson to have carried out his instructions, for the country he was supposed to traverse is amongst the roughest in Tasmania, and even today no road exists in this direction.

Justifying the delay in exploration, Curr claimed that it had not been due to want of industry but to the difficulties of the country which had "kept a large and interesting portion of the country unknown....." But he boasted that the Directors

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(1) Curr-Inglis, 25th. Aug. 1826. V.D.L. Co.

(2) Van Diemen's Land Company's Annual Report, 1828. V.D.L. Co.

Also Jorgen Jorgenson, History of the Origin, Rise and Progress of the Van Diemen's Land Company. London, 1829. (Reprinted and abridged from articles by Jorgenson in the Colonial Advocate, Hobart, 1827). M.L.

would have "the satisfaction of knowing that our final selection will be grounded on the most comprehensive and minute knowledge, laboriously acquired and considerably digested."<sup>(1)</sup>

ii. First Exploration West of the Mersey by Goldie and Fossey, 1826.

Goldie and Fossey again left the Mersey in the whale boat on 29th. July, 1826, accompanied by six men and with Richard Frederick as helmsman (See Maps 4 and 5). Because of the heavy swell, however, they were forced to take shelter in Parish's Boat Harbour (Cooee) on the 30th and the next day they managed only with difficulty to round Table Cape; but they were again forced to shelter in another Boat Harbour (Jacob's), where they were detained by the weather until August.<sup>2</sup> That day, taking advantage of a calmer sea, they reached Circular Head before the weather broke again.

Their detention enabled them again to examine the peninsula of Circular Head and they confirmed the earlier opinions by reporting to Curr that there was an estimated 4,000 acres of good land to be had immediately, and much more could be made available quite easily.

On the 5th. the weather improved and they sent the

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(1) James Bischoff, Sketch of the History of Van Diemen's Land.

London, 1832. "Report of Mr. Alexander Goldie....." note to Chap. V, pp 156-63.

boat laden with provisions on to the Duck River (named by Goldie and Fossey), while they walked overland to join it. However the intervening country, mostly swampy plains, was unimpressive. A day was spent in examining the country in the Duck River area and on the 7th they set out for Cape Grim; at first they took a course west by south, but after about three miles encountered swampy forest land difficult and unpleasant to traverse, so they veered towards the North-West, keeping along a ridge about six miles inland; changing their course to the North they again reached the coast on the 8th. Thereafter they followed a route varying from one to three miles from the sea over wet heathy plains with patches of tea-tree scrub, until they reached the camp and the boat about two miles east of Cape Grim, on the 10th.

None of the whole tract of country between Circular Head and Cape Grim, Goldie realized, would be at all useful for the Company; it was either low swampy plains or thick forest, and everywhere the soil was a poor grey sand; though the heath might perhaps provide feed for the sheep in the summer, it would be impossible to run stock of any kind there during the winter. The prospects at Cape Grim, however, were brighter; Goldie found it to be all good sheep land with the exception of one low plain, which would make a good cattle run.

On the 15th the party returned to the Welcome River, and on the following day Goldie, Fossey and one boatman, set off for Mount Cameron (so named on Hardwicke's map). The land for the most part continued to appear suitable for sheep, though it

narrowed to a coastal strip of only a mile in width and deteriorated to mere heath and swamp in the immediate neighbourhood of Mount Cameron; that hill, however, would provide excellent feed of about 800 to 1000 acres.

The party then returned to the boat to make preparations for an expedition to Pieman's River. The trip was, however, not commenced until the 20th. because of the unfavourable state of the weather. Five men, Goldie, Fossey, Frederick and two boatmen made up the party, each carrying ten days' provisions; two more boatmen accompanied them for the first three days to guard against their running short. The boat was then to return to Circular Head to await their arrival.

On the first day they made Mount Cameron despite heavy rain, and for the next two days they continued a southerly course over wet heathy plains and hills of the same nature as Mount Cameron, until they came to a river which from the description he had of it, Goldie mistook for the Pieman, since it was a bar river, as wide as the Mersey at the mouth and much deeper. It was found impossible to cross it so they took a south-easterly course inland, again over wet heathy plains, though it appeared to Goldie that there was more good land on the opposite side of the river towards a mountain which he mistook for Mount Norfolk, about fourteen or sixteen miles distant.

From the top of a ridge, Goldie was able to see that the plains bounded by low forests, extended for a considerable distance north-east and south-west. The party, continuing a south-easterly course became embroiled in the forests which at

this time of the year proved very difficult travelling, for in addition to the usual fallen timber and scrub there was a mud surface in which they sank nearly knee-deep. To add to their discomfort the spot where they pitched their tent was so wet that they could not lie down; they had only a few logs to make a fire and all felt the cold keenly.

Seeing the country was low and swampy all around, and fearing to become further delayed by it at this season, Goldie determined to retrace his steps. It took them four hours to get out of the forest using their old route, though it was no further than four miles. Curr's instructions had been to return north-east straight to Circular Head from the Pieman, but Goldie considered it impossible to travel so far inland at this time of year. Thus they made for Mount Cameron and from there to Circular Head, which they reached on 29th. August.

Goldie could only conclude that the only land at all suitable for the Company was that around Cape Grim, a narrow strip running along the West Coast, and that at Circular Head; but these areas combined could form only a very small portion of the Company's grant and they were widely separated from any country of similar quality. Furthermore a running stream of fresh water was lacking at Circular Head. At Cape Grim, though there was a small creek and a greater extent of good land, there was no anchorage for vessels nearer than that at Hunters' Island, and this was not as good as at Circular Head.

On 4th. September the party left in the boat for Rocky Cape intending to proceed inland, but bad weather detained them at the

coast until the 8th. They took a south-west course and carried seven days' provisions. They proceeded up the Detention River for about four miles before crossing it on a tree and entering the forest, which as usual made for difficult travelling. They encamped that night on the bank of the Alarm River (so named from the experiences of the party on this occasion). The ground, however, was too wet to permit them to lie down, the recent rain caused the river to rise and extinguish their fire, and they were obliged to move to higher ground where they remained all night crouched under a tree. By the early morning light they were able to see that the river had swollen considerably and was running so rapidly that it would be impossible to cross it. Furthermore it had completely isolated them on their elevated spot so that they had to wade through it up to their arm-pits to return to the forest whence they had come. The Detention River proved quite impossible to cross so that they encamped once more on its bank, hoping it would subside sufficiently the next day. Their provisions had been much spoiled by the wet and they were lucky to make a crossing the next day and return to their camp. However, the weather again intervened and prevented them reaching the Mersey until the 15th.<sup>(1)</sup>

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(1) James Bischoff, Sketch of the History of Van Diemen's Land.

London, 1832. "Report of Mr. Alexander Goldie.....", note to Chap. V, pp. 156-63.

Also Tasmanian Legislative Council Journals, Vol. VI, 1861, Paper No. 16.



iii. Hellyer's Explorations on the Mersey, 1826.

Meanwhile Hellyer and Lorymer, early in August, 1826 had established a base camp at Claremont, now Kimberley, about twenty miles down the west bank of the Mersey at the junction of that river, the Minnow and the Dasher.<sup>(1)</sup> All these names were most likely conferred by Hellyer for they appear for the first time on his map published by the Van Diemen's Land Company with their annual report in 1828 (see Map 4).

Curr had instructed Hellyer to proceed south-west from the mouth of the Mersey to the west of the Black Bluff Range,<sup>(2)</sup> but Hellyer believed that an easier route into the country could be found from Claremont than by a more direct course from the coast.<sup>(3)</sup> Heavy rains and flooded rivers prevented him from proceeding much further than the Minnow River on this occasion.

However Curr was not disposed to accept explanations on deviations from his orders. Neither Hellyer nor Goldie had kept to his instructions and Curr was quick to point this out. Hellyer, in proceeding on a course to the eastward of South instead of south-west, had penetrated into a country of which Curr already possessed a sufficient knowledge, and to which Hellyer had not added anything of importance; Goldie had proceeded in the first instance to Circular Head and Cape Grim

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- (1) Curr-Inglis, 4th.Sept. 1826, and encl., Adey-Curr, 28th.Aug. 1826. V.D.L. Co.
- (2) Curr's Order Book, No. 8, 30th Aug.1826. Quoted in Meston Papers, U.T.
- (3) Adey-Curr, 28th Aug.1826.Encl.in Curr-Inglis, 4th Sept.1826 V.D.L. Co.

whereas his instructions had stated he was to take southerly course inland from Rocky Cape. Curr wrote:

.....it is impossible to combine and regulate the movements of 3 exploring parties unless each party will punctually conform to the instructions under which they are expected to act.....In the case of Mr. Hellyer much time has been expended and great expense incurred in examining a country respecting which little information is required. In the case of Mr. Goldie the deviation may be less injurious but it cannot be approved, as no sufficient reason seems to be assigned by him for it. (1)

With the Tranmere expected almost hourly, the necessity of reaching some decision on the Company's lands was a matter of some urgency and Curr expressed his hope "that every gentleman of the exploring parties will use their utmost endeavours to accelerate the conclusion of their present duty.....increased exertions are looked for....."(2) The next week he was again exhorting the surveyors to do their utmost.

At a moderate calculation the Company's expenditure is £30 a day - the loss of the day is the loss of £30 therefore....Hardships have to be endured it is true but this should only be an additional motive for exertion, that they may the sooner be exchanged for a more comfortable mode of life.

No reasonable cost has been spared in the equipments and provisioning of the parties. Everything has been done for them under the circumstances and for such a purpose could be done. The gentlemen should remember this and in return make all the exertion in their power. The days are now considerably lengthened. Twice as much labour may now be performed in the day as could have been accomplished when they were at the shortest.....Another month from this date is the utmost limit of time which can be allowed for completing the examination of the country..... (3)

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- (1) Curr's Order Book, No. 8, 30th.Aug. 1826. Quoted in Meston Papers, U.T.  
 (2) Supra.  
 (3) Op.cit., No. 9, 8th.Sept. 1826.

Curr's previous experience as a settler in Van Diemen's Land, in the Cross Marsh district, did not give him any insight into the extraordinary difficulties of exploring or even traversing this type of country - dense forests often with almost impenetrable underwood, deep gorges and rapid flowing rivers and streams, and added to this an average rainfall of over twice as much. The surveyors could not be blamed for lacking some of the enthusiasm for their work that Curr felt was necessary.

The last journey in this area before the Company removed to Circular Head was undertaken by Hellyer in October. He set out from Claremont camp to attempt to get to the southward of the Rolland Range of mountains and after incredible difficulties, did succeed in reaching the summit of a mountain a little south of Rolland's Repulse, which he named Van Dyke, and from which he was able to view the surrounding country. Another eminence about two miles to the south-west he named Mount Claude. To the south of the Black Bluff Range he observed high snow-covered plains of great extent at the base of the "Peak like a Volcano." This peak had been the one known landmark in this area before inland exploration was begun, having been observed and so remarked upon by Flinders in 1798.

Southward from where he stood Hellyer reported ".....plains as far as the eye could reach, rather woody at the north end, but open and undulating beyond." Lack of provisions compelled him to return to the Mersey where, had they not met with a party of sealers, they must have perished since Curr, through a

misunderstanding, had ordered the removal of the depot to the eastern side of the river. <sup>(1)</sup>

iv. The Decision to Establish the Company at Circular Head, 1826.

These journeys concluded the first period of exploration by the Van Diemen's Land Company (see Map 3). Curr had already reported (16th September, 1826) his intention of commencing the establishment at Circular Head when the Tranmere arrived, it being the best port on the North Coast; <sup>(2)</sup> Goldie's report, which he received subsequently, strengthened this decision. He wrote to the Court of Directors that:

from the judgment I am able to form of the extent of ground which he [Goldie] may have gone over I am satisfied that much more good land may still be found contiguous to that which he has seen; indeed I have information on which I think I may rely of more good land being in this direction. <sup>(3)</sup>

Curr, however, believed at this time that Goldie had penetrated as far south as the Pieman River and he stated that he had "little doubt Circular Head and Cape Grim and the country adjoining will be the district which we shall select for the Company." <sup>(4)</sup> It was thus to Circular Head that the Tranmere was directed when she arrived at George Town early in October.

(1) Curr-Ingles, 11th Nov. 1826. No. 28. V.D.L. Co.

(2) Id., 16th Sept. 1826, No. 20.

(3) Id., 21st Sept. 1826, No. 21.

(4) Supra.

Though Jorgenson had reported, when on his first attempt to reach Circular Head he had been turned back by the flooded Ouse River, that there was sufficient good land in the neighbourhood of the source of this river to comprise the Company's grant, Curr was unconvinced; he rightly considered that this area was too high and cold, and too far distant from a port to serve the  
(1)  
Company's purposes.

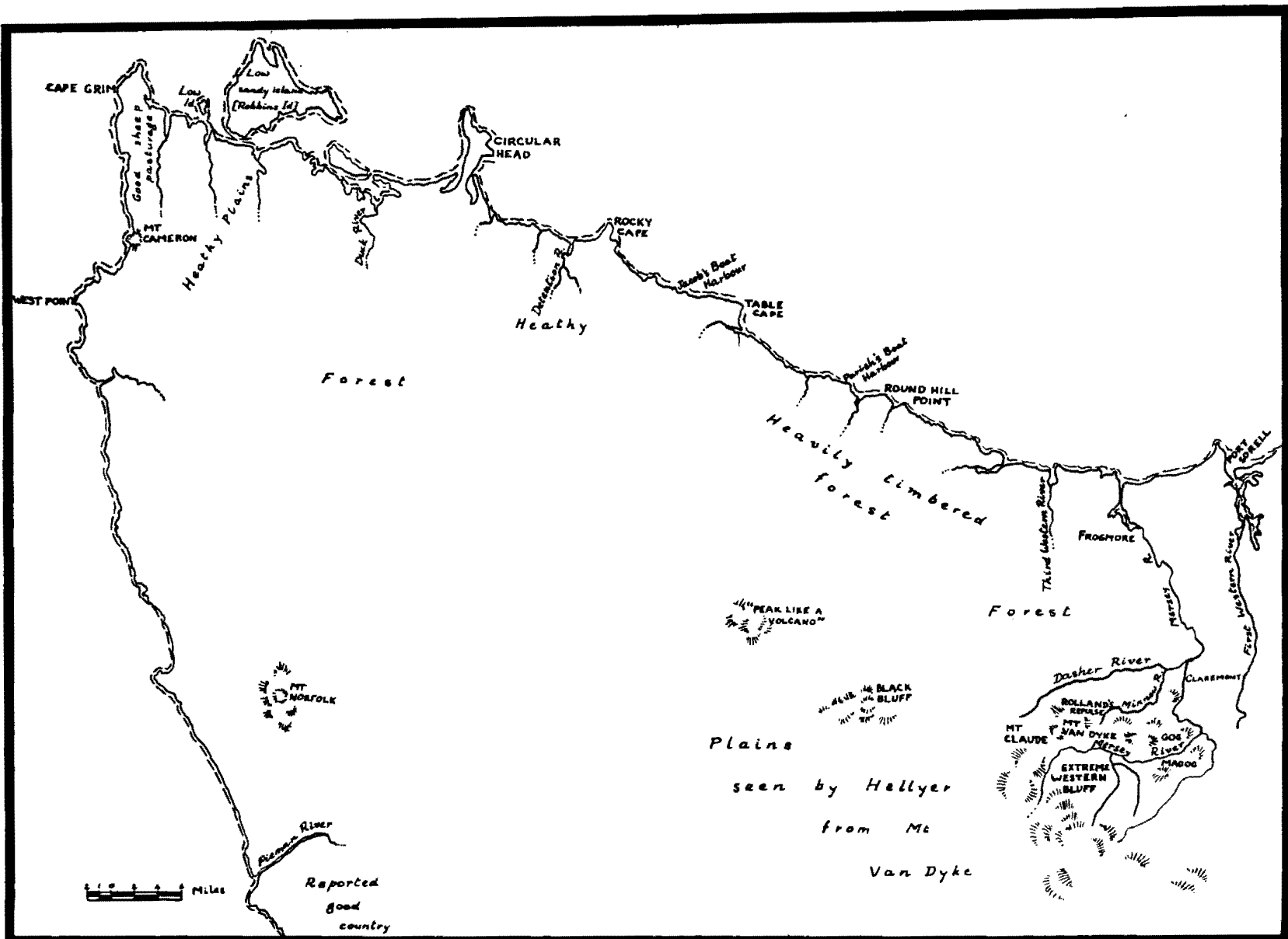
Curr really believed that a superior tract of country would be found on the West Coast between the Pieman River and Cape Grim, and on this expectation, and on that of finding a route  
(2)  
from the Pieman River to Hobart, he built his plans.

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(1) Curr-Inglis, 5th Oct. 1826, No. 24. V.D.L. Co.

(2) Supra.

Map 3. Illustrating the progress of exploration at the end of 1826.



## CHAPTER 3.

## THE VAN DIEMEN'S LAND COMPANY: LAND GRANT.

i. Hellyer's Journey to the Surrey Hills from the West, and  
Fossey's from the East, 1827.

The setting up of the establishment at Circular Head meant that for some months the Company's surveyors were fully occupied in superintending the work there, and no more exploration was attempted. However, as the summer progressed Curr again became anxious that something be done to acquire more knowledge of the unexplored regions while there was still time. He intimated this desire to Adey and later to Goldie at Circular Head during December, but as both Hellyer and Fossey were engaged at Circular Head, Lorymer was the only one free to undertake any exploration. During January and early February, 1827 he was, therefore, despatched on several journeys to explore the country to the south-east of the peninsula. Curr, however, considered Lorymer unreliable, and these journeys a waste of time and money.<sup>(1)</sup> Thus of only one does any record exist, and this was preserved through its having come into the possession of Jorgenson. On this occasion Lorymer was occupied at the end of January in exploring an area around the Detention River and appears to have almost reached the Shakespeare Hills, about fifteen miles from the coast. But the land over which he passed presented nothing of use to the Company, being largely a mass of forest, often

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(1) Curr-Inglis, 13th Feb. 1827, No. 42, V.D.L. Co.

rendered impassable by thick wiry scrub, interspersed with poor sandy, heathy hills.<sup>(1)</sup>

Dissatisfied with these efforts Curr, on a brief visit to Circular Head early in February made arrangements for Hellyer to proceed, with provisions for five weeks, inland from Rocky Cape in the direction of the "Peak like a Volcano". Hellyer had reported seeing extensive plains in this neighbourhood from the summit of Mount Van Dyke. Curr still believed that should Hellyer succeed in finding a passage to the Peak, his discovery in conjunction with Jorgenson's would mean that the desired route between Circular Head and the settled districts around the Derwent River could be accomplished.<sup>(2)</sup> Such an overland route to the capital would be of commercial importance to the Company, as well as being of great convenience in allowing it to be independent of sea transport.

This journey by Hellyer is one of the epics in the annals of Tasmanian exploration, and a decisive one for the future of the Van Diemen's Land Company.

Hellyer at first pushed inland in the same direction as Lorymer had taken and succeeded in reaching the Dip Mountain, from the top of which he observed the surrounding country; a mass of high forest to the South, low forest to the West, but

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(1) "Exploring Report of C. P. Lorymer....", Tasmanian Legislative Council Journals, Vol. VI, 1861, Paper No. 16.

(2) Curr-Inglis, 13th Feb. 1827, No. 42, V.D.L. Co.



a large tract of open grassy country south-east by east on the north side of the "Peak like a Volcano", to which he decided to direct his course. The country between Circular Head and the Dip he considered useless for the Company's purposes, as had Lorymer before him.

Realizing that the intervening forest would present enormous obstacles to travelling, Hellyer decided to leave the horses in charge of the two already exhausted prisoners at a small green flat near the Dip which he called Dipwood Marsh. He himself set off for the Peak with the other two "intelligent active men used to the bush", Richard Frederick and Isaac Cutts, each carrying a fortnight's provisions, a blanket and a gun. "My strength, I feared," wrote Hellyer, "was scarcely equal to it; but I was determined to go on as far as possible."

They left Dipwood Marsh on 7th February, 1827 (see Maps 4 and 5), and for the following four days travelled through dense forest rank with decaying vegetable matter, the air putrid and oppressive and the sunlight completely shut out by the mass of foliage above. The timber was principally myrtle, "... in general from one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet in height, and from thirty to forty feet in circumference." The rivers and streams which crossed their path were numberless; in fact they were

scarcely half an hour, during any day, without crossing one or the other. Dead logs and branches impeded us at every step; and we were continually meeting with large tracts of dense thicket, from thirty to forty feet high, so closely interwoven and matted together, as to be impenetrable below: and we were often obliged to be walking upon these never-dry, slippery branches, covered with moss, as much as twenty feet above the ground, which, being in many instances rotten, occasioned us many awkward falls, and tore our clothes to rags. We were not able to force our way on five hundred yards in an hour in some of these horrid scrubs.

Despite the difficulties of the country, Hellyer noted that the quality of the soil had improved from a "hungry sandy soil" around Dipwood Marsh," to a deep rich loam."

During these four days' travelling in the forest they had been unable to make any observations, and it was not until the evening of the 11th that they were able to obtain a glimpse of the Peak which then appeared about three days' journey distant. As five days of the fourteen for which they were provisioned had already passed Hellyer determined to change his course from South-East by East to South-East by South half South, and head straight for the Peak rather than follow his previous plan of steering for the open plains to the north of the Peak; by its ascent he would be able to ascertain the nature of all the surrounding country.

On the morning of the 13th they came upon emu tracks, a promising sign of a more open country; their hopes were not confounded. This change revived their spirits and when shortly after they came upon the largest river they had seen since leaving Circular Head, Hellyer named it the Emu; but through a

mistaken belief that this was the same river that entered the sea at Round Hill, the name was later applied to the latter, whereas  
 (1)  
 in reality this river was the Cam.

There were still a number of lesser hills to traverse before they reached the Peak proper. Hellyer described it".....in shape when viewed on the east and west side, like a three masted ship in full sail; and when observed from north or south, it is as steep as any peak can well be imagined, the sides being nearly all perpendicular". The ascent was begun on 14th February, but before they had gone far there was a heavy rain storm and the whole mountain was enveloped in mist so that they were obliged to descend to camp for the night.

A clear day on the 15th enabled them to try again, and this time they reached the top, where they were several hours struggling through thick scrub but "at length arrived upon the very highest point, 3000 feet above the level of the sea!" In honour of the day he had begun the ascent Hellyer carved "St. Valentine's Peak" and the date upon a stump and drove it into a cleft of rocks at the top.

From the Peak he decided to proceed south, as the country to the North might more easily be examined from the coast. They encamped that evening in an area of "grassy hills and knolls" which

resembled a neglected old park, a thousand or fifteen hundred acres in a patch, without a tree, except a few clumps of blackwood. Dead trees rotting where they had fallen; grass run to seed, the tops of which appeared at this season nearly white; made it very conspicuous when viewed from a distance.

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(1) So called about May, 1827 either by Hellyer himself or by Fossey.

It was watered by a brook which Hellyer mistakenly thought might be the source of the Leven (named previously), on the banks of which were found "as good mushrooms as any I have tasted in England".

As time was now running short Hellyer determined to make for a large open tract he had observed about ten miles to the West South-West. The country continued to be of the same type - grassy knolls divided by brooks with "elegant" trees and shrubs on their banks. Hellyer was enchanted with this country which, after long days of battling through the forest undergrowth, reminded him so nostalgically of England; and being also something of an artist he was inclined to let the beauty of the scenery influence his judgment of its utility and possibilities.

On the 16th, continuing in the same direction they came upon and crossed the Wey River, Hellyer thinking it to be the Emu. In this area they found many evidences of the natives; the hills had been burnt and later they found native huts and some charcoal sketches, some of which Hellyer brought away as mementos. Another and larger river which crossed their path Hellyer named the Don, but this was afterwards fittingly renamed the Hellyer. He described it as a "noble river" of fifty yards' breadth with sloping shrubberies on its banks. At some distance from the river was "one of the most magnificent grass hills..... seen in this country, consisting of several level terraces, as if laid out by art, and crowned with a straight row of stately peppermint trees". The country continued in a succession of

grassy hills and from its "great extent and importance" Hellyer called the area to the South of the Peak the Surrey Hills, "being the same distance inland as that county in England"; that to the North, being nearer the coast, he called the Hampshire Hills. These had appeared to Hellyer to be even more park-like than the Surrey Hills. In fact he could find no faults at all: grass and beautiful shrubs in every vale, the soil a rich brown loam, and even a gravelly sub-stratum on the hills meant only to him that they would be perfectly dry; the timber, principally peppermint and stringy bark, very tall and fine, often one hundred feet to the lowest branch, would afford shade from the summer sun; and the whole was charmingly divided by crystal clear brooks so that it resembled English enclosures.

Hellyer now turned his course to the North North-West to return to his camp at the Dipwood Marsh, but again he encountered tier upon tier of forest clad mountains which prevented him from taking any bearings upon known landmarks. On the 19th they descended to a river larger than the Hellyer, here running south-west, but though they avoided it at this point they came upon it again shortly after. This time it ran north-east so that they were forced to wade through it as best they could, for the current was dangerously strong. They continued on over hills of forest and scrub, still unable to perceive anything beyond the next wooded tier.

On the 20th the river again presented itself, now running west, so that it again had to be forded. This time a better

crossing was found which Hellyer thought might ".....serve for a ford and depot, if ever a road should be made in this direction; which I think is most improbable from the lofty mountains surrounding it". As it was obviously one of the principal rivers in the island Hellyer "took the liberty" of naming it the Arthur, in compliment to the Lieutenant-Governor. A view obtained of the Blue Peak Range shortly after they crossed indicated that they were too far west and they altered their course to North North-East, on which route they came upon the Arthur River for the fourth time, but as it took a turn from East to North, the necessity for a further crossing was avoided. Here they discovered a long line of perpendicular cliffs of slate of the best quality which Hellyer believed would be found valuable should the Arthur River prove navigable. Under the cliff he carved "Whoever is found stealing slate from this quarry, will be dealt with according to law."

Provisions were now almost exhausted; they each had only a little flour and water a day - hardly enough to sustain their strength as they toiled on through dreary forests, descended ravines only to climb the precipitous opposite sides, and scrambled once along a rocky ridge so dangerously narrow on the top that they were at times forced to crawl around the trees that blocked the passage, with deep ravines falling away on either side. At last they descended again to the Hellyer River; across this they had to find their way over the Campbell Range and then again encountered masses of horizontal scrub impossible

to pass except by walking on its top; but there was no alternative but starvation, though the men were beginning to think it hopeless.

On the 24th they were heartened by coming upon a river which they recognised as the Inglis, and a little further on were able to get a view of Table Cape. The rise which afforded them this glad sight was named Welcome Hill. The next day after altering course to North-West they at last saw the Dip Mountain only five miles south-west of them. "We became a new set of men in a moment" wrote Hellyer, and when within a mile of the mountain they were overjoyed to hear their signal shot answered.

The two men left, Higginson and Wells, had given up hope of Hellyer's return after nineteen days' absence, and had determined to return to Circular Head the next day. After resting for a day the whole party set out for Circular Head on the 27th, retracing their steps to the mouth of the Detention River in four days; then making their way along the coast, they arrived at the establishment on 4th March.

In his Report Hellyer unselfishly paid tribute to the two men, Richard Frederick and Isaac Cutts, who had accompanied him, for without their exertions he felt he would not have been able to penetrate so far inland and thus make his important discoveries in the vicinity of the Peak.<sup>(1)</sup>

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(1) James Bischoff, Sketch of the History of Van Diemen's Land.

London, 1832. "Report of Mr. Henry Hellyer....." pp.164-78.  
Also Tasmanian Legislative Council Journals, Vol. VI, 1861,  
Paper No. 21.

Hellyer's report seemed indeed a windfall for Curr - the culmination of all his efforts to have the whole north-western area explored; he immediately recommended to the Court that they make arrangements to locate their lands in the Surrey Hills district, and if it should be impossible to include both it and Cape Grim, he thought it would be preferable to secure that discovered by Hellyer. Obviously elated, he wrote:

From the time of commencing the survey to this hour, my efforts have always been directed to this point as I judged from various circumstances that a good tract of country would be found there. The success has been rather tardy but I trust it is complete.

Curr also bestowed great praise on Hellyer:

.....a most intelligent, useful and indefatigable person [who has] encountered greater difficulties, dangers and privations than any individual in the service, and it will not be forgotten that he last winter narrowly escaped with his life in attempting to reach the same point from the mouth of the Mersey. (1)

Meanwhile Adey and Hellyer discussed the possibility of finding an easier access to the Surrey Hills from the coast at Round Hill Point. Adey also despatched Fossey to attempt a passage to it from the Western Marshes, a task of some difficulty because of the intervening mountains which had repelled all other similar efforts. To find a way across the Mersey and the Forth Rivers was also a formidable prospect. (2)

Fossey set out from Launceston on 6th April (see Maps 4 and 5), the plan being that he should finish his journey on the coast at the Cam River, where a supply depot was to be set up for him. (3)

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(1) Curr-Inglis, 22nd March, 1827, No. 51, V.D.L. Co.

(2) Supra.

(3) Id., 17th April, 1827, No. 54.



However, he was confined at the Mersey through illness until 23rd April and because the nature of the country further on was unsuitable for horses, he was forced to leave the cart behind at this point and proceed on with the two men who had accompanied Hellyer, Frederick and Cutts.

Fossey's report is somewhat meagre in detail, but it appears that after leaving the Mersey he travelled south-west through the Emu Plains, which he named, and on through mountainous forest land across the Forth Gorge almost to Cradle Valley. To the apparently unbounded heathy plains to the North-West of Cradle Mountain he gave the name of Hounslow Heath and expressed his opinion that it would become a worthwhile acquisition to the Company as a summer sheep run.

Fossey was now travelling north-west in a direction towards the Black Bluff Range; to a romantic vale on the south-eastern slopes of this mountain, with a lake at its north-eastern end, he gave the name of Vale of Belvoir. On 1st May he ascended a southerly extension of the Black Bluff Range, to which he gave the name of May Day Mount. From the summit he obtained his first view of the lands discovered by Hellyer, and was equally impressed. Further north he crossed the Leven River near its junction with the Medway and he described this tract as "so admirably laid out by nature, that it assumes very much the appearance of a nobleman's domain, both as to extent and good quality." From here he took a course through the Hampshire Hills to the coast, meeting on the way some of the dense forest and undergrowth which had caused

Hellyer so much difficulty on his journey. Nevertheless Fossey considered the forest land between the Hampshire Hills and the coast to be of exceedingly rich soil. This area is now considered one of the best agricultural parts of the North-West Coast.

He reached the coast about two miles west of the Cam River on 10th May and the following day proceeded along the coast to the Emu River where he met Hellyer.<sup>(1)</sup> The latter had begun exploration to find a route from the coast to the Hampshire Hills.<sup>(2)</sup>

Fossey's opinions, which endorsed those of Hellyer on the Surrey and Hampshire Hills, now left no doubt in Curr's mind that this area should comprise part of the Company's grant. Hellyer's observations from the Dip Mountain seemed to preclude the possibility of finding further good land between there and the West Coast and it was decided to commence operations at the Hampshire Hills as soon as possible.<sup>(3)</sup> From the description given, it seemed to Curr that the country around the Peak was more like the old settled districts in that it was an "alternation of hill and dale, grassy and lightly timbered", and this proved to him their suitability for sheep grazing.<sup>(4)</sup>

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- (1) James Bischoff, Sketch of the History of Van Diemen's Land. London, 1832. "Report of Mr. Joseph Fossey....." pp.178-81. Also Tasmanian Legislative Council Journals, Vol. VI, 1861. Paper No. 16.
- (2) Curr-Inglis, 23rd June, 1828, No. 32. V.D.L. Co.
- (3) James Bischoff, op.cit., "Report of Mr. Henry Hellyer.....", pp. 164-78. Also Tasmanian Legislative Council Journals, Vol. VI, 1861. Paper No. 21. Also Curr-Inglis, 17th April. 1827, No. 54, V.D.L. Co.
- (4) Curr-Inglis, 23rd May, 1827, No. 57, loc.cit.

In August, 1827 Curr engaged George Barnard, who had recently completed a survey of King Island for the Government, to examine the coast between Table Cape and Round Hill Point to find the best situation for a harbour. <sup>(1)</sup> Barnard's expedition was made in September and Curr accompanied him in order to see the Hampshire Hills for himself. Both Curr and Barnard favoured Table Cape Bay as the best situation for a port, but Hellyer had already completed eight miles of road from Emu Bay, and surveyed <sup>(2)</sup> four more, and Curr had to accept the fait accompli.

On this visit Curr had his first experience of the kind of country with which his surveyors had been struggling, which was unlike anything he had seen before.

The myrtle tree scarcely known except in this district and enormous stringy bark trees many of them three hundred feet high and thirty feet in circumference near the foot exclude the rays of the sun and in the gloom which their shade creates those trees flourish which affect darkness and humidity, and in other parts of the Colony are only found in the deepest ravines, and by the sides of creeks, as sassafras, dogwood, pepper tree, musk tree, and in some situations, blackwood of the best quality. The forest trees and undergrowth described which later rise to the height of from eighty to one hundred feet create and retain on the ground such a great degree of humidity and almost dungeon darkness that all the tribes of cryptogamous plants flourish there to a degree that I never observed in any other situation, fungi, mosses, lichens, ferns. The most remarkable of these plants, the fern tree.....with a stem of seven feet in circumference near the ground gradually increasing in girth towards the top, grows to the height of thirty-five feet.

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(1) Curr-Inglis, 4th August, 1827, No. 66. V.D.L. Co.

(2) Id., 10th November, 1827, No. 70; also 23rd June, 1828, No. 32.

Every trunk stem, root and branch, of every kind of tree is closely invested with a thick coat of moss; this moss again becomes the receptacle of the roots of parasitical plants.....and these in their turn nourish their share of moss and ferns.....If to this enormous mass of vegetation be added another whole forest of fallen timber strewed thickly in every part and which occasionally lies in heaps to the height of twenty and thirty feet from the ground some idea may be formed of the difficulty of penetrating such a country and opening roads. (1)

After examining the Hampshire and part of the Surrey Hills Curr reported to the Court that he could not wholly confirm the previous opinions on their good qualities. They differed from the more esteemed areas in the Colony in the type of grass and timber, the soil was generally light and often poor, and though it was one of the best watered districts in the island, its climate was cold and backward. Though Curr thought it could be improved he expressed his opinion that it could never be "a first nor even a second rate sheep pasture", though in the matter of picturesque beauty it yielded to nothing he had seen in the rest of the island. It was a matter of regret to Curr that none of the Company's surveyors had had any colonial experience as he had, and, therefore, had no knowledge with which to judge the nature and capabilities of the country. The acquisition of this knowledge was often dearly bought. (2)

Later Curr was to write that Hellyer "may be said to look upon everything with a painter's eye and upon his own discoveries in

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(1) Curr-Inglis, 10th November, 1827, No. 70. V.D.L. Co.

(2) Supra.

particular with an affection which is blind to all faults."

Yet he believed that it could be made profitable to the Company in some way; ".....and it must never be forgotten that we have no option."<sup>(1)</sup>

ii. Jorgenson's Journey down the West Coast, 1827.

In his attempt to reach Circular Head overland from the Lakes in September-October 1826, Jorgenson had reported that he had almost reached the "Peak like a Volcano". Curr, believing this at the time, determined to send Jorgenson to Circular Head that he might be enabled to complete the discovery of the line of route Curr cherished, from the Lakes to the Company's lands. This was to be accomplished by striking inland from the mouth of the Pieman River, from where Jorgenson believed there was an opening in the mountains, and where there would be only twenty-eight miles of unexplored ground to the spot he had reached on his former journey.<sup>(2)</sup>

Jorgenson was attached to a party under the Company's junior surveyor, Lorymer, and they set out on 1st March, 1827, (see Map 5), before Hellyer had returned from the Peak. Provisions for six weeks were conveyed in a whale boat to accompany them down the coast.<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) Curr-Inglis, 13th December, 1828, No. 51. V.D.L. Co.

(2) "Private Journal and Remarks of Jorgen Jorgenson of Discoveries in Van Diemen's Land and the Death of Mr. Lorymer." 1827. M.L.

(3) op.cit., 15th.Feb. 1827.

West

V

Map 4. Copy of a "Map of the North-West Quarter of Van Diemen's Land to accompany the Third Annual Report of the Van Diemen's Land Co." 1828.

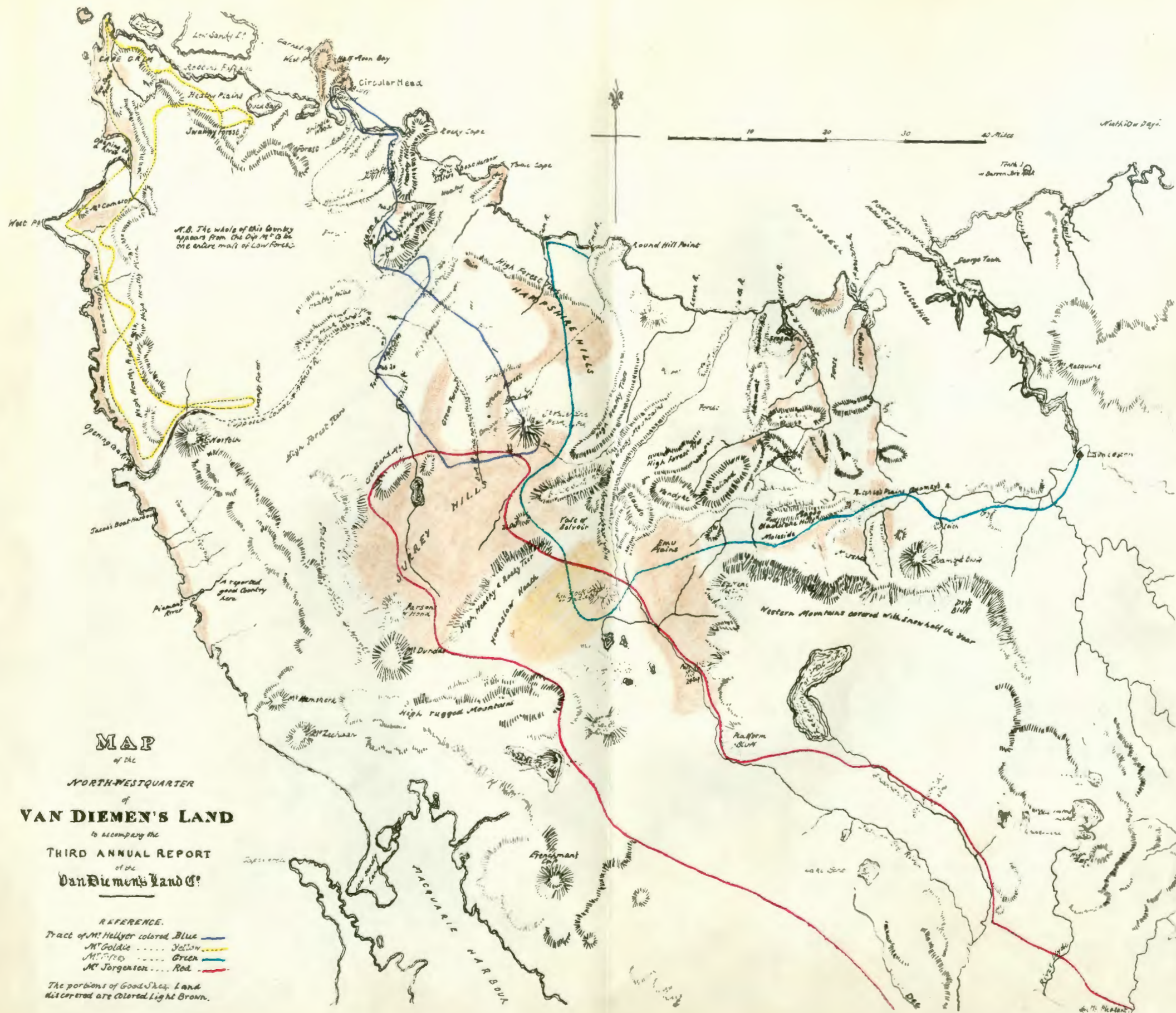
They proceeded in the first instance to Mount Cameron and then followed down the coast, some of the party travelling overland to find suitable harbours for the boat. On 5th March they put in to a small boat harbour about ten miles south of West Point which was given the name of Church Cove from the appearance of a singular rock resembling an ancient village church. From this circumstance also, the Arthur River, two miles further south earned the name of Church River. But Hellyer having met with this river further inland two weeks before had already bestowed on it the name it now bears.

For two days they were delayed at the Arthur River and employed the time in exploring in various directions. A solitary peaked mountain about sixteen miles distant in a south-easterly direction, Jorgenson mistook for Mount Norfolk.

From 14th March they followed down the coast from boat harbour to boat harbour, two of which were named after members of the boats' crew, Venables Boat Harbour (probably Whales Head Boat Harbour) and Jacobs Boat Harbour (at the north of Ordnance Point). A delay of three days during this time at a point west of Mount Balfour, the one they mistook for Mount Norfolk, enabled Jorgenson and Lorymer to ascend this mountain, the first to do so, and obtain a view to the southward.

At Native Well Bay, so named from an excellent well of water found there, and now Kenneth Bay, they, unable to find a suitable harbour further south, decided to take their knapsacks and proceed inland. Provisions were buried in the ground for their return and the boat's crew returned to Circular Head.







They pursued a route along the Norfolk Range (which they named the Duffrin Mountains), crossed the Lagoon River and wound round the southern end of these mountains. From here Jorgenson saw a range of mountains in front of which he believed was that he had named the Dundas Range and the one which had stayed his progress on his former journey through the Lakes. Mount Dundas appeared to be about twenty-five miles distant. This was not the Mount Dundas of modern times, nor could it have been the one Jorgenson had seen and so named previously. The range was most likely the Meredith Range and Mount Dundas, Mount Livingstone. A little to the north and west of Mount Livingstone was the mountain which seemed to correspond with that he had named the Parson's Hood when viewing it from the east. But in fact that had been Mount Ossa and the one he now mistook it for bears the name Jorgenson gave it.

Immediately before them was a round mountain which they ascended the following morning, Sunday, 18th March and, therefore, named Mount Sunday. Between them and Mount Livingstone, but a little further south was another peaked mountain which, when viewing it from Native Well Bay, they had named Mount Jubilee. Its description would appear to fit Mount Donaldson but Jorgenson's later references to it and bearings of it leave some doubt as to its true identity (see Appendix B for a discussion of Jorgenson's route on this occasion).

From Mount Sunday the party proceeded in an easterly direction, inclining a little to the South, until they arrived

at a deep and wide gully through which ran a considerable river, in a south-easterly direction. It seemed to the explorers that this river could be no other than the Pieman, but the distance they were from its mouth and the course it took make it fairly certain that it was the Donaldson River, a tributary of the Pieman.

The country which had hitherto been of a sandy and heathy nature now assumed a different appearance with large tracts of thick scrub and fallen trees which impeded their progress.

They crossed the Donaldson and ascended the steep banks opposite to encamp for the night. The next morning they ascended an outcrop of the Longback Range to obtain a view of the country. It appeared to be one entire mass of scrub all the way to Mount Livingstone (Dundas), but in hopes of being able to penetrate it they descended. However, it proved to be so high and dense that only two miles' progress was made in the whole day.

The party now began to have serious doubts as to the utility of continuing their expedition. Jorgenson was suffering from an indisposition and it appeared that it would take at least four more days to reach Mount Dundas. It seemed doubtful whether their supplies would be sufficient for that time. Moreover the country was a totally unknown one and they feared they might meet with even greater obstacles and perils.

Attempting to justify this decision Jorgenson said that the utility of the passage had become questionable. They had found the whole country from Robins Passage to the Pieman a heath-covered sand and not worth the Company's acceptance. Under these circumstances a road which would involve considerable expense could be no object to the Company. Indeed the party seem to have been very anxious to find excuses to turn back, forgetting that several excuses are always less convincing than one.

Yet Jorgenson admits to their still having two weeks' provisions, not including what they may have been able to catch, and as the return journey from the Pieman to Circular Head might have been accomplished by forced marching, within nine days or perhaps less, more enterprising explorers may not have been so easily deterred.

The party, however, returned to Mount Pieman and determined to spend some time in examining this area on the northern banks of the river which on Curr's chart was marked as "supposed good land".

They forded the Pieman at their former crossing place on 22nd March and on the 24th Lorymer set out with one of the men, Thomas Jones, for the mouth of the Pieman and returned the following day with the information that the supposed good land did not exist.

In two days they reached Native Well Bay where they found the buried provisions safe and intact, and on the 28th encamped

at Native Hut River. The weather was now cold and wet and they remained at this station until the 30th when they made for Jacob's Boat Harbour. The rivers were now swollen considerably and presented difficulties in crossing. On the 31st they made a camp a little north of Venable's Boat Harbour where they remained till 2nd April and on the 3rd made the Arthur River. On 6th April they arrived at Robinson's Passage. By this time two of their dogs had been mysteriously lost, presumably shot by Jones when they had refused to give up the kangaroos they had killed. Thus they had no means of augmenting their supplies. But seeing Circular Head before them the party was in high spirits and the last of the rations was distributed.

However, the following day they found their progress impeded by the Duck River over which they could find no ford. A raft constructed for the purpose sank almost immediately. They then proceeded up the river in an attempt to find a crossing place, but the next morning Lorymer changed his mind and, attempting to swim over the river lower down, was drowned. The rest of the party were able to cross on a tree trunk about nine miles higher up and arrived at Circular Head on 9th April.<sup>(1)</sup>

Lorymer's death was the third loss the Company suffered during their explorations, two men having previously been drowned when attempting to cross the Mersey River in flood. A young man, he appears not to have been a good leader and lacked the qualities of courage and enterprise so necessary in this type of work.

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(1) "Private Journal and Remarks of Jorgen Jorgenson of Discoveries in Van Diemen's Land and the Death of Mr. Lorymer." 1827. M.L.



iii. Wedge's Official Survey of the North-West Quarter, 1828.

Having decided upon establishing themselves at the Surrey and Hampshire Hills, it remained for the Company to secure the area in its grant. After the initial difference of opinion between Curr and Arthur over the location of the grant, and subsequent correspondence between the Court of Directors and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Earl Bathurst, it had been determined that the Company should be permitted to select within the boundaries they desired - that is as far east as Port Sorell - (1) though it was denied that this had been the original intention. Bathurst instructed Arthur, however, that in deciding the question of the land to be considered available for the Company:

it must be borne in mind that the feeding of sheep is the Company's principal object, and that the fitness or unfitness of the land which may be surveyed for the use of the Company must principally depend upon its suitability for Sheep Pasturage. I have to desire therefore that in the event of any dispute or difficulty arising between the Company's Agent and yourself upon this point, you will be guided in your decision by the opinion of the Surveyor-General, who, in surveying the Country within the limits now prescribed for the Company's Settlement will first report upon the more distant parts of the Country with reference to its fitness for Sheep Pasturage, - it being distinctly explained in my Letter to Mr. Inglis "that the intended Grant shall not be fixed in the parts adjacent to the Lands already located, unless the more distant Country shall be found upon examination to be decidedly unfit for the feeding of Sheep, and that this further extension of the limits...should offer Land fit for that purpose." (2)

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(1) Bathurst-Inglis, 5th Jan. 1827, Encl. in Bathurst-Arthur, 7th Jan. 1827, No. 1. GO 1/5, T.S.A.

(2) Bathurst-Arthur, 7th Jan. 1827. No. 1. loc.cit.

It was soon after this concession that Hellyer had made his journey inland and to discover the Hampshire and Surrey Hills. Curr had consequently suggested that, as this land seemed the most desirable for the Company and as he did not want to relinquish the establishment already at Circular Head, the Directors should seek permission to divide the Company's grant. (1)

This was done in September, 1827 and the Directors also requested

That the 250,000 acres of useful land be defined to mean, good land, fit for cultivation or pasture, clear of forest, scrub, or swamp, and such as the Company may immediately put to use. [And] That the limits... be extended over the whole North West Quarter... from Port Sorell, Westward, and from Port Macquarie, Northward...and if sufficient shall not be found there... they shall have liberty to make selections in the north East, to the extent of useful land deficient in the North West. (2)

Replying to this in October Huskisson dismissed all these claims stating that "the clearing, improvement and cultivation" of the grant had been one of the primary objects, and if they expected a "continuous square tract which would include 250,000 acres of land free from timber and which in its natural state produces grass, and is at least capable of being used as pasture land" with all the other thrown in as useless, "the whole Island of Van Diemen's Land...might not have been sufficient to satisfy

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(1) Curr-Inglis, 17th April, 1827, No. 54. V.D.L. Co.

(2) Inglis-Hay, 5th Sept. 1827. Encl. in Huskisson-Arthur,  
13th Oct. 1827, No. 4. GO 1/5. T.S.A.

so unreasonable an expectation." Huskisson, however, was prepared to make the concession of allowing the Company to break their grant into four or five allotments, all within the prescribed limits and with the quantity of useless land included not exceeding an addition of one quarter.<sup>(1)</sup>

Arthur, zealous to protect the interests of the private settlers who were continuing to arrive in the Colony, was loath to accept a line drawn south from Port Sorell (as conceded by Bathurst) as the eastern boundary for the Company's selection and believed that sufficient land could be found westward of a north and south line drawn from Round Hill Point. He pointed out that the improvement and cultivation of waste and uninhabited land was also part of the Company's original proposition, and that this seemed to have been lost sight of by their Agents. Great injury would result to private immigrants were the Company not confined at least westward of the Mersey River.<sup>(2)</sup>

Huskisson's further concession, that the Company could divide their grant, aggravated the situation, for not only could they approach the settled districts, but they could "pick the eyes" out of the entire north-west quarter.

To support his views Arthur enclosed in his despatch a report from the Land Commissioners,<sup>(3)</sup> a letter from the Surveyor-General,

(1) Huskisson-Inglis, 8th Oct. 1827. Encl. in Huskisson-Arthur, 13th Oct. 1827, No. 4. GO 1/5, T.S.A.

(2) Arthur-Huskisson, 10th April, 1828, No. 24. GO 10/3, T.S.A.

(3) Land Commissioners (Frankland, Murdoch and O'Connor) -

Colonial Secretary, 11th April, 1828. Encl. in supra.



George Frankland, to the Colonial Secretary in which he defined the expression "North west district" used in the original instructions as meaning not a quarter of the island but only one ninth! Moreover he pointed out that the area between the Western Tiers and the northern coast was that principally sought after by the new immigrants;

for the Tide of Settlement.....is now flowing round to the Westward, and spreading itself in the very fine country which opens in that direction; but if the Company are allowed to extend themselves to Port Sorell they place themselves at the very head of the Flood and impede the Current; it is difficult to say what other direction it can take! The bad land in this country bears so very great a proportion to the good, that it seems but fair that the Company should not be much more fastidious, than the poor settler who must take bad and good as they come.

With respect to the mode in which the allotments are to be taken, I fear that the Company while they nominally hold 312,500 acres will virtually possess upwards of two million acres; thus engrossing that portion of Van Diemen's Land which is probably the finest from the circumstance of its being so much better Watered than the older settlements. For it will be impossible for Private Settlers to fix themselves between these surrounding Grants of the Company. They would be totally overwhelmed and ruined..... (1)

Arthur believed that Bathurst's and Huskisson's decision rested entirely upon the faith placed on Curr's reports and he could not be certain of their accuracy. Indeed he and the Land Commissioners felt that the Company had not made a thorough inspection of much of the area, especially that between Rocky Cape

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(1) Surveyor-General-Colonial Secretary, 14th April, 1828. loc.cit.

(1) and the West Coast. It was for this reason, as well as in accordance with Bathurst's instruction, that Arthur sent John Helder Wedge to examine and report on the district and especially to ascertain whether the Surrey and Hampshire Hills area was the most westerly tract which could be located for the Company's purposes. It was hoped that there would be found in the vicinity of Cape Grim from 100,000 to 150,000 acres suitable for the Company. If this should be the case it was then Arthur's intention to suggest that the Company's grant be divided into three parts, comprising all the available land at Cape Grim and at Circular Head, and the remainder be taken in the Surrey and Hampshire Hills.

(2)

Wedge was engaged on this task from February to May, 1828. During this time he made four different journeys, though it was not until the last one that he crossed some entirely new country not before explored by the Company's officers. (See Map 6).

On his first journey he proceeded in a southerly direction from the mouth of the Crayfish River to the junction of the Detention and Alarm Rivers. Much of this was bad travelling with heathy hills and indifferent soil which both Hellyer and Lorymer had reported useless, but Wedge, no doubt anxious to conform with Arthur's opinions on the location for the grant, reported that it could be improved to enable it to carry a limited quantity of stock by the introduction of artificial clovers to provide summer pasture.

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(1) Land Commissioners-Colonial Secretary, 11th April, 1828.

Loc.cit.

(2) Arthur-Huskisson, 10th April, 1828, No. 24, G.O. 10/3, T.S.A.

After ascending a peak of the Shakespeare Hills Wedge returned up the Tret or Detention River to Rocky Cape.

On 20th March he set out on his second journey from the Duck River, which he had spent some time surveying previously. He proceeded southerly down the Duck River to the vicinity of the modern Trowutta, then turned north-west towards Mount Cameron. On this route he encountered swampy forest land which greatly impeded his progress, and which only terminated at the West Coast. From Mount Cameron he headed north-east and arrived on the coast at the mouth of the Harcus River, which he called the Lamb. The country nearer to the coast between the Harcus and the Montagu Rivers next engaged his attention. He proceeded south down the left bank of the Montagu River but again encountered marshy country and heathy plains which were, however, capable of being brought into production by drainage. This was never attempted until the present day when the Government decided to open up the area for soldier settlement. About ten miles from the coast this type of country ended in bare and sterile hills totally unfit for stock of any kind, so Wedge again turned north-west and followed down the course of the Welcome River where there was land of a much better quality.

For his last and most important journey Wedge set out from Cape Grim on 29th April intending to examine the West Coast as far south as Mount Norfolk and thence inland in a north easterly direction to Circular Head.

The country as far as Mount Cameron was already well known and Wedge confirmed the earlier reports of its suitability for sheep pasturage. On his first ascent of Mount Cameron Wedge like Jorgenson before him, had mistaken Mount Balfour for Mount Norfolk, but on this occasion after taking bearings from a hill on West Point he realized his mistake and conferred the name of Balfour on this mountain in honour of his friend, Lieutenant Colonel Balfour, the late Commandant at Port Dalrymple.

In his report Wedge recommended that the Company be confined to the extreme north-west area, that is, west of a line drawn south from Rocky Cape. He believed that here there was ample land suitable for them.

Wedge's actual route after leaving Mount Balfour is somewhat doubtful. Although his report was accompanied by a map illustrating his route (see Map 6), it is not in agreement with his record and of his course direction as entered in the day-to-day diary kept during the journey. It may be that he made his map to be more in line with his instructions so it would appear that he had examined almost all of the north-west quarter of the island in which Arthur was anxious to confine the Company. Some degree of inaccuracy on the distances travelled each day is to be expected but a course plotted by compass in a generally north-east direction between the Balfour and Frankland Rivers should be fairly reliable, and, therefore, his route almost directly east as given in the map is inexplicable.

The map itself caused some uproar for it was protested

and proved by the Company that the distances had been exaggerated.<sup>(1)</sup> This fact was used to discredit Wedge's whole report for the Company suggested that the inaccuracies had been deliberate so as to make the amount of suitable land in the north-west quarter appear greater than it was - in fact so extensive that the area west of the Detention River could legitimately satisfy the Company's expectations.

After leaving Mount Balfour Wedge travelled in a direction a little north of East, crossed the Balfour River (now the Lindsay), the Leigh and the Horton Rivers. The latter has been altered to Norton. The country, though forested, was more open to the south-east and Wedge expressed his belief that a fine country, possibly connecting with the Surrey Hills, lay in that direction. He seems to have been a little hazy on names already given to the rivers in the area. A large river swollen by floods which he came upon about eight miles after crossing the Frankland, he first refers to as the Don but, later in his Report, names it the Arthur, and the name of Don is given to a small tributary of the Arthur. In actual fact neither was it the Arthur, but a large tributary of that river, now known as the Rapid River. The mistake was one which originated with Hellyer's failure to find exactly where the Hellyer and Arthur Rivers joined, and his supposition, incorrect as it was, came to be inserted on the maps as truth, so that even in Sprent's map of 1859 it was perpetuated.

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(1) Curr-Colonial Secretary, 23rd Oct. 1829. CSO 1/14/265, sub-no.84,

T.S.A. Also Arthur-Twiss, 9th Oct. 1829. GO 10/6, T.S.A.

Wedge commented on the rapidity of the river, which he claimed to be equal to the cataract at Launceston. His course after crossing the Rapid River followed a north-easterly direction towards the Blue Peak. From his record of distances and direction travelled to and from this eminence, it would appear that it was not that so known today, but another hill further to the North, possibly Frog or Folly Hills. From its summit Wedge had a view of the surrounding country which in its vicinity was of an open heathy nature with bare hills to the South-east and East.

About six miles from this hill a considerable river interrupted his progress. Having mistaken the Rapid for the Arthur, it was only natural that he should now mistake the Arthur for the Hellyer. It was flooded and his party was detained for five days on its banks before they could effect a crossing. Felled trees failed to reach the opposite side and although they traced its course for some miles no way of crossing presented itself. At a narrow part of the river they again decided to fell some trees but before even one was down the tomahawk flew off its handle and was lost in the river.

The next day, 19th April it was decided to attempt to swim the river. One man did so and the plan was to pull the rest of the party across on a catamaran which they had constructed. As the river was too wide for the string attached to the catamaran to be thrown over, another man had to swim over with it in his mouth. The catamaran was then embarked with a grass rope to

haul it back again for the next journey. However, the force of the current broke the string and they were forced to tow it back again. Then another member of the party volunteered to paddle over, but upon reaching the middle was caught in an eddy, and upset, and though he managed to swim to the opposite bank, the catamaran and the provisions on it were lost. The only thing left to do now was to attempt to burn or blast down the tree which they had been felling. In the meantime the three men on the opposite bank, left without clothes or provisions, were forced to re-swim the river. On the night of the 20th the tree fell and next morning they had the satisfaction of seeing that it extended across the river so that they could cross.

Having been five days delayed at this point Wedge felt it was wiser to return straight to Circular Head rather than press on for the Dip Range as had been his intention. This ended his examination of the North-west and as a result he recommended that the eastern limits of the Company's grant should be the Tret and Alarm Rivers - i.e. the Detention - and thence south to join an East-West line passing over Mount Balfour. This would comprise almost one million acres of which 50,000 would be immediately available for stock with little outlay of capital. In addition to this about one hundred thousand acres of heathy hills and sandy plains could be discounted altogether, but the remainder, about 700,000 acres of heavily timbered land, though impossible for private individuals to select, could be reclaimed with such resources as were available to the Company. The expense

would be great but this might be defrayed to some extent by exporting the timber, and the land when cleared was likely to prove very valuable. To support this opinion he cited the example of the United States of America where ".....the land with the greatest quantity of timber upon it is chosen as being the most valuable."

In addition to confining the Company west of the Detention River, Wedge urged the great importance of reserving Emu Bay for a township or for some government purpose, it being the only one of the three ports on the north-west coast which would not be within the Company's limits. The Company could be given the indulgence of an allotment on the foreshore if they so desired.

Wedge expressed his belief that all the advantages that the Company could expect of a country in its natural state were possessed within the limits he had recommended. <sup>(1)</sup>

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(1) Tasmanian Legislative Council Journals, Vol. VI, 1861, Paper No. 21. "Official Report of Journales [sic] made by J.H. Wedge.....in the North-west.....in the early part of..... 1828." Also Wedge-Surveyor-General, 1st July, 1828. CSO 1/14/265 sub-no.86, T.S.A. Also J.H.Wedge, Diary, 31st Jan-25th May, 1828. A 1429, M.L.



Map 6. "Map of the North West Portion  
of Tasmania illustrating a Report  
made in 1828 by Mr Surveyor Wedge"

MAP OF  
THE NORTH WEST PORTION  
OF  
TASMANIA

ILLUSTRATING A REPORT MADE  
IN 1828 BY  
MR SURVEYOR WEDGE



iv. Controversy on the Location of the Grant.

Wedge's examination and report did little to clarify the situation, for the Company were not prepared to accept such a grant of land as Wedge had recommended. Upon the discovery of the Hampshire and Surrey Hills Curr had recommended that the Court of Directors make efforts to have this area secured to the Company.<sup>(1)</sup> Huskisson's decision of October, 1827 allowed them to divide their grant, and a further conference with the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Stanley, and the permanent head, Hay, had resulted in a Minute from Downing Street (1st January, 1828) authorizing the Company to select their lands:

between two nearly parallel lines running South from Table Cape, and Round Hill Point respectively..... to be extended if needful to a distance not exceeding 15 miles South of a line running Westward through Quamby's Bluff to the Sea so as to include the whole or at least some considerable portion of the Country named the "Surrey Hills".

They were also to take a tract of "at least 20,000 Acres" at Circular Head and were permitted to retain the 10,000 acres at the Lakes which had previously been approved by Arthur.<sup>(2)</sup> The remainder was to be comprised in two blocks with the useless land not exceeding the addition of one quarter.<sup>(3)</sup>

This communication, which reached Arthur on 10th August, 1828, gave the Company all they desired at the moment and

(1) Curr-Inglis, 17th April, 1827. No. 54. V.D.L. Co.

(2) Lieutenant-Governor's Minute, 10th Jan. 1827. CSO 1/13/267, T.S.A.

(3) Huskisson-Arthur, 1st Jan. 1828, No. 1. GO 1/7, T.S.A.

completely overruled Wedge's recommendations. All further discussion on the subject was thus rendered useless.

The Van Diemen's Land Company had been regarded from the outset with a great deal of jealousy by some of the influential settlers and landowners and by some of the principal government officials. The reports of the Company's surveyors on the quality and extent of the Surrey and Hampshire Hills had served to increase this feeling. On a tour of the Island in January, 1829, Arthur, accompanied by the Surveyor-General, George Frankland, Thomas Scott, John Montagu and Charles Arthur, took<sup>(1)</sup> the opportunity personally to inspect the district. His impressions were not very favourable; in fact it was his opinion that the situation was "in its natural state wholly inapplicable for the purpose" of breeding fine woolled sheep.<sup>(2)</sup> He, therefore, suggested to Curr that the Company should locate at least part of their grant at Cape Grim which he believed would be more suited to the breeding of sheep. Curr agreed, though in his opinion the quantity of good land at Cape Grim was of comparatively small extent.<sup>(3)</sup>

Arthur reported to Murray that although the limits agreed upon by the Directors and the Secretary of State in January, 1828 were desirable from the point of view of the local Government because they were clearly separated from the settled districts,

(1) Hobart Town Courier, 31st Jan. 1829.

(2) Arthur-Murray, 31st Jan. 1829, No. 3. GO 10/5, T.S.A.

(3) Curr-Inglis, 13th Feb. 1829, No. 56. V.D.L. Co.

they could not be carried into effect "without being attended with the most ruinous consequences to the Company" and "that even with such modifications of the original agreement as may be consistent with the Interests of the rest of the community in Van Diemen's Land, it is exceedingly doubtful whether the objects of the Company will ultimately succeed."<sup>(1)</sup>

The modifications which Arthur proposed, and in which Curr and the Directors acquiesced at the time, and which were approved with some variations, by Murray in May, 1830, were that the Company should divide their grant into six locations; 20,000 acres at Circular Head, 10,000 acres at the Middlesex Plains instead of that previously agreed upon at the Lakes, 10,000 acres at the Hampshire Hills, 150,000 acres at the Surrey Hills, 150,000 at Cape Grim and 10,000 acres in three of the adjoining islands - Trefoil, Perkin's and Walker's. The allowance of unproductive land to be included free of quit rent was to be increased to 100,000 acres.<sup>(2)</sup>

Murray also informed the Company that these terms were to be considered final,<sup>(3)</sup> and he instructed Arthur to suffer "no arguments on the part of the Agents of the Company to induce you to defer the completion of their Grant, the limits and boundaries of which, you will direct the Surveyor-General to fix as expeditiously as can be accomplished with convenience....."<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) Arthur-Murray, 31st Jan. 1829, No. 3. GO 10/5, T.S.A.

(2) Murray-Arthur, 27th May, 1830, No. 27. GO 1/11, T.S.A.

(3) Hay-Bischoff, 21st May, 1830. Encl. in supra.

(4) Murray-Arthur, 27th May, 1830, No. 27, loc.cit.

However much Murray hoped he had thus settled the matter it was not to be so, for before he had even considered Arthur's proposals, the question had again been raised. After receiving Arthur's propositions "with every feeling of gratitude and satisfaction" and having inspected Cape Grim, Curr reported that he had found it to correspond very nearly with the former accounts he had received of it. Some part was desirable "but the grass as compared with the heaths, is but a small extent running generally in a narrow strip down the west coast", so that although there might be 50,000 acres of available grass land it would necessarily lie in a very long narrow tract, and could not be included in a compact figure without taking in a disproportionate quantity of useless land.<sup>(1)</sup> Curr also noted that Arthur had made no provision in his arrangements for securing any land for the Company at Emu Bay.<sup>(2)</sup> Some extent of land there as well as the small plains on the road to the Hampshire Hills were essential to maintain their position and to feed the bullocks which were necessarily employed on the road.

The request was submitted to the Surveyor-General and his report was that such a plan was impossible although some of the plains might be leased to the Company for a short term, and allotments at Emu Bay should be given to them on the same terms

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- (1) Curr-Colonial Secretary, 7th Mar. 1829. CSO 1/14/267 sub-no.72, T.S.A. Also Curr-Inglis, 25th Feb. 1829, No. 58. V.D.L.Co.
- (2) Curr-Colonial Secretary, 29th June, 12th Oct. 1829, CSO 1/14/265, sub-nos. 82, 83. T.S.A.

(1)  
 as to private settlers. Frankland was also opposed to the  
 Company receiving such a grant on the West Coast as Curr desired.  
 This he believed was a:

question of policy - whether it be expedient to  
 sacrifice the present immediate interests of the  
 Company to the future wants of emigrants, or on the  
 contrary to abandon all intention of hereafter  
 locating private Settlers in that quarter and to  
 surrender to the Company all the lands which are  
 available for sheep grazing without previous outlay.  
 The present position of things in England would lead  
 one to anticipate that emigration to this Colony  
 will increase to a great extent when the advantages  
 of that step are better known to certain Classes in  
 the Mother Country - and the future wants of those (2)  
 Emigrants should I think be constantly borne in mind.

To these objections Curr could only say that if the lands to which  
 he objected were "within ten miles of London they would not be  
 worth forty shillings an acre. As much Ocean would be more  
 valuable." (3)

This discussion was for a time terminated by the arrival  
 of Murray's final decision of December, 1830, by which the  
 Company was to take 150,000 acres at Cape Grim "in as compact a  
 shape as possible with reference to natural boundaries."

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- (1) Surveyor's General's Minute, 18th Aug. 1829 on Curr-Colonial  
 Secretary, 29th June 1829. CSO 1/14/265, sub-no. 82, T.S.A.  
 Also Surveyor-General-Colonial Secretary, 10th Nov. 1829.  
 CSO 1/14/265, sub-no. 85, T.S.A.
- (2) Surveyor-General's memorandum, 29th Dec. 1829. CSO 1/14/265,  
 sub-no. 88, T.S.A.
- (3) Curr-Colonial Secretary, 6th Feb. 1830. CSO 1/14/265,  
 sub-no. 91, T.S.A.

Curr at first accepted this; but when his requests for land at Emu Bay and on the road to the Hampshire Hills (for which he was prepared to give up ten times the amount out of the Cape Grim allotment)<sup>(1)</sup> were not met with favourably,<sup>(2)</sup> in June, 1832 he requested that the Company should be allowed to give up 50,000 acres at Woolnorth in return for a similar quantity to form a road block connecting the Hampshire Hills with the coast. He maintained that the possession of the Surrey and Hampshire Hills would be of no value without the road block for "it cannot be expected that the Company will make a road at very great expense upon Crown lands."<sup>(3)</sup>

Upon reference to the Surveyor-General it was ascertained that he was not averse to this proposal as it coincided more nearly with the original terms on which the Company were to locate their lands by concentrating almost two-thirds of their grant into one block, and although the soil in the forest areas which would thus be granted to the Company was very rich, the nature of the forest made it exceedingly improbable that any private settler could undertake to clear it.<sup>(4)</sup> Opinions in the

- (1) Curr-Colonial Secretary, 18th May, 1831. CSO 1/14/265, sub-no. 98, T.S.A.
- (2) Surveyor-General-Colonial Secretary, 17th Dec. 1831. CSO 1/14/265, sub-no. 101, T.S.A.
- (3) Curr-Colonial Secretary, 1st June, 1832. CSO 1/14/265, sub-no.102 (2), T.S.A.
- (4) Surveyor-General-Colonial Secretary, 24th July, 1832. CSO 1/14/265, sub-no.105, T.S.A.



(1)

Executive Council differed and Arthur himself wrote to Goderich in July, 1833 that the local government could not sanction it. The land at Woolnorth was inferior and remote from the settled districts".....while that at Emu Bay, has facilities calculated to render it at some not very distant period a thriving Settlement."

(2)

The length of time that elapsed before Arthur reported the decision of the local government to the home authorities had allowed the Directors of the Company to make application direct to the Secretary of State while he was ignorant of the attitude in the Colony. Goderich, believing that Arthur's silence was because he felt himself precluded from submitting any new proposals by the terms of Murray's despatch of 27th May, 1830, sanctioned the exchange of lands the Company desired.

(3)

The Company had now obtained what they were convinced was the best available land in the north-west quarter of Van Diemen's Land, to which by the terms of their Charter they were restricted. However, the results of several seasons indicated that these lands were not such as were adapted to their purposes, and which they had been led in the first instance to believe they would receive. The principal object in the formation of the Company had been the

(4)

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- (1) Minutes of Executive Council, 23rd March, 27th Aug. 1832. Encl. in Arthur-Goderich, 24th July, 1833, No. 42. GO 10/14, T.S.A.  
 (2) Arthur-Goderich, 24th July, 1833, No. 42. GO 10/14, T.S.A.  
 (3) Goderich-Arthur, 27th March, 1833, No. 24. GO 1/15, T.S.A.  
 (4) Charter of the V.D.L. Co. H.R.A. III, iv, pp. 599 ff.

breeding of fine woolled sheep, the shareholders and directors being principally merchants and people with interests in the woollen industry in England. At the time the Company was formed the settled areas in the eastern half of the island were proving their suitability for the objects the Company wished to pursue. The north-west quarter was, however, very different from these regions, both in soil and climate, and though it has since proved to be farming land of the finest description, it was not then suited to sheep breeding, especially for fine wool. Therefore, the Company was doomed at the outset to fail in its objectives.

The experience of several winters at the Surrey Hills soon bore this out, for the Company's losses of stock were severe. With his worst fears confirmed Curr determined once more to attempt to wring more favourable terms from His Majesty's Government. During his visit to England early in 1834 he caused the Directors to apply to Stanley for permission to relinquish 70,000 acres of their grant at Woolnorth and to take 54,000 acres in the North-east. Several changes in the Colonial Office, bringing Spring Rice and then the Earl of Aberdeen to the position of Secretary of State in December, 1834, resulted in these proposals being shelved and it was not until February, 1835 that they were again brought forward.<sup>(1)</sup>

The Company claimed that after considerable expense in importing the finest breeds of Saxon sheep, and in road-building, fencing and other improvements their flocks, which under normal

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(1) Pearse-Aberdeen, 17th Feb. 1835. Encl. in Glenelg-Arthur, 20th June, 1835. No. 11. GO 1/18, T.S.A.

conditions should have increased many times over, had been reduced by two-thirds. That their affairs had been thus retarded they attributed to their restriction to the north-west quarter, a restriction which they claimed had been designed wholly to the public advantage. Their continued applications for modification of this restriction were due to the fact that they had never obtained the sheep country which had been specified in all the early correspondence. Furthermore, while the Company had derived great benefit from the Company's expenditure, to them it had returned nothing. <sup>(1)</sup>

These representations fell on sympathetic ears in the Colonial Office, but in April, 1835 Under-Secretary Hay informed Pearse (the Governor) that it was not possible to grant the Company's request without reference to the Colony, and then only if it could be established that the land which had been assigned to them was not of such an extent as they had in the first instance been led to expect for their purposes; that it was owing to the nature of the land and not to other causes over which the Government had no control that the flocks had decreased; and that the exchange could be effected without detriment to the interests of the Colony and of the private settlers. <sup>(2)</sup> Glenelg, the

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(1) Memoranda of officers of the V.D.L. Co., 30th Jan., 14th Feb., 14th April, 1834. Encl. in Glenelg-Arthur, 20th June 1835, No. 11, GO 1/18, T.S.A.

(2) Hay-Pearse, 8th April, 1835. Loc.cit.

Secretary of State, therefore, requested Arthur to bring the whole subject under the consideration of the Executive Council, recommending that the Company should receive "every reasonable and practicable facility in retrieving their affairs.....with a due regard to the general interests of the Colony or of Private Individuals."<sup>(1)</sup>

When the case was reviewed by the Council on 9th November and 7th December, 1835, it was evident from the outset that the request would not be granted. The former agriculturalist to the Company, Alexander Goldie, was called and gave evidence that in his opinion the Company's losses were due to inadequate preparation of the pasture, lack of artificial food, and the bad condition in which the sheep arrived at the Surrey Hills. He also suggested that much of the fern land in the Company's grant might be cleared and cultivated at a very moderate expense. The seal was set on the Company's fate when the Surveyor-General reported that in his opinion the Company's proposal if granted would be:

an obvious interference with the interests of the Community.....Those Individuals who have occasion to form new Settlements find the greatest difficulty at the present moment in selecting land fit for their purposes, but it is to the North East quarter generally, that they turn their views, as it affords here and there, tracts of land fit for depasturing sheep - the desideratum now so difficult of attainment in most quarters. (2)

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(1) Glenelg-Arthur, 20th June, 1835, No. 11. GO 1/18, T.S.A.

(2) Minutes of Executive Council, 9th Nov., 7th Dec. 1835. Encl. in Arthur-Glenelg, 14th Jan., 1836, No. 9. GO 10/21, T.S.A.

The Council, therefore, rejected the Company's proposal on each of the three conditions laid down by Hay. First they considered that it had never been intended that the term "land applicable to sheep pasturage" should take precedence over the condition of remoteness, for if it did it would mean that "the whole Island should, under certain circumstances, be open to their selection". On the second count they found that the reduction of the flocks had been greatly exaggerated by the Company, and that lack of care accounted for much of the actual loss incurred. Although the Company's lands were perhaps inferior as a pasture country to the older districts, there was a fair prospect of remuneration if the flocks were carefully managed. The Surveyor-General's memorandum dealt effectively with the third proviso. Moreover the Council requested Arthur ".....to submit to His Lordship that they are not aware that the Colonists are collectively, or individually, likely to be effected by the success or failure of the Van Diemen's Land Company."<sup>(1)</sup>

Reporting this decision to Glenelg, Arthur, although he concurred with the findings of the Council, admitted that it "is nevertheless undeniable that the estate of the Company is, as a pasture for Sheep, inferior to the Settled Districts."<sup>(2)</sup> Following a suggestion of Curr's<sup>(3)</sup> he submitted that the Company

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(1) Minutes of Executive Council, 9th Nov., 7th Dec., 1835. Encl. in Arthur-Glenelg, 14th Jan. 1836, No. 9, GO 10/21, T.S.A.

(2) Arthur-Glenelg, 14th Jan. 1836, No. 9. Loc.cit.

(3) Curr-Colonial Secretary, 4th Dec. 1835. CSO 1/14/265, sub-no. 118. T.S.A.

Map 7. Copy of a Map of the North  
West Quarter of Van Diemen's  
Land, based on Hellyer's map  
of 1831.

The following arrangements for the Grants to the VAN DIEMENS LAND COMPANY have been determined upon.

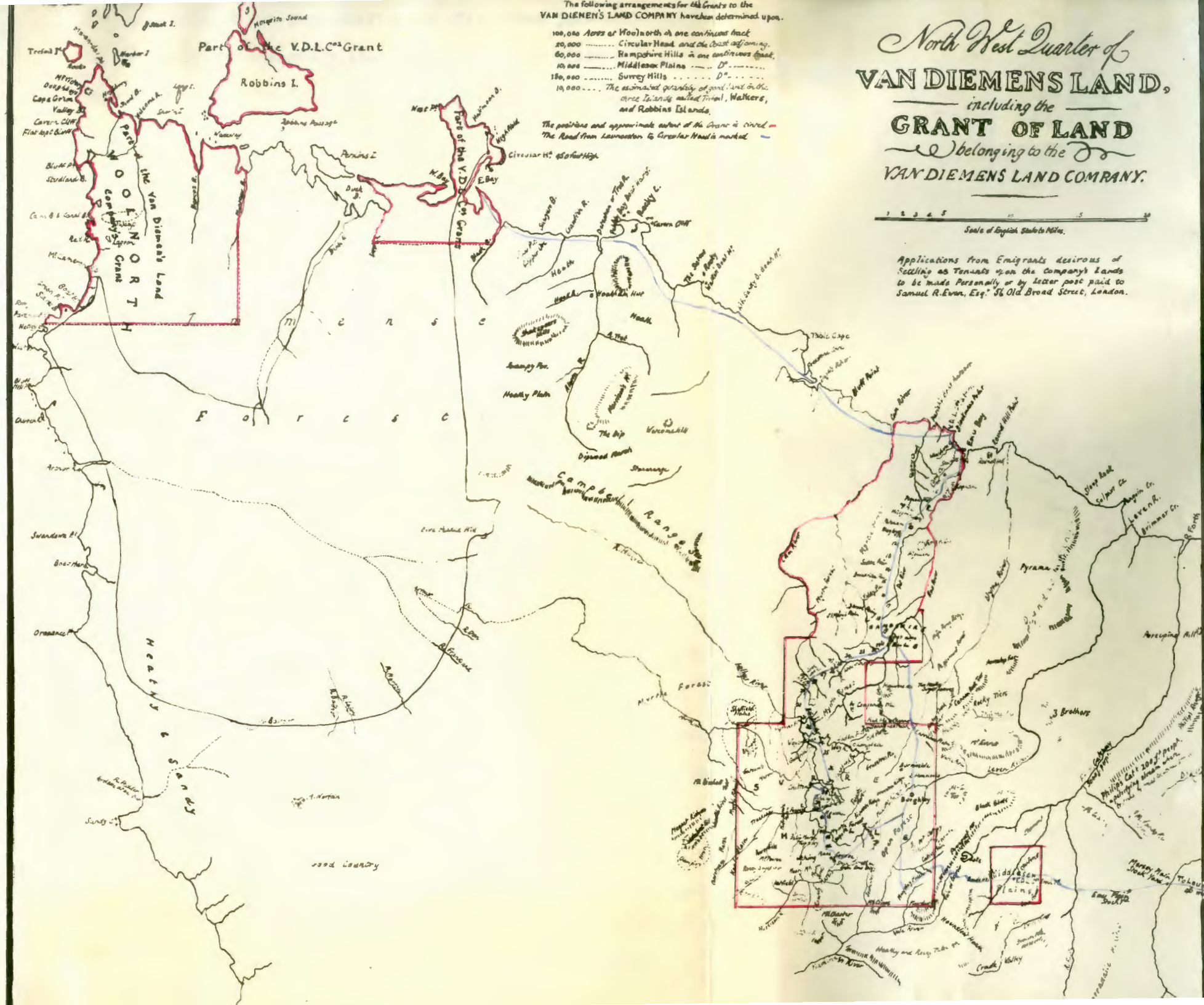
- 100,000 Acres or More north of one continuous tract
- 20,000 ..... Circular Head and the Coast adjoining
- 60,000 ..... Hampshire Hills in one continuous tract
- 10,000 ..... Middlesex Plains ..... D<sup>o</sup> .....
- 180,000 ..... Surrey Hills ..... D<sup>o</sup> .....
- 10,000 ..... The estimated quantity of good land in the three Islands called Trawl, Walkers, and Robbins Islands.

The positions and approximate nature of the Grants is shown - The Road from Launceston to Circular Head is marked -

# North West Quarter of VAN DIEMENS LAND, including the GRANT OF LAND belonging to the VAN DIEMENS LAND COMPANY.

Scale of English Statute Miles.

Applications from Emigrants desirous of settling as Tenants upon the Company's Lands to be made Personally or by letter post paid to Samuel R. Ewen, Esq. 56 Old Broad Street, London.



might be given land at the newly colonized district of Port Philip, although the same difficulty - ".....the jealousy [sic] of the Colonists generally that lands have been alienated on more favorable terms to the Company than to private Settlers" - that existed in Van Diemen's Land would be likely to present itself there.<sup>(1)</sup>

This suggestion was never carried any further; for by the terms of their Charter the Company was precluded from holding lands other than in Van Diemen's Land and its dependencies.<sup>(2)</sup>

v. Hellyer's Further Explorations in the Surrey Hills Area.

Throughout this period exploration had not ceased; once having decided upon the situation of the Surrey and Hampshire Hills Curr was anxious to have it accurately surveyed and mapped. During 1828 Hellyer continued his explorations in the Surrey Hills area and along the line of road from the Mersey, which Fossey had begun to lay out.

At the beginning of February, 1828 he journeyed to the summit of Black Bluff,<sup>(3)</sup> the first known ascent of that mountain, and thence to the Mersey at Liena, returning down the west bank of the Mersey on his former route of September and October, 1826, and along the coast to Emu Bay. He also made a trip to Cradle Mountain in March, 1831.<sup>(4)</sup> The whole Surrey Hills block was thoroughly traversed

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(1) Arthur-Glenelg, 14th Jan. 1836, No. 9. GO 10/21, T.S.A.

(2) Charter of the V.D.L. Co. H.R.A. III, iv, pp. 599-600.

(3) Curr-Inglis, 28th Feb. 1828, No. 11, V.D.L. Co.

(4) Id., 28th March, 1831. No. 171.



in every direction from Mount Bischoff in the West to Black Bluff in the East and as far south as the Cripps Range, an area which thus became one of the best surveyed and most completely identified in the island.

The names of many of the directors of the Company are perpetuated in the nomenclature; Pearse, Cattley, Bischoff, Cripps, Campbell and Inglis. Some names, such as Hatfield, Medway, Blythe, Wey, Netherby, Sheffield Plain and Romney Marsh were derived from nostalgic memories of England; some were purely descriptive, and others were inspired by prominent Englishmen of the day.

On one of his journeys of examination of the Surrey Hills district Hellyer was forced further to the southward and eastward than had been his intention and some entirely new ground was traversed. His object had been to proceed south south-west from the Company's station at Burleigh and return in a north-westerly direction to Mt. Pearse, examining the country as far as the line of demarcation agreed upon by the Secretary of State and the Directors of the Company. The party included Isaac Cutts who had accompanied Hellyer, and later Fossey, on their first journeys to Hampshire Hills, and Alexander McKay, then an assigned servant of the Company, but later to make a greater contribution to Tasmanian exploration. He had also been with Hellyer on a previous expedition to Mount Van Dyke. <sup>(1)</sup> Fossey also accompanied Hellyer on this occasion, so

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(1) Calder-Colonial Secretary, 5th June, 1840. CSO 5/217/5521, T.S.A.  
Also McKay-Lieutenant-Governor, 5th July, 1831. CSO 1/495/10854,  
T.S.A.

the party was made up of seasoned explorers with experience in rough and difficult terrain. With provisions for fourteen days they set out on 7th November, 1828 (see Map 8).

The weather early showed unpropitious signs, but since it appeared somewhat improved on the 9th they determined to push on southward towards the Cripps Range, crossing a river which Hellyer named the Allowell, but which now appears on the maps as the Southwell.

The country alternated between belts of open myrtle forest and grassy plains which soon dwindled out to the type of green forest Hellyer had become accustomed to, with dense horizontal scrub. On the 10th they ascended a mountain in their course, forming part of the Cripps Range, from which they obtained a view of open plains to the South-west. Beyond, a mountain of considerable height presented itself and Hellyer concluded that it must be Mount Heemskirk, and that it was placed too far west on the chart, for there were two distinct ranges between it and the West Coast. However, the cartographers were right and the mountain Hellyer saw was Mount Murchison. It seems strange that it did not occur to Hellyer that this might be a hitherto undiscovered mountain, but possibly from its great height he believed that it must be visible from the West Coast and from his knowledge and experience in the use of Scott's map he knew it to be grossly inaccurate insofar as the mountain ranges were concerned. The eminence from which Hellyer made his observations he named Charter Mount, the day of their ascent being the third

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anniversary of the granting of the Company's charter.

They continued their course in a south south-westerly direction to avoid a wide and wooded gully on their left in which the roaring of a mighty torrent could be heard. But another ravine running north and south and joining the main one soon presented itself, and after crossing this the party ascended another steep mountain side in the hope of better travelling along its open heathy top. An enormous rock on the summit of this mountain led Hellyer to name it Mount Block. From this eminence they had a panoramic view of the surrounding countryside which, from the number of rivers and gullies, appeared likely soon to call a halt to their further proceeding south. Their expectations of better travelling higher up had proved groundless and they were forced to descend an almost perpendicular cliff to the banks of the river they had previously heard, here running from the North-east to the South-west. Hellyer named it the Mackintosh after the eminent Whig statesman of the day, Sir James Mackintosh.

Attempts to follow this river down proved difficult from the number of gullies leading to the main ravine; for they were soon confronted with a chasm which Hellyer claimed to be a thousand feet deep with a rapid roaring creek at the bottom to make a difficult crossing. The ascent of the steep opposite banks was equally arduous. But soon their step was quickened by the opening out of the forest and the beginning of the heathy country they had observed from Mount Charter. At the south-west extremity of these plains was a hill resembling "a venerable old castle" which formed

the north end of what Hellyer called the Eldon Range. But the fact of Hellyer's having mistaken Mount Murchison for Mount Heemskirk led to this range being represented on later maps as being almost east of Heemskirk, so that the name of Eldon was transferred to a range further south by later explorers. Hellyer's Eldon is now the Farrell Range.

Coming again upon the Mackintosh River they decided to cross it and ascend the plains on the opposite bank. They recognised that this was a calculated risk as the river, even at low level, as it then was, proved a dangerous crossing, and from the amount of driftwood lodged high up its banks they could see that it was liable to rise as much as twenty feet. Indeed it had risen six inches before the last man of the party had crossed.

The plains, though of small extent in this area, had been burnt by the natives and, as it seemed unlikely they would journey this far for that only, Hellyer was hopeful of finding a much larger extent of open land close by.

On 13th November, continuing in a southerly direction, their progress was again obstructed by another tremendous river, almost as wide as the Mackintosh, and flowing from the South-east. Again they realized the dangers of crossing should the river rise and so cut off their retreat; but when they found a fallen tree lying across, the temptation proved too great to resist, though it was already raining heavily. This river, a tributary of the Mackintosh, Hellyer named the Brougham, this time in honour of the Tory reformer, Lord Henry Brougham. It is no longer to be found

on the maps for later explorers named it the Sophia, possibly in a belief that there were two tributaries of the Mackintosh between the Fury and Murchison Rivers.

The party had now arrived at the foot of the long heathy range to which Hellyer had given the name of Eldon, and they ascended it expecting to gain much information by observations from its summit. The plains, which he named Cranbourne Chase, lay to the South-east and were drained by the Brougham (Sophia). Hellyer's artist's eye did not fail to appreciate the magnificent scenery which the Chase presented:

The Chase has a cultivated and diversified appearance from its having been lately burnt in several extensive tracts, looking fresh and green in those places and in others so completely covered with blooming heath that it resembled vast fields of clover divided by rows of shrubs serpentining every brook which intersected it from the mountain ranges on either side. I felt much disappointed that it was not a country at all desirable for the Company's purposes.

To the westward he could observe little, for his view was obstructed by the wooded ranges forming the Black-Murchison group.

The party continued south along the top of the Eldon Range for some miles in order to gain the loftiest dome, but even this proved too low to obtain the desired view to the West and North; but to the North-east they could see the May Day Plains and the Vale of Belvoir. Cradle Mountain itself was, however, obscured. Hellyer states that Barn Bluff was visible to the South-east; this was probably Mount Olympus, which much resembles it.

Now within a few miles of that lofty mountain he had mistaken for Mount Heemskirk, Hellyer was anxious to gain its summit from which he would be able to obtain a commanding view of the whole area. The weather, however, was bitterly cold and wet with occasional squalls of hail and sleet. But they continued to press a southerly course, passing a lake on the top of the range to the opposite side where they were confronted with another tremendous ravine through which a large river wound its course. To this Hellyer gave the name of Canning, but this has been transferred to a tributary further east and the river is now the Murchison.

Rising high above the surrounding mountains on the opposite side was Mount Murchison, Hellyer's Heemskirk, which with Mount Farrell, his Eldon, formed a great gateway for the rushing waters of the river beneath their almost perpendicular sides. To the West they could see that the Murchison was joined by another river of considerable size. This is now the Stirling River, but Hellyer left it nameless.

They descended the range along heathy slopes in a south-westerly direction towards Mount Murchison, but on nearing the river they could see that it was "deep enough to float a 74, and at least 60 yards wide", so that there was no possibility of their being able to cross even if they could have reached its banks, which seemed doubtful, for they were then on a spot surrounded by precipices on the East, West and South. Moreover the weather was now rapidly deteriorating so that even if after considerable exertion they could have ascended Mount Murchison it was likely that the view

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would be completely obscured by the dense cloud which even then enveloped it.

In these circumstances Hellyer decided against continuing in this direction, especially too as this was the eighth day of their journey and the heavy rains which would have considerably swollen the rivers meant that they would have to steer a course further to the eastward in order to head the rivers. They, therefore, retraced their steps to Lake Herbert and thence hurried down the eastern slopes of the range into Cranbourne Chase - which name Hellyer inscribed upon a tree.

The next morning, the 15th, they continued in an easterly direction towards the Brougham River (Sophia) but it was now in flood and the whole area was inundated. After wading through streams and break-outs they realised that the attempt was hopeless and retraced their steps to their previous camp site. The weather showed no signs of abatement; indeed it appeared to be deteriorating and their only chance of extricating themselves from their predicament now seemed to be to follow the mountain ranges until they could head the Brougham. In fact, so unenviable was their plight that unless they could regain the mountain range very promptly they were in danger of being completely cut off, for their camp site was already ankle deep in water.

The slopes of the range were now streaming with water which made their ascent very slippery. There was no possibility of fording the Brougham, now a deafening, foaming torrent, and they continued south-easterly along the range during the 16th and part of the 17th, but seeing an open country to the North-east which

it would be desirable to reach, they again descended a steep gully to the Brougham. After walking along it for some distance they found a spot where it was fordable, near to two peaked mountains which Hellyer on viewing later from the summit of a ridge on the opposite bank, named "Victoria" and "Sophia", after the two princesses, daughters of the Duke of Kent.

The heathy plain through which they now directed their course towards the North-east was named Hailstone Heath from the appearance given by small pieces of quartz on its surface. Still travelling in this general direction they ascended another partially snow-covered ridge, but were enveloped in a severe snow storm; their position seemed precarious for at every turn they seemed to be confronted with nothing but steep precipices, and a deep ravine on the North which completely cut off their route. To avoid this they descended a lesser defile to the South-east, but since the storm continued they were soon obliged to seek shelter for the night.

The snow, lying deep upon the ground the next morning (19th November), made their travelling even more difficult. From the top of another ridge they obtained a view of Mounts Block and Charter and realized that the ravine which obstructed them was that which they had seen from these mountains running towards Barn Bluff. They believed that this was the gorge of the Mackintosh River, but it was that of the Fury River, a tributary of the Mackintosh.

After rounding several minor gullies they arrived on the slopes of Barn Bluff and as the ravine still presented itself, they realized there was no alternative now but to cross it or perish in

the snow. The whole party were in extreme pain from the cutting snow and ice which fettered their every movement. The descent of this ravine occupied them four hours and in this they found the snow amidst the jagged and beetling rocks of great support. At the bottom they were overjoyed to find that the river, the Fury, was fordable. In this they were indeed fortunate, for the next morning the melted snow and rain had swollen the river considerably.

It was now the fourteenth day of their journey and their supplies were almost exhausted; but they continued on in a north and north-easterly direction, ascending the rocky cliffs to the snowy regions once more; and descending again to cross the Schist Creek, now a roaring torrent. But determined to keep the ridge as long as possible they climbed the opposite bank and plunged along to the North-east in a thick fog.

At length the clouds dispersed and presented to their delighted gaze a grassy valley directly before them. They felt they were in the land of the living once more. They descended two miles to the valley where the warm and sheltered climate provided a wonderful contrast with that of the previous four days. As the evening was clear Hellyer ascended a rocky ridge and was overjoyed to find that they had arrived at the north end of the Cradle Mountain, near Lake Dove.

The next day, 22nd November, they left Cradle Valley and proceeded north by the side of the Dove River through an open forest land. The whole party were so fatigued and encumbered by

stiffness and swollen legs and hands, that progress was slow, but with great exertion they managed to make their way across the Middlesex Plains and Vale of Belvoir and encamped for the night at the May Day Plains. The next day they made Burghley, all very much the worse for their experiences.

In his report to Curr Hellyer was apologetic because of their failure to find anything suitable for the Company's purposes, and lamented the "mortifying circumstance" that they should have had no clear weather while toiling over some of the highest mountains in the country to enable them to survey the distant country.<sup>(1)</sup>

Undaunted by the trials of his previous journey, Hellyer set out again in January, 1829 from Burghley pursuing a south-westerly course. There is no record of this journey other than a letter from Curr to the Colonial Secretary in which he states Hellyer to have reached the coast on 19th January

having been twelve days toiling through dense forest and heath, and over the deepest ravines he has ever had to encounter. He crossed three streams, which are branches of the Pieman, and supposes that when he reached the coast was only a few miles north of the mouth of that River and about fifty miles south of the Arthur.<sup>(2)</sup>

The three streams which Hellyer crossed were probably the

(1) Hellyer-Curr, 29th Nov. 1828. Journal of Hellyer's 1828 Expedition. Meston Papers, U.T. Also Curr-Inglis, 24th Dec. 1828, No. 52. V.D.L. Co.

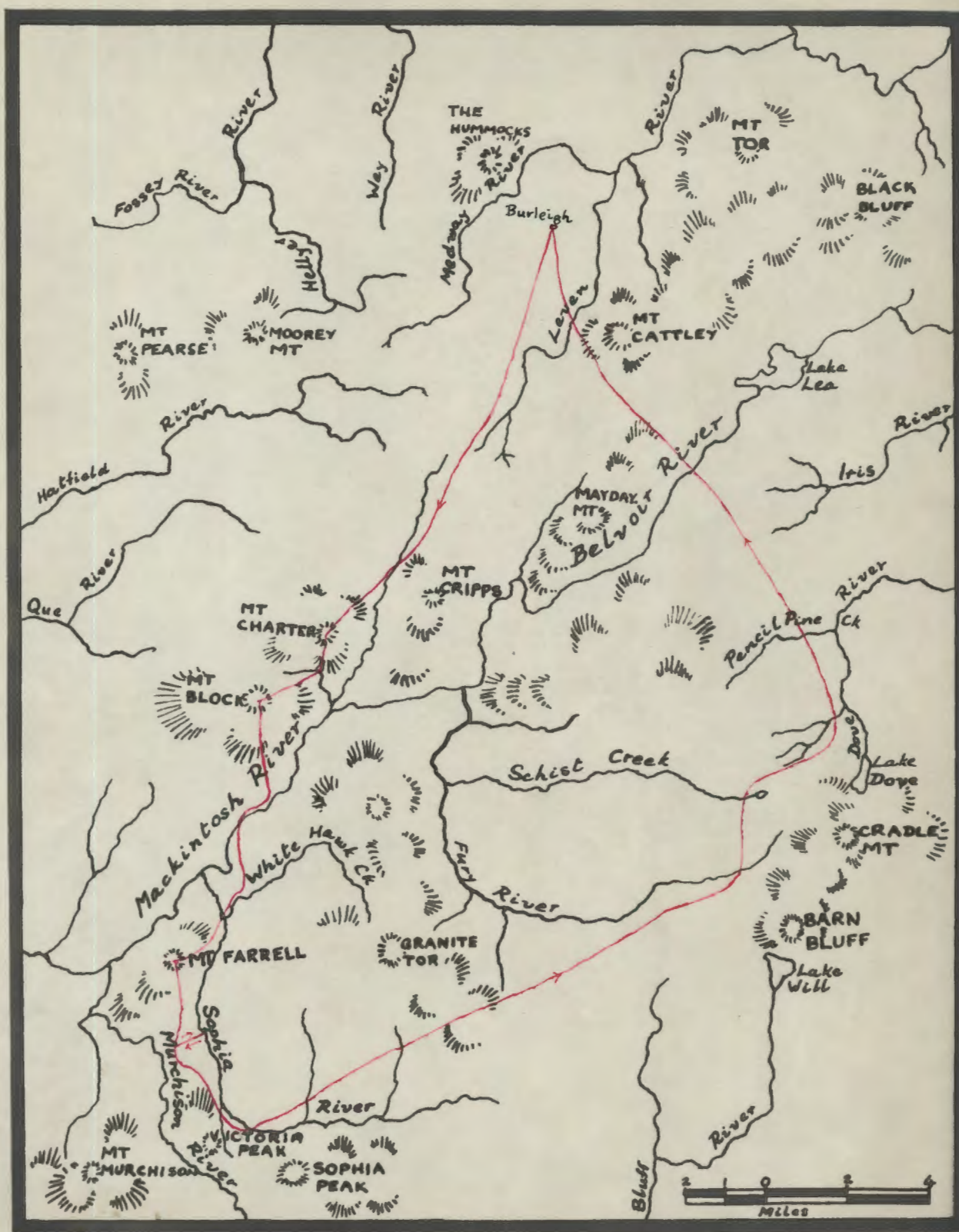
(2) Curr-Colonial Secretary, 11th Feb. 1829. C.S.O. 1/14/265, sub-no. 71, T.S.A.

Heazlewood (a tributary of the Whyte River), the Savage and the Donaldson. As the name of Donaldson dates from about this time it is likely that it is due to Hellyer as J. Donaldson Esq. was at the time one of the Directors of the Company. It would appear from Frankland's map published in 1837, and Sprent's of 1859 that the name was first applied, not to that which is now known as the Donaldson, but to either the Savage or the Whyte.

Fossey accompanied Hellyer on the journey, and after reaching the coast they followed it north to Mount Cameron and then went inland to Circular Head. Curr reported to the directors that they were "both in bad health and very much reduced by their late expedition."<sup>(1)</sup>

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(1) Curr-Inglis, 13th Feb. 1829, No. 56. V.D.L. Co.



Map 8. Illustrating Hellyer's route to Mount Farrell, 1828.

PART II

EXPLORATION IN OTHER PARTS  
OF THE COLONY

## THE LAKES AND THE CENTRAL PLATEAU.

i. Introductory.

After 1820 immigrants arrived in Van Diemen's Land in increasing numbers, due to depressed economic conditions in Britain, and an increasing awareness of the opportunities which the colonies presented, both for labour and capital. Sorell had encouraged immigration to the island and large grants of land were freely bestowed on all who appeared likely to contribute to the economy and future development of Van Diemen's Land.

But by the mid-twenties the best and most easily accessible lands had been alienated, mostly in large pastoral estates. Thus the newcomers had to seek their land further afield. The realization of the possibilities of fine wool production for the export market also led to a quickening of interest among established landowners in the extension of their present holdings, and in the acquisition of summer sheep runs. It was found that the districts towards the Lakes of the Central Plateau were admirably suited to this purpose, and already the country as far as the Great Lake was grazed by the flocks of the outlying settlers.

During the preceding decade little had been done to make known these districts by official surveys, and the only knowledge of them was that gleaned from the more adventurous outback settlers and large flockowners who were ceaselessly pushing out the borders of settlement, either in search of new runs for their flocks, or in pursuit of bushrangers and strayed or stolen herds.



The Great Lake had been first visited in 1815 by a kangaroo hunter named Toombs. <sup>(1)</sup> No doubt many other such people also had happened to come upon it, but the first journey to the Lake of which there is any record was that of John Beamont in December, 1817. On this journey Beamont not only visited the Lake but pushed on further west across the Central Plateau to the mountainous country to the north of Lake St. Clair. Beamont, however, was not a surveyor, and the total want of knowledge of any sort of the area at the time makes his account unsatisfactory. <sup>(2)</sup>

In 1821 Assistant Surveyor Thomas Scott visited Lakes Sorell and Crescent with a party of intending settlers. These Lakes, however, were already well known and there were a number of stock huts in the vicinity. They had been discovered as early as 1807 when Lieutenant Laycock had made his overland journey from Launceston to Hobart Town. However, it was not until Scott's visit that they received their present names. Scott was also one of a party which pushed east from the settlements on the Clyde River and discovered Lake Echo in 1823. <sup>(3)</sup>

No doubt much of this country was known before this time but the local knowledge of the shepherds and stockriders, even if it did reach official ears, was little heeded - possibly because

(1) Critic, 1st April, 1921, quoting Calder.

(2) Beamont before Bigge, 10th May, 1828. H.R.A. III, iii, pp.343-4,

"Also Copy of Mr. Beamont's Journal taken on his Tour to the Western Mountains, Van Diemen's Land." 1-10th Dec. 1817.

H.R.A. III, iii, 586-9.

(3) James Ross, Van Diemen's Land Almanack, Hobart, 1832.

the source was considered unreliable - and the charts and maps of Van Diemen's Land continued to present vast tracts left completely blank or marked "unknown" or "not yet explored", in the areas beyond the immediate limits of settlement.

But under Sorell the frontiers had pushed out considerably; Thomas Scott's Chart of Van Diemen's Land, published in 1824 (see Map 1) gives a good general picture of the boundaries of settlement. These had crystallized in the west at the Ouse River with some outer stock stations on the Dee. There was little penetration south of the Derwent, though the settlement had extended along the South Esk and Meander Rivers in the North.

#### ii. Wedge's Exploration of the Lakes District, 1825.

The area of the Central Lakes (excluding Lake St. Clair) was known only vaguely and, as Scott's map shows, had never been accurately surveyed. Early in 1825, however, the Assistant Surveyor on duty in the northern half of the island, John Helder Wedge, was sent to trace the Lake River to its source. He worked his way down the left bank of the river but found the country mostly of an inferior description and his way often impeded by steep rocky hills. On the western side of Regent's Plain he ascended a peaked hill which he named Mount Penny, having left a penny piece on the summit.

After tracing the Lake River to its source in the Arthur Lakes, Wedge set out on 22nd March for the Great Lake and having skirted Swan Bay he proceeded for some distance up the western side of the lake; but, confronted by rocky hills forming the

Split Rock and Wild Dog Tier, he decided there was no possibility of his being able to penetrate further to the North-west as had been his intantion, impeded as he was with bullocks and cart. He, therefore, turned his steps in a south-westerly direction and camped on the night of 27th March on the banks of the Ouse River. After crossing the Ouse he pursued the same general course across a plain and a cluster of rocky hills to the Little Pine River just above Lake Fergus. The path now proved too difficult to attempt with a cart, but as the country appeared promising with some extensive clear plains Wedge, with one man and provisions on their backs set off to examine it more fully. His intention was then to turn to the North-west and return by an easterly route.

He was now upon the Central Plateau which was bounded on the West by the snow-capped ranges of Ducane and Pelion; but Wedge journeyed only as far as the Nive River, which he followed up for some distance and then struck north up the Little Pine River for a few miles before returning to the Great Lake. He considered the whole area to be ".....totally unfit for any purpose unless the rocks should become an article of export for mending roads in England, or the Lake waters should be discovered to possess some restorative qualities for the shattered and debilitated nerves of our Indian neighbours", and in the whole distance "..... not an inch.....that ever will or can be converted into any agricultural purpose." Wedge could not foresee that the abundance

of water would one day prove a valuable asset to Tasmania. <sup>(1)</sup>

iii. Jorgenson's Journey on the Central Plateau, 1826.

Very different was the next report of the same district. In conjunction with the activities of the Van Diemen's Land Company's surveyors along the northern coast, the manager of the Company, Edward Curr was anxious to explore a route between the settled districts on the upper Derwent and Circular Head where he proposed to begin the Company's operations, so that the expense and risk of water transport of stock could be avoided (see Part I, Chapter 2). For this task Curr obtained the services of Jorgen Jorgenson, a convict who had been strongly recommended to him by Captain Dundas, one of the Directors of the Company. <sup>(2)</sup> The journey was expected to occupy five weeks.

At this time Scott's chart was still the standard map of Van Diemen's Land. This contained no information of the area Jorgenson was to traverse, save for a mountain range running north-east and south-west, near the southern extremity of which was thought to be the "Peak like a Volcano" reported by Flinders (see Map 1). To avoid this supposed barrier Jorgenson's instructions were to proceed through the Lakes to the West Coast near the Pieman River and then northward to Circular Head. <sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) J. H. Wedge, Diary, 24th Feb. - 4th April, 1825. A 1429, M.L.

(2) Curr-Inglis, 25th Aug. 1826, No. 14 and 5th Oct. 1826, No. 24.

V.D.L. Co.

(3) Id., 4th Sept. 1826, No. 16.

Jorgenson seems also to have seen some sketch maps of earlier explorers in the area immediately to the west of the Great Lake. In his journal he refers to the tracks of "Serjeant Rian" and "Corporal Brien" in the vicinity of Lake Fergus, but no other information of these earlier expeditions is available. It is possible that one of these men named Lake Fergus, for the earliest recorded use of it is in Jorgenson's journal.

With two men, Andrew Colbert (a native) and Mark Logan, both experienced bushmen, Jorgenson set out from Patterson's farm, "Hunterston", on the Shannon River on 11th September, 1826 (see Map 9); the river was in flood as a result of continued heavy rains and it was not until 21st September that they were able to effect a crossing, much further upstream at St. Patrick's Plains, and reach the south-western corner of the Great Lake. The next day they found their route again barred by a river, this time the Ouse, but which Jorgenson at first mistook for the Derwent. Jorgenson was impressed by the extensive plains on either side of the Ouse, which he believed were suitable for sheep and cattle, and, therefore, worthy of a more minute examination by the Company's surveyors. These he named Arthur's Plains, in honour of the Governor.

On the 23rd. Jorgenson traced the river northwards for about seven miles to the foot of a snow covered mountain, but could find no crossing place. On the following day they again examined this stretch of the river and found that it took a westerly course for two or three miles, after which it reverted to its usual

north-west and south-east course. It was here that Jorgenson reported the river "pouring down with a tremendous roaring, precipitating itself between two stupendous rocks."<sup>(1)</sup> By much study, the later Mr. A. L. Meston concluded that this was the gorge of the Ouse River at Liawenee, the snow covered mountain was Split Rock, and the hill on which they camped on 24th September was the Big Hill near Liawenee, one of the successive steps of broken ground building up to the Split Rock. After careful observation in this area Meston also concluded that the Big Hill was the eminence from which Jorgenson took his bearings of the surrounding mountains, for it is only for this hill that the western skyline can be seen as it is described by Jorgenson.<sup>(2)</sup>

From this hill Jorgenson described seeing extensive plains on the western side of the Ouse enclosed within a vast circular sweep of mountains. He identified a southern part of this as the Frenchman's Cap, bearing south-west by west and distant thirty-five miles. To a mountain of great height, due west and about thirty-six miles distant, he gave the name of Dundas; and a third, west half north, thirty-four miles away, received the name of the Parson's Hood. He also reports a Table Mountain twelve miles distant to the South-south-west.<sup>(3)</sup> These mountains, except the last, were obviously part of that great range which rises on the

(1) Jorgenson's MS Journal, 1826. M.L.

(2) W. Meston and R.A.V. McCulloch, "Jorgenson's Journey across the Central Plateau." Royal Society of Tasmania, Papers and Proceedings, vol. 89, 1955, pp. 107-23.

(3) Jorgenson's MS Journal, 1826. M.L.

western extremity of the Central Plateau, for the real Frenchman and the mountains known today as Dundas and the Parson's Hood could not have been seen from here. His estimate of distance also points to their being mountains of this central range - Cuvier, Manfred, Ducane, Ossa, Pelion. Meston has identified Jorgenson's Frenchman as Mount Cuvier, Dundas as the Ducane Range, and Parson's Hood as Mount Ossa.<sup>(1)</sup> Numerous attempts were made between the 24th and the 27th to cross the Ouse at this point but all to no avail. Had he been able to cross the river Jorgenson expected his route would have come very near that which Hellyer had been instructed to follow on his journey down the western side of the Mersey River. He, therefore, composed a letter to Hellyer giving his account of the country, intending to leave it fastened to a pole on the plains on the west bank of the Ouse for Hellyer to find should he pass that way.

Following the failure of his successive attempts to gain the western bank of the Ouse, Jorgenson determined on the 27th to retrace his steps, replenish his supplies and send one of his men to Hobart Town with news for Curr of their discoveries. By the time the messenger had returned it was hoped that the river would have fallen sufficiently to give them passage.<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) W. Meston and R.A.V. McCulloch, "Jorgenson's Journey across the Central Plateau." Royal Society of Tasmania, Papers and Proceedings, vol. 89, 1955, pp. 107-23.

(2) Jorgenson's MS Journal, 1826. M.L.

Jorgenson reported to Curr that he was of opinion that once he was able to cross the Ouse there would be no further insurmountable obstacle to his reaching the Pieman River. Despite Jorgenson's account of the country he had seen Curr was not anxious to have the area included in the Company's location; its great distance from a port and its altitude gave him an unfavourable opinion of it. <sup>(1)</sup>

The party set out again from "Hunterston" on 11th October, and on the 18th reached the hut they had constructed on the Big Hill where their former journey had terminated. They were still unable to ford the river, however, so on the 20th they set out to trace it to its source. About eleven miles higher up they found a spot which permitted them to wade across. Meston has fixed this point as being a few miles above the junction of the James River with the Ouse.

Continuing in a westerly direction from here they made their camp for the night among some high stony hills from which they could see the Ouse running towards the North-north-west. Standing on a "lofty and rocky eminence" to take bearings on the surrounding country Jorgenson was surprised to find that "when placing the compass on a rock.....its vibration was so quick that I could make no observation by it;" he concluded, therefore, that iron ore might be found in its vicinity. <sup>(2)</sup> This is the eminence that

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(1) Curr-Inglis, 5th Oct. 1826, No. 24. V.D.L. Co.

(2) Third Annual Report of the V.D.L. Co., 1828.



Clune and Stephensen, from this evidence, concluded was Mount Magnet, an outcrop of Mount Bischoff, despite the fact that it was the same day that Jorgenson had crossed the Ouse, and the two places are sixty miles apart.<sup>(1)</sup> Meston has established that this hill was Little Split Rock and indeed, he himself had similar experiences with a compass on its summit.<sup>(2)</sup> Jorgenson, therefore, took his bearings from lower ground but could still observe his landmarks - Mount Dundas bearing south-west, Parson's Hood, south-west by west, and the "Peak like a Volcano" (the first recorded bearing) north-west half west. The plains before them were everywhere dotted with lakes and lagoons so that the only practicable route for them to follow was a north-westerly one, but the next day they found themselves continually impeded by these basins of water, and by the James River which they had to follow up for some distance before they were able to cross. The country now presented an uninviting picture, being everywhere rocky and scrubby.

All this time they were directing their course towards the "Peak like a Volcano" and the identification of this landmark was the greatest subject of controversy in the Jorgenson report. Some earlier writers accepted Jorgenson's statement without question and assumed that it was indeed St. Valentine's Peak, but a close study of his report proves this untenable. Jorgenson first describes

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(1) Frank Clune and P. R. Stephensen, The Viking of Van Diemen's Land....., Sydney, 1945, pp.347 ff.

(2) Meston and McCulloch, "Jorgenson's Journey across the Central Plateau." Royal Society of Tasmania, Papers and Proceedings, vol. 89, 1955, pp. 107-23.

the peak as being part of the range of mountains running north-east and south-west as marked in Scott's map and joining Frenchman's Cap to form a semi-circle bounding the Central Plains. St. Valentine's peak is, however, an isolated mountain and cannot be seen from the Central Plateau, because of the greater height of the intervening mountains. His first reported bearing on his peak was taken soon after crossing the Ouse River and he continued to shape his course towards it in the following days, though the weather was hazy. <sup>(1)</sup>

It is obvious, therefore, that his peak was a much closer landmark. After many years of research and actual observations from the Central Plateau Meston fixed on this point as being the East Wall of the Jerusalem Walls. These, 4,788 feet high, would be snow covered at this time, as was Jorgenson's "Peak". <sup>(2)</sup> From another "lofty eminence" on 22nd October they observed that the Peak only communicated with the range of mountains before them by means of uneven ridges of rocks, but it was too deeply covered with snow for them to attempt its ascent. At this point also ".....a frightful chasm many miles in width - to the view a bottomless gulph!" interrupted their progress so that in proceeding further to the West to avoid it they came upon a river flowing from a "large and magnificent sheet of water, which is formed between the Peak and the large range of mountains above described." <sup>(3)</sup> Meston identified this lake as one

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(1) Third Annual Report of the V.D.L. Co., 1828.

(2) Meston and McCulloch, "Jorgenson's Journey across the Central Plateau." Royal Society of Tasmania, Papers and Proceedings, vol. 89, 1955, pp. 107-23.

(3) Third Annual Report of the V.D.L. Co., 1828.<sup>4</sup>

which he named Lake Barbara, but a general reshuffling of nomenclature has resulted in its now bearing the name of Lake Ball.<sup>(1)</sup> They were able to cross this river on a pine tree, but immediately found travelling even more difficult on the other side. The country was barren and inhospitable, provided nothing for food, but they continued on in an attempt to reach the southern end of the lake. Here they found another river had its source, this time flowing towards the South-south-west. Jorgenson later concluded that this was the Derwent, and some writers, blindly accepting his statement that he discovered the source of the Derwent, also credit him with discovery of Lake St. Clair.

Snow was now falling, their clothes were in tatters and they, therefore, determined to fall back across the river to seek a comfortable shelter. Jorgenson estimated that they were twenty-eight miles distant from the mouth of the Pieman River and forty-six miles from Circular Head.

During this night, 24th October, two feet of snow fell and because of their exhausted condition, especially that of Andrew Colbert, it was obvious that they must descend to lower ground without delay. By the following day they had arrived in more hospitable country, with kangaroos and plenty of wood and shelter and, Jorgenson felt, quite suitable for sheep pasturage. The weather, however, was still unpleasant and too hazy for them to

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(1) Meston and McCulloch, "Jorgenson's Journey across the Central Plateau." Royal Society of Tasmania, Papers and Proceedings, Vol. 89, 1955, pp. 107-23.

discern any known landmarks. Because of this and because Jorgenson's return journey is somewhat hurriedly described in his report, it is difficult to fix his route. He mentions "passing a river or two" and then arriving on "the borders of a capacious Lake" which he thought must be Lake Fergus, though of much larger extent than that marked on the map. The land around it formed a sort of amphitheatre. The following day he sighted the landmarks of the Clyde and Shannon settlements.<sup>(1)</sup> From these two points Meston has concluded that the lake was Lake Echo.<sup>(2)</sup> Jorgenson returned straight to Hobart Town from here, arriving on 1st November, to communicate his discoveries to Curr.<sup>(3)</sup>

Jorgenson's descriptions of the hardships of the journey and the frustration of his efforts to carry out his orders did not fail to convince Curr. There was no censure of Jorgenson for his failure to reach his goal as there was of some of the Company's own surveyors when they did not come up to his expectations. Curr instead determined to send Jorgenson to Circular Head and then down the West Coast and inland from Pieman River to attempt to connect up his discoveries from that end and find the route which Curr so much desired.<sup>(4)</sup> In transmitting Jorgenson's narrative to the

(1) Third Annual Report of the V.D.L. Co., 1828.

(2) Meston and McCulloch, "Jorgenson's Journey across the Central Plateau." Royal Society of Tasmania, Papers and Proceedings, vol. 89, 1955, pp. 107-23.

(3) Third Annual Report of the V.D.L. Co., 1828.

(4) Curr-Inglis, 11th Nov. 1826. No. 28. V.D.L. Co.

Court of Directors he spoke of the journey as ".....an undertaking not surpassed, in enterprize and perseverance, by any of the bold and hazardous journies which have distinguished the Company's survey."<sup>(1)</sup>

However, by the time the Company's Annual Report had been issued in 1828, publishing these reports of the surveyors, Curr had reason to regret his remarks; he had begun to doubt the accuracy of Jorgenson's statements, and he informed the Court that he considered the account of the journey to the lakes to be ".....in part a fabrication. The route as laid down on the map is certainly wrong as he never was at or near the Surrey Hills and Middlesex Plains. Persons walking in the bush often unintentionally over-reckon the distance they travel in the day by more than half."<sup>(2)</sup> The map has been compiled by Hellyer to show all the routes of exploration and there is little doubt that, having to reconcile Jorgenson's report with the facts known to himself, the result is rather distorted.<sup>(3)</sup>

(Note: For a discussion of the various interpretations of Jorgenson's accounts, see Appendix C).

(1) Third Annual Report of the V.D.L. Co., 1828.

(2) Curr-Inglis, 5th Jan. 1829, No. 53. V.D.L. Co.

(3) Id., 17th Sept. 1828, No. 43.

Map 9. Illustrating Jorgenson's route, Central Plateau, 1826

## CHAPTER 2.

## THE HUON-DERWENT AREA, AND GOODWIN.

i. Wedge's Journey on the Southern Derwent, 1827.

While Lieutenant-Governor Arthur maintained the penal station at Macquarie Harbour for the most irreclaimable convicts he was not anxious that the districts between it and the settled areas should be opened up, or even known.<sup>(1)</sup> For while it remained an unexplored wilderness it would act as a deterrent to escaping convicts, and indeed tales of those who had attempted to penetrate the area and had never been heard of again were rife. Thus no official exploration was undertaken into these districts subsequent to the abandonment of that penal settlement, although the settlers continued to push the boundaries of settlement further westward, across the Ouse to the Dee and beyond.

Limited in this direction, the Survey Department concentrated its efforts more to the areas south of the Derwent and around the Huon River. At this time the Derwent was known to the west a little farther than the Dee but not so far as the Nive. The tributaries of the right bank were all named as far west as the Russell Falls River (now sometimes called the Tyanna), though they were not explored to their sources.

It was Wedge again who undertook an expedition in the region south of the Derwent in May, 1827, having volunteered for that

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(1) Surveyor-General-Colonial Secretary, 19th Feb. 1833. CSO 1/589/13389. Also Surveyor-General-Colonial Secretary, 12th Dec. 1834. CSO 1/770/16466, T.S.A.

(1)  
 Service to the Acting Surveyor-General, Edward Dumaesq. The area which Wedge covered on this expedition was one of dense forest and scrubby hills, and it remains even today little developed, except as a forestry region.

He set out from the junction of the Jones River with the Derwent, following the course of the former for about twelve miles before taking a southerly course to the Russell Falls River. He followed this river down to the present site of Glenora, where the party replenished their supplies and set off again, this time directing their course up the Styx River. At Mount Styx he turned more to the East, reaching the Plenty River which they followed down to its junction with the Derwent. (2)

ii. Goodwin's Journey from Macquarie Harbour, 1828.

From the establishment of a penal station at Macquarie Harbour many attempts at escape had been made, for the slender chance of survival and freedom was sufficient incentive to quit that earthly hell. Few had succeeded in this bid, one of the better known who did accomplish the west-east crossing being Alexander Pearce of man-eating fame. He was captured and returned to Macquarie Harbour only to attempt another escape, this time northwards. But after eating parts of his companion, and presumably overcome with disgust and remorse he returned to Macquarie Harbour to give himself up. He later stood trial in

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(1) J. H. Wedge, Diary, 27th March, 1827. A 1429, M.L.

(2) "Diary of Journey on S. Derwent," 11th April-1st May, 1827.



(1)  
Hobart and was hung.

The first important crossing from the point of view of exploration was that of James Goodwin, a convict who escaped from Macquarie Harbour in March, 1828 and made his way overland by way of the Peak of Teneriffe or Wyld's Crag. Goodwin had previously been employed in a surveying party under Thomas Scott and attributed his success to his superior knowledge of the country. This knowledge also makes his report geographically coherent. (2)

Goodwin was transported for seven years in 1821 for stealing two pigs and for a similar offence in the Colony was sent to Macquarie Harbour with a further seven year sentence in 1827. (3) He made his escape about the middle of March, 1828 with another convict, Thomas Connelly, in a canoe hewn out of a pine log (see Map 10). They proceeded up the Gordon River to its junction with the Franklin when they turned left, hauling their canoe over the falls in the Franklin River for about four miles. They then abandoned it and set off overland, heading for a mountain about five miles distant. This was probably that now known as Goodwin's Peak. They continued steering a north-east course, crossed the Maxwell River and were detained for two days on the

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- (1) John West, History of Tasmania, Launceston, 1852. Vol. II, pp. 197-8, footnote.
- (2) P. A. Mulgrave-Colonial Secretary, 11th May, 1828 and Goodwin's statement, 13th May 1828. CSO 1/276/6658, T.S.A.
- (3) Goodwin's convict record. Accession No. 2/144, p.90, T.S.A.

top of a range of hills by rain and heavy fog. When this cleared they steered for another tier before them - probably the Denison Range - crossing the Denison River on their route. The ground so far traversed Goodwin reported as bad, mostly marsh or scrub, but across the Denison Range they came upon plains, some of a better quality, and in places very wide. This type of country continued along the banks of a very wide and deep river which Goodwin supposed to be the Huon. It was in fact, the Gordon but his mistake is understandable and he was not the only one to make it.

They remained on these plains for three or four days until their provisions were exhausted, when they continued on towards the Peak of Teneriffe, as Wyld's Craig was popularly known at that time. Travelling in this direction proved very difficult because of the amount of scrubby country, and it was not until the third day after leaving the river that they reached the top of the range a little south of the actual peak. From here they recognised the High Plains at the junction of the Ouse and Derwent Rivers and to which they directed their course in a north-easterly direction. Here they came upon the Florentine River - a river which ran in a contrary direction to all the previous ones and which Goodwin, therefore, assumed to be the Derwent. By this time they were in such a weak state that it took them nearly two weeks to follow the river down to its junction with the Derwent and then to the Ouse. During this time and for some of the time previously they had fed on grass roots, white berries which they found upon the Peak, and a few mushrooms.

The two travellers parted at the Ouse, Connelly intending to go to the New Norfolk district and Goodwin to the Midlands where he was apprehended on 9th May at Lincoln, a small settlement on the junction of the Macquarie and Isis Rivers. <sup>(1)</sup>

Goodwin's account given to the Police Magistrate at Launceston excited some interest in the Survey Department. Until the appointment of George Frankland to the office of Surveyor-General in March, 1828 no serious efforts had been made to explore these districts. It was one of his duties to compile a map of Van Diemen's Land from the latest surveys and explorations, for intending landholders, and to ascertain the remaining areas available for selection. It was for this reason that he undertook expeditions, first to the Huon area and later to seek the source of the Derwent.

iii. Journey by Frankland and Scott on the Derwent, 1828.

At the time of Goodwin's apprehension Frankland was planning an expedition to the Huon, as the first step towards opening up a route to Port Davey. At the beginning of May, 1828 he applied to Arthur for a party of ten men to clear a bridle track from Hobart Town to Port Davey, a situation which he believed might quickly become an important town, thus rendering the land between it and Hobart extremely valuable. <sup>(2)</sup> His intention was first to

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(1) Mulgrave-Colonial Secretary, 11th May, 1828 and Goodwin's statement, 13th May, 1828. CSO 1/276/6658, T.S.A.

(2) Surveyor-General-Colonial Secretary, 9th May, 1828. CSO 1/274/6613, T.S.A.



Map 10. Illustrating Goodwin's route of escape from Macquarie Harbour, 1828.

send Thomas Scott to the Huon to reconnoitre. <sup>(1)</sup>

Arthur backed the scheme completely as he considered a communication with Port Davey to be of the first importance, although he very much doubted the existence of available land in that direction. <sup>(2)</sup>

Goodwin's information, however, caused Frankland to change his plans. Goodwin had expressed his belief that he could go from the junction of the Ouse and Derwent Rivers to that which he called the Huon in three days, <sup>(3)</sup> and Frankland decided to attempt this route. <sup>(4)</sup> He and Scott set out about 20th May, 1828 (see Map 11) but heavy snow and rains compelled them to return when they were within twenty miles of their object. Their course followed the Derwent fairly closely on its right bank, and the farthest point reached, a hill between Misery Creek and the Florentine River, was appropriately named Turnagain Hill. In its

(1) Surveyor-General-Colonial Secretary, 14th May, 1828. CSO 1/274/6613, T.S.A.

(2) Lieutenant-Governor's minute on Surveyor-General-Colonial Secretary, 9th May, 1828, and his minute on Principal Superintendent of Convicts-Colonial Secretary, 14th May, 1828. loc.cit.

(3) P.A.Mulgrave-Colonial Secretary, 11th May, 1828. CSO 1/276/6658, T.S.A.

(4) Colonial Secretary's minute, 17th May, 1828 on Lieutenant-Governor-Colonial Secretary, 15th May, 1828. CSO 1/274/6613, T.S.A. Also Hobart Town Courier, 24th May, 1828.

report of the return of the explorers the Tasmanian indicated that a further attempt was considered worthwhile in a more favourable season. (1)

iv. Activities of the Survey Department in the Huon Area, 1829-31.

The record of the following summer, however, indicates that Frankland had once more turned his attention to the Huon area, for by this time the party of men under his supervision were engaged in forming a bridle road to the Huon River - the first road in this direction. (2) Early in January, 1829, therefore, he despatched surveyor George Woodward to seek for land suitable for settlement in the vicinity of the Huon River. The report was far from favourable, the land being too thickly forested for easy cultivation, though the timber would doubtless become valuable. From the Huon the party headed across the Wellington Range to New Norfolk, following the Sorell Rivulet from its source (3) (see Map 12).

In reporting this journey the Hobart Town Courier (most likely from an official report by Frankland himself) commented that it was:

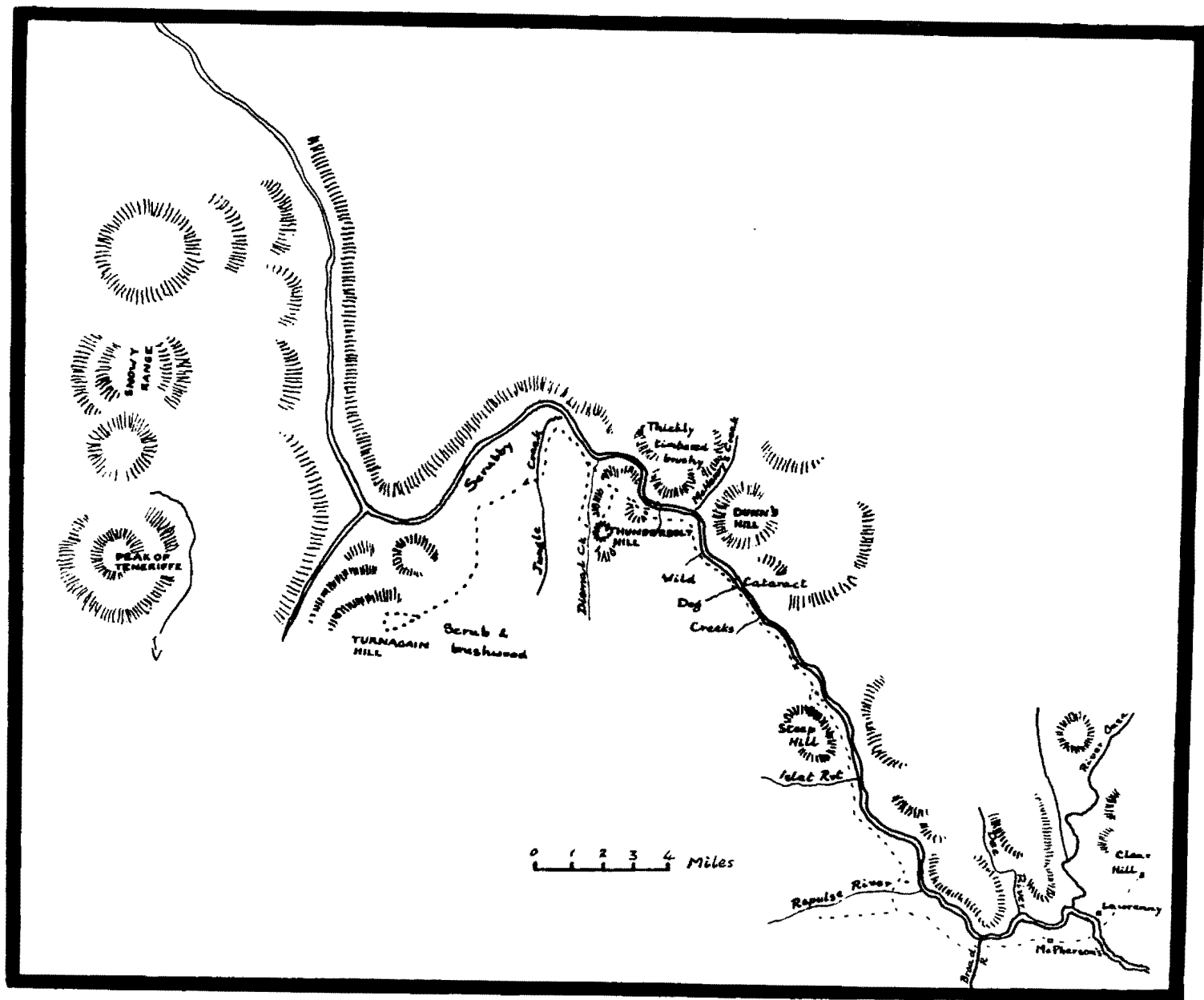
of great importance to the success of future expeditions. One will probably be by boat as far up the Huon as it is navigable, and thence on foot, or with the assistance of small coracles or portable canoes, with which they might proceed until they reach the open country, the other most successful plan will probably be to proceed direct

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(1) Tasmanian and Austral-Asiatic Review, 13th May, 6th June, 1828.

(2) Hobart Town Courier, 3rd Jan. 1829.

(3) Ibid., 3, 24th Jan. 1829.



Map 11. Copy of Scott's sketch map of a journey up the Derwent, May 1828.

to the mountain called the peak of Teneriffe, from which most of these rivers seem to take their rise, and from the heights of which the traveller might in the first instance acquire some knowledge of the nature of the country round.<sup>(1)</sup>

The latter idea was left in abeyance until 1833, but Frankland continued to pursue the former, though with little success.

In March, 1829 Frankland travelled with Woodward to the Huon<sup>(2)</sup> but no details are available, although an anonymous journal of an expedition in this area exists for the period 22-29th March.<sup>(3)</sup> This indicates that Frankland sent someone on to attempt to reach Port Davey. The person employed was possibly one of the road party. Many such were sent on expeditions of this nature by Frankland, and writing in 1849 J. E. Calder lamented the fact that Frankland had frequently entrusted "these services to illiterate persons whose sole qualification was that they were good bush travellers, and could stand anything." Calder mentions as one of these, Bastian, "a prisoner of the Crown - the same who cut the first track from Hobart Town to the Huon in 1830."<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) Hobart Town Courier, 24th Jan. 1829.

(2) Ibid., 28th March, 1829.

(3) "Anonymous Journal of Exploration in Huon Valley." C 722, M.L.

(4) Calder's minute on Lady Franklin-Calder, 12th July, 1842.



There is no mention of a Bastian in the convict records, although there is a James Basten who was transported for life in 1820 and who was employed some time between 1824 and 1832 by the Survey Department, and was apparently acquainted with the Huon area. If Bastian and Basten be the same man it is likely, in view of his convict record prior to 1824, that he merely formed one of the party of convicts assigned for the work. <sup>(1)</sup>

The journal of this expedition is largely unintelligible, but the party apparently travelled some distance up the river on the right bank. <sup>(2)</sup>

Frankland was again at the Huon in May, 1829, in company with Scott, O'Connor and Seymour, in a combined water and land expedition. According to the Hobart Town Courier report, the party, despite bad weather,

.....ascended the river Huon for 40 miles higher up than it had ever been explored, which will be a great addition to the geographical knowledge of the country.....the banks of the river along this distance affords but indifferent prospects to the settler, the soil being in many parts sterile, and the surface in general hilly. The timber, however is of excellent quality and being so close to the river must ultimately prove valuable. We anticipate as soon as the season will permit that another excursion will be made to explore the fine and extensive country which from all accounts lies on the banks of the upper parts of the river. <sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) Basten's convict record. Accession Nos. 2/59, 2/131, p.78, T.S.A.

(2) "Anonymous Journal of Exploration in Huon Valley." C 722, M.L.

(3) Hobart Town Courier, 16th May, 1829.

Three weeks later an article on the Huon River appeared in the same newspaper giving reasons for this assumption of better land on its upper reaches. Because the river was "considerably larger than even the Derwent" it "must necessarily flow from a large extent of level country or else from a large lake, and it is possible that Government will speedily take measures to explore it, and open a new field to agricultural industry."<sup>(1)</sup>

The claim to have ascended the river "for 40 miles higher up than it had ever been explored" is an exaggeration,<sup>(2)</sup> for the party travelled up the right bank of the Huon - the usual route for exploration, as the north bank was too thickly forested for easy travelling - keeping it within sight, crossed the Arve River, which Frankland most likely named, and travelled only another six miles through a tea-tree plain. Writing of this in the seventies, Calder claimed that ".....as all the country beyond for many miles was a mass of Forests and dense scrubs Mr. F. was too good a judge to go any further."<sup>(3)</sup>

Calder was no doubt being ironic because he was delegated the task of continuing this exploration himself, in 1831. He was instructed to push up the right bank of the Huon River as far as

(1) Hobart Town Courier, 6th June, 1829.

(2) Ibid., 16th June, 1829.

(3) Calder's minute on Surveyor-General-Calder, c. May 1831. A 601, M.L.

possible, the object being "...to explore the open country between the Huon and the High Plains" (near the junction of the Ouse and Derwent) and "to discover the source of the Huon. I think you will find it comes from the Northward, unless it issues from a very large Lake."<sup>(1)</sup> This expedition was in May, 1831. In the previous month Frankland had sent Calder and Alexander McKay to Adamson's Peak.<sup>(2)</sup> McKay had just returned to Hobart after being employed in the aboriginal mission, during which he had travelled round the whole island with G. A. Robinson, and he was, therefore, thought to be slightly familiar with the country.<sup>(3)</sup>

There is no record of this journey other than a page of fragmentary notes left by Calder, and only part of his diary for the second expedition remains, covering the six days following his crossing of the Arve River, during which the party was much impeded by scrub and bad weather. The diary ends on 27th May after they had travelled some eighteen or more miles from the Arve. Allowing for the usual over-estimation of distance, they must have been very close to the Picton River. Calder later says the notes are

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(1) Surveyor-General-Calder, c. May 1831. A 601, M.L.

(2) "Fragment of Notes of a Trip up Mt. Adamson, 1831."

A 596, M.L.

(3) Surveyor-General-Colonial Secretary, April 1831. CSO 1/518/11295,

T.S.A. Also McKay-Lieutenant Governor, 5th July, 1831.

CSO 1/495/10854, T.S.A.

of a journey "up the Huon and Picton Rivers" and there seems  
no reason to doubt that they did reach the Picton. (1)

The fact that Calder did not discover the hoped-for open country apparently dampened Frankland's enthusiasm for further efforts in this direction. It had been sufficiently established that the land on the Huon would not provide the type of open pasturing country which was the objective of most immigrants at this stage of the development of Van Diemen's Land.

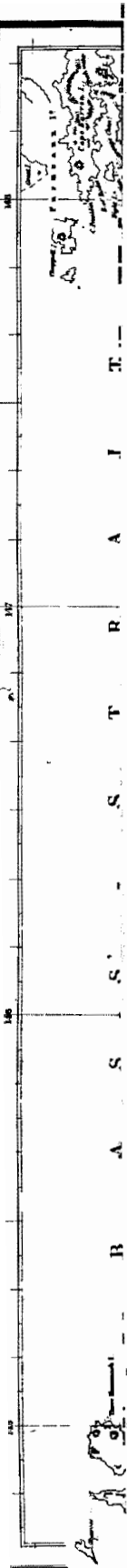
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(1) "Some Fragments of my Notes of Journeys made up Mt. Adamson -  
and (afterwards) up the Huon and Picton Rivers in 1831."

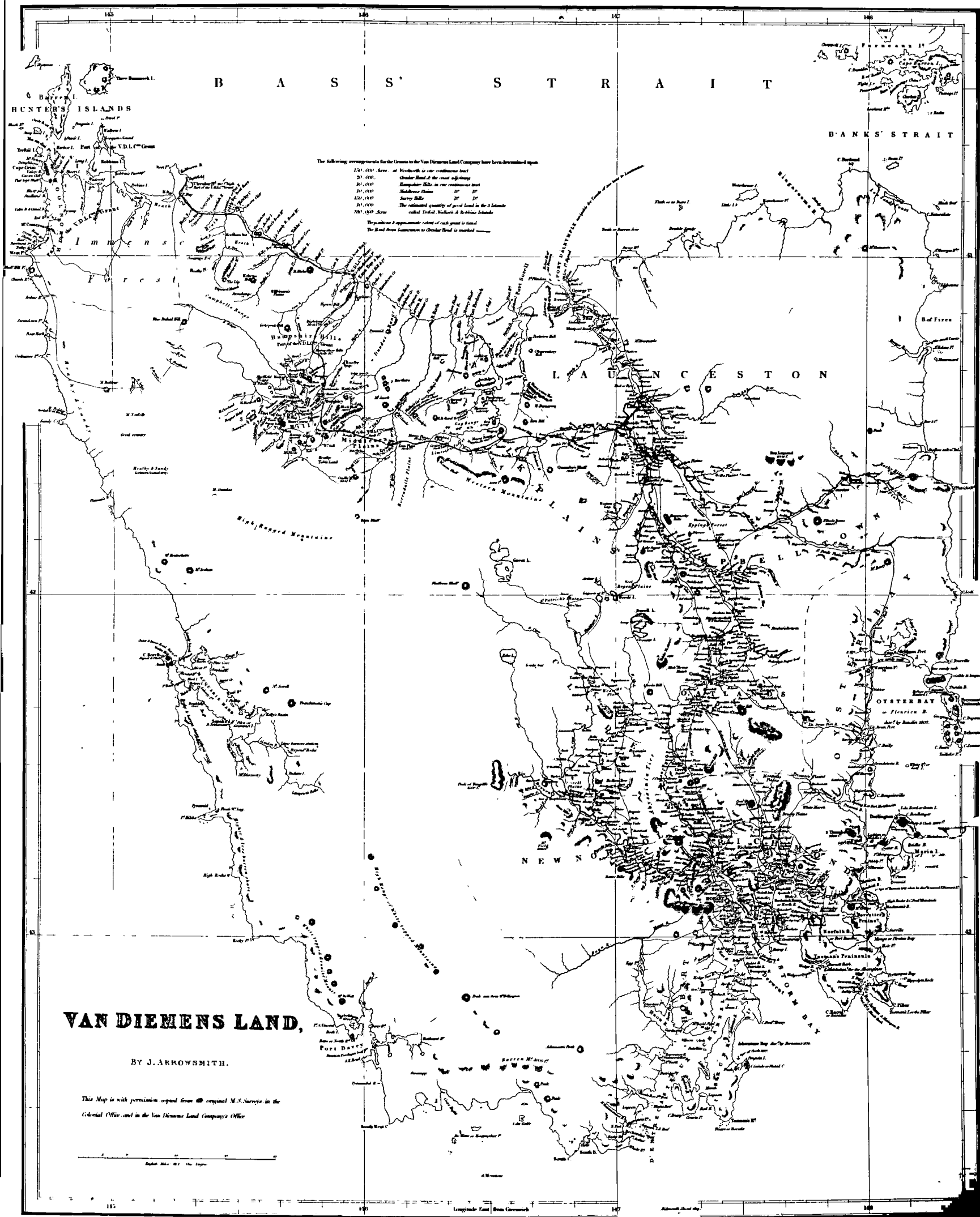
A 596, M.L.



Map 12. Illustrating the area of Survey Department activity, 1827-31, and Wedge's route, 1827.



Map 13. Van Diemen's Land, by J.  
Arrowsmith. 1831.



## THE SEARCH FOR NEW LAND.

i. Sharland's Journey to Frenchman's Cap, 1832.

One of the most important extensions of settlement, and the last considerable area of land to be alienated in the Colony - the dying echo of the land boom which was not to be revived until the North-West and the North-East were opened up under the Waste Lands Acts of the latter half of the Century - was the "New Country" on the upper Derwent and Nive Rivers. This was the direct consequence of an exploratory journey in 1832 by William Stanley Sharland, then an Assistant Surveyor in the Survey Department.

Sharland is also generally credited with the discovery of Lake St. Clair, which he sighted from Mount Charles, although he did not visit it. However, in the Hobart Town Courier in April, 1831, there is a report of an excursion made by ".....Mr. Russell of Denniston.....to the south and westward of the Great Lake." According to this the party travelled forty or fifty miles in this direction until they arrived at ".....a cluster of small lakes, and a little farther on, at a very large lake, along the coast of which they travelled for two days."<sup>(1)</sup> The direction and distance quoted would appear to fit Lake St. Clair, it being the only lake of any great extent in the area. Furthermore, it was reported that a ".....river of considerable size was seen to emanate from it, flowing in the direction of Macquarie Harbour, which Mr. Russell supposed to be the Gordon River." Sharland himself mistook

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(1) Hobart Town Courier, 23rd April, 1831.



(1)  
the Derwent for the Gordon.

The only factor which would seem to detract from this argument is the description of the land on its borders. Although it was described as ".....of a thin and barren nature.....," which would be reasonably accurate,<sup>(2)</sup> the failure to mention anything further than that, if the lake were indeed Lake St. Clair, is surprising, for the most striking characteristic noted by visitors to this incredibly beautiful lake is the magnificence of the surrounding mountain scenery, often snow-capped, rising from its edges on nearly all sides. It is hard to believe that even hard-headed pioneer settlers, bent on finding grazing land for the extension of their flocks, would overlook such breath-taking grandeur. Though it cannot be proved, the principal facts in this account seem to make it reasonably clear that this party had come upon Lake St. Clair.

Frenchman's Cap, which was Sharland's goal on this expedition, was the only known landmark between the settlements on the Shannon and Dee Rivers and Macquarie Harbour. Because of this, its identification was bound to be the subject of abuse. Although anyone seeing the real Frenchman could not mistake it, it was inevitable that, in such an extensive uncharted area, any high mountain might be confused with it. In January, 1827, therefore, we find that Patrick Dunne, the bushranger, in a statement made

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- (1) "Rough Notes of a Journal of Expedition to the Westward.....by W. S. Sharland.....1832." 9th March, 1832. Tasmanian Legislative Council Journals, vol.VI, 1861, Paper No.16.
- (2) Hobart Town Courier, 23rd.April, 1831.

before his execution, claims that his gang had left some sheep near the Frenchman's Cap and a horse by the side of the Gordon River.<sup>(1)</sup> It is difficult to believe that the bushrangers would have deposited their stolen property at such a great distance from the settlements, especially as the forty miles of country intervening between the Frenchman's Cap and the properties of Bethune and Humphrey, from whom the livestock was stolen, was rugged and mountainous and capable of supporting very little besides a few hardy kangaroos. It would be impossible to state with any certainty what is the true identity of this mountain and river; Dunne speaks of a hill near this river, named after himself, ".....in a straight direction from.....the Frenchman's Cap."<sup>(2)</sup> On a sketch map made by Thomas Scott in 1828, Dunne's Hill is shown on the left bank of the Derwent between the Ouse and Dee Rivers; (see Map 11); therefore it seems that Dunne's "Gordon River" was in reality the Derwent, and his "Frenchman's Cap" Wyld's Craig.

During 1829 many of the roving parties sent out in quest of the aborigines, especially in the area around the Ouse River, the Great Lake and Lake Echo, mention having seen Frenchman's Cap;<sup>(3)</sup> it is possible to see the real Frenchman from only a very few

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(1) Hobart Town Gazette, 13th Jan. 1827.

(2) Supra.

(3) Various documents in CSO 1/118/7578 and CSO 1/120/7578. T.S.A.

points eastward of Lake St. Clair, and then but indistinctly. Since many of these had contact with Jorgen Jorgenson, who himself led a party, it is reasonable to suppose that they merely followed his erroneous impression that Mount Cuvier or some other lofty eminence was Frenchman's Cap.

In this same year Gilbert Robertson, at that time active in the solution of the aboriginal problem and later to be prominent in the opposition press of the Colony, led an expedition in this direction in search of the natives. According to a report in the Hobart Town Courier, he ".....passed near the great lake, explored the western borders of Lake Echo, reached within 15 miles of the hill called the Frenchman's Cap and returned by the Shannon."<sup>(1)</sup> Once again it seems highly unlikely that Robertson had reached the foothills of the real Frenchman; the most likely candidates for his "Frenchman's Cap" are Mount Olympus or Wyld's Craig: both lie about twenty-five miles distant from Lake Echo, and both are of sufficient height to impress the traveller with their aspect. Though the former is to the West and the latter to the South, the report mentions nothing to indicate the direction in which Robertson was travelling.

Men such as Gilbert Robertson, G.A. Robinson and others engaged in the aboriginal "mission", although they undoubtedly covered much of the then unknown territory of Van Diemen's Land, can play but little part in any history of exploration, for neither by training nor experience were they fitted to report accurately

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(1) Hobart Town Courier, 23rd May, 1829.

and clearly upon the country they traversed. Nor were they generally concerned with doing so, and in many cases they possessed only the haziest notions of the local geography, so that reports of their journeys are often almost wholly unintelligible.

As a surveyor, Sharland was qualified. He possessed the knowledge and experience to enable him not only to report on the capabilities of the country generally but on possible lines of roads and likely situations for townships.

Sharland left Bothwell on 28th February, 1832 (see Map 14) and following a westerly course, passed Lake Echo on its northern side, and traced the course of a stream which he named the Reform River (later re-named the Serpentine Creek by Frankland), until it entered the Nive River; this he thought was undoubtedly the Derwent, with its bed fifty yards wide. He remained here for two days, examining the country on either side, enthusing about the beautiful and extensive plains and marshes on which numerous herds of wild cattle grazed. One spot he picked out as being a particularly suitable site for a township: this later became the thriving frontier settlement of Marlborough, now, as Bronte, a centre of Hydro-Electric Commission activity. On 5th March the party set off for the West, crossing the Nive, and a few miles further on, a smaller river, now known as the Nivelle. The country alternated between marsh and forest land. Another and larger tributary of the Nive Sharland called the Clarence River, one of the few of Sharland's appellations which have remained. They followed a tributary of the

Clarence, since called the Power, upwards along its southern bank until it divided into several streams. Sharland gave the name Mount Charles to an eminence two and a half miles distant to the West-north-west, and that of D'Arcy's Bluff to a high hill two miles to the South-west, in honour of Captain D'Arcy Wentworth, the Police Magistrate at Bothwell who had accompanied the expedition on its early stages. This was later changed, most likely by Frankland, to the Wentworth Hills.

Sharland's remarks on the trees in this area are interesting in the light of later assertions that an extremely severe frost in 1837 blighted all the vegetation, so that in 1842, when Sir John Franklin made his overland journey to Macquarie Harbour, there was nothing left but dead trees. Sharland claimed that:

.....the trees look luxuriant and healthy throughout the whole of the country I have passed; nor did I perceive the least symptom of that decay so prevalent with the black gum in most parts of the Colony, and which I perceive Dr. Ross attributes to the "increased severity of the climate." The circumstances I have just related, of the healthy nature of it in this part, must therefore defeat the Dr's. hypothesis.

The party were detained at this point for a day by rain and snow, and when they continued their journey on 8th March they were much impeded by the wet conditions which were such that the pack horse frequently became bogged. The marshes were divided by areas of scrub, and this type of country continued until they reached the banks of a fine river, which Sharland thought was "undoubtedly the northern branch of the Gordon." Like all others before, therefore, Sharland had failed to identify the Derwent. Having first mistaken the Nive for the Derwent, he now went on to infer that this river,

being of much the same width as the "Derwent", was not in fact this river".....owing to its having a fine gravel on the banks, with a bed of the same, instead of the large stones and rocks which the Derwent [Nive] had." Here the party halted, and with two men Sharland explored the river for about three miles up the left bank; when the scrub became too dense, he branched off to ascend a ridge of Mount Charles, from which he had a view to the North and was :

.....gratified with a view of a very extensive lake bearing N 30°W - from which there is no doubt the main branch of the Gordon proceeds.....The lake - which I called the Gordon Lake - is surrounded, as far as I could see, with almost inaccessible mountains upon which the snow still remained. The lake appeared to extend between these high mountains in a north westerly direction, the first point being about three miles distant.

Such is the first recorded description: no breathless wonder, no extravagant admiration; Sharland saw it perhaps only with the utilitarian eye to which the greatest beauty would have been a rolling grassy plain with a mirage of countless sheep grazing across the pages of a healthy bank account. Few of the early explorers stopped to admire the scenery and if they did their superiors and the public failed to appreciate it. There was no tourist trade, except perhaps that brought by the Indian Army men who came to the mild climate to recover their health.

Although Sharland admits that the improvement in the weather and the view of the Derwent and the Lake had "reanimated" their hopes, he felt that ".....nothing could be gained by proceeding to the lake." He reported that the marshes round the Derwent were very

boggy, but he had "no doubt they might be made available and productive if drained and artificial grasses substituted: the great moisture would certainly have the effect of producing an abundant pasturage." Posterity, however, has seen fit to do the opposite. Rather than draining the area it has dammed the Derwent and formed an artificial lake as large as Lake St. Clair. But even with drainage Sharland could see that the shortcomings of the country were such that it would never support sheep except during the summer months.

Sharland, with two men, each with six days' provisions, set out on 9th March for Frenchman's Cap; they had not yet seen it though they had mistakenly taken another peak for it just after leaving Lake Echo. After crossing the Derwent, a mile and a half's travelling brought them within sight of it, and Sharland took bearings on a number of other mountains whose names were to be filled in at a later date; however his report leaves the names unentered. Thus he lost his opportunity of leaving his mark in Western Tasmania, and of the few landmarks which he did designate, many were renamed in ignorance by later explorers.

That night they bivouacked on Mount Arrowsmith and remarked the appearance of the western mountains which, being of quartz, gave them an illusion of being snow-covered. This feature had been noted by the early marine explorers and observed also from high ground in the East; Scott's 1824 chart describes a range of mountains in the South-west as a "High ridge of white topp'd mountains."

The country had deteriorated in quality so that Sharland considered it unlikely that it could ever be valuable for agriculture. Nor did he fail to notice the fact that as he went further west so the rainfall increased.

The party now had to descend the western side of Mount Arrowsmith, a very difficult task because of its steepness and the density of the undergrowth. Once down they ".....viewed the hill.... as it really was - a stupendous mountain with a most appalling aspect to the west." Later explorers were to remark on this same aspect, for Mount Arrowsmith, though presenting only a very moderate ascent on the East, falls so rapidly on the West as to give the impression of having been cut through the centre.

About a mile and a half further on the party first met with the Franklin River, here already a large and rapid stream which they would have been unable to cross but for a tree having luckily fallen across. Its course here - from the North-east - led Sharland to believe that it was a branch of the Gordon; he was right, though he had wrongly identified the Gordon in the first place.

After having passed through a thick sunless scrub they entered a small plain flanked by similar growth, of which Sharland wrote:

The splendid richness of its variegated foliage, without a single branch being visible, and many of the shrubs even at this time bearing flower, offers such a striking contrast of the general feature presented by the gum and the more common trees, that, although we were thankful to have escaped such an obstacle to our progress, we could not refuse our admiration of its beauty.



They discovered also a native fire and this, coupled with the numerous native huts they had seen earlier, inclined Sharland to believe they were following the natives' route to the West Coast. This may well have been so, for the course Sharland took as far as this is the natural inlet to the western districts, and nearly the same as that followed today by the Lyell Highway.

The Franklin River again crossed their path on their course westerly and although they attempted to skirt it to the North, they found it continued in a north-westerly direction for at least two miles. Having previously presumed it to be a branch of the Gordon because from its course then - south-westerly - it had seemed probable that it was the upper part of that river shown on the map as joining the Gordon some little distance from its mouth on its right bank, Sharland now decided that it must be the King River which empties into Macquarie Harbour from the North-east. The party, therefore, recrossed the river and toiled through denser scrub until, topping a hill, a beautiful valley could be seen. This valley "..... had the appearance, at a distance, of undergoing all the various processes of agriculture, - some parts (the most recently burnt) looking like freshly ploughed fields; and again, other parts possessing the most beautiful verdure from the sprouting of the young grass and rushes." Through it a river ran from the South in the direction of the "King" (Franklin) which Sharland named the Adelaide. The valley he named Queen's Valley ".....from its beauty." However the appearance was deceptive for a more minute examination showed him that "....the soil all partakes of the same kind of peat which abounds

in this quarter." He also found a heap of bones which he conjectured were those of an unlucky absconder from Macquarie Harbour.

The Frenchman's Cap was now only about five miles distant, bearing South  $80^{\circ}$  West, and after crossing the river, now the Loddon, they began to ascend its foothills. Much evidence of the high rainfall appeared. One very large pond and a stream proceeding from it, Sharland calculated would be sufficient ".....to turn four or five mills." They had difficulty in finding a dry camping site upon such ground "through every pore of which water appeared to be gushing."

They began the final ascent on the following morning, 12th March, expecting but a two hours' climb. However the route was deceptive, for often the ridges that they followed suddenly terminated in precipitous descents, compelling them to retrace their steps. It was not until after eight hours of hazardous climbing ".....where one step would have hurled us some hundred feet into a chasm below", that they reached what had appeared to be the highest point; only to discover that yet another, higher tier lay before them, impeding the expected view of Macquarie Harbour, but allowing them a sight of the ocean beyond. Between this tier and the one they were on there was a ravine "of so great a declivity and so impervious a scrub" that it would have needed another day and a half to cross it, ".....and even then, there did not appear any possibility of making the Cap."

His observations from the peak on which he stood - now named Sharland Peak - turned generally on the possibility of runaways from Macquarie Harbour succeeding in crossing this country. He doubted

whether they ever passed over the Frenchman's Cap but thought that they probably kept further to the South in making for the Peak of Teneriffe; even then it would be a matter of chance for any man to succeed in reaching the settled districts without knowledge of the country that lay between. From his experience Sharland now thought that he could travel from Bothwell to the Cap in four days.

They fired a parting double shot at the Cap, and then retraced their steps, finding no more practicable route than that by which they had come. The advance journey had occupied them three days and one day has been spent in climbing the Peak so that they had only two days' rations left for the return journey to their base camp on the Derwent. The return was easier by reason of familiarity and a fall in the level of the rivers, and they reached camp in the afternoon of the 14th, two days later.

Although Sharland would have liked to explore the "Gordon" (Derwent) to the South he thought that the nature of the country did not justify him, and so for another three years the true source of the Derwent remained unknown. He decided to return to the river he thought to be the Derwent (i.e., Nive) and to explore its southerly course for indications of more good land. Accordingly he went back to Marlborough, the site which he had previously reported as being most eligible for a township, which view was now reinforced upon closer examination.

From here he followed the Nive down the left bank for about eight miles before he reached a large marsh under what is now called

Brady's Sugar Loaf. It was here that the bushranger Brady had apparently kept stolen livestock and it, therefore, later became known as Brady's Marsh and, more recently, Brady's Lagoon, after the Hydro-Electric Commission converted it into a storage lake. During the night of the 17th Sharland had a remarkable escape from injury when his fire blazed up while he was asleep; it destroyed his blanket on one side and passed in a circle round his feet but extinguished itself before it reached his powder flask and gun on the other side. They continued the southerly course in the expectation of again coming upon the Nive, but soon became entangled in an almost impenetrable scrub of tea-tree, fern, sassafras and cutting grass. Sharland, therefore, decided to make for the South-east towards the Dee, especially as there did not seem to be any possibility of finding good agricultural land. Furthermore, the dogs were in such a weak state that the men, rather than leave them to starve, had to drag them along. On the 19th they bivouacked near the source of Black Bob's Rivulet; next day, six miles further on, they saw Blue Hill and another hill near the Dee which they recognised. This revived their spirits and they arrived at Mr. Parson's hut on the Dee that evening "....heartily glad to be again on habitable ground". The party reached Bothwell on 24th March having been absent three weeks and four days. <sup>(1)</sup>

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(1) "Rough Notes of a Journal of Expedition to the Westward....by W. S. Sharland...1832. Tasmanian Legislative Council Journals, Vol. VI, 1861, Paper No. 16.

The reports of Sharland's journey and of the country which he had discovered, published in the Hobart Town Courier, differ greatly from Sharland's own written account. On 31st March, 1832 the Courier reported that "Mr. Surveyor Sharland....discovered a fine and extensive tract of richly, well-watered country, chiefly eligible for cattle grazing..."<sup>(1)</sup> and the following week, enlarging upon the same subject wrote:

From the Frenchman's Cap and other hills which Mr. Sharland mounted a considerable extent of low marshy land was conspicuous, intermixed with rich pasture downs and gentle rises, presenting very eligible sites for farms or townships. The country generally had a more moist appearance than this side of the island and the herbage and foliage were most luxuriant....from its remote situation it is probable it will be of little service, for some time to come at least, as an accession to the colony, excepting for cattle grazing....<sup>(2)</sup>

Of the hills around the Frenchman's Cap Sharland had written:

These hills, at a distance, have all the appearance of downs; but when approached I found them very deceptive - partaking of the same kind of soil which I before described as being peculiar to this part [i.e., peat], and bearing only a sour kind of herbage, which I think would not be sufficiently nutritious even for cattle.<sup>(3)</sup>

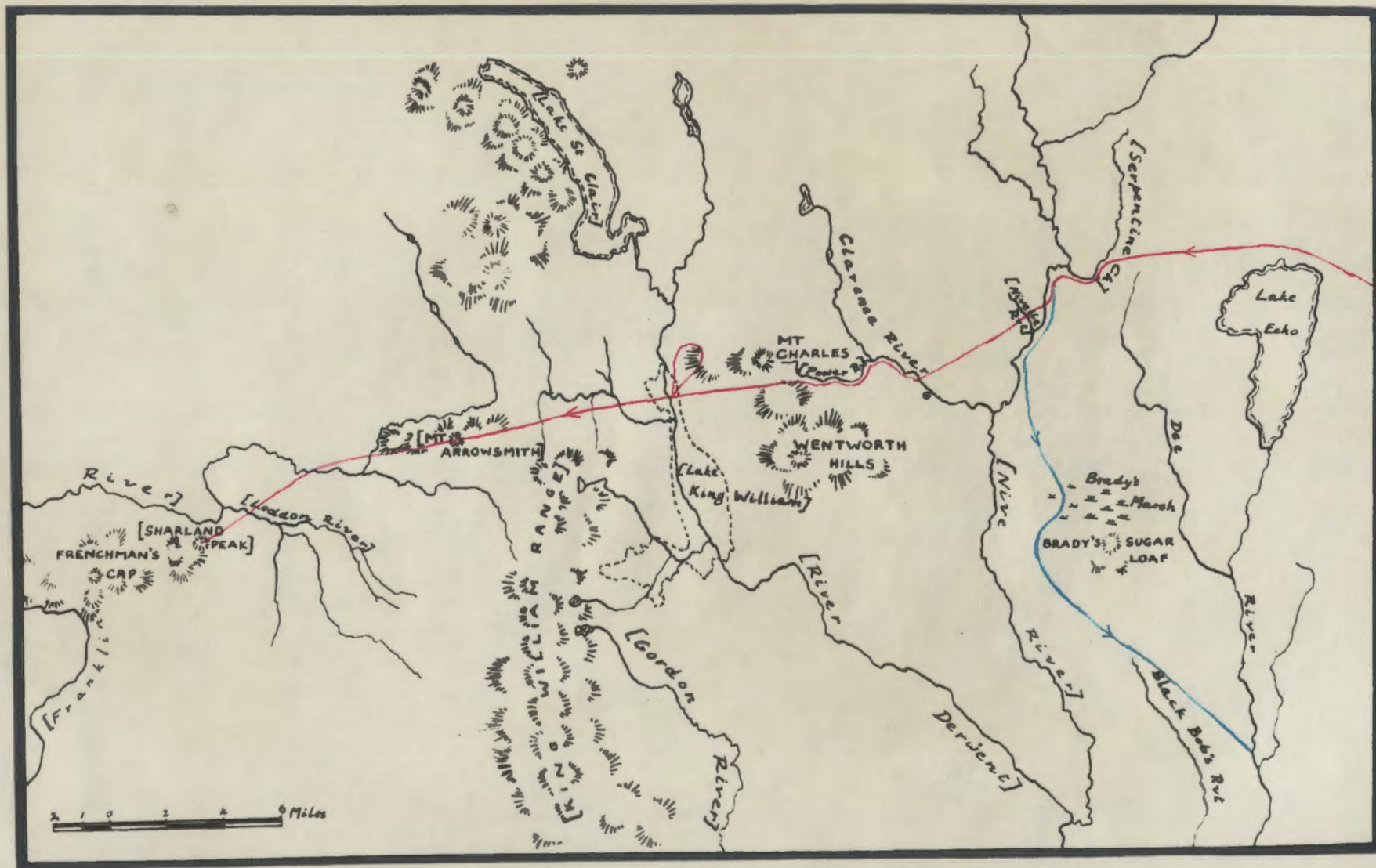
The difference between these two passages is perhaps to be explained by the hazy knowledge of geography and the lack of appreciation of the great distance and variation in types of country between that which Sharland had recommended on the Nive and that

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(1) Hobart Town Courier, 31st March, 1832.

(2) Ibid., 7th April, 1832.

(3) W. S. Sharland, op.cit.



Map 14. Illustrating Sherland's route to Frenchman's Cap, 1832.

nearer Frenchman's Cap, typical of the sterility of the West Coast. In fact, the Hobart Town Courier was acting the part of armchair critic; anybody who had not travelled at least as far west as Mount Arrowsmith could not appreciate this difference.

In June, 1831 the land regulations providing for the free grant of land to intending settlers in proportion to their capital available for its improvement, were abolished and sale by auction became the general means whereby land was alienated from the Crown. (1) This measure resulted in a great outcry in Van Diemen's Land. The land-hungry settlers were accustomed to receive grants in extension after a certain amount of improvement to their original holdings and, as settlement extended, the areas of land available for selection diminished year by year; by 1830 there was little pastoral land that was easily accessible remaining. In the North settlement had spread as far as the Mersey River; in the central West, as far as the Dee; and in the East a few settlers had begun to establish themselves in the vicinity of St. Helens. Thus new settlers had increasingly to accept inferior land; and now with the additional burden which land sales thrust upon them, they felt themselves to be doubly at a disadvantage. Apart from the capital involved at the outset, the situation of their grants meant much more capital outlay to bring them into production than that of the older settlers.

Hence Sharland's discoveries were not greeted with as much enthusiasm at first as one might have expected. The Hobart Town

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(1) Goderich-Arthur, 28th Jan. 1831, No. 10 and 14th Feb. 1831. No.12.

Courier feared that ".....the sale of lands measure will..... render the discovery comparatively valueless....."<sup>(1)</sup> and they prophesied that the new lands would be of little use to the colony ".....if the occupier shall have in the first instance to sell off the greater portion of his herds to pay the purchase money of the soil."<sup>(2)</sup> Despite these gloomy forebodings, the Colony's agriculture seemed prosperous.

However by the following year a less sceptical attitude had prevailed; in February the Courier reported that Sharland had almost completed a road to "the New-Country" which "....will be of great service to the colony as affording additional ranges of pasture, at least for cattle if not for sheep."<sup>(3)</sup> Lieutenant-Governor Arthur and Surveyor-General Frankland also visited the district and found it exceeded Sharland's description.<sup>(4)</sup> After their trip, the Courier described the country as consisting "..... in many parts of a rich red loam, easy of cultivation, with an undulating surface, and for the most part well sheltered and watered."<sup>(5)</sup> This was, no doubt, Frankland's own opinion.

Arthur had apparently been so impressed with the "New Country" as described by Sharland that in the summer following the expedition he took the initiative in opening it to further exploration and

(1) Hobart Town Courier, 31st March, 1832.

(2) Ibid. 7th April, 1832.

(3) Ibid. 8th. Feb. 1833.

(4) Ibid. 19th April, 1833.

(5) Ibid. 3rd May, 1833.



and settlement. In a memorandum to the Colonial Secretary he said that it was a matter of importance further to explore the country to the West, and as a first step he directed that a party of ten men superintended by Alexander McGeary, and under the orders of Sharland, he sent to clear a road. This would mean that enterprising settlers would be induced to explore further, and thus lay the foundations of a new settlement.<sup>(1)</sup>

The road was completed as far as Marlborough by 25th April of the following year.<sup>(2)</sup> Meanwhile, Frankland and become interested in furthering his knowledge of the area. In correspondence with the Colonial Secretary, he pointed out that the decision to remove the penal establishment at Macquarie Harbour to Port Arthur did away with the objection that had hitherto existed of exploring the extensive districts between the Derwent and the West Coast.<sup>(3)</sup> Frankland's point perhaps indicates that Arthur had expressed doubts or disapproval of Sharland's journey of the previous year, and if this is so, it may account for Sharland's desire to point out in his report that the overland journey from Macquarie Harbour to the settled districts would be extremely difficult for anyone, and well-nigh impossible

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(1) Lieutenant-Governor-Colonial Secretary, 6th Dec. 1832.

CSO 1/589/13389, T.S.A. Also Colonial Secretary-Surveyor-General, 8th Dec. 1832. LSD 1/84/2332 Sub-no. 2, T.S.A.

(2) Principal Superintendent of Convicts-Colonial Secretary, 25th April, 1833. CSO 1/589/13389, T.S.A.

(3) Surveyor-General-Colonial Secretary, 19th Feb. 1833. loc.cit.

(1)  
for people unacquainted with the country.

As he believed that Sharland could have obtained, during such a short excursion, only a limited knowledge of the terrain, and then only of that which he had actually passed over, Frankland suggested that a surveyor be employed to explore the country to the South of Sharland's route. It was necessary for such a journey to be made by some qualified person who could keep charts and estimate courses and distances accurately. He recommended John Charles Darke for the task. (2)

ii. Darke's Journeys on the Nive and to Wyld's Craig, 1833.

John Charles Darke was a nephew of John Helder Wedge, and had often accompanied his uncle in the field. Wedge, however, held no particularly high opinion of his ability. In a private letter Wedge wrote of Darke's application to be appointed a temporary assistant surveyor: "I did not apply to the Government in support of his application because I do not think he is capable of performing the duties nor do I think his attention to business would be such, judging from past experience, as to justify me in taking the responsibility in recommending him....." (3) However, he was appointed and was first sent down to the Huon River area. (4)

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(1) "Rough Notes of a Journal of Expedition to the Westward....by W. S. Sharland, 12th March, 1832.

(2) Surveyor-General-Colonial Secretary, 19th Feb. 1833. CSO 1/589/13389, T.S.A.

(3) J. H. Wedge - his father, 1st Feb. 1833. Uncatalogued MSS, Set 188, M.L.

(4) Id., post-script, 5th Feb. 1833.

Arthur approved of Frankland's suggested expedition, though he thought the season was late.<sup>(1)</sup> The object was to find out whether the river Sharland had thought was the Derwent, was in fact so, or only a tributary; Frankland's instructions to Darke were to proceed from Marlborough along the banks of the river to the Peak of Teneriffe, from the summit of which he should be able to obtain a general view of the surrounding country.<sup>(2)</sup>

Darke left Hamilton on 19th March (see Map 15) and followed the line of the new road to Marlborough. There he found it necessary to send one of the party back to Hobart "he being quite useless besides possessing a most voracious appetite. I had previously sent two others back from the same cause." He was now left with only two men, Cunningham and Goodwin, "the latter an excellent hand in the bush." This was the same James Goodwin who had escaped from Macquarie Harbour in 1828 and made his way overland to the Derwent via the Peak of Teneriffe. (see Part II, Chapter 2). They set off with "about 50 lbs of bread, 50 lbs of flour, 10 lbs of sugar and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lbs of tea, 30 cakes of chocolate and a number of boiled wild fowl for present use." Compared with other expeditions they, therefore, appeared to be quite well provisioned.

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(1) Lieutenant-Governor's minute on Surveyor-General-Colonial Secretary, 19th Feb. 1833. CSO 1/589/13389, T.S.A.

(2) Surveyor-General-Colonial Secretary, 23rd June, 1833. loc.cit.

They proceeded down the western bank of the river and crossed the Clarence River; the country here became steep, rocky and scrubby and they, therefore, crossed to the eastern bank, where it appeared more open. They followed the course of the river until they reached Brady's Creek, a tributary of the Nive which now turned to the right, into country which made it impossible to follow it further. Therefore, they kept a southerly course through the Big and Nive Marshes in the vicinity of which Darke and Goodwin climbed the hills to the East to get a view of the Peak of Teneriffe and the ranges beyond. Around the hill on which they stood were numerous marshes separated by grassy forests, which seemed to afford good shelter and pasturage for the wild cattle that existed there in considerable numbers.

His observations here led Darke to direct his course to the Peak of Teneriffe from which he hoped to plot the exact course of the Derwent. Accordingly they made southwards, crossing the Nive (here running south-east) where its rocky sides formed a deep gully. This was somewhere near the present Tungatinah and Tarraleah power stations which have ravines of a thousand feet on either side. The ground was again exceedingly scrubby, and the number of fallen trees frequently made it necessary for them to crawl on hands and knees. The soil was "a rich red mould (almost mud) apparently formed by the decay of vegetation for an immense period of time;" the forest was "composed of immense stringy bark, myrtle and gum trees with light wood, sassafras and fern trees forming the brushwood."

On 28th March they reached another deep gully, at the bottom of which was "a large river which I immediately concluded was the main branch of the River Derwent, the stream to which the road party have been working being small in comparison, not containing half the quantity of water." Sharland's fallacy was now exploded, for this was indeed the Derwent, and it now only remained to link it with Sharland's "Gordon" for its whole course to be known.

They crossed the Derwent at a spot where a small island in the middle lessened the current, and then began the ascent towards the Peak of Teneriffe. On 29th March they encamped about a mile and a half from the Peak proper. Darke climbed to the pinnacle and left his papers and instruments there, intending to return the following morning to make his observations. However, during the night a gale sprang up accompanied by heavy rain, sleet and snow and carried their hut away. At daybreak Darke determined to recover his papers and lost no time in descending the western side of the mountain. Although visibility was very limited Goodwin found his way to the summit, but he returned in such an exhausted state, that "with his eyes bloodshot and glazed [he] looked like a dead man." The descent revived them a little though Goodwin fell repeatedly and could not rise without help. As soon as they reached a sheltered spot they made a fire and spent the night in a makeshift hut of cabbage palm leaves, which Darke found growing in this vicinity, the first he had seen in Van Diemen's Land. The following day they proceeded down the mountain towards the South-west and passed through scrub and pine forest to the banks of the Gordon River. Darke does not hazard a guess

as to the identity of the river; Frankland presumed, from his account, that it was the Huon.<sup>(1)</sup>

From the mountain Darke had seen marshes about ten or twelve miles long and two to four miles wide running south down the river valley and extending to the North-west six or seven miles. Though swampy, Darke thought the area would support cattle.

Goodwin and Darke attempted to climb an outcrop of the Denison Range but the effort so exhausted them that he thought it prudent to return to Marlborough immediately, rather than to make for Mr. McPherson's farm between the Ouse and Dee Rivers which appeared a more difficult route, involving another ascent of the Peak of Teneriffe.

On 4th April they, therefore, left their encampment and crossed the Gordon River, just below the junction of the Gell, in their course towards the Derwent. Their provisions were all gone except for a few pounds of flour and they were now dependent on what they could shoot. They reached the Derwent on the 6th and the Nive on the 8th, where they finished the flour. The dogs had become so weak that they had to be dragged out of the way of a grass fire. They made their way along the east bank of the river and in the evening reached a road party's hut where they found "the hind quarters of a calf and a large damper which had been deposited there for the use of his Excellency on his expected visit. We applied it to our own use to the consternation of two of the road party left

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(1) Surveyor-General-Colonial Secretary, 23rd June, 1833.  
CSO 1/589/13389, T.S.A.

in charge of it."<sup>(1)</sup>

Darke's discoveries on this expedition made Frankland anxious to find out whether a shorter and better road to the western country could be made by penetrating from the highest settlements on the Derwent to the marshes around the Peak of Teneriffe, a route which he himself had explored almost as far as the Florentine River in May, 1828. Now he, therefore, despatched Darke to the point where his own former expedition had come to an end, a hill between Jungle Creek and the Florentine, almost opposite the new Wayatinah "B" Power Station. From this point he was instructed to examine the country between there and the "Huon Plains" (i.e., what Frankland was later to call the Valley of Rasselas) to discover the possibility of building a road in that direction.<sup>(2)</sup>

As a result of Darke's first expedition, Frankland suggested to Arthur that the river previously thought to be the Derwent on which Marlborough was situated be named the Nive, and the stream which fell into it "opposite the cottage", the Nivelles, "....in commemoration of the brilliant actions by British troops in the South of France under the Duke of Wellington at the conclusion of the last war."<sup>(3)</sup> Arthur approved and so the names remain today.<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) J. C. Darke, "Copy of Journal." 19th March-8th April, 1833.

LSD 1/91/2656, sub-no. 1, T.S.A.

(2) Surveyor-General-Colonial Secretary, 23rd June, 1833.

CSO 1/589/13389, T.S.A.

(3) Supra.

(4) Lieutenant-Governor's minute on supra.

Darke left Mr. MacPherson's on this second expedition on 19th May (see Map 15). With his three men, Goodwin, Cunningham and Bird, he crossed the Broad and Repulse Rivers on the first day and encamped a little beyond the latter on the banks of the Derwent. Darke observed the bank on the opposite side to be very grassy and sent Cunningham across to examine it. He reported that the grass extended a long way back from the river and up that side almost to the junction of Black Bob's Rivulet.<sup>(1)</sup> On these plains Cunningham had found large herds of wild cattle and many huts, apparently built by white people, bushrangers according to Darke. As a hill near this place was marked "Dunn's Hill" on Scott's sketch of the route (see Map 11) taken by Frankland and himself it may well have been one of the haunts of this gang and would perhaps link up with Dunne's statement before his execution: "I left Mr. Bethune's horse by the side of Gordon's River....under a large plain, near what we named Dunne's look-out, and in a straight direction from the hill called the Frenchman's Cap."<sup>(2)</sup>

On the 21st the party followed Frankland's route as far as Dismal Creek, and pitched their tent on the same spot as had Frankland all but five years earlier. They then turned south-west and early on 23rd May they arrived at the Florentine, the river which was still at this time anonymous. Their course then took them over high

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(1) J. C. Darke, "Journal of an Expedition Southwest of the Peak of Teneriffe. May 1833." 13th May - 2nd June 1833

LSD 1/91/2656, sub-no. 2, T.S.A.

(2) Hobart Town Gazette, 13th Jan. 1827.



scrubby hills, outcrops of Wyld's Craig, and on the 26th they arrived at the Gordon Marshes near the place of their previous encampment. Although the season had advanced two months nearer to winter than at that time Darke found that the marshes were now drier. His intention was to cross the plain towards the South along the course of the river, but after six or eight miles heavy rain led him to conclude that it would be impossible to explore further at this time of year, so he decided to return. His timidity was perhaps due to his previous experience on the Peak of Teneriffe. He reiterated his opinion that the plains would support cattle; the soil was generally rich and he thought that clover would spread rapidly over the whole marsh. The open country appeared to extend right to the foot of bare mountains, which could be distinguished about thirty or forty miles southwards. There was evidence of recent occupation by natives.

Because of the wet conditions Darke decided not to return by his outward route, but to continue straight over the Peak to the Derwent and proceed thence to Marlborough. They reached the Peak on the 28th but were detained on its summit for two days by torrential rain and a thick fog which reduced their visibility to ten yards. The weather cleared on the 31st and they were able to descend the northern slopes of the mountain; they hoped to reach the Derwent and find the exact spot where the three rivers joined, that is the Nive, the Derwent and the Florentine. They came upon a river flowing easterly (apparently the Florentine) and followed it until it joined the Derwent, which they crossed. They spent the night at this point, about two miles above Dismal Creek, another place submerged in the Hydro-Electric Commission's Catagunya Dam. But apparently Darke had mistaken the Florentine for

the Derwent and the Derwent for the Nive, for he says that he "was not able to ascertain where the Southern and middle branches of the river joined."

During this night, 1st June, in similar circumstances to those in which Sharland had had a providential escape, Darke was not so fortunate. The grass caught fire and burned the tent wrapped round his feet; he was so badly burned that he was unable to continue and sent Goodwin and Cunningham to Hamilton for his horse. They returned to the camp on the following evening and after ".....a horrible journey of two more days" he arrived at Hamilton. "The extreme inflammation of my foot and leg rendered it extremely painful for me to ride and over the rough road the men carried me. They all behaved remarkably well."

Commenting on the possibility of a road, he expressed his belief that one could be cut without difficulty from the Derwent to the point he had reached; the greatest obstacle would be the scrub. He suggested that it should be done during the winter so that in the following spring and summer further exploration could be carried on. If a depot were established at the "Teneriffe Marshes" it could be used as a focal point for exploration in any direction from there to the coast. (1)

Frankland, very satisfied with this report, requested permission to have a party of ten men to form a bridle road from Mount MacPherson

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(1) J. C. Darke, "Journal of an Expedition Southwest of the Peak of Teneriffe. May 1833." LSD 1/91/2656, sub-no. 2, T.S.A. Also Darke-Surveyor-General, 27th June, 1833. LSD 1/72/2656, sub-no. 3 T.S.A.

to the plains during the following summer. He hoped to further the discoveries to the South, and to connect this road with the navigable part of the Huon to which a bridle road had been cut in 1829-30. (1) Arthur approved of the plan. (2)

Also enthusiastic was the Hobart Town Courier. Besides the country discovered the previous year in the vicinity of the Nive River "Mr. Darke.....has discovered that almost an equally extensive tract of good country lies to the South and West" of the Peak of Teneriffe. (3) This was after his first expedition, and in July after his second they wrote that it was:

".....to be hoped that the newly discovered country beyond the mountains on the south and west of the island will shortly be made available to the public. The limited nature of our pastoral districts - the rapid increase in population, the decrease in the numbers of sheep and cattle from a variety of causes, of which the impounding system and the wild dogs are not among the least, will together conspire to keep the price of butcher's meat in the colony. (4)

iii. Frankland's Campaign of 1835 and The Solution of the Question of the Sources of the Huon, Derwent and Gordon.

During Frankland's term as Surveyor-General there had been a certain amount of public discontent with the Survey Office. Frankland had been appointed to the position in 1828 after G. W. Evans had been compulsorily retired following malpractices in the survey of

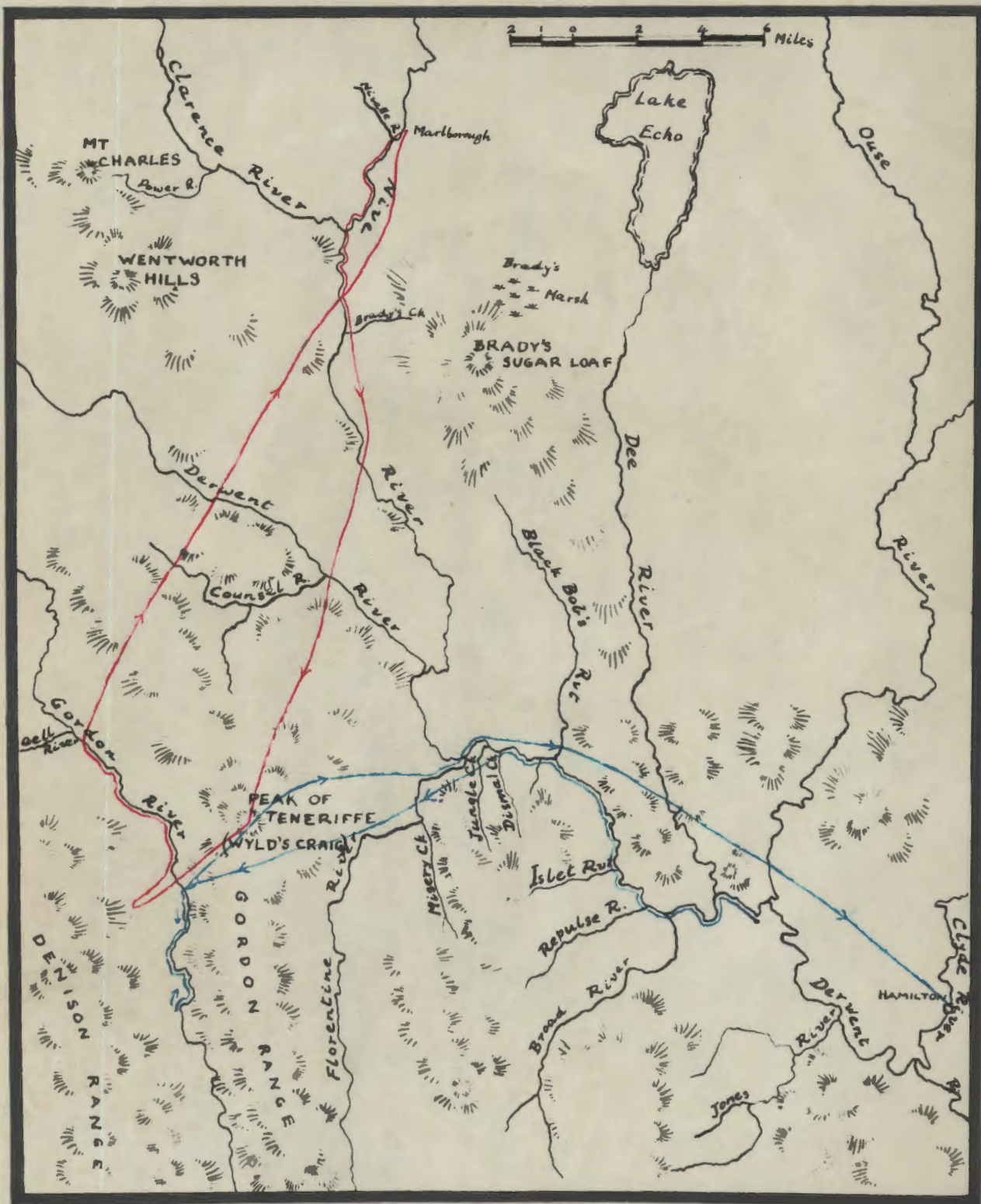
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(1) Surveyor-General-Colonial Secretary, 23rd June, 1833. CSO 1/589/13389, T.S.A.

(2) Lieutenant-Governor's minute on supra.

(3) Hobart Town Courier, 17th May, 1833.

(4) Ibid., 19th July, 1833.



Map 15. Illustrating Darke's journeys on the Nive River and to Wyld's Craig, 1833.

land, and Thomas Scott, the Deputy Surveyor-General, who had been associated with him, was excluded from promotion. These irregularities, and the doubts which had been cast on the validity of all grants running in the name of the Governor, necessitated a considerable amount of extra work in the department during the years following Frankland's appointment. The uncertainty and alarm occasioned by the grants question brought a load of criticism upon the department generally and the Surveyor-General in particular; he also had to endure criticism in his capacity as executive member of the three man Commission which was established to investigate all titles to land and to issue corrected deeds.

J. E. Calder later wrote of Frankland that he was a man with "no taste for public drudgery" and had owed his appointment "to his general intelligence and agreeable address, rather than to any great professional proficiency." His genial disposition made him much sought after and he was a great favourite with the members of his staff, who erected a monument to him after his death. However, Calder said that "he was fonder of what are called the elegant studies, natural history, the fine arts &c. rather than of his own proper business."<sup>(1)</sup>

While there remained available land in the more easily accessible areas of the Colony, the older settlers and the newer immigrants bickered among themselves rather than with the Government.

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(1) Calder Papers, Vol. 1, p. 236, P.L.V.

The settlers who had arrived in the early twenties came with a fairly accurate picture of the pioneer community of which they would become part; after gaining a few general observations from the Survey Office they went out to seek land for themselves. But by the 1830s the new immigrants had been told of the prospects and advantages of Van Diemen's Land in glowing terms and were led to expect more than they found to exist. They were, therefore, often disappointed in the land they were given, for they had to seek further afield for it and it was often inferior to that of the older settled areas. Such a settler inevitably vented his frustration on the Survey Office which he considered had failed in its duty to point out to him a more eligible situation.

A public meeting, held in Hobart on 23rd May, 1831, passed a resolution, with "bursts of popular approbation", severely criticising the Survey Office: they claimed that it had failed to give advantages to the Colony proportionate to their annually increased expenditure. On the contrary:

.....the difficulties of the recent Emigrant and the older Settler are aggravated, by the total want of any correct chart of the located, or unlocated districts.... to which the public may refer, by the frequent re-measuring of lands already defined, whereby the certainty of land marks is destroyed, and ill feeling and discord consequently kept up and excited, by the difficulty of obtaining any information respecting land from the Office of the Department..... (1)

When news of this meeting unofficially reached the Secretary of State he reminded Arthur that he had been instructed to receive

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(1) Colonial Times, 25th May, 1831.

regular reports from the Surveyor-General ".....setting forth the progress which he has made in the survey of the Territory..... annexing to such Reports Charts or Maps....."(1) Frankland competently dealt with these allegations in reply to an enquiry from the Colonial Secretary, stating that:

Such a Map.....has always been suspended in the Public Anteroom to my Office.....and every one desirous of inspecting it has merely to walk in from the Street..... an officer of the Department.....is in constant attendance for the purpose of explaining to applicants any details which they may not understand by simply inspecting the plans. [Also there were].....separate plans of each district constructed on a larger scale.....

New immigrants were also given letters of introduction to the assistant surveyors in the field who were directed to give all possible information on lands available;

.....this devoted attendance on the wants and even caprices of Applicants consumes a great portion of valuable time.....but I have always deemed it of importance to the Country that every subject connected with its lands, and with the Department managing them, should be open to general scrutiny..... (2)

In later correspondence with the Under-Secretary, Hay, Frankland enlarged on his difficulties:

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(1) Goderich-Arthur, 18th Jan. 1833, No. 108. GO 1/15, T.S.A.

(2) Surveyor-General-Colonial Secretary, 12th Aug. 1833. Encl. in Arthur-Goderich, 12th Aug. 1833, No. 44. GO 10/14, T.S.A.

.....I verily believe that the time never will arrive when complaints will cease. From the nature of things we may expect a constant recurrence of boundary disputes, and although Settlers are too indolent to preserve their land marks when first put in possession of them by the Gov't Surveyors, they become sufficiently alive to their interests the moment a neighbour is suspected of encroaching and they then look to the Gov't for resurveying their land, and if so unreasonable a request is not attended to, the weight of their wrath falls on my devoted Department. So if a member of the Legislative Council gets into a boundary dispute with an adjoining farmer and does not obtain a settlement of the question exactly suited to his wishes, he votes a refusal of supplies for paying the Department and so forth.<sup>(1)</sup>

Although Frankland was able to answer the criticism to the satisfaction of the Lieutenant-Governor and the Secretary of State, he was probably induced by it to intensify his exertions in exploration; it may have been one of the reasons for his interest in finding new land to the West - first by Sharland's expedition, then by Darke's and finally by an extensive exploration of the whole area himself early in 1835.

He planned this expedition on a grand scale and proposed to employ nine surveying parties besides his own. The object was ".....to make a military reconnaissance of the whole extensive tract of country interjacent between the Surry hills and the lower Huon; the Dee, and the West coast."<sup>(2)</sup> Frankland seemed to be determined to fill in all the blank spaces on the new map of Van Diemen's Land that he was preparing.

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(1) Surveyor-General-Hay, 21st Oct. 1835. CO 280/61, P.R.O. (Micro-film copy held in T.S.A.)

(2) Surveyor-General-Colonial Secretary, 12th Dec. 1834. CSO 1/770/16466, T.S.A.



The proposed expedition had not been sanctioned by Arthur and Montagu, the Colonial Secretary, was somewhat alarmed at its scale; he thought that the Surveyor-General should not be allowed to withdraw surveyors from their districts unless the arrears of work were completed.<sup>(1)</sup> But Frankland justified it by saying that the policy of keeping the district intervening between Macquarie Harbour and the settled areas unexplored had become obsolete with the abandonment of that penal station, and that Sharland's cursory examination had

...inspired the community with a desire to see it opened to Settlers and to justify the expectation of its becoming at no distant period an important agricultural Country.... the necessity of opening out new agricultural lands is of an imperative nature at a conjuncture when such large bodies of labourers are emigrating from England to this Colony and when a wider field for the establishment of a respectable yeomanry is so much desired.

Added to this was the desirability of obtaining knowledge of the whole territory as well as the "considerations connected with Natural Philosophy - which nevertheless are inseparable from all such journies, while they serve to confer on them the deepest interest and the greatest utility."<sup>(2)</sup>

But Montagu was still critical and even Arthur regretted that Frankland should have

...meditated an operation so extended contemplating the removal of almost all the Surveyors from the Settled Districts and the transport of a large quantity of Provisions at a great expense, for an object, important certainly, but by no means commensurate with the expenditure of such means - without...fully communicating with the Govern't.

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- (1) Colonial Secretary's minute on Surveyor-General-Colonial Secretary, 9th Dec. 1834. Loc.cit.  
 (2) Surveyor-General-Colonial Secretary, 12th Dec. 1834. Loc.cit.  
 (3) Colonial Secretary's minute on supra.

Interruption to the duties of the surveyors, even on an occasion or urgent and vital necessity to the whole Colony (as in 1830 at the time of the Black War), was a matter of grave importance. He further considered that "the object to be gained is not, although highly desirable by any means pressing" and could be equally served

if the quarter of the Island were occupied by a Station on the Nive, and the Lands located by Renting the Country for a Season or two, great information would shortly be acquired and with the assistance of two Surveying Parties, everything done, in order to prepare for that Class of Settlers from England whom I am desirous to see in occupation of that Soil, that is requisite.

He considered it would be unwise and indeed rash to paralyse the whole department for three months during the best season, especially in view of the Secretary of State's expressed concern with the completion of the land survey of the Colony. <sup>(1)</sup>

Frankland, therefore, revised his plans and asked that, since he considered the enterprise to be of the utmost importance, he be allowed to undertake it on a reduced scale. <sup>(2)</sup> The Lieutenant-Governor finally approved of a party of twenty people, including four surveyors, be engaged for a period of six weeks; though as the season was becoming late he wanted "...an assurance that the expense to be incurred, and the time to be devoted...would be fully

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(1) Lieutenant-Governor-Colonial Secretary, 17th Dec. 1834. Loc.cit.

(2) Surveyor-General-Colonial Secretary, 31st Dec. 1834. Loc.cit.

compensated by the result of the Expedition."<sup>(1)</sup> Frankland was apparently able to satisfy him, though he later complained to the Under-Secretary of State of Arthur's attitude : "I should more frequently perform.....explorations were it not for the circumstances of Col. Arthur being so very averse to any of the Officers of the Survey Department leaving the plodding work of marking of the Settlers farms - even for a day - and one gets very little credit here for any exertions made in the cause of science or general knowledge."<sup>(2)</sup>

Three of the parties, that of J. E. Calder, J. H. Wedge, and William Dawson, as well as Frankland's own, all began their expedition from Marlborough on 9th February, 1835 with the object first of setting at rest the long unsolved problem of the source of the Derwent. Although Darke had established that the Nive was not the Derwent this still remained the general impression in the Colony, and although it would have appeared reasonable, from the direction from which the main branch of the Derwent flowed, that it was the same river that Sharland had reported as having its source in Lake St. Clair (his "Gordon" Lake) this had never been suggested. However, Frankland may have suspected that it was in fact the same river for it was to the lake that he directed his course, with the intention of climbing some high mountain whereby he could acquire, "by a single coup d'oeil sufficient knowledge of the features of that country to guide me in the further pursuit of that particular object as well as of the ends of exploration in general."

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(1) Colonial Secretary-Surveyor-General, 26th Jan. 1835. Loc.cit.

(2) Surveyor-General-Hay, 21st Oct. 1835. CO 280/61, P.R.O.

The first night they encamped on a boggy plain near the Clarence River (see Map 16). The march during the following day was through similar country, a series of marshes, sometimes divided by narrow belts of forest; the soil was of "an exceedingly rich nature" but the surrounding hills were too rocky to afford pasturage. In the evening they reached an unusually extensive marsh through which ran a river which Frankland named the Humboldt "in honour of the distinguished Naturalist of that name." This is now known as the Traveller's Rest River, though on Frankland's 1839 map a tributary on the opposite bank bears this name; that stream is now the Navarre. From here a mountain, "of immense height and perpendicular on all sides" was observed to the North-west. From the appearance Frankland first thought it was Barn Bluff, and:

.....its isolated and commanding position at once excited in us the desire of ascending to its summit, but the apparently inaccessible nature of its faces left us but slender hope of being able to accomplish the object.

A five mile advance on the morning of 11th February brought them to :

.....the edge of a beautiful lake in the heart of scenery of the most picturesque character.....after winding round several tongues of land beautifully tufted with rich luxuriant herbage [the lake] extended for many miles to the north-west, washing the north east bases of the lofty mountain which I have just mentioned.

While the party were breakfasting Frankland, himself engaged in making drawings of the romantic scenery, sent Alexander McKay to follow the lake to the westward; he returned within half an hour to report that a large river, which he thought was the Derwent, flowed out of the lake. The whole party then walked along the shore of the

lake, crossed the river a little below its source, and passed over an extensive marsh for about a mile on its southern side; they then returned to the shore of the lake and had a fine view of it stretching away to the North-west. To the South-west a bay

...lay embosomed in sloping hills covered with the most varied foliage....It was a fine summers day and the air was so serene that the surface of the water was scarcely ruffled but the sandy beaches bore evidence of the Lake being at times as rough as the sea. I will not here dilate on the extreme beauty of this scenery as it might be considered out of place in an official report, but I confess that while thus narrating the circumstances of the journey I feel it difficult to avoid expressing the impressions of delight which were inspired by the first discovering of such a romantic country....I believe every man of the party felt more or less the calm influence of the scenery and to all, this days journey was a matter of recreation.

They "sauntered" around the bay, which was named Cynthia's Cove, and camped on the beach at its head. This spot commanded a good view of "the great mountain".

On every side it appeared scarped by perpendicular columns of basalt so as to be quite insurmountable but when the setting sun lit up in bold relief every pillar of this singular natural structure, we conceived hopes of being able to find some fissure through which an ascent might be practicable....

In the morning, therefore, a party of fourteen men, provisioned for four days, set off for the mountain about seven miles distant. Soon after starting they crossed a river running from the South-west to the lake, which Frankland named the Hügel, in honour of Baron Charles Hügel of Vienna. He named a larger stream which joined the Hügel from the North-west, the Cuvier "...after the great Naturalist who has by his genius and researches added so extensively to human knowledge." The Cuvier was found to run through a long and beautiful valley, the discovery of which gave "a high zest to

the excursion" as they had expected to encounter "nothing but the most embarrassing forests." At eleven o'clock they arrived at the foot of the mountain and made the top in another hour and twenty minutes," where the remaining breath was devoted to three hearty cheers and then we named the mountain - Olympus."

From the summit :

.....the view.....was beyond all description - the whole of Lake St. Clair lay at our feet with its beautiful bays and its golden beaches and in addition we could descry at least 20 other Lakes of various dimensions in different parts of the panorama - two in particular attracted our especial notice and admiration by their beauty."

One, at the north-west extremity of Cuvier Valley and the source of the Cuvier River, was named Lake Petrarch, and the other, among the woody hills on the north side of Lake St. Clair, Lake Laura. The high tableland to the North-east was seen to abound in lakes, intersected to the West and North by many lofty tiers and chains of mountains; to the South-east the extensive plains were drained by the Derwent. The party remained on the mountain until sunset to make observations and then bivouacked in the forest near its foot.

On the 13th they visited Lake Petrarch and then made a rapid march back to the camp at Lake St. Clair; and next day the party divided. Calder and Dawson were to follow the Derwent down its left bank while Frankland and the rest intended to explore to the West on the other side. Here he found a vast area of open country "....bounded by an amphitheatre of Great Mountains",

One on the South-west he named King William's Mountain, while another range on the North-west was named ".....after the Princess Victoria." This name was not perpetuated and does not even appear on Frankland's own map, possibly because he realized that Hellyer had given the name to a mountain south of the Surrey Hills. The plains, however, were wet and "nearly useless in their present undrained state." On the southern side of these plains they came upon a stream flowing from Mount King William which they followed to its junction with the Derwent. They named it the Guelph. They forded the Derwent, here a beautiful and gentle river. This area has now been made into Lake King William. The country on the right bank had begun to close in with the foothills of a mountain extending down to the river; Frankland called this mountain "after the Rt. Hon. Henry Hobhouse of Hadspen in Somersetshire."

Calder and Dawson here joined Frankland's party; but shortly afterwards the banks on this side of the river became extremely rocky and precipitous as the Derwent entered what was later called Butler's Gorge, now the site of a hydro-electric power station. The party turned to the East but again came to the Derwent, which had made a large curve. Since the river now appeared to contain more water, Frankland suspected that it may have been joined by a tributary and, therefore, sent Calder to find out whether this were so. Calder's route was the one that Frankland had not followed further because of the difficulties made by the spurs of Mount Hobhouse. Afterwards he was instructed to continue following the right bank to the confluence of the Nive. These instructions were carried out "in a most zealous and complete manner"; he did not

rejoin the party until they had returned to Marlborough.

Frankland's party continued along the left bank for a few miles but the forest became so thick that it was impossible to take the horses further in that direction. They, therefore, sent them back, in Dawson's charge, to Marlborough via the northern end of the Wentworth Hills; the rest of the party carried on through the forest hoping to reach the Nive River. But the first day they could only make two miles' progress and they occasionally found it easier to wade along the river. The next day, 18th February, Frankland determined to leave the Derwent and strike out to the North-east towards the Nive River; they finally reached it on the 19th at a point somewhere near where Darke had crossed it at the present Tungatinah and Tarraleah Power Stations. Travelling was much easier on the left bank of the Nive and "it may be imagined with what *allegresse* we walked over the elastic turf of these beautiful plains....." until they reached a road party's hut about nine miles from Marlborough. Here Assistant-Surveyor Seymour met them and they laid "main basse" on his provisions and were quickly restored to their former spirits.

On the 20th they arrived at Marlborough and made a rendezvous with the other parties. Dawson was sent back to Hobart with the horses. Wedge, with three others including McKay and several natives and convicts, were sent to Mr. Parson's hut on the Dee to make observations for a better line of road than that which had previously been made to the north of Lake Echo. The result of this expedition convinced Frankland of the superiority of this new line.

Frankland and Calder having joined Wedge at the Dee, the whole



party on the 28th left on the second phase of the expedition, (see Map 16), the results of which it was hoped would make known the nature of the south-western quarter of Van Diemen's Land and would discover the source of the Huon. With knapsacks averaging a weight of eighty pounds they headed for the Peak of Teneriffe or Wyld's Craig, the form of which (a lofty cone on the southern side scarped by a bold precipice of 3000 feet) Frankland anticipated would give an extensive view of the surrounding country. From the Dee Tier they carefully noted the principal features of the Peak, then about fifteen miles distant, to decide on courses. That night they bivouacked on the banks of the Derwent at a point where Darke had done likewise nearly two years previously, that is opposite the junction of a large river which Frankland named the Florentine.

On 1st March they forded the Derwent and pushed on in the direction of the Peak. For two days they struggled through thick forest ".....seldom cheered by a furtive gleam of sunshine through the gigantic timber which enveloped us." They came to a most welcome valley immediately under the mountain, dividing the Peak from another crest of the same range, which Frankland named Mount Shakespeare. In the valley were two small lakes, the one where they encamped being named Lake Daphne. Bad weather detained the party here for a day but on the 4th the fog cleared and they continued. The actual pinnacle was reached in less than an hour ".....and well we were repaid at that moment for all the toil of the journey." The view was all the more gratifying to Frankland because of the many years'

speculation "...on the probable character and features of that unknown country", on the western side of the mountain. "The view does not dawn upon you by degrees - one step and the whole Country lies stretched at your feet with its rivers its verdant valleys and its mountains....." The Florentine lay on the South-east shaping its course northward and veering to the East where it met the mountain. Divided from the Florentine by a sharp ridge of hills (which later became the Gordon Range) was another river draining an extensive and clear plain which Frankland called the Valley of Rasselas. The river previously mistaken for the Huon was on this journey later proved to be the head of the Gordon. Beyond this the country was of a completely different character; the mountains though lofty and rugged, were clear of timber and apparently presented few obstacles to the traveller. To the North they could pick out the prominent characteristics of the country they had been exploring - Olympus, Ida, Byron, Manfred, King William, Victoria, Hobhouse and the Wentworth Hills. They could also see some of the settled areas round Hobart and Oatlands.

After making all their observations they returned to the camp at Lake Daphne to make arrangements for the exploration of the Valley of Rasselas and of the Huon. But Frankland had now to return to Hobart because of official duties. The Huon expedition, therefore, fell to Wedge, and he was accompanied by McKay and one Wood, as well as several convicts and natives.

On the following day they left Lake Daphne and entered the Valley of Rasselas (see Map 16); though free from timber they found the herbage coarse and the land ".....so wet as to be unavailable in its undrained state." Frankland, suspecting the river might have its source in a lake, had instructed them to follow it northwards; but when they could find no such lake after a day's march they then began to follow it southwards, and for four days travelled through open country. The river turned westerly about twelve miles from the Peak, from which they rightly concluded that it was the Gordon.

On 11th March they came upon two delightful lakes "..... lying in the heart of the most romantic scenery and being surrounded by lofty mountains." Wedge named these lakes Pedder and Maria, in honour of the Chief Justice and his lady. The following day they came upon the Huon, which flowed apparently from a third lake that they could see in the distance and which was given the name of Edgar. The travelled down the right bank of the Huon through heavily timbered country; the area towards Port Davey seemed more open.

Provisions were becoming short so it was necessary for the party to march as rapidly as possible for the navigable part of the Huon to which Frankland, on his return to Hobart, would have despatched a supply boat.<sup>(1)</sup> They reached it on the 20th and Hobart

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(1) Surveyor-General-Colonial Secretary, 24th Feb. 1835. CSO 1/770/  
16466, T.S.A.

the following day.

To complete his discoveries, at the end of March Frankland instructed Seymour to follow the Nive River to its source. This he did to its junction with the Pine; and the Pine to its junction with the Little Pine; and finally the Little Pine which he presumably believed to be the main branch of the Nive. Until he reached the neighbourhood of Lake Fergus, the country was hilly, but there it opened into extensive plains, "...affording the finest sheep pasturage" and already occupied from the flocks of the Clyde district. The river, after passing near Lake Fergus, was found to have its source in the cluster of lakes further north known as the "Nineteen Lagoons."

The combined efforts of all these journeys convinced Frankland that the labour of two months had been amply repaid in the discovery of the sources of the Derwent, Huon and Nive Rivers.<sup>(1)</sup>

In a letter to Under Secretary Hay he expressed his confidence that "the application of labour, under agricultural skill would render a large proportion of the marsh lands highly productive. However nothing will do for our farmers at present but sheep hills...."<sup>(2)</sup> Possibly because the expedition had failed in this respect, and because the colonists were not interested in "the cause of science or general knowledge" as Frankland had complained, the journey was much

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(1) "Narrative of an Expedition to the Head of the Derwent and to the Countries bordering the Huon..." CO 280/61, P.R.O.

(2) Surveyor-General-Hay, 21st Oct. 1835. Loc.cit.



Map 16. Illustrating the routes of Frankland, Wedge and Calder, 1835.

criticized in the Press. The Hobart Town Courier lamented the fact that the aboriginal names for the places which Frankland had discovered could not be found and used.<sup>(1)</sup> The official report of the country in this paper was sarcastically optimistic about the future of the cold wet marshes which characterized most of the country over which Frankland had passed:

In a future age, perhaps, when these high and barren regions become drained by time and assume a warmer temperature, it is possible that man may vegetate on portions of them but at present they are anything but attractive to the settler - yet these are the lands which the appraisers of Downing St. have determined to be worth at the lowest 5s. per acre. They are actually not worth the same extent of ocean, which indeed we wonder that the political economists of the present day have never thought of disposing of by the acre also, in order to pay off the national and all other debts.<sup>(2)</sup>

Although disappointed, the Hobart Town Courier was prepared to hope for the best, but the radical True Colonist seized every opportunity to criticize all things which had to do with officialdom.

First they complained of the lack of information which had been given to the public by Frankland and his exploring party of their visit to "Mt. Ida Parnassus and the Fountains of Helican", and rhetorically questioned whether "modern Arcadia is as barren as is the information which he has vouchsafed to the Public relating to its qualities"; and hinted that the expedition had accomplished nothing "beyond the affixing of fine heathen names to

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(1) Hobart Town Courier, 27th Feb. 1835.

(2) Ibid., 27th March, 1835.

barren hills and desert streams....."(1)

The following month, after the publication of the account in the Hobart Town Courier, the True Colonist used it for an unreasoning attack upon the Government and officialdom generally. Commenting upon the statement that it would not be available for human purposes until "drained by Time" it wrote:

When the Usurers and Lawyers have "swallowed up" all the land, that is now inhabited and converted it into boundless sheep runs, that the industrious classes, broken in spirit, and half starved with hunger, will be glad to retire and linger out a sort of vegetable life, in the cold swamps which he describes, as forming the surface of Mr. Frankland's Arcadia!!

.....When time or some happy change.. has removed his present patrons from power - if the Colony is blessed with Rulers that can comprehend, and will seek to advance the interests of the People, and the honour of the King; or if the people are allowed to select their own Legislators, we will soon see a happy and industrious race of farmers, graziers and dairymen, occupying this uninhabitable country which the Courier and Mr. Frankland have devoted to the Heathen Gods, and supplying their fellow colonists with every article of food....."(2)

Of the whole area that had been examined on this expedition Frankland realized that the plains around Marlborough constituted the best country; the increased rainfall rendered those further west largely unavailable, and the clear land around the Huon and Gordon Rivers, though of tremendous extent, was "so saturated with wet that where you might under other circumstances expect to find grasshoppers you meet with nothing but small crawfish." However he was hopeful that in the mountains in this quarter "many natural resources will be

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(1) True Colonist, 27th March, 1835.

(2) Ibid., 24th April, 1835.

elicited which are now hidden from our knowledge."

To hasten the occupation of some of this country Frankland recommended a shorter and better line of road to Marlborough, similar to that followed to-day, instead of the one then in use to the north of Lake Echo; a bridle road up the right bank of the Derwent to the Florentine and across the Gordon Range to the Valley of Rasselas; and the road to the Huon should be continued up the right bank of the river to the plains. Every encouragement should then be given to the settlers to occupy land in these localities. As a first step he recommended that an experimental farm should be established in the south-western area, the results of which would indicate the possibilities of the country. (1)

Of the roads which Frankland advocated, that across the Florentine to the Gordon was not made at this time, but that to the open country around Port Davey and Lake Pedder was actually cut by a party of twelve convicts under the supervision of Alexander McKay during the first half of 1836. (2) The Hobart Town Courier however suggested, as Frankland himself had done, that ".....the labourers should be directed to break up and cultivate an acre or two of the soil on the plains, which if successful would be a guarantee of their fertility....." (3)

The bridle road was completed at the end of May, 1836 to about thirty miles beyond the Huon on the right bank, crossing the

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(1) "Narrative of a Expedition to the Head of the Derwent and to the countries bordering the Huon....." CO 280/61, P.R.O.

(2) Surveyor-General-Colonial Secretary, 30th May, 1836. CSO 1/770/16466, T.S.A.

(3) Hobart Town Courier, 4th March, 1836.



Arye, Picton and Cracroft Rivers (the last named by Frankland "after Judge Cracroft of the Bengal Civil Service"), and bearing  
(1)  
towards the Arthur Range.

The information of the completion of the road was published so that "those who are fond of exploring or may be in search of Land to purchase or rent may be aware that the way has been smoothed before them, should they wish to attempt settlements in the 'New Country'....." He suggested a round trip up the Gordon to Lake St. Clair and then to Marlborough. The only difficulty contemplated was the crossing of the Picton River, for which Frankland had "caused two canoes to be constructed, one being left on each bank...."

In 1849, when Governor Denison became interested in the south-west quarter and called for information on this old road, Calder wrote of it in very disparaging terms. The road had been cut up the right bank, which was more free from scrub, where it necessarily had to cross at least two first class rivers. To Calder's mind this was "to say the least of it perfect madness - but they were afraid to face the forests of the left bank." Furthermore the road had been so badly cleared that when Calder travelled it, only a few months after it was completed, he could barely trace it, and the men had merely chopped down the scrub to within a foot or two of the ground so that it was "positively like walking along an almost endless line of upright bayonets."

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- (1) Surveyor-General-Colonial Secretary, 30th May, 1836. CSO 1/770/16466, T.S.A.
- (2) Hobart Town Courier, 15th July, 1836.

Mr. Price, the Commandant of Norfolk Island, who had travelled it soon after it was cut in search of a location, described it to Calder as "a most abominable line ever laid out." The clearing party had asserted they had left canoes at the Picton for the use of travellers but Price and Calder had found that though a large tree had been hollowed out, "they had neglected to saw it off the parent trunk which was about 100 ft. long."<sup>(1)</sup>

Such was Frankland's road to the Port Davey Plains and few apparently ever attempted to use it. The reason may have been the waning interest in land and therefore in exploration, consequent upon the emigration of Batman and Faulkner to Port Philip and the accounts received of the sheep pasturage in that vicinity. Port Philip became the Eldorado to which the new settlers and many of the old looked for their wealth from sheep breeding. When land could be obtained there it was not likely that many should want to venture into the wilds of Van Diemen's Land where it was much inferior for their purpose.

#### iv. Calder's Journey to the Arthur Range, 1837.

Although Frankland had expressed his intention of resuming the exploration in the following summer, especially of examining the country between Port Davey and the Huon Plains it was not until the summer of 1837 that he attempted it. Compared with his expedition of 1835, which had been given much publicity and had later been the

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(1) Calder-Surveyor-General, 10th July, 1849. A 591, M.L.

subject of adverse criticism, Frankland apparently decided to keep quiet about this one. As a result no mention of it appears in the Press or in the official correspondence. The journey was entrusted to Calder who was instructed to verify information given by a Mr. Barker. He had reported a large lake "between the first and second tiers", in which the Russell Falls River had its source. On crossing the second tier he had looked down the plains "studded with trees" and intersected by a river." Frankland thought this would be the Gordon and Calder's orders were to follow up the river and find this lake, lay it down on the map and then to "push on beyond in search of the Gordon and Lake Pedder country - and see where the Florentine River comes from." His subsequent movements were left to his discretion. (1)

The journey was to commence at Captain Michael Fenton's property - "Fenton Forest" - and his party included his old bush companion, Alexander McKay. From here Calder wrote to Frankland of his intention to penetrate to the Gordon River, explore it to its source and return via Lake St. Clair to "Fenton Forest" from where, if Frankland had no objections, he would set out for the open country around the Huon. (2)

There is no direct evidence as to whether Calder carried out his intention. However Lake Richmond, the source of the Gordon,

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(1) Surveyor-General-Calder, 22nd Feb. 1837. Calder Papers, Vol.1, p.236, P.L.V.

(2) Calder-Surveyor-General, 1st March, 1837. LSD 1/4/489, T.S.A.

is marked, though not named on Frankland's 1839 map of Van Diemen's Land and it would, therefore, be reasonable to suppose that Calder discovered it at this time. Numerous lakes in the Mount Field area are also shown; one of them is named Lake Barker - now Lake Fenton.

Of the latter part of his journey we know only that he reached the Arthur Range from Lake Pedder, having crossed the earliest waters of the Huon River "flowing across an immense plain at least 15 miles wide and of very great but unascertained length."<sup>(1)</sup> From the features marked in Frankland's 1839 map it would appear that Calder travelled along the Arthur Plains to the Cracroft River and then followed the infamous track which had supposedly been cut this far in the previous year, on the right bank of the Huon.

#### v. Frankland's Contribution.

Despite the criticism of his 1835 expedition as a waste of time, of his failure to do any field work, and the doubt thrown on his capabilities as Surveyor-General, Frankland's tenure of this office saw very great extensions to the geographical knowledge of the Colony, nearly all of which was due directly to the efforts of the Survey Department. He was fortunate in that he had as his assistants men of the best calibre - resourceful, intelligent, and excellent bushmen. These men, like Calder, Sprent and Wedge, undoubtedly did the spade work, but it was the task of the Surveyor-

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(1) Calder-Surveyor-General, 15th Jan. 1849. A 596. M.L.

General to co-ordinate all this, as well as to attend to all the official business connected with the Crown land in the Colony. The increase in the administrative work of the department commensurate with its growth, meant that Frankland, unlike his predecessors before the great expansion of the Colony, had little time to engage in field work. Apart from his 1835 expedition and those of 1828 and 1829 in the Huon area, his activities in the field were confined to tours of inspection consequent upon the initial exploration.

However, it was certainly Frankland who provided the driving force for all the exploration of the period. As something of a scientist, it was his desire for knowledge that prompted him to attempt to have the unknown areas of the island penetrated, and his map of Van Diemen's Land published a year after his premature death in 1838, and only fifteen years after Scott's and eight after Arrowsmith's, is a testimony to the value and thoroughness of the exploratory work that was carried out. The only really extensive blank was what is now the mining area on the West Coast.

Frankland had realized that the best results in exploration could be achieved by large, well-organised expeditions with co-ordinated parties, and it was on this principle that he planned his expedition of 1835. Nor was he disappointed in its results; he solved the riddle of the three great southern river systems - the Derwent, the Gordon and the Huon - at one stroke. He had reason, therefore, to be proud of his achievement despite the press comments.

Lake St. Clair was henceforth to become a depot for exploration further west, first of all in the direction of Macquarie Harbour and later in that vast and rugged tract towards the West Coast.

The value of Frankland's contribution however was not fully realized, largely because his discoveries led to no immediate and significant development of the Colony. At this time all eyes were turned towards Port Phillip; many years later, when some interest was evinced in these areas, much of it had to be re-explored, and it was to these later explorers that the credit has been given by posterity.

## CHAPTER 4.

## THE ROUTE TO THE WEST.

i. The Change in Motives.

When Sir John Franklin took over the governorship, the years of expansion were almost finished in Van Diemen's Land. In 1836 Arthur had reported the Colony to be in a state of unprecedented prosperity.

There is no parallel of such rapid progress in any former instance of civilization. Never in so short a space of time, did the first possessors of any territory pass from a state of comparative poverty, into one, not only of abundance, but of absolute wealth.

This prosperity had been largely brought about by the high price of wool which in turn had affected the prices of all other produce.

But >

.....leaving out of view the Country to the West, the available pasture land has all, or almost all, been appropriated. A Capitalist immigrating with the intention of establishing himself upon some 100 acres of Waste land, finds to his surprise that there is no waste land, to be found..... Instead of there being an extension to the limits of the Colony, the growth is entirely interstitial.

This position had created numbers of tenant proprietors, renting the properties of earlier settlers, often at high prices "not much less in many situations than the cost price for the same farms would have been six years ago."

A combination of all these factors had resulted in an increase in the price of land and although the settlement was limited Arthur had "no doubt that as land still further advances in value, tracts now considered useless will be brought within the

the sphere of the application of capital."<sup>(1)</sup> This however was not to prove the case for some time.

Thus after 1836 there was no real exploration undertaken with the sole objective of seeking to extend the limits of settlement. Frankland's efforts were motivated mainly by the desire to present an accurate and as full a map of Van Diemen's Land as possible, in the cause of knowledge. The settlement of Port Phillip provided Vandemonian sons with the flocks and capital which were lacking in Van Diemen's Land. It was the changeover from a system whereby convicts were assigned to work for private settlers, to one where they were to be maintained in probationary gangs by the Government for at least part of their sentence, that provided the next impetus to exploration.

The labour problem in Van Diemen's Land in the late thirties, despite the use of convict labour, was one which engaged the attention of Sir John Franklin. He supported the promotion of free immigration to the Colony because he wished to see a greater proportion of free than bond. But the land fund which was devoted to this purpose was very small; nor was there "any large extent of territory that could at an early period be exposed to sale with the intention of replenishing it." Furthermore Franklin felt sure that the exodus to Port Phillip would result in a lowering of land prices in Van Diemen's Land as well as the loss of most of the labour that

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(1) Arthur-Glenelg, 4th May, 1836, No. 46. GO 10/22, T.S.A.



was brought out in this way. He felt however that with a large force of convicts put at the command of the Government, as was likely to be the case, and employed

in cutting lines to the coasts at right angles, or diagonally, to the great North and South road...some very considerable extents of good land at present unapproachable may be laid open and rendered available for the purpose of the settler. The sale of such lands so connected with the settled country might certainly create a fund with which a considerable impulse could be given to Immigration.... The reclaiming of the extensive country to the East and South hitherto scarcely even explored would certainly be an important service, and there could not be a more satisfactory mode of ensuring it than the opening of various lines of communication.<sup>(1)</sup>

When the first probationary gangs were formed in 1839, it was suggested that they be employed "in opening communications to, and in clearing and draining, lands for Sale."<sup>(2)</sup> This was now the more important for the news that assignment of convicts to settlers was to be stopped meant that an increased supply of free labourers would be required. Franklin himself looked on these probationary gangs as "the pioneers of the Colony" who would greatly help to facilitate its future extension.<sup>(3)</sup>

The instruction that the convicts were to be worked in gangs in the unsettled districts again aroused interest in the western areas of the island, where it was thought they might profitably and

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(1) Franklin-Glenelg, 9th Dec. 1837, Separate. GO 9/7, T.S.A.

(2) Id., 15th Feb. 1839, No. 31. GO 10/31, T.S.A.

(3) Supra.

safely be employed. This was one of the main reasons for Sir John Franklin's decision to open an overland route to Macquarie Harbour in 1840. J. E. Calder, who was then occupied in a survey of the country to the west of the Great Lake, was selected to make the preliminary exploration and to cut a track, so that Franklin himself might visit Macquarie Harbour and inspect the abandoned penal settlement there :

.....with the view of ascertaining whether the capabilities of the place were such as to make it desirable to re-establish a penal station there for the reception of the doubly convicted felons who were now for the first time to be sent to my charge from New South Wales and Norfolk Island..... It was part of my plan therefore to examine into the nature of the country between it and the settled districts, in order that I might judge of the fitness of employing a large body of convicts to establish a land-communication between them, and of opening the country to the occupation of enterprising settlers. (1)

The introduction of this system of convict discipline found the Colony ill equipped to deal with a situation in which more and more convicts arrived in Van Diemen's Land, and had at first to be supported by the Government. Although it was instructed that they be worked in the unsettled districts, no accommodation could be provided for them there, and the necessity for moving stores meant that communications would have to be opened with these areas before any establishment could be formed. (2)

Reporting this to Lord John Russell early in 1841, Franklin signified his intention of attempting to re-open the station at

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(1) Sir John Franklin, Narrative of Some Passages in the History of Van Diemen's Land. Private circulation, 1845.

(2) Franklin-Russell, 12th Jan. 1841, No. 7. GO 10/37, T.S.A.

Macquarie Harbour where many of the old buildings were still standing, and to effect a land communication he proposed to station large gangs there and at Marlborough to work towards each other. <sup>(1)</sup>

The work of Calder was a preliminary to this, not merely a whim of the Lieutenant-Governor, though no doubt the prospects of travelling in unknown regions had its own appeal to him.

#### ii. Calder's Opening of a Track to the West Coast, 1840-2

Calder received his instructions in November, 1840; he had written them himself "...as there was no one in the Colonial Secretary's Office who understood these things." <sup>(2)</sup> His intention was to set up a supply depot beyond the Derwent at the King William Plains and there commence his exploration. The object was

a general exploration of the country lying between "Lake St. Clair" and "Macquarie Harbour", and...to ascertain the best line over which a road may be practical. [He was to] take particular notice of the surface of the Country - the character of the soil, its adaptation to agricultural or grazing purposes, the nature of the Forests and the vegetation generally, - he will, as far as he can, trace the courses of the rivers, and the position of Lakes (if any) must be noted, - and all information which can extend Geographical Knowledge must be supplied.

In selecting a suitable line of road he should aim at the best that could be obtained with the least expense, and was generally to be guided by "the exercise of a sound discretion." Temporary huts were to be erected at intervals along the route for the accommodation of the Lieutenant-Governor and his suite on their journey. <sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) Franklin-Russell, 12th Jan. 1841, No. 7, GO 10/37, T.S.A.

(2) Note by Calder. Calder Papers, Vol. 1, p.59, P.L.V.

(3) "General Instructions for the Guidance of Mr. Calder proceeding overland to Macquarie Harbour." CSO 5/267/6941, T.S.A.

Calder first had to make a passable track from Marlborough to Lake St. Clair and while he was occupied on this he sent Alexander McKay ahead with two men to explore the route as far as Frenchman's Cap.<sup>(1)</sup> The latter was occupied on this journey from 9th to 13th December, and reported to Calder that he apprehended no difficulty in finding a road at least as far as the Cap, he having passed over an immense extent of open country with a favourable soil "though the herbage is not generally grass."<sup>(2)</sup> As Calder had still to finish the earlier track, McKay was sent to mark a crow's flight track to the Gordon, which would later give Calder a general idea of the country and serve as a base line for explorations. By Christmas McKay had marked the track, very nearly following Sharland's original route, as far as the Frenchman's Cap, and was examining the Deception Range for a possible track over it.<sup>(3)</sup>

Calder made his first journey this far between 22nd and 26th December (see Map 17). The marshes between the Derwent and Mount Arrowsmith were even then rather wet and though Calder thought their soil fairly good, they produced no grass, "the herbage being always a coarse, tough, wiry rush largely intermixed with a plant something similar to the head of a grass tree....."

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(1) Calder-Colonial Secretary, 13th Dec. 1840. CSO 8/30/489, T.S.A.

(2) Supra.

(3) Calder-Colonial Secretary, 19th Dec. 1840. 28th Dec. 1840, loc.cit.

Calder remarked the singularly steep declivity presented by the western face of Mount Arrowsmith, its ascent on his return "so long, steep and difficult" that he named it Fatigue Hill. The name of Arrowsmith however was given two years later by the Polish geologist, Count Paul de Strzelecki when he travelled the route.

The view from the summit gave Calder a good indication of the character of the West "...having command of a view of 1000 square miles but a wilder scene can scarcely be imagined .....The Hills (which have a most forbidding appearance) occupy more than three quarters of the whole at a moderate calculation." Even the open country in the valleys was of a dull brown unlike the whitish green appearance which grassy country always presents when viewed from a distance. However Calder was still hopeful of finding some large and open valleys between the mountains.

A small plain at the foot of Fatigue Hill had been named Badger Bottom, a typically descriptive though uneuphemistic name, such as many given by the early bushmen; it was changed by Sir John Franklin to Wombat Glen. The track then led twice across the Franklin River (still thought to be the King) where it made a bend. As this was "a most suspicious looking river evidently carrying during rains a large body of water" Calder thought it wise to move the track about a mile to the southward to avoid it altogether. This would also mean that the track would have to pass to the south of Frenchman's Cap, for any route to the north would necessitate the construction of bridges.

About five or six miles through forest brought the track to "quite an English River" which was, therefore, named the Loddon. It was the same as had been previously called by Sharland the Adelaide. With its branches it had to be crossed four times but being only a gentle stream of medium width it did not present any obstacle on crossing. There was "capital soil on the banks..... and its herbage was good broad leafed grass."

They then passed into an open valley leading up to the Frenchman's Cap, with some good soil and grass. This was the same that Sharland had named Queen's Valley, but which Calder restyled the Valley of the Frenchman. The track led from this over the inferior south-eastern ridges of the Cap into another valley - Lachlan Plains. Here McKay had his depot and on the night of 24th December, while they encamped under a large overhanging rock on the edge of this plain, a storm of lightning set fire to the grass. This circumstance gave it the name of Lightning Plain, and the rock where they were sheltering was called Christmas Rock.

This was as far as Calder went on this occasion; he estimated that it was about ten or twelve miles from the Gordon. The chief obstacles to the road as he saw it would be the three mountain ridges - Fatigue Hill, the lower ridge of Frenchman's Cap and the range which Calder later named Deception Range.<sup>(1)</sup>

On return to Hobart at the end of January he reported to Franklin on his observations. Speaking of the marshy plains he wrote:

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(1) Calder-Colonial Secretary, 28th Dec. 1840. CSO 8/30/489, T.S.A.

In travelling through parts of the Western and South Western portions of the Island, if the traveller is struck with the discovery of vast plains (open land) and most extensive levels (to the amount of even millions of acres) such as occur about Lake Pedder, Valley of Rasselas, Arthur Range &c, his surprise is increased at finding on so prodigious a surface scarce a blade of grass. From the Clarence River to Macquarie Harbour, from the sources of the Gordon and the Huon Rivers to the Coast this will be found to be the case.

The soil of those Marshes which we encounter shortly after leaving Lake St. Clair I should be disposed to think well of. In colour it is black and of rather an adhesive character but their peculiar situation seems naturally to condemn them - their great height - the probable rigour of the Winters here - their inaccessibleness - and above all, the absence of grass seems to afford so hopeless a prospect to the enterprising agriculturalist or grazier, that the natural inference is, that this place will long remain uncolonized.<sup>(1)</sup>

While working on the route during January Calder had named a "lofty and most picturesque mountain" forming the northern facade of the "King's River" valley, Cheyne's Mountain.<sup>(2)</sup> Captain Alexander Cheyne was at this time combining the duties of Director of Public Works and Director-General of Roads and Bridges but was dismissed for incompetence in September, 1841. This disgrace may be the reason for the name not being perpetuated, for though David Burn mentions it in his narrative,<sup>(3)</sup> Calder does not refer to it again. It is now called Mount Gell, named not in honour of Sir John Franklin's future son-in-law, the Rev. J. P. Gell, but for P. H. Gell, a surveyor who was employed in the trigonometrical survey during the 1850s.

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(1) Calder-Colonial Secretary, 25th Jan. 1841. CSO 8/30/489, T.S.A.

(2) Supra.

(3) David Burn, Narrative of the Overland Journey of Sir John and Lady Franklin and party from Hobart Town to Macquarie Harbour, 1842. Edited by George Mackaness, Sydney, 1955.

By altering the route to the southward to avoid the double crossing of "King's River", Calder had come upon another smaller river, a tributary of the former, which he named the Surprise. Beyond it was a narrow plain, poor and wet, but in it were found two native huts, only recently abandoned.

On the bark with which they are covered are some extraordinary charcoal drawings one representing two men spearing an animal, which from its erect posture I presume was meant for a Kangaroo though the artist by a strange oversight has forgotten the animal's tail and made the fore legs about twice as long as the hinder ones - but of course one ought not to criticize. There is also a drawing of a dog - and some other thing I could not make out. I left these rude specimens of the Arts undisturbed for the present intending however to remove them on my leaving this part, for uncouth as they are, they are not discreditable to the genius of so uncultivated a race. (1)

However on a later journey he found that they had been obliterated by the weather. (2)

Calder had completed the track as far as the ridge of Frenchman's Cap when he was recalled by order of the Lieutenant-Governor at the end of February, 1841. (3) However he left a party in charge of a convict overseer, William Reeves, to complete the track to a navigable part of the Gordon River. (4)

(1) Calder-Colonial Secretary, 25th Jan. 1841. CSO 8/30/489, T.S.A.

(2) J. E. Calder, "Some Account of the Country lying between Lake St. Clair and Macquarie Harbour." Tasmanian Journal of Natural Science, Jan. 1849.

(3) Lieutenant-Governor's minute on Calder-Colonial Secretary, 17th Feb. 1841. CSO 5/264/6900, T.S.A.

(4) "Instructions for guidance of Wm. Reeves on receiving my recall from the Western Country." 8th March, 1841. A 601, M.L.



The great difficulties of the route had caused Calder to realize the impracticability of making any sort of permanent road there. In fact he was quite outspoken about the route. When he returned to Hobart he reported to the Colonial Secretary that although Macquarie Harbour would appear on paper to be the natural outlet of the western districts it was far from being so, for "neither from Lake St. Clair or even from any part of the centre of Van Diemen's Land is it to be approached with a practicable road...." The three ridges which he had feared were in themselves sufficient impediment to condemn a road, each necessitating a steep ascent and descent. (1)

Calder, therefore, suggested an alternative route to Port Davey from Marlborough, which he knew from personal observation and from the information given by Alexander McKay could be traced through perfectly open country. Although he had not been impressed at the time with the prospects the area offered, he now expressed his opinion that such an extensive open country was worth consideration, for it could surely be found susceptible of improvement in some way. Drainage especially might bring it into a state of productiveness. The project would also provide employment for the numbers of convicts whose labour was now at the disposal of the Government, and the construction of roads would encourage its occupation by private enterprise. (2)

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(1) Calder-Colonial Secretary, 16th March, 1841. CSO 5/217/5521.  
T.S.A.

(2) Supra.

Later Calder suggested to Power, the Surveyor-General, that a track might be opened up from the Huon Plains to the Gordon and thence to Macquarie Harbour if desired, thus passing through some of these open plains. He condemned entirely the present route he was following, for the quantity of open country was inconsiderable and even this was exactly similar to that around Lake Pedder where there was many hundreds of thousands of acres of it. In cutting a road between the Huon and Gordon Rivers the great problem of provisioning the parties could be overcome by using boats for transport, one of which should be placed on attendance on each party. However it was still his opinion that the route from Marlborough to Port Davey was the most desirable, both from the point of view of practicability and the results it would bring.<sup>(1)</sup>

Sir John Franklin, however, was determined to continue the track to Macquarie Harbour on the present route. On the receipt of Calder's first report, which was not altogether favourable, he had signified to the Surveyor-General that he wished the continuance of the work to be sanctioned.<sup>(2)</sup> He planned to make the trip to Macquarie Harbour himself in the following summer. The country which was interesting Calder so much was given little attention until 1849 when, in a race for grazing runs, one and a half million acres were leased in the central and Gordon River areas.

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(1) Calder-Surveyor-General, 16th Aug. 1841. CSO 8/30/489, T.S.A.

(2) Lieutenant-Governor's minute on Calder-Colonial Secretary,

25th Jan. 1841. Loc.cit.

The party of convicts who had been left to complete the track had returned to Hobart in April, 1841, and, representing that they had cleared to within three and a half miles of the Gordon River, all but one were granted the promised indulgence of a ticket-of-leave. <sup>(1)</sup>

In August Calder suggested that the one who had been denied because he had slept out of barracks on the night of his return to town, Robert Mumford, an intelligent and "fine hard working fellow and well deserving", should be sent to open the remainder of the track, for "unless some steps such as I have recommended be not taken His Excellency's Journey will be exceedingly unpleasant." <sup>(2)</sup> However Calder himself was given this task at the end of the year. Sir John and Lady Franklin planned to make their journey in January, 1842 and it was hoped, though very doubtful, that the track would be completed by then. <sup>(3)</sup>

Difficulties now began to close in on the work. Provisions had to be carried forward from the depot at Lake St. Clair, and the dense forest undergrowth made it impossible for the men to cut more than a third of a mile a day. Calder had hoped to continue the track so that it should terminate in Macquarie Harbour, but the ridge of Deception Range and the ravine of the Franklin River on its western side were impassable. He was, therefore, obliged to turn southwards where the track was cut through a thick jungle, named by the men Glow-worm Forest from the lights given by luminous plants. The track was steep and dangerous, a factor increased by the frequent rains.

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(1) Calder-Lieutenant-Governor, 20th April, 1841. CSO 8/30/489, T.S.A

(2) Calder-[Surveyor-General?] 24th Aug. 1841. Loc.cit.

(3) Calder-Surveyor-General, 13th Nov. 1841. A 601, M.L.

A stream in the valley Calder named the Acheron and this had to be crossed several times until finally the hills on either side closed in, carrying the river to a waterfall which occupied the entire bottom and prevented further advance down the valley. However Calder acknowledges the beauty of the spot and says that "the most apathetic traveller would scarce begrudge a halt here and a gaze at the stern but beautiful scenery." To lead the track around this obstacle Calder constructed a flight of stairs from the trunks of fern trees. However some little distance further on he was obliged to lead the track entirely out of the valley, though the steepness of the ascent made it necessary to erect hand rails for support. The track then crossed a poor sandy plain, named White Hill Plain because of the white hills which surrounded it. The view was one of unrelieved forest, presenting an "inconceivably forbidding and gloomy" picture, and through a further six miles of this, the beautiful wide and deep river which Calder named in honour of the Lieutenant-Governor must have been a welcome sight, with its high banks covered with myrtle and pine trees. Although they added to the beauty of the river the incidence of pine trees also served a more practical purpose. A pine raft was constructed to provide a safe and easy crossing for the men while they were working in the area, for the river was not normally fordable on foot. None of the other timber of these forests was buoyant.

The road led by a steep ascent out of the Franklin valley to a worthless plain of inconsiderable extent. It had been

cleared this far by February, 1842 and luckily the Franklins' had been delayed by official business in the capital. Calder then returned to Hobart for provisions and travelled to Macquarie Harbour by sea in the schooner Breeze. He chose a navigable reach of the Gordon River for the termination of the track, just below the junction of Eagle Creek, and set off overland to rejoin his party, who were then about nine miles distant. All but three quarters of a mile of this had been cleared by the time Sir John Franklin left Hobart at the end of March, 1842 and Calder was obliged to return to Lake St. Clair to act as guide and make all the necessary arrangements for the party. The huts which it had been originally intended to erect at suitable stopping places along the route had to be forgotten, though some supply depots were set up. <sup>(1)</sup>

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- (1) J. E. Calder, "Some account of the Country lying between Lake St. Clair and Macquarie Harbour." Tasmanian Journal of Natural Science, Jan. 1849. Also Calder, "Topographical Sketches of Tasmania", Mercury, 21st, 25th, 27th Jan. 9th Feb., 6th March, 1860.



Map 17. Illustrating Calder's track to the West Coast, 1840-2

## CONCLUSION

The driving force behind Tasmanian exploration in the first half of the nineteenth century, before the discovery of metals and the emergence of mining as an important industry in the island, was the need to find new land for the settlement of immigrants. The ceaseless penetration, further and further from the original nuclei of Hobart Town and Launceston, resembled the American frontier on a tiny scale. The impetus for this outward movement during the years with which this thesis is concerned was almost entirely that given by the discovery of the island's suitability for the production of fine wool, and its success on the British market; in turn this led to an influx of free immigrants and a rush for sheep lands.

The immigrants, with their demand for fresh pastures, provided the most constant motive for exploration in the years of the island's increasing prosperity; but the greatest single contribution to the opening up of Van Diemen's Land in these years and possibly in the whole of its history, was that of the Van Diemen's Land Company. Formed with purely mercantile interests, the Company needed to find the best areas in the district set aside for its selection, and this meant thorough examination and, in some parts, a detailed survey, of the North-West quarter. This survey based on private enterprise, is unique in the history of Australian exploration; its achievements were an outstanding example of the spectacular results possible with the application of relatively large-scale capital to exploration, with the sole object of commercial reward.

A secondary motive, following closely on the heels of the need for land, was the need for communications. The discovery of isolated areas of land suitable for agriculture or pasturage would be of no advantage unless they could be made accessible to the markets in or through the centres of population. Sea transport was rarely economical, particularly on the stormy western coasts, and land communication was the only solution. Even the Van Diemen's Land Company, with its large resources and despite the possession of several supply vessels had, as one of its considerations from the time its servants began their surveys, the discovery of a practical overland route to the settled districts. In this case however, the route proved elusive and it was not until nearly twenty years after the establishment of the Company that a reasonable line of road was completed to its base from Launceston.

In a curious way the converse of this motive operated in the case of Macquarie Harbour; part of Arthur's penal policy was that exploration between this station and the settled districts should not become known to the convicts. The natural difficulties of the country and the experiences of those who failed in their bid for freedom did act as a deterrent. Macquarie Harbour remained in its isolation until the end of the nineteenth century.

By the late 1830s and early 1840s official policy began to play a larger part in exploration, mainly because the settlers were no longer able to travel to the furthest limits of location and there find the good land they wanted; when the declining prosperity began to lead to dissatisfaction, settlers began to



demand from the Government that it should seek out the likely areas for the extension of settlement. While the assignment system remained it was necessary that good new land should be made available so that the solid type of settler who would serve the ends of that system by taking convicts off the Government's hands, and at the same time be the type of master thought desirable for discipline, would be induced to come to the Colony.

The abandonment of the assignment system and the rush for the broad acres of Port Phillip, where the desideratum of every colonist, pastoral country, was freely available, outdated these motives for exploration. But the introduction of the probation system, with the stipulation that the gangs of convicts be worked in areas isolated from the more settled districts, meant that exploration continued to be a matter of official policy.

The search for minerals was of no real importance in early exploration, although Frankland did express some interest in finding a supposed lead mine in the interior early in the 1830s. In the agricultural and pastoral infancy of a colony conceived primarily as a station for penal servitude and only secondarily as a free settlement, little interest was taken in the discovery of this other form of the earth's wealth. It was in the following half-century that mining was to be the great motive behind exploration, following the train set off by the Victorian gold rushes. This movement included not only the search for gold and other minerals in all districts, particularly in the West, but the further

examination and agricultural development of the North-West and North-East, when many of the displaced miners from the gold fields came to Tasmania to take up land under the favourable Waste Lands Acts.

However, all exploration cannot be attributed to an obvious motive. Some was purely accidental - the journey of an escaped convict or the wanderings of stockmen and bushmen; or incidental, as in the case of the aboriginal hunters. The real explorer was led on by knowledge for its own sake; though he may have been the tool of another purpose, he himself maintained a disinterested attitude. Such an attitude is perhaps best exemplified by Hellyer, whose opinions sometimes were too disinterested to be of advantage to his employers; by Frankland, who was in the happy position of being able to some extent to turn the official policy of the Survey Department to fit in with his own desire for knowledge; and by Sir John Franklin, who was however fettered by the implications of his position as Lieutenant-Governor, which meant that everything that he undertook was expected to have an official motive.

Exploration was not essentially a result of government interest. Sorell had been enterprising and had given much encouragement in the early years of the Colony's expansion; but Arthur, whose governorship was marked by the greatest achievements in this field, was less interested, and gave no impetus to the great advances. It was prosperity, the great expansion and the hope and confidence in the future that gave men this restlessness to seek new horizons, typical of a pioneer settlement once it has established itself. The Van Diemen's Land Company, the private enterprise which

contributed to so much of this advance under Arthur, sprang from this spirit of the day, and many of the men concerned, such as Thomas Scott and Sharland, though employed by the Survey Department, were also landowners sharing this spirit.

These eighteen years of exploration transformed the map of Van Diemen's Land. By 1839, the date of the publication of Frankland's map, most of the blank expanses of ignorance which had characterised Scott's map of 1824, twenty years after settlement, had been filled in; and often in comprehensive detail, as in the north-west and upper Derwent areas. The nature of the South-West was roughly indicated, and the more notable landmarks set down in the way they were to remain for another fifty years. The main area remaining untouched was what is now the West Coast mining region, and even some of this was partly explored by Calder in the following two years.

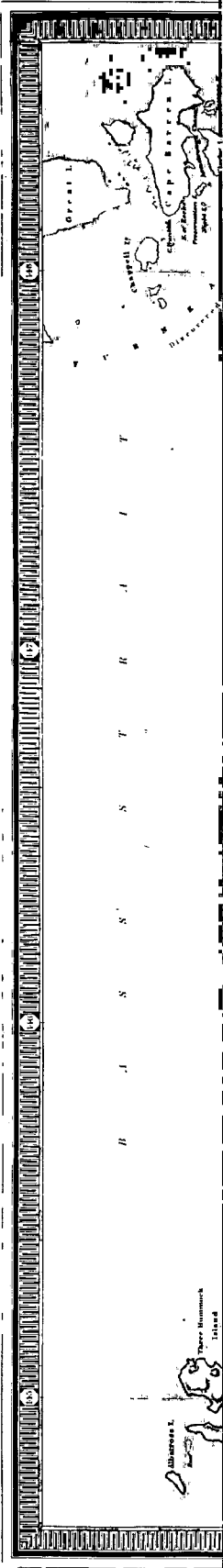
By comparison with Scott's, Frankland's map also showed a great increase in the dispersion of settlement; in 1824 occupation was confined to the areas along the principal lines of communication, but by 1840, not only had these areas become closely settled, but the lines had lengthened and fanned out, limited now only by the availability of good agricultural and grazing land.

In assessing the contributions made by the different men one realizes how important was the spirit of exploration, and the difference it made to the achievements of those who possessed it. Hellyer, undaunted by the difficulties of travelling through dense forest, the dangers of crossing swiftly flowing rivers, the

vagaries of the weather or the knowledge that his provisions were short, achieved far more than a man like Lorymer, who lacked the driving force of a sense of discovery and was guided more by his instincts of self-preservation and fear of the unknown before him. Frankland too possessed some of the qualities of the true explorer, but he was not a bushman; however in his case the lack mattered less because he was in the fortunate position of being able to send others to do his spadework. One of those who did it was Calder, a man who understood the ideals of exploration and to whom Frankland and later Franklin could give a good deal of independence.

Imagination and the ability to give a qualitative account of the country were necessary parts of the make-up of an explorer, and where these were lacking much of the potential value of a journey was lost. For example, Fossey, though undoubtedly an excellent bushman, was so prosaic and inarticulate that posterity cannot call him anything but a faithful servant of the Van Diemen's Land Company; he carried out his orders punctiliously, but reported nothing of his explorations beyond the bare minimum. On the other hand a surfeit of imagination, unaccompanied by good judgement, was also likely to render exploration valueless, as in the case of Jorgenson. Those who knew that some parts of his account were false, were not prepared to accept any, and dismissed the whole.

But for all these men there were rich rewards in Tasmania, especially in the wilder and more inaccessible areas. On mainland Australia returns were often greater in degree, but less exciting; in Tasmania they were of a more private nature - the joy its natural beauties must have given them.



Map 18. Map of Van Diemen's Land by A. K. Johnston, based on Frankland's map of 1839, and illustrating the progress of exploration and settlement, c. 1840.

### English Miles at a Degree

Geographical Names to a Degree

NOTE

San Clemente Island was discovered by Spanish in 1572, & in better circumstances called "Isla de San Clemente" to reward the general name of the famous of England's King, then, christened of the Prince & Prince, & was named by Jack & Nathaniel 1737 & was named to be an Island by the discovery of "Pinto Strait" 1790. In 1804 it was formally deliver possession of the name of "British" and the State of "BRITAIN" THEN moved on to the Capital, Georgetown, New England began in 1871, where the "U.S. Land Force" was established in 1875 it was discovered independent of N.S. Wales & the chief authority stated in a letter (transverse & General

Longitude East from Greenwich

## APPENDIX A

## B I B L I O G R A P H Y

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## APPENDIX B

## JORGENSEN'S REPORT OF HIS JOURNEY DOWN THE WEST COAST

Jorgenson's route and landmarks are extremely doubtful. I have given his route as the one which appears to me to be the most likely. There are however a number of anomalies.

(a) The position of Mount Jubilee

Jorgenson first mentions Mount Jubilee as a triangular shaped mountain seen to the South-east from Native Well Bay, and said by some members of the boat crew to be Frenchman's Cap. Even Jorgenson however realized that this was impossible. From Mount Sunday, Jorgenson says that a traveller between that and Mount Jubilee must fall on Mount Dundas; yet Dundas was estimated to be twenty-five miles distant east south-east and Jubilee but seven miles south-east by south! The only explanation seems to be that he meant that a traveller to Mount Dundas would fall on Mount Jubilee on its northern side.

On 19th March, after leaving Mount Sunday the party arrived at the foot of Mount Jubilee at 1 p.m., leaving it two miles to the southward. If Jubilee were Mount Donaldson it would appear that to pass it two miles to the northward they must already have crossed the Donaldson River. But no mention is made of any river at this stage, and surely Jorgenson would not omit to mention the crossing of a river the size of the Donaldson. The only other alternative for Mount Jubilee, other than Donaldson, would appear to be a mountain on the western side of the Donaldson River, but no such mountain is to be found on any of

the maps.

Yet neither of these positions can fit in with Jorgenson's statement that Mount Jubilee bore south-east from Mount Pieman, the mountain he ascended after crossing the "Pieman River", that is the Donaldson. The only possible alternative seems to be that "south-east" was written in mistake for "south-west".

(b) Mount Pieman

This was probably a much lesser eminence than either Donaldson, Dundas or Sunday. Jorgenson often refers to it as Pieman's Hill, so it was probably not more than a thousand feet. The party actually ascended this mountain three times - twice on the 20th and again on the 21st to make further observations. This is evidence of its not being very lofty.

Observations from Pieman's Hill were: Mount Dundas, south-east; Mount Heemskirk, south south-east; Mount Sunday, west by north; Mount Jubilee, south by east. Apart from Mount Jubilee these bearings would fit those taken from a southern outcrop of the Longback Range to Mount Livingstone (for Dundas), and Mount Sunday. The bearing of Mount Heemskirk however would be south  $12^{\circ}$  east.

If Mount Pieman were Mount Donaldson, the bearing for Mount Dundas would fit that so called today. Mount Livingstone would have been east south-east. Mount Heemskirk would more perfectly fit Jorgenson's bearing of south  $18^{\circ}$  east, and Mount Sunday north  $25^{\circ}$  west.



However his identification seems untenable, for had the party ascended Mount Donaldson they must have seen from its summit the main branch of the Pieman River, which here takes a turn and flows from the South-east.

I have therefore concluded that Mount Donaldson was in fact his Mount Jubilee, that Mount Pieman was an outcrop of the Longback Range, and that Jorgenson had actually crossed the Donaldson River before they stood to the northward of Mount Jubilee.

## APPENDIX C

## THE JORGENSEN LEGEND

As one of the most colourful figures in Van Diemen's Land history, Jorgen Jorgenson's life in this island has been the subject of much research, and his contribution to exploration has been one of the most disputed facets of his career. As an educated convict, Jorgenson himself has added not a little to this controversy for he was ever ready with his pen to defend himself and his actions and to complain of the way in which he had been treated.

With his usual verbosity Jorgenson kept journals of his expeditions and later wrote anonymously of them in the Hobart Town Almanack. But for many years Jorgenson's work in this field was either completely ignored or treated with great reserve. In later years these accounts have either been accepted uncritically by writers on history, or the whole dismissed as a complete fabrication by others who realized that his declared route and identification of landmarks was an impossible feat.

S. H. Roberts in 1923 set the pattern for much subsequent misconception when he claimed that Jorgenson had crossed the very roof of the island, discovered the Surrey Hills and reached St Valentine's peak five months before Hellyer made his journey in February-March 1827. To support this claim he published the original 1828 map of the Van Diemen's Land Company's explorations - a map not based on any particular knowledge of the country but merely on the surveyor's own reports (see Map 4). So it was only

that Jorgenson's route should be shown as extending as far as the Peak and returning in a wide sweep to within a few miles of Frenchman's Cap, as he himself had claimed he did. To fit this in the map had to be distorted almost out of all recognition. No one else had yet visited this country nor was there anybody to dispute his claims, though there were probably many doubts as to the likelihood of his travelling such a great distance in so short a time, especially compared with the journeys of the other surveyors and the unprecedented difficulties they had met. In fact two years later the manager of the Company, Edward Curr, wrote that he believed the report to be in part a fabrication and that he was never near the Surrey Hills.

More recently (1953) M. C. I. Levy exceeded even Jorgenson's own claims when he stated that Jorgenson penetrated from the Shannon to Circular Head.

The latest (1955) published account of Jorgenson's life, that written by Frank Clune and P. R. Stephensen, has also taken Jorgenson's word as truth. They even go so far as to say that he reached Mount Bischoff, and that this was the mountain which deflected his compass, although this happened on the same day as he had crossed the Ouse sixty miles away! Their whole account is so utterly unfounded on any facts, and containing as it does so many glaring errors that it can hardly be claimed to be history. Even a popular history must have some basis.

The only systematic and thorough research undertaken into the whole question of Jorgenson's explorations was that carried out by the late Mr. A. L. Meston, who, by field work and study of all the related facts over a period of twenty years, has fitted Jorgenson's account into the geography. All Jorgenson's references and bearings were found to conform with identifiable landmarks visible from the Central Plateau, and his conclusions are the only ones which can be supported by the evidence.

