

1899-1900
REPORT ON EXPLORING TRACK FROM THE RED HILLS TO
ELDON BLUFF.

Zeehan, 27th June, 1900.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to report as follows on surveying and cutting a track from Red Hills to Eldon Bluff:—According to instructions received from your office, I commenced the survey on 1st February, 1900.

THE ROUTE.

Commencing on the Lake Selina Silver Mining Company's 80-acre section, No. 1197-93M, the track was taken in a northerly direction along Anthony Creek for about a distance of 1 mile 44 chains through to the mineral section charted in the name of P. P. Quinn, No. 3297-93M (67 acres). At this point the actual survey commenced, leaving the mineral-sections on the south-west, of which only a rough bearing has been taken: the rest of the survey is made with theodolite, giving magnetic bearings. From Quinn's section to the Murchison River, a distance of four and a half ($4\frac{1}{2}$) miles, the track runs in a north-easterly direction. On either side of the river there are precipitous cliffs, ranging up to five hundred feet in height; and this is the only place where a crossing could be made, which was done by felling a tree and placing a hand-rail on it thirty feet above flood level, and about twenty chains from its junction with the Canning River. From the river the track runs in a southerly direction for about three and a half ($3\frac{1}{2}$) miles, when a high table-land is met. An easterly course was then taken, along a fairly level spur, until the Eldon Bluff was reached—a distance of about eight miles—a fairly good grade being obtained. The track ends at two small lakes, which are charted, but not named. As will be seen by chart deposited, a good route has been shown for a pack-track. The reason for deviating south from the Murchison River was the impracticability of crossing the Canning River. Owing to its being too wide to span with a tree, it would be necessary to erect a cage for foot-passengers. If decided, in future, to extend the track, a connection can be made with Innis' track, at Pelion West, or the track can be carried on to connect with the overland route from Lake St. Clair. Keeping on the table-land, a connection can be made with the Lake River district coming off the Western Tier, in the vicinity of Saundridge or Connorville estates.

THE GRADE.

From Lake Selina to the Murchison River a good grade is obtained; from there, for three miles and a half, to the table-land, is the steepest part of the track, the balance of the route chosen being good walking. Through the timbered country the track is well cut out, and trees marked fore and aft. All logs have either been cut out or notched in a convenient manner, to allow travellers to get over them. The button-grass and open country is well staked, making the track easy to follow. The last mile of the track is not very well cut out, as, owing to the wire-like nature of the scrub (a kind of mountain ti-tree), the tools would not stand.

A DEPÔT HUT.

It was found impossible to build a depôt hut at Lake Augusta, owing to the scarcity of splitting-timber, and it would not be advisable to erect a chock-and-log with calico roof, owing to the severe weather which is experienced at this high altitude,

MILE-POSTS.

At every mile on the track, mile-posts, painted white, are placed, with mileage stencilled thereon.

MINING FEATURES.

From Quinn's section to the Murchison the country is quartzite and slate, which practically continues to the Eldon Bluff. At about two and a half miles from the Murchison River there is a fairly large hill of micaceous schist. Towards the Eldon Bluff the country changes into sandstone and limestone, evidently a continuation of the Barn Bluff strike of country. About two miles north-east of the Eldon Bluff there is a hill which is simply one mass of fossils. There has been a little prospecting done on a branch of the Canning, running from Lake Augusta. The work done has exposed a foot of arsenical pyrites in a flat, and several of the creeks passed over showed promising indications of alluvial gold, but time would not permit of their being tested. The general features of the country passed through are decidedly in favour of minerals being discovered.

GENERAL.

One great drawback in cutting the track was the severe weather experienced. During the twenty weeks my party were engaged there were not seven consecutive days of fine weather for most of the time, while it rained, accompanied by snow and fogs, for weeks at a time. The fogs were so dense that it was impossible to see three chains ahead. In future, it would greatly facilitate operations in cutting tracks in similar country if a commencement were made in November, so as to finish before the rainy season. The party at first engaged consisted of Marcus Hardwicke, William Johnstone, and myself. - During the last seven weeks only one man was employed, Johnstone returning to Zeehan, and it would have occupied too much time if I had returned to Zeehan to replace him; moreover, Hardwicke would have been left by himself.

THE DISTANCE.

From Lake Selina to Eldon Bluff is a distance of twenty miles, with another two miles fifty-four chains (to connect with the Red Hills pack-track), which has been well staked and chained and is fit for horse traffic. All chaining has been done on horizontal measurement, and aneroid heights taken every mile. Aneroid set at Zeehan railway station.

SIGN-BOARDS.

Sign-boards have been erected, painted white, and stencilled, at principal places along the track.

I have the honour to remain,
Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

ROBT. EWART.

E. A. COUNSEL, *Esq.*, *F.R.G.S.*; *Surveyor-General, Hobart.*