

Survey Office, Hobart Town,
25th October, 1826.

Sir,

In obedience to the instructions received from you and from the Colonial Secretary, dated 22nd September, we proceeded to examine the coal at South Cape Bay and Adventure Bay; and now have the honor to/you. the observations we have made while out upon this duty. submit to

The nearest harbour where it will be possible for a vessel to approach the coals at South Cape and to anchor, is in a bay or harbour called Rocky Bay, (la Baie des Roches by the French) forming the south west part of Recherche Bay. At the south angle of this bay we landed our provisions and pitched our tent, proceeding to examine the country in the direction of where the coal is to be found, which is distant in a south-west direction from where we landed five miles.

This harbour affords excellent shelter for vessels, and has deep water to the upper end, almost close to the beach. Here there is an inlet of salt water, extending in the direction of south-west about a mile inland; boats only can enter it, and at high water, may be taken to the head. This inlet; by a little expense in driving stakes on each side of the channel, might be made navigable at all times for boats of a small burthen.

From the head of this inlet commences a swamp or marsh, which bears up south west for two miles further, bounded on each side by high, barren, rocky hills. The surface of this marsh is, for the first six inches, composed of peat; below which, for three feet, is clear sea sand with layers of shells. The marsh at this season being so wet, (it raining more or less every day we remained here) we were unable to dig deep enough to get through the sand. The marsh is formed by numerous drains from the hills on each side, which, spreading over it in all directions, form a considerable stream at the lower end. I was able to get the exact level of the marsh. The rise is gradual all the distance - one foot in every sixty-seven yards, or, twenty-six in a mile.

Beyond this marsh, in the same direction, commenced a ridge of sand hills, along which the road must pass for about a mile; from which distance it must be taken to the spot which will be determined as the best for sinking to work the coal; The coal cliff extending about two miles along the sea-beach opposite to where the road would branch off. At present the country being covered with such an impenetrable bush, it was found impossible to fix a proper place for sinking.

There will be no material obstacle in the way of the road being made from the head of Rocky Bay to the coals, except the swampy nature of the ground through which it must pass.

Provided it should be considered eligible for carrying on the works at the coal cliff, we deem it our duty to observe, that, since leaving Rocky Bay, from what we could perceive of the appearance of the country towards the head of a considerable stream which falls into the west side of Port D'Entrecasteaux, we are led to believe that a road much more eligible than the former might be found from the north side of the coal cliffs to where a vessel might be loaded with less trouble.

Accompanying this Report is a section of the face of the coal cliff as it at present appears on the sea-beach. The specimens brought up to town in the boats were taken from the lower vein, after digging in about seven feet. This seam, No.8 on Plan of Section, admeasures three feet four inches in thickness, and dips an inch and a half in a yard towards the northeast.

It is composed of alternate layers of coal and a hard black stone. The latter predominates in the whole of the three feet; the remainder being excellent grained coal. The great length of time which must have elapsed since the face of this coal has been laid open to the action of the atmosphere, has here, as in all other instances, rendered the coal dry and completely divested of the bitumen that constitutes the inflammable properties of coal. In order further to ascertain the quality of this seam, we perforated a heading or level, the height of the vein horizontally inwards, and found the coal greatly crushed from the great weight of the incumbent rocks pressing from above; the rock being in places excavated by the perpetual lash of the undermining surf below. As time and means at this juncture were rather circumscribed, we could excavate no further than seven feet; and, in the space of this short distance, we observed a considerable improvement, by the appearance of a few bright and gasceous blazes, which indicates that, at a proper distance from the fracture and long-exposed surface, the existence of a good and brilliant burning coal.

The Section shows the lay of the strata from the summit downwards. To the left appears the fall of the hill and a stream, where is seen the lower seam of coal rising to the surface; and should it be considered desirable to ascertain whether a better vein exists under No. 9, the margin of this stream offers a most eligible position for the sinking of a shaft for trial but, by avoiding the whole of the hill, as a shaft here would at once commence upon the stratum No. 8.

We have every reason to believe, from the appearance of No. 9, that below it a better vein of coal may be found than that above ground. We consider that, without such a vein being found, the present vein No. 8 would not be equal to clear the expense of working, owing to the rugged nature of the country in which it is situated, and the length and difficulty there would be in forming a road to a seaport, from whence it would be shipped.

After leaving South Cape we visited Adventure Bay, and found strong indications of coal on the west side, in one place only, about three miles from the anchorage, and the same distance south from Isthmus Bay Neck. This appears to be the upper stratum, as there is only a very small portion of coal in the vein, being about 20 feet below the surface and ten feet above sea-mark. It would be attended with difficulty and expense to work the coal here, it being exposed to the lash of the sea, so that no boat could land nearer than about two miles; which distance along the coast, both to the north and south of where the coal is found being composed of high rocky cliffs, with deep ravines intervening, over which distance the making of a road would be attended with much trouble. Coal may be found here, but a shaft must first be sunk to ascertain the quantity and quality below.

On visiting Southport and the Huon River, we found no good land available for the purposes of settlers at either of those places. At Southport, where Major Honner formerly settled, the land is of a poor sandy nature; no grass is to be seen, the ground being covered with a short stunted scrub. At the head of the Port is a considerable stream of water, where the timbers composed of an immense number of small trees, denominated "spars," growing so close together they do not seem to attain great size in diameter, but, for straightness and height they do not surpass any trees we have seen in that part of the Island.

In the Huon, we observed in one place, the Huon Inlet, indications of coal by the same sort of stone which is found to abound at the other coal districts. On the Satellite Island we found a sample of the very best limestone.

From coal and limestone being found at Hobart Town, and also at New Norfolk, we conceive that a vein of these minerals runs from this all the way to South Cape, showing itself in the different fractures and dislocations of the strata; and it yet remains to be found how far this extends into the interior.

We have the honour to be,
Sir,

Your most obedient humble servants,

(Sgd.) Thomas Scott, Assistant Surveyor.

" R.A. Roberts.

" J. Hobbs.

E. Dumarésq, Esq.,
Surveyor-General,
VAN DIEMAN'S LAND.