



*REPORT from Manager of Tasmanian Main Line Railway of the Trial of  
Mount Nicholas Coal on Main Line Railway.*

*Lands and Works Office, Hobart, 31st August, 1883.*

SIR,

As the Government understand that a practical test of coal from Mount Nicholas, in the Fingal District, was made on Wednesday last, by running a special train on the Main Line Railway from Hobart to Bridgewater and back to Hobart, with an engine supplied exclusively with the above-mentioned coal, will you please furnish me, for the information of the Government and Parliament, with a report of the result of such trial?

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

NICHOLAS J. BROWN,

*Minister of Lands and Works.*

C. H. GRANT, *Esq., Manager Tasmanian  
Main Line Railway Company, Limited.*

*Tasmanian Main Line Railway Company, Limited,  
General Manager's Office, Hobart, 1st September, 1883.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 31st ultimo, in which, referring to a test of the coal obtained from Mount Nicholas, in the Fingal District, that was made on the Main Line Railway on the 29th ultimo, by running a train from Hobart to North Bridgewater and back, a distance of 27 miles, with the express engine that had been in use on the previous day, and was fired only with this coal, you desire that I would furnish you, for the information of the Government and Parliament, with a report of the result of such trial.

In reply, I have the honor to state that, having superintended the operations connected with the trial, I am able to certify—that the engine was used in the precise condition in every respect in which it performed the journey to Launceston and back with the express train the day previously,—that the coal used on the trip was exclusively that obtained from Mount Nicholas, and brought down by the railway from the Corners Station,—that the quantity consumed weighed 9 cwts., and the residual product of ash, as taken from the fire-box, weighed but 26 lbs., such being of a very light and favourable character, and not running into clinkers.

I can further assert, from personal observation, that throughout the whole journey the pressure of steam was well maintained at its maximum of 140 lbs., the steam blowing off through the safety-valve most of the period; also, that the weight of the train was that of an ordinary express train.

The coal was of a large rubby nature, easily broken, and favourable to economical firing, much resembling the very best Newcastle coal, which alone we use on this railway, and very superior to that supplied from most of the New South Wales pits, or from New Zealand, and to the York Plains, Jerusalem, or any other local coal.

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I have also tried the coal as a domestic coal, and find that it burns freely, leaving but a small proportion of a fine but not dusty ash, and that the heat is greater than from the same amount of Newcastle coal, while it also lasts much longer in the grate.

On the whole, therefore, I am able to state positively that the coal delivered to the Railway Company at their Corners Station, and brought down and tried by me, is of a decidedly superior quality to the best Newcastle coal, and I am not aware of any imperfection therein which would detract from its great value to this Colony.

Should the railway be constructed, and proper facilities given for loading coal and discharging into the vessels, I feel assured that an enormous export trade must arise.

Herewith I send you the official report of the trial trip made by the Locomotive Superintendent of the Line, which you will notice fully corroborates the assertions made from my own observations.

Hon. N. J. BROWN, M.H.A., Minister of Lands and Works.

I have, &c.

C. H. GRANT.

Tasmanian Main Line Railway Company, Limited, Engineer's Office, Hobart, 30th August, 1883.

SIR,

I BEG to report for your information as to the trial made yesterday of the Mount Nicholas coal. I used express engine No. 8 for the trial, no alterations of any kind being made either of the fire-bars or otherwise. Steam was got up in the usual way until a pressure of 100 lbs. was indicated; we then began to fire with this coal, and used no other while standing and shunting in the yard, or until we finished the journey.

As you are aware, we ran at a very high rate of speed during the trip, and maintained the full pressure of 140 lbs. on the pressure-gauge. The engine worked well, and the firing was very light and easy. We had on one or two occasions to open the fire-door from making too much steam. The engine was under steam three and a half hours, and used in all 9 cwts. of coal. I had the ashes weighed after the fire-box cooled down, and found 26 lbs. weight of light friable ash with no clinker.

I consider this coal better than Newcastle, and would be pleased to be supplied with it. I may say that No. 8 engine could not run at the same speed and keep the same pressure with any other coal except the best Newcastle.

I may also inform you that our local train uses a mixture of half Newcastle and half Jerusalem coal, 33 lbs. per mile being the average consumed. The actual average of running with the Mount Nicholas coal was 25 lbs. per mile, and I feel sure that in a through journey 22 lbs. would be more than sufficient. The fire-bars had no signs of being burnt or in any way affected.

I am, &c.

WM. CUNDY, Locomotive Superintendent.

C. H. GRANT, Esq., General Manager.