

9th August, 1922.

W.A. Pretyman, Esq.,
Secretary for Mines,
H O B A R T.

Dear Sir/

Coal at Buckland

Perhaps the following particulars regarding the extent and quality of the coal at Buckland will obviate the necessity for a complete report which would not serve a more definite purpose.

Three seams of coal have been exposed on French's property and there are indications of several others, but not sufficient exploratory work has been done to make a definite pronouncement as to the number occurring there.

Until recently no attempt had been made to test the coal outcrop by underground workings. A few holes had been sunk here and there, but these were not productive of important results. The operators realised that exploration by tunnelling would prove the best means for the purpose in view and works of this nature were laid out accordingly.

The coal beds are exposed in an extensive land-slip on the south-west side of Sand River valley. In order to test the seams under cover of solid rock an adit was driven in the direction of dip underneath an outcrop of high-grade coal. This tunnel has been advanced 120 feet without meeting the main seam. At 100 feet from the entrance an attempt was made to explore the seams overhead by rising, but after penetrating the first seam operations were suspended owing to inefficient ventilation.

Since the writer's visit another seam of coal two feet thick has been found on the hillside about 80 feet above the level of the tunnel, and a little work has been done to open it for examination.

The coals occurring here are remarkably similar in every respect to the Cornwall and Mt. Nicholas coals. They are firm, hard coals of humic (bituminous) character consisting of alternate dull and bright laminations of varying thickness. They are capable of withstanding severe shock without crumbling, and are not appreciably affected by exposure to the weather. They ignite readily at a comparatively low temperature producing great heat in the process of combustion.

The exact limits of the coal-bearing strata have not been defined, nor have the several seams known to exist here been explored, therefore, it is quite impossible to attempt an estimation of the quantity of coal available in the area. However, it is quite certain that the productive measures are not extensive, being but a remnant of the great formation that contains the most important seams.

The difficulty of access tells greatly against the development and exploitation of these coal seams. The only

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practicable route for a tramway is that following the Sand River gorge to the valley of Prosser River, then turning along the course of that stream to Orford, the nearest shipping port. The cost of construction of a tramway from the mine to this port, a distance of 15 miles, would not be less than £50,000.

The question at issue is whether or not the coal-field is of sufficient importance to justify the expenditure of such a large sum of money in providing these transportation facilities.

Yours faithfully,

A.M. Reid

GOVERNMENT GEOLOGIST.