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NOTES ON REPORT BY C. HOWARD ON
THE COUNTRY BETWEEN
LOW ROCKY Pt & FITZGERALD

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Rep on Country between
Low Rocky Pt & Fitzgerald
by
C. Howard 1927.

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Notes on Report by C. Howard on the Country between Low Rocky Point and Fitzgerald.

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Mr. Howard accompanied Mr. P. B. Nye, Government Geologist, as Field Assistant, on an expedition to the country in the neighbourhood of Low Rocky Point, West Coast. The other members of the party travelled by boat; Howard on the return journey travelled overland alone. The report of his trip inter alia is as follows:-

No doubt prospecting has been performed in this district at long intervals, especially along the coast line, but information is very meagre with respect to the country between the nearest settlement (Fitzgerald) and Low Rocky. That fact was the cause of my decision to explore the intervening country.

The first day out I reached Little Rocky River which leads from a southern spur of Lawson Range called Review Hill. Next day after a first effort failure I reached the summit of Lawson Range which is extensive and on its eastern slope precipitous. The following day I walked in the direction of Counsel or Prospecting Range in expectation of finding Hales Crossing of Hardwood River but later realised that I would have to follow the range southward in order to find an easy descent not into the Hardwood but into Giblin River valley. Giblin River is fringed with an almost impenetrable tangle of tea-tree and batters and its flood-plain is very boggy, wide and long.

Having arrived at the foothills of a belt of broken country between Counsel and Lawson Ranges, I saw the pegged line of Moore's track. It appeared to me that Moore had skirted the flat country and had crossed the headwaters of Giblin River at much easier points. I continued my journey through the broken country in a northerly direction and late in the day reached the hills overlooking Hardwood Valley with its barren broken spurs of schist on one side and its wooded ridges on the other. I had come out near View Hill which I could have reached in a much easier way by going around the northern bend of Lawson Range. I was pleased to find the pegged line of Hales' track on the floor of Hardwood Valley which I followed southward until I lost sight of them.

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Continuing my southward journey towards a sharp bend in the river I found the old crossing of Jones and Hales. At this point the Hardwood River is 60 feet wide, deep, slow-flowing, and its plain is subject to floods. Middle Ground plain is a large tract of open button-grass country lying between Hardwood and Davey Rivers. Davey River at the point of crossing is fringed with Huon Pine, which, I venture to say will be found in extensive forests near the headwaters. Next day I left the Eastern bank of the river, crossed several minor tributaries before reaching ~~Deckerly's~~ ^{Doherty's} Ground. Keeping Cinder Hill to the South I crossed two large tributaries of Davey River which are 30 to 40 feet wide and fast-flowing. I then followed the long spur leading to Jones Pass, 1800 feet above sea-level. As the pass appeared to be thickly clothed with scrub I first attempted to find a way along the steep slopes of Mt. Giblin, but finding it too rough I returned to the pass and after some time ^{came} to a blazed trail leading towards Huon Plains. This I followed some distance, then continuing on the northern side of Mt. Giblin and noticing Scott Peak directly in front decided to camp. (Before proceeding with this account I should like to state that an isolated hill $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles long and 600 feet high guards the mouth of Jones Pass. As this is a prominent landmark I named it Sentinel Hill. The scrub through the Pass contains a large proportion of pine). I followed a spur off Frankland Range to Huon Plains, passing several small lakes on the way, and ultimately reached the track leading from Port Davey to the South Gordon track about 8 miles away.

Observations made on the overland trip leads me to believe that the possibilities of finding mineral deposits of commercial value are decidedly good.

To open this country well designed tracks are first essentials but not for the carriage of provisions to the far-western areas because the cost is prohibitive. The sea-route is the only economical way at present to those parts.

As regards the geological formations of the country traversed the following remarks are submitted -

Over Little Rocky River crossing is a 20-chain wide belt of granite (probably of ordovician porphyroid series), succeeded by slates, quartzite, slates, and schists. Lawson Range is composed of quartzite and coarse conglomerate from Giblin Valley, which is overlied by schists; quartzite stained red continues to Hardwood Valley, an erosion channel is fossiliferous limestone. The country between Hardwood Valley and Frankland Range is composed of schists, quartz and mica varieties. Crossing Docherty's Ground is a band of slate, succeeded by a high ridge of sandstone veined with quartz. The Spur leading to Jones Pass is quartzite which continues to the Southern fall of Mt. Wedge. Here occur conglomerate, sandstone, purple schists, limestone, and a black undermined rock. It is not basalt. It would not surprise me if this was a particular mineral belt similar to Adamsfield. The country is worthy of careful attention.

Taking for granted that tracks are going to be put down and will be used in future I would like to suggest a track that would enable prospecting to be carried out properly in the tract of country first mentioned. The Tyenna track to the South Gordon and Davey junction could be utilised and the Davey track to a point opposite South Peak. Part of this track is in a very bad state and part of it is very good. The question of a proper crossing ~~at the Huon~~ at the Huon would have to be gone into. Horses if properly handled are good swimmers and a wire rope and cage would suffice for men and stores. Timber is plentiful in this locality. A good hut could be erected for a small amount and would indeed be welcome.

Turning off into Hales Exploration survey the new track to be continued to View Hill, West of the Frankland Range. In this stretch, the scrub leading through Jones Pass is bad but the slope is good. The highest point would be 1800 feet. Dropping down on its Western Side the slopes are fairly steep but by continuing along the top of the spur the going would not be bad.

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Continuing along the first branch of Davey the grade is good. This branch would not be difficult to cross at the worst of times, these branches rise rapidly and fall likewise. Continuing the track would cross Dohertys Ground and then a second tributary of the Davey. The track crosses a high button grass ridge but by keeping towards its Southern end a good grade could be got. Going down its Western Side the track crosses a small creek and a little further on the Davey River. Provision for crossing this river would also have to be made and as there is fine timber here, a hut could be built. The track crosses the Middle Ground which is fairly flat and crosses the Hardwood River. The banks of this river are about six to eight feet high but not difficult for ~~max~~ horses. The track would then cross the Hardwood Valley to foot of broken country and continued north hugging these spurs, crossing four branches of the Hardwood (which are not difficult) and would come onto the saddle between the head of the Olga and Hardwood. This main track could be taken right to Moores Landing on the Gordon River which appeared to be from View Hill a continuous valley.

This track would tap a large scope of country all the way, but there still remains the country further West.

View Hill must be the junction of a track leading to it. I would suggest that the summit be followed along Jones track bearing a distance of seven or eight miles ~~through~~ through button grass broken country, but not difficult, to Frederick Hill. Crossing over this down onto a branch of the Mainwaring river lying in between Frederick Hill and Moores Look Out and the Southern end of Lyons Range. Following the Southern bank of this tributary 2½ miles the track would come in contact with Moores survey. Following this the track would cross the headwaters of the Mainwaring River. Easy crossings can be got and the country is very open and not difficult.

Continuing along this survey of Moores to the headwaters of the Wanderer River the country is more difficult but not bad.

My knowledge of the country north ends here but from a height does

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not look bad right through to Birchs Inlet. This would give prospectors a chance to prospect a large tract of country in this locality.

Until tracks are put in to these inaccessible parts they must remain unknown.

The track that I have tried to sketch out is practically the result of the efforts of four mens work Marsden, Hales, Jones and Moore.

Money has been spent on Marsdens track which was for packing. The others appeared to be only surveys but I have used them in outlining a main track and branch that would when completed open up a tremendous scope of country for prospecting. And one important find would repay the cost.