

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

NORTHERN TERRITORY SURVEY PROGRESS  
REPORTS.

*Ordered by the Legislative Council and House of Assembly to be printed, 30th July, 1869.*

1/69.

Camp, Fort Point, Port Darwin, 2nd March, 1869

Sir—I have the honor to forward herewith progress reports and pay-sheets for the party for the months of December, January, and February, 1868-9, in separate letter, and enclosed—

1. Copy of rough journal
  2. C. L. and I., N. T., 11/68.
  3. Abstract of contents of deal deck-house purchased from ship.
  4. List of orders drawn on Department.
  5. List of specimens of timber cut from site of port township at this place, with the exception of the pine, which came from land at the East Arm.
  6. Letter from Dr. Peel, relative to experiments with bi-sulphate of lime.
  7. Letter from Dr. Peel, relative to preserved meats used during the voyage.
  8. Copy of memorandum to officers and men on arrival at this place.
  9. Copy of memorandum to Mr. Mitchell, relative to examination of country hence to East Arm and Fred's Pass, Daly Ranges.
  10. Copy of Mr. Mitchell's report thereon.
  11. Copy of letter from Dr. Peel, relative to health of party and salubrity of this locality
  12. Memorandum from Dr. Peel, enclosing sketch of insect caught as the ship neared the land, and outline of fish not known to the naturalist.
  13. Memorandum from Mr. Ringwood, relative to testing of quartz rock for gold
  14. Memorandum from Mr. Brooks, enclosing photographs of coast line in the port and at site of township.
  15. Eight sketches by Mr. Hoare, the doctor's assistant, giving panoramic view from Fort Point to Point Emery.
  16. Memorandum from Mr. Schultze, the Collector and Naturalist, enclosing list of botanical and other specimens, sent in five cases per *Moonta*
  17. Copy of charter party, with Captain Barneson's receipt for balance of amount named therein.
  18. In separate parcel—Plan of country examined between this place and lat 12° 50' south.
  19. Tracing of township at this place, omitting wharf frontages.
  20. Plan of proposed township at East Arm.
  - 21, 22, 23. Rough sketches of Fort Point before and after landing.
  24. Rough sketch of the tumbling waters above the head of navigation at the South Arm.
- And to report that after a pleasant voyage, wholly free from differences or disputes, the *Moonta* anchored near Fort Point on the 5th February. After a careful examination of the locality, and sounding to ascertain the depth of water along shore at low water, a landing-place was agreed upon, and subsequently the stock and stores were got safely on shore, with the exception of one horse, which was unfortunately drowned by mismanagement of man in boat, the boat being used in my absence, and against my express orders and those of the captain. The casualties during the voyage amount to the loss of two horses from inflammation, and a few goats. Since landing, one mare died from a similar cause, and one bullock from weakness. The remainder are in sound health and condition, and are at work daily.

The schooner has not yet arrived. In her absence—the iron stores being on board of her—I had to construct a store, stable, smithy, &c. The store is fifty by twenty feet, and twelve feet high in the walls, roofed partly by galvanized iron and partly by bark brought in by natives, of whom there are a few here, and who appear friendly. The stable was constructed large enough for all the horses, as I considered it necessary to feed them at first and gradually accustom them to work and to the vegetation. It is simply a covered shed—the roof, branches of trees

A well was sunk, and a supply of good water obtained, in the Doctor's Gully, where also a garden was laid out, and there are already up cress, radishes, cabbage, lettuces, and shallots. Other seeds have been planted, such as melons, potatoes, garlic, &c., but there has not been sufficient time to ascertain with what effect.

A second well was sunk to the east of Stokes' Hill to a depth of twenty-four feet, but it has been discontinued in consequence of the hardness of the sinking and the absence of blasting-powder, which, unfortunately, is in the schooner. The well has been slabbed, and the water comes in at the sides after heavy rains so rapidly that it takes half the day to bale it out; and as the men could do little after emptying it, without powder, I thought it best to delay its completion. I have no doubt but a permanent supply of good water will be obtained a few feet below the present depth.

A preliminary survey was made to enable me to decide upon the limits of the township—a road cut from the saddle to the table land, and a floating jetty made to facilitate the landing of goods.

The ship anchored twenty chains W.S.W. of Fort Point, swinging to fifty fathoms of cable. In this anchorage she rode out some of the most severe squalls, but the captain advises me it would always be desirable to moor and let the best bower go to the S.E., as the tides run so strongly that a ship riding at a single anchor the anchor would be liable to foul. Squalls prevail from the south to E.S.E. at this season—or since our arrival—with thunder, lightning, and heavy rain; most frequently they occur between two and six p.m.

After examining the country inland—which consists as far back as I have been of table land from seventy to 150 feet high, with thicket of vegetation fringing the rocks of the coast and a few mangroves where the water is shoal, open forest of gum, iron and stringybark, cedar, banyan, and other trees named in list above referred to, with three varieties of palm (fan, corkscrew, and another with leaves resembling long feathers), an endless variety of shrubs, herbs, and grasses; the table land mostly of good rich soil, stony in places, as also are the ridges, quartz and ironstone cropping out in places; the slopes and valleys, generally, contain soil fit for the growth of any product suited to the climate and latitude. I started Mr. Mitchell off with a party to examine the country as far as the East Arm, where I should meet him, but failing to do so he was to proceed to Fred's Pass (*vide* instructions in memo. enclosed), and proceeded myself with the captain, doctor, and a boat's crew to the heads of navigation of the various estuaries to examine the country above tidal influence, and consequently above the mangroves upon their margin. I was agreeably surprised with the result, finding that the schooner could sail at low water several miles up the south, east, and western arms, and that boats or barges could at all times ascend to where the high lands adjoined the creeks, which became fresh above the good landing-places, securing to us a series of good sites for small townships and available natural roads thence into the interior. I met Mr. Mitchell, as agreed upon, up the East Arm, and was so satisfied with his report, and what I had myself seen, that I sent him on to Fred's Pass with instructions to return thence to the camp at Fort Point. He completed his examination in a satisfactory manner, and I have since satisfied myself of the reliable nature of his description of the country, which may be thus summarized:—Ridges and table land of open forest, with gum, oak, grevillea, iron and stringybark, box, two varieties of cedar, pine, cypress, three kinds of palm, paperbark—the paperbark and corkscrew pine frequently are seen together in the low valleys, forming the centre of drainage, or in swampy basins that have no natural outlet—apple, plum, and a number of other trees not known to me even by a local name, an endless variety of shrubs and herbs, grasses, amongst which I observed kangaroo, spear, and others well known in South Australia, but of larger growth, and on some of the watercourses bamboo and reeds. The ridges are frequently stony; quartz and ironstone boulders, and micaceous sandstone and slate were frequently seen. The slopes and valleys are frequently covered by small waterworn fragments of nodulous iron, below which, they only forming on the surface, is generally a rich chocolate or loamy soil. The rocks at Fort Point are sandstone and a silicious rock over mica schist, the latter dipping at high angles 80° to the W.N.W. and running S.S.W. and N.N.E. The rock is similar at Talc Head, but is intersected by a large dyke of quartz and plates of mica. The quartz, however, contains no trace of gold; and Talc Head is best characterized as a jungle of mangroves and a few other trees, the rocks as above, the beach affording an ample supply of shingle suitable for ballast. Water is obtainable by sinking a few feet in a swampy hollow below the head; but the place is unsuitable for landng, roads, or occupation, and the radiation of heat from the sand and rocks makes it intolerably hot.

After careful consideration, repeated examination and consultations with the Doctor and officers of my party, I have decided upon adopting three sites for townships—the first, at this place; the second, up the East Arm; and the third, near the tumbling waters at the head of the navigation of the South Arm. All these sites are healthy and free from swamp. At this place we have not even the nuisance of musquitos or sandflies, though as much cannot be said for the others; but these pests are easily guarded against by proper precaution. The survey of the principal township will be completed in about ten or twelve days, when the party will be divided into three, and the subsidiary townships and rural survey be commenced.

Notice may at once be given to land-order holders to select town lots; and, should a sufficient number of agents come over, I will appoint a guide to show them over the country, and afford them all possible aid—except as regards provisions; these they must bring. I am very pleased with what I have seen, and can only express regret that the points and localities referred to herein had not been more fully examined by the preceding parties, when much trouble and expense, as well as delay, might have been avoided. South Australia has no reason to fear the result of her connexion with this place; sooner or later it must turn out well. The country, so far as I have seen it, is a first-class country for large stock, such as horses and cattle. Even, as it now exists, with all its rank, uncropped vegetation, the soil in the slopes, valley, and parts of table land is well suited for cultivation, and mostly rich. The timber is fine, and suitable for nearly all purposes—see samples sent; likewise the larger samples, on board the *Moonta*, which Captain Barneson has promised to exhibit—and the area required for this survey can readily be obtained, encroaching but slightly upon the area available. By next mail I hope to send diagram of survey effected, with detailed description of country; but, should that mail not arrive in good time, it must be attributed to accident to the schooner, and steps should then be taken to communicate with the party through the Timor Koëpang Chinese merchants, who mostly own vessels that could readily communicate with us.

All the party are well, except those suffering from boils, brought on, I think, by too little exercise on board ship, or change of diet—there is no serious illness.

Dalwood has been sent back, invalided from chronic bronchitis, and Kennedy has left the party. He will convey the boxes of specimens from Wallaroo to Adelaide, and hand them over to you.

I have purchased seven iron tanks, a deck house, and dingy, from Capt. Barneson, *vide* enclosed copy of receipt; these purchases were rendered necessary by the non-arrival of the schooner. The *Moonta* leaves here to-morrow morning, the third instant.

I have the honor, &c,

G. W. GOYDER, Surveyor-General.

The Secretary to the Hon. the Commissioner of Crown Lands.

Fort

12/69.

Fort Point, Port Darwin, 3rd May, 1869.

Sir—I have the honor to forward, in separate parcel, duplicates of letters, &c., sent per mail by ship *Moonta*; and, herewith, twenty-six plans and diagrams of the principal and two minor townships at Fort Point, on the Elizabeth, and in the fork at the junction of the River Darwin with the Blackmore; diagrams of 43,000 acres of land surveyed into sections of 160 and 320 acres, and the completion of which has been properly certified; a plan of the township at this place, and a general plan showing the position of the land surveyed, and natural features of the country, so far as such have been ascertained by personal inspection, and fixed by the respective surveys; pay-sheets for the months of March and April; list of orders issued for the same periods; progress reports, so far as such have been sent in from the field; thirteen boxes from naturalist, containing specimens of plants, animals, shells, reptiles, and seeds, two live pigeons, a native canoe, paddles, spears, throwing stick, and a few trifling curiosities, as per detailed lists; copy of rough journal; copy of letter from Dr. Peel, respecting the health of the party; meteorological observations taken at Fort Point during March and April; and requisitions for provisions, tools, &c., required for the use of the party, and which should be sent, without fail, by the schooner on her return trip.

The *Gulnare* arrived here on the 27th March. Beyond delaying the work, and a little anxiety, no other inconvenience resulted from the condemnation of the *Sea Ripple*. Captain Sweet reports his voyage protracted to forty-two days by calms in the tropics. He is an able, active, energetic officer, and did all in his power to facilitate my plans. He is also an expert photographer, and has taken several views in the locality, of which I am glad, as Mr. Brooks has been fully occupied preparing plans and documents for the field parties during the past two months.

We have here a splendid harbor, suitable to vessels of the largest tonnage—deep water and good holding ground. At a trifling cost jetties or wharfs might be constructed, and the place is healthy, and the sites of the township here and elsewhere the most healthy the country affords. We have also obtained good roads thence into the interior, and lands varying in character from light sandy loam to rich black and chocolate-colored soils, with water and grasses in abundance—the quality of the pasture improving towards the south, south-west, and south-east. I believe, from the experience of others, and what I have seen, that this harbor is the best in the locality, and with its high lands and deep waters close to the points of landing, estuaries radiating towards the interior, and navigable to lands suitable to the growth of any product adapted to the climate, with first-rate pasturage for large stock—I think it is too hot for sheep—and supply of water, though in the dry season, except in water-courses or water-holes, this will have to be obtained by sinking below the surface—most suited for the purpose of commerce and likely to lead to the satisfactory settlement of the country. I look, therefore, upon the object of the expedition as gained, and consider that the quality of the land under survey, the timber, vegetation, and conveniences for traffic equals, if not surpasses, the most sanguine expectation of the land-order holders and those interested in the development of the country. It is to be borne in mind, however, that so far our experience only extends to the rainy season and the early portion of the dry, by the end of which grass, that is now green will be dry, and the earth in many places look parched and dusty. But this is common to all countries in this latitude; indeed, the same may be said of the greater portion of South Australia. My first impressions in its favor, as detailed in my previous report, are only confirmed by more extended travel; and I trust that but a short time will elapse before it is occupied. Apart from the suitability of much of the soil for the growth of cotton, sugar, rice, &c., it is invaluable for breeding large stock, and horses or cattle could readily be shipped and conveyed to India. It is true the heat is great, and the climate, for at least six months in the year, oppressive, and for Europeans it is as bad as some portions of India: and the same amount of work cannot be done as in South Australia without great determination and exertion. But again, our experience is that of men new to the locality, and much may be done by acclimatization, but labor can be readily obtained from the adjacent islands, and at a cost so trifling compared with that of European labor, that the latter would only be resorted to where inspection or direction became necessary.

I expect the survey to be completed, at latest, by the 1st of October of the present year, when the party will be prepared to return; and have sent the schooner back direct to Adelaide, with the mail, and instructed Capt. Sweet to bring back necessary stores, tools, &c., and to call for letters at Timor on his way back to this place.

We have carried on operations thus far without collision with the natives. There are about sixty in the locality, many of whom hang about the fence round the camp from daylight till dark; they brought in some weeks ago two Malays, the survivors of a proa, which they state was wrecked about two years ago. The names of these two men are Sennam and Salammo, natives of Maccassar. They state the captain of the proa was named DeSorme; the proa, *Lambaray Senkang*; she was trading between Maccassar and Marragie, and had on board 103 picols of rice, and forty-three hands; she carried three guns and five muskets, and was owned by a Chinese named Ka-soo-ah, who does business in Campon-mals-koo, Maccassar; all perished but these two men, who were suffering from incipient scurvy, and were fed at the camp and attended to by the doctor. As they expressed great anxiety to get to Koepang, where one has a wife and family, I have instructed Capt. Sweet to make them useful on board, and land them there on his way back. Their present story is essentially different to that first told by them, but this may arise from the more perfect knowledge of the language attained by R. C. Burton, who conversed with them, though at first with great difficulty. Then they spoke of half the crew being drowned and the remainder spared by the natives, their lives only being spared at the instigation of Mira, who protected and subsequently brought them here from Escape Cliffs, and to whom I gave a ration for his humanity, after having the reason fully and clearly explained to him by Burton, who understands a good deal of their language.

The land upon the Adelaide Plains is still under water as far south as the latitude of Fred's Pass. It will not be dry for two or three months yet. I do not propose surveying any of this land, as, though doubtless of good quality, it is only prevented from constant inundation by the greater

greater height of the land on the bank of the river, and will require to be properly drained before it is available. When this has been done it will probably yield a large price and profitable returns, but it would be premature to survey such lands for allotment at the present time. The above remarks only apply to the land north of the latitude of Fred's Pass and extending northward to the Narrows, near Escape Cliffs, and to the east of the Daly Ranges. After personal inspection of the locality, I have altered the site of the proposed township there from the low bald rises, formerly spoken of, and which during the rainy season are surrounded by water, to a preferable site on the east slope of the range nearer the Pass. All the party are in good health.

I have the honor, &c.,

G. W. GOYDER, Surveyor-General.

The Secretary to the Hon. Commissioner of Crown Lands.