

No. 2.

SIR,—

Survey Camp, Granville, 27th October, 1886.

I have the honour to furnish the following report on the road recently surveyed by me to the Laloki River.

I found that the present native track was as good a road as it was possible to find, so that I have almost followed that the whole course, straightening it up as much as possible. The distances are as follow : From traverse at beach near native village to gap in range, 91 chains 30 links ; to first water, 225 chains ; to Vaigana Creek, 439 chains ; to Laloki River, 632 chains ; along river-bank to crossing, 56 chains : making a total of 688 chains from beach traverse to Laloki River crossing, or $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles. The road is offset as a two-chain road ; the whole distance excepting crossing the range, where I considered an offset unnecessary, being only suitable for road purposes.

After striking the river I have surveyed a road of an average width of 3 chains along the river-bank as far as the crossing. This is, I think, necessary as a travelling-stock reserve and approach to water for all public purposes. This should, I think, be continued along the river as the survey of the country progresses ; my two-chain road, of course, runs into this. It is useless surveying a road immediately down to a crossing, as that continually changes in a river subject to any freshes : for instance, where the water is shoal this season it may probably be deep next, and so on. The three-chain road along the river-bank, therefore, gives access to a crossing, wherever it may be, at any particular season.

The same should be done on the opposite bank, and the two-chain road commenced cutting out from it wherever the country may prove most suitable for the purpose. During the whole time I was working on this road we had heavy rains daily, which caused floods in the river. I was therefore unable to give any opinion on the crossing itself, as I could not get up to it ; but from Mr. George Hunter's report, who has crossed there, I should think it would easily be made a convenient ford.

The country for about two miles on either side of the road I have sketched with prismatic compass, and my plan will, I think, have given a very good idea of the surrounding country. I would not have it taken that this sketching is even supposed to be precisely accurate, but quite sufficiently so for the guidance of any one either travelling the country or to take up selections from. Of course, before any accurate fixing of hills, &c., can be made trig. stations must be built on their highest points, and tops cleared so as to get reliable bearings to the same point. This would entail considerable time and expense. However, with the short time at my command, and the very unfavourable state of the weather, I have managed to map in a good portion of the country behind the range, which I trust will prove serviceable until such time as a more minute and accurate survey can be made. During the whole of the distance of road-line surveyed by me there was not more than 5,000 [links ?] of burnt country ; the remainder was covered with grass between 4ft. and 5ft. high, which would not burn, being too green, and if started there was no wind to carry the fire any distance. This grass I had to cut down the whole distance, which very much lengthened my work. The country throughout is of a limestone formation, and I came across no signs of any mineral. For the most part it is a pastoral country, if not wholly so ; in the flats there is some good soil, but of no great extent, suitable for growth of maize and such-like produce. The timber is mostly stunted gum (poor), excepting on the banks of watercourses and surrounding the lakes at Vaigana, or what in Northern Australia we should term "tea-tree swamps." Here is found abundance of Leichardt-pine, a very useful timber in all countries where the white-ant is to be found (it will not touch this pine) ; and from it splendid flooring-boards and so forth can be cut. It is a timber easy to work, and very pretty ; it is a yellow colour, well adapted for tables, chairs, &c., in these countries. On the country surrounding these lakes horses and cattle should, I think, thrive well, if not too much molested by leeches and alligators. The latter are numerous in a deep waterhole leading into these lakes, and would, I fancy, be capable of doing considerable destruction to young stock. During my camping term in the vicinity, the absence of game on these lakes makes me think they would most probably be plentiful in them as well as in the waterholes where we saw them ourselves.

The country northward of these lakes, as far as the eye can span, is low-lying, apparently swampy lands, timbered with low scrub.

To the westward for about a mile low ranges are passed over, all well grassed, which would give good high feeding-ground for stock in the wet when the flats are boggy. I should have liked to have run a line from the junction of the two native tracks this side of Vaigana to the junction of the Goldie and Laloki, which it was my intention to have done ; but, owing to the heavy rains which fall daily, and with the amount of sickness in my camp, I did not think I should be doing my duty either to my party or myself by staying out to complete that work, so, at your suggestion, struck camp.

I myself suffered considerably with scrub-itch, which, together with the worry of my men being sick, and long hours in the sun during the day in a stifling atmosphere with no wind and heavy rains, and no sleep at nights, completely knocked me up. I used quarts of kerosene to destroy this itch, but without effect ; the best remedy I found was to rub myself all over with Holloway's ointment. Painkiller and St. Jacob's oil had no effect, and for more than a week I could not get a wink of sleep, so spent most nights walking about keeping the mosquitoes company, which also were somewhat numerous night and day. The water in the creek at Vaigana I do not consider fit for drinking purposes, but by sinking in a gravelly bed can secure first-class water, the holes being choked with decomposing vegetable matter. There was nothing that I met with in any way differing much from this surrounding country on which to write a lengthy report, more than to say it is all evidently a good pastoral country ; and trusting this, together with the plan I shall send in as soon as completed, may prove serviceable,

I have, &c.,

WALTER R. CUTHBERTSON,
Surveyor.

To the Assistant Deputy-Commissioner.