

VICTORIA.

TRACK TO THE RIVER JORDAN GOLD FIELDS.

RETURN to an Order of the *Legislative Assembly*,
Dated 15th December, 1864—

That there be laid on the Table of this House the Engineer's Report as to the best Track to the Jordan Gold Fields.

(*Mr. McLellan.*)

Ordered by the Legislative Assembly to be printed, 17th January, 1865.

APPROXIMATE COST OF RETURN.

DETAILED PARTICULARS.	AMOUNT.		
	£	s.	d.
Clerical labor, copying	0	3	6
Printing	1	11	4
TOTAL	1	13	10

COPY REPORT BY MR. ROAD ENGINEER WILKS.

Melbourne, 15th December, 1864.

SIR,

I have the honor to report that all the men, are discharged who were employed upon the Yarra track, and the road works are completely stopped as the funds available for the purpose are quite exhausted.

This cessation of the works is the more to be regretted from the circumstance that a good and comparatively easy coach road is to be obtained from the Watts Valley to Wood's Point, and this season of the year is the most suitable for conducting road works, especially in a mountainous district.

In accordance with your request I beg to subjoin a general report, showing the state of the works upon the track when operations were brought to a standstill, and also the feasibility of obtaining a good track for wheeled traffic up to Wood's Point.

The line of road which has been finally selected for survey, and as best adapted for a permanent road, is in continuation of the surveyed road near Bell's station, at the Yarra flats, and after following several spurs descending from the main range, crosses the Watts River at a distance of about forty (40) miles from Melbourne. No works have been at present executed upon this permanent line until the track reaches the township of Healesville, near the Watts River. From this point a cleared track, varying in width from twelve to twenty feet, extends along the valley of the Watts, avoiding the lower and more rotten line at first selected and cleared for the road. Side cuttings have been carried for nearly two miles to avoid the flats, and when the works in this valley are completed there will be a very easy road up to the second crossing of the Watts without any gradient exceeding 1 in 16, and for only short distances over 1 in 20.

At the Watts second crossing a bridge was in course of construction when the works were stopped.

C.—No. 7.

From the Watts River the road crosses a range known as the "Black's Spur," and many portions of the present line of clearing are at a gradient of 1 in 4 to 1 in 6, but the permanent line as marked out, though not yet cleared or formed by side cutting, will, when finished as proposed, in no portion, exceed a gradient of 1 in 12 or 1 in 13, being mostly 1 in 20 to 1 in 30. The whole of this new line will thus remove the heaviest obstacle to traffic upon the present track.

From the foot of the Black's Spur this permanent line of road is cleared up to Fisher's Creek. At this point the present temporary structures have to be replaced by more permanent works.

From Fisher's Creek to the Acheron the new line is laid out, but not cleared. All the gradients will be quite easy, and it will be one mile shorter than the present cleared track.

The road to the township of Marysville, after crossing the Acheron, is all laid out, and is mostly cleared to a varying width, but the permanent line avoids some of the present cleared portions in order to secure easier gradients; and the whole of this part of the line will be devoid of any steep pinches such as are at present on the track.

From Marysville to Mount Arnold the permanent line will deviate in many parts from the present track in order to secure easy gradients; and, although the present track will remain available for horses or foot passengers, the new line will be opened up as an easy track for wheeled vehicles. From Mount Arnold to the Springs, within ten miles of Wood's Point, the line is mostly cleared, most of the bridges constructed, and the more permanent works only have to be executed.

From the Springs the road has yet to be cleared and formed, but there will be no difficulty in obtaining easy gradients and a good road.

I have no hesitation in stating that the permanent road, which will extend from Melbourne to Wood's Point, and which will not be much above a hundred (100) miles in length, will not present a single serious obstacle to wheeled traffic, and it is with the certainty of obtaining such a result that I have frequently urged the importance of providing, during the fine season, for the execution of works so necessary for opening up access to the Jordan gold-fields so that stores of all kinds, and especially machinery, may be easily and cheaply conveyed to that district.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed)

CLEMENT WILKS.

Road Engineer.

The Assistant Commissioner of
Roads and Bridges.