



NEW ZEALAND
GOVERNMENT GAZETTE.

PROVINCE OF CANTERBURY.

Published by Authority.

All Public Notifications which appear in this Gazette, with any Official Signature, are to be considered as Official Communications made to those persons to whom they may relate, and are to be obeyed accordingly.

By His Honor's command,
 For the Provincial Secretary,
T. B. KEELE,
 Chief Clerk.

VOL. II. TUESDAY, JULY 24, 1855. [No. XIII.]

*Provincial Secretary's Office,
 Christchurch, 8th June, 1855.*

A NOTICE having appeared in the Government Gazette, dated the 17th November, 1854, warning all persons not to encroach on the lands reserved for public roads, by digging ditches, or erecting banks thereon: and representations having been made to the Government by persons desirous of fencing in land fronting on the public roads, that they are willing to erect such fences as shall tend to improve the public road adjoining:—His Honor the Superintendent directs it to be further notified, that any person who is desirous of erecting a fence on the boundary of a public road, may, by application to the Government, receive an order in writing from the Provincial Engineer, stating what alterations he will be allowed to make in the surface of the land reserved for the road adjoining his fence, and that any person encroaching on the public road by taking any soil therefrom, or erecting any bank thereon, except so far as shall be set forth in such written order, will be prosecuted as the law directs.

By His Honor's command,
 For the Provincial Secretary,
T. B. KEELE,
 Chief Clerk.

*Provincial Secretary's Office,
 July 3rd, 1855.*

HIS HONOR THE SUPERINTENDENT directs the publication of the following notice for general information:

By His Honor's command,
 For the Provincial Secretary,
T. B. KEELE,
 Chief Clerk.

*Colonial Secretary's Office, Auckland,
 27th April, 1855.*

SOME misapprehension existing with regard to the office of Registrar General of Births, Deaths, and Marriages for New Zealand, His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government directs it to be notified that, under the authority of the Registration Ordinance, (Session 8 No. 9) His Excellency has been pleased to appoint

JOHN B. BENNETT, Esq.;
 to be Registrar-General of Births, Deaths, and Marriages for New Zealand: Such appointment to take effect from the 10th October, 1854.

All subordinate officers appointed under the above named Ordinance (as well as all Registrars under the Marriage Act, 1854,) in the several provinces of New Zealand are requested to furnish Returns, and such other information as may be required, to the Registrar-General, and to communicate with him as the head of the Department.

By His Excellency's command,
ANDREW SINCLAIR,
 Colonial Secretary.

Provincial Secretary's Office,
Christchurch, July 14, 1855.

HIS HONOR THE SUPERINTENDENT directs the following Report of an Exploration, with a view to the discovery of a direct line of road between Nelson and Christchurch, to be published for general information.

By His Honor's command,
For the Provincial Secretary,
T. B. KEELE.
Chief Clerk.

**REPORT OF AN EXPEDITION WITH
A VIEW TO THE DISCOVERY
OF A DIRECT LINE OF ROUTE
BETWEEN NELSON AND CAN-
TERBURY.**

TO THE PROVINCIAL SECRETARY, PROVINCE
OF NELSON.

SIR—I have the honor to forward, for the information of his Honor the Superintendent, the following report of an expedition into the interior of this island, projected by the Provincial Government of Nelson, with a view to the discovery of a direct line of route between Nelson and Canterbury.

I am fortunately in a position to report that I have succeeded in attaining that object by the discovery of a route (or I might more correctly say, of two routes), presenting few and inconsiderable natural impediments, avoiding the Fairfield Downs and Barefell Pass, diminishing the distance to be travelled by about 130 miles, and which in fact would, after a slight outlay on the part of government, place the fine grass country of the Acheron and Clarence at a distance of from two to three days, that of Waiau-ua and Hurunui at from four to five, and Christchurch itself at about six days from Nelson.

The whole route, either by the Acheron or the Clarence, affords abundance of excellent feed for cattle, sheep, or horses; is generally speaking level, and crosses the Wairau, the Acheron, and the Clarence so near their sources as to render the fording of those rivers a matter of comparatively little moment, under ordinary circumstances and with ordinary precautions.

I may, moreover, be permitted to state, that although unquestionably a work of expense and magnitude, no insurmountable barrier exists to the ultimate formation of a dray road from Nelson to Canterbury, which would be practicable in most seasons of the year. The greatest difficulties would

be found in the hill about the upper Motueka Valley, at the head of Blind Bay, in the descent from "Jollie's Pass," and in the Leslie hills on the Waiau-ua (the latter might possibly be avoided.) No doubt travelling would be occasionally interrupted by snow and (especially in the southern part of the route) by floods. Judging by the nature of the vegetation and from the fall of the rivers, I imagine that the level of the most elevated valleys cannot be less than from 2,000 to 2,500 feet above the sea; but it must be borne in mind that the route between Nelson and "Jollie's Pass" surmounts no mountain ranges of any consequence, as will appear when I enter into details.

I will now proceed to lay before you a somewhat more detailed account of my expedition, and of the country which I have traversed.

In undertaking the expedition I was aware that the late season of the year might possibly endanger its success. I consequently lost no time in proceeding to Flaxbourne, and after making the necessary preparations I commenced my journey without delay. Knowing that between the "Top House" on the Wairau Valley and the Clarence and Acheron country there was some forest to be traversed, and a formidable mountain barrier to be penetrated or surmounted, I decided upon performing that part of my journey upon foot, with a single companion, whilst, as far as possible to guard against the contingencies of snows or floods, and to facilitate any explorations that I might find advisable in the comparatively open countries of the Acheron or Clarence, I sent round a party with horses and provisions to proceed by the Awatere over Barefell Pass, and to await me on the Acheron, five miles above its confluence with the Guide; for this latter service I was so fortunate as to secure the co-operation of Messrs. McCabe and Knight, whilst for the former I had taken with me an old and experienced bush hand. An accident however, obliged him to return home from the "Top House," and I am much indebted to Mr. A. C. Clifford, who most opportunely volunteered to supply his place.

It was on the afternoon of Monday, 26th March, that Mr. A. Clifford and myself entered the Black Birch Bush on the upper Wairau, on the west side of the river, opposite to the "Top House." We encamped that night about five miles from the entrance of the bush. The next day we proceeded about ten miles, and the following morning, after a walk of some three or four more, we stood in the centre of an

open valley, at the confluence of two main branches of the Wairau, one flowing from S.W. and the other from S.E. Hitherto our course had been nearly south for about 18 miles, excepting only an easterly inclination within the last two miles. The valley, mainly covered with black birch forest, is very level, and walled-in on either side by rocky and precipitous mountains.

Along the sides of the river, lie at intervals small open flats of grass, of good quality, but now, however, in places rough with spear grass and prickles; these open spaces become larger and more frequent, as the head of the valley is approached and a higher level attained, until, finally, the black birch is found, rather in clumps and patches than presenting the appearance of a continuous forest.

In travelling up this valley, we found the bush difficult and tedious, owing to the great number of young trees that were in places growing up. We consequently crossed the river several times and kept to the shingle-bed and open flats as much as possible; but I am of opinion that a road might be carried the whole way along the west side of the valley, with perhaps one or two side cuttings. However, in any case, it would be unnecessary to cross the river more than twice, once below and once above a place where the river, whose fall is ~~always considerable~~, forms a kind of rapid, about 13 miles above the open valley at the "Top House."

At a rough estimate, I should say that a good line of road might be made by cutting through about eight or nine miles of very easily cleared bush land, emerging at intervals upon open ground. There is very little, if any, soft or swampy ground, and the tributary brooks that fall from the mountains, with the exception of two from east to west, just above the rapids, are few and insignificant. The road might, however, be made passable by more frequent deviations into the open spots, at a very much smaller outlay of labour and capital than I have indicated, whilst a somewhat greater amount might be very advantageously expended upon it.

On the morning then of March the 28th we found ourselves halted at a clump of black birch trees at the junction of the two branches of the Wairau.

They flowed out of a formidable barrier of mountains in our front, whose rocky peaks rose darkly above us, patched here and there, in spite of the long continued summer's heats, with dazzling dots of snow.

A spur, more rounded and grassy than the rest, descended from the very centre of

the chain to the junction of the two streams.

We pitched our tent, left our loads, and ascended by this spur to the top of the range; light mists floating about the summit slightly impeded our view, yet did not from an altitude of nearly 7,000 feet above the sea level, prevent us from ascertaining that the inland grass country lay below us.

At our feet to the S.E., lay a valley dotted with miniature lakes or pools; beyond and around it, grassy and bare-topped hills and narrow valleys. In the distance, bearing about east, we made out the landward Kaikoras amongst clouds and mists, with the Barefell Pass range. Immediately on our left, the S.E. branch of the Wairau flowed out of a rock-bound gorge, whilst to our right little was visible but craggy and snow-patched mountains, in which the valley of the West Wairau seemed soon to break and lose itself.

Turning back to re-descend the mountain to our camp, the eye followed the dyke-like valley of the upper Wairau, with its dark forest, its river bends, and its patches of yellow grass, cleaving straight through a chaos of rocks, crags and mountains, till it reached the open country at the "Top House."

Early on the following morning we resumed our loads, and a little after noon found ourselves once more on the summit of the mountain. We had taken this course, because, whilst neither of the river branches promised a good line of road, we knew that after traversing the mountain range, and viewing it from either side, we should probably be better able to judge of any pass that might exist.

The northern ascent of the mountain had been steep and long, but not rugged; the descent on the southern side proved worse.

Turning a little along the ridge to the left, we descended a steep shingle slip of some 300 or 400 feet, and following down a gully with loose stones, alpine plants and finally black birch, found ourselves, by about four, p.m., on the S.E. side of the range, and to our joy once more upon the banks of the East Wairau, which here pierces right through the mountains, and leads directly to our camp of the morning.

Although the day was drawing to a close, I determined not to rest till I had ascertained the practicability of the gorge. I followed it down till it opened out into the valley we had left that morning, about a mile above the junction. Having done so, late at night I returned to our camp. The gorge, remarkable for the precipices that rise above it, for huge isolated

blocks of rock, that at first sight threaten to obstruct the river's course, and picturesque patches of black birch that hang about their sides, presents no real impediment to the traveller or drover. A few blows with the tomahawk, a fire-stick judiciously employed, and should the brook be high, a little sidling over a low bank or two, is the most that can be needed, though the gorge being very narrow, its aspect may at first appear discouraging for a mile or two. (Course E.)

After receiving two tributaries from the eastern mountains, the gorge opens, and another two miles (course S. by W.) will bring the traveller into Tarn-dale.

I gave the name of Tarn-dale to the valley immediately south of the great barrier of mountains, so unexpectedly penetrated by the East Wairau. It is situated between the valleys of the Acheron and Clarence; its northern extremity, about two miles broad, rests upon that block of rugged and inaccessible mountains, which stretching westward from Mitchell and Dashwoods' Waihopi and Acheron Pass, is penetrated, as I have already described, by the upper Wairau. The hills around Tarn-dale are generally grassy, the highest being bare-topped and shingly, especially on the south and west sides.

The valley itself averages a mile and a-half broad, by eight or ten miles long, stretching nearly north and south, with an easterly inclination in the centre, and contains much rich cattle pasture.

It appears to have no timber, excepting some black birch on the mountain-side, at its N.W. extremity, near the Wairau gorge.

But the most remarkable feature of Tarn-dale is undoubtedly the little lakes, or "Tarns," from which I derived its name. They are six or seven in number, not all visible at once, but lie scattered, amongst low undulations of land, at the north end of the valley. Two or three of the largest contain an area of about 80 acres, circled round by smooth banks, free from sedge or bulrush; their waters clear and pure, and reflecting the mountains around; their surface only broken by the evolutions of flocks of grey ducks, teal and widgeon, that had here their hitherto undisturbed abode. I had expected to have found the source of the Wairau in one of these pools, but it was not so; it rises in the hills west of the valley, just enters its north-west extremity, passes close by one of the pools, and, turning to the northward, cuts boldly through the heart of the mountains.

From the pools at the north-east corner of the valley (Tapuaenuku, bearing E. N.E.), a branch of the Acheron rises, and, after flowing for rather more than three miles E.N.E., through a narrow valley, and two miles east in more open country, it receives a considerable branch from the rocky mountains from the N.W., and soon afterwards a branch from the S.W. (which formed of two streams, one rising in a pool in the centre of Tarn-dale, and one in its S.W. extremity, join and flow out of it four or five miles south of the stream we had followed).

We arrived at the comparatively open country I have just mentioned, and which I believe to be the "Dashwood Plains" of Captain Mitchell's journal, at noon, on Saturday, March 31st, having spent the preceding day exploring and camping at the N. E. "Tarns."

We had observed a column of smoke, arising from a conical peak, in answer to our fires of last night, and we now met Mr. M'Cube, who had reached the pre-arranged camping-place on the Acheron the preceding day.

Traversing considerable flats with isolated downs to our left and higher grassy hills to our right, we proceeded, first E.S.E., and then S. E., till we reached the main stream of the Acheron, a distance of about two and a-half miles (having on our left (N.), at the junction, a small isolated hill, whose grassy surface is broken by innumerable small points of volcanic rock), and followed its course to the camp, where we spent the next day (Sunday, April 1st).

I had now established the required communication between the "Top House" and the usual route to Canterbury, by a line of perfectly level country: nevertheless, as the latter part deflected slightly to the eastward of the direct course, and as Tarn-dale was probably by a few miles nearer to the Clarence than to the Acheron, I was resolved to make the most of the fine weather with which I was favoured, by exploring the sources of that river.

In pursuance of this resolution, we proceeded down the Acheron.

Rather more than five miles (during which the horses crossed the river twice, and we passed one stream from the W.) brought us to the "Guide" below "Bare-fell," and we then followed the ordinary route to the junction of the Acheron with the Clarence (Waiiau-toa).

Here, Mr. A. Clifford and I spent a day chiefly in walking down the valley below the confluence.

The course of the river is from W. to E.

for about ten miles, when it appears to bend to the south by some grassy hills, and then seems to sweep round to N. E. The valley, for eight or ten miles, is a mile or a mile and a-half wide, flat, and well grassed. I should imagine a pass might be found thence to the Tuakuka, which would open a communication with the Amuri country.

Beyond, the mountains appear to close in as the river penetrates the Kaikoras, which is confirmed by Messrs. Mitchell's and Dashwood's journals, and by observation from the seaward side.

Messrs. A. Clifford and Knight now left us on their return to Flaxburn, and Mr. McCabe and myself rode on up the Clarence (Waiautoa).

We pursued the usual road to Jollie's Pass, the valley with narrow grass flats on either side, differing in no material particular from that of the Acheron, excepting that, whilst the Acheron and its tributaries are quite destitute of timber, there are always numerous patches of black birch and often manuka on the Clarence.

We left part of our provisions opposite Jollie's Pass, and rode on for about five miles, course bearing about W.N.W.

The next day, leaving to the west the comparatively low hills and flats that lie between the Clarence and a branch of the Waiiau-ua, and to the east Leaderdale and the "Maori wares," with the old route from the Guide and Acheron about seven miles (N. or N. by W.), brought us to a point where the mountains reduce the valley to a breadth of less than half a mile, and the river bends slightly from the eastward. Above these narrows, which may extend for a mile, the valley again opens, and is about a mile in width, still flat and grassy, although, in the character of its vegetation, showing indications of a high level. We proceeded another four miles (course N. by E.) passing a tributary stream from the N. E., and encamped by the river for the night.

The following day I resolved to devote to exploring on foot, as I was now, but a few miles from the head of the Clarence, and hoped to establish a communication with the source of the Wairau.

In this also I was completely successful; about a mile above our camp a branch of the Clarence joined it rising from a pass or passes bearing N.N.E., and distant about two miles. We took the more easterly one, a low saddle two or three hundred feet high, and of easy ascent, and found that it formed the only separation between

a source of the Clarence and that of the East Wairau.

Standing on this saddle, the Wairau rose at our feet, and flowed through a small valley or mountain hollow. A large round isolated mound, almost filling the head of the glen, marked its source.

After following the stream for rather more than a mile N.N.E., it receives a branch from the west, and turning to the east, runs in about two and a-half miles more into Tarndale. This last two or three miles is rather uneven travelling, as the spurs from the mountains run close down to the river. It is not, however, difficult.

As I have before mentioned, the Wairau enters Tarndale just opposite to the pass from it to the Acheron, and, turning from the valley, penetrates the mass of mountains to the northward.

After looking down into Tarndale, we returned late at night to our camp.

I devoted yet another day to the Clarence valley. Its N.E. branch rises, as I have described, by the S.E. branch of the Wairau.

A N.W. branch shows the appearance of a possible pass to the westward among high and snowy mountains. A ~~course~~ branch flows out of a lake which lies at the foot of the main barrier of mountains. These branches meet, as it were, at the head of the Clarence valley, which opens to receive them.

The lake, Mr. Knight and I had discovered two years ago, from a mountain down the Clarence, and had named it "Lake Tennyson," and a mountain above it, the "Princess;" it lies about a mile and a-half out of the route, and is not readily perceptible from the plane.

It now first burst upon my view from the point of the hill west of the confluence of the branches. Though small, being only about half a mile wide, by a mile and a-half in length, Lake Tennyson, in beauty, far surpasses any thing I have ever seen in New Zealand.

None of the lakes in the Northern Island can, in my opinion, compare to it. It lies in an amphitheatre of lofty peaks, bold in outline, dark in colour, except where brightened by sunlight and relieved by patches of snow scattered in clefts of the rock.

On its banks clumps of birch trees, here and there, hang over the water, or stand grouped over a smooth down, towards a wood, on the left; whilst in front the Clarence, leaving the lake by a pebbly bay, flows away down the level grass plain.

Nothing now remained to induce me to

spend further time in this part of the country. We consequently turned our horses' heads to the southward, set fire to the country behind us, and, passing over Jollie's Pass, reached Stonyhurst Station, on the Hurunui, on the 11th of April, just before bad weather set in, which covered the mountains with snow.

I have little to add to the foregoing epitome of my journal of the two routes, from Tardale.

That by the Clarence is the shorter, by about five miles and the river is the easier to ford; whilst the route by the Acheron is the most perfect level, less stony, and at present has the advantage of having been, for the greater part, cleared by successive fires.

As a pastoral country, I am inclined to prefer the Tardale and Acheron country to that of the Clarence. There is, however, abundance of excellent grass in either; the soil is every where light, and presents more frequently the appearance of pulverized rock, with a remarkable small admixture of vegetable matter.

The mountains throughout the country I traversed seem to be composed of sandstone, clayey slate, or shale, more or less hardened and altered in character by volcanic action. Here and there I saw rocks of basaltic appearance, but I am inclined to believe that the purely volcanic formation rarely exists except in the Kaikora block.

In general, mountains rising to a height of about 2,000 or 3,000 feet above the valleys, are rounded, bare topped, and covered with beds of broken shingle, through which those of greater altitude rear their peaks of rock, the whole presenting the appearance of a country undergoing physical changes.

As a general rule, the sides of the mountains, the lower hills, and the valleys, are covered with grass; the black birch is found on the Clarence and Wairau to a level of about 3,000 feet (as nearly as I can estimate) above the sea; the manuka at a somewhat lesser elevation.

I observed no new plants or shrubs which I had not previously noticed, and the season of the year was unfavourable for such research.

No rare or remarkable birds fell under my observation.

The blue whistling duck that delights in rocky mountain-streams, with the Paradise goose, and an occasional teal or widgeon, formed part of our daily fare; whilst the unsophisticated wood-hen often amused us by pecking and prying, with quaint attitude and curious eye, around our encampments.

Wild dogs appear to abound, especially on the Clarence.

Before I conclude it may not be amiss to mention, that I saw no traces of the earthquakes which have lately been so severely felt in some parts of these islands—another proof of their local nature.

In bringing this report to an end, I may be permitted to express a confident hope, that the easy and direct line of communication now established between Nelson and Canterbury may prove to the advantage of either province.

I have, &c.,

FRED. A. WELD.

Stonyhurst, Hurunui, April 15, 1855.

Provincial Secretary's Office,

Christchurch, July 3rd, 1855.

HIS HONOR THE SUPERINTENDENT directs the following Reports relative to explorations in search of a New Country in the southern portion of this Province, and a Line of Road between the Waimea and the Wairau, be published for general information.

By His Honor's command,

T. B. Keele,

Chief Clerk.

TO THE PROVINCIAL SECRETARY, NELSON.

SIR,—I beg to report to you, for the information of His Honor the Superintendent, the result of the exploration undertaken by me at His Honor's request, in order to examine a tract of country reported by the natives to exist between the head of the Wairau and the southern portions of the province.

I started from Nelson, with my brother-in-law, on Saturday morning, the 7th instant, and reached the Top House, in the Wairau, on the Sunday evening, intending to commence the journey up the river on the following day. The natives who were appointed as my guides, and the European (Mr. Robert Strange) whom I had selected to accompany me, had reached the Top House on Saturday afternoon.

On Monday the 9th, we had heavy rain with wind from the south-west, which detained us at the Top House. The weather cleared towards evening, and we started on Tuesday morning, at 8, a.m.

Our loads were rather heavy, those of the natives in particular, which somewhat exceeded 50lbs., in consequence of their taking a stock of useless clothing.

We attempted to enter the bush at the head of the Reserve, but found a deep swampy creek in front of it, after floundering in which for some time, we made for the banks of the river.

These we pursued, without incident of any kind, for about 9 miles, when we camped, the natives feeling fatigued from their day's work.

The night was frosty and exceedingly cold; the thermometer, at half-past 6, on the Wednesday morning, ranged no higher than 33 deg.

We broke camp on Wednesday, at 8, a.m. Weather cloudy, with wind from north-west; Mount Cashel, at the top of the valley, bearing very nearly due south, which course we followed for about 10 miles, when we camped in the same spot on which Messrs. Weld and Clifford (whose track we had closely followed during the whole day) had previously rested. The wind shifted to the south-east in the evening, and during the night we had heavy rain, with occasional showers of sleet, the thermometer, at 8, p.m., standing at 38 deg.

The rain and sleet continued during the whole of the next day (Thursday), and we found that during the night the mountains around had become entirely covered with snow.

We remained in camp until Friday, the 13th, when the weather having cleared, we started at half-past 7, our course being about south-east to the foot of Mount Cashel, and from thence nearly south towards a spur of the Turk Mountain, where the river forks.

One branch here flows from the south-west for about 5 miles, which was called by the natives the Kopiwemuku, and the other from the south-east. I was informed that the Kopiwemuku takes its rise in mountains in the neighbourhood of the Rotorua.

At the foot of Mount Cashel we struck another camp of Messrs. Weld and Clifford, which, from its short distance from their last, I imagined was chosen as a central spot, from which they diverged for purposes of observation.

From the fork we followed the south-eastern branch of the river (which still retained the name of the Wairau) for about a mile and a half, beyond which it flows through a rocky cañon for nearly three-quarters of a mile in a general westerly direction.

We found the passage through this cañon somewhat difficult travelling, having to ford the river many times in order to avail ourselves of the best track through it. We camped at about 5, p.m., on a peninsula of rock jutting from the southern slopes of Mangerton Mountain, perpendicularly to the course of the river.

The night was excessively cold, the thermometer at 5 o'clock on the Saturday morning, being 30 $\frac{1}{2}$ deg. We left camp on the Saturday, at 8, a.m., and, still following the course of the river in a south-easterly direction for about 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles, we reached low undulating ground, but proceeded 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles further along the banks

of the river, until we found it running through a valley between high rocky mountains having a W.S.W. direction, the course of the river being about E.N.E.

At the point at which it turned, we crossed some low grassy banks, the summit level of which above the river bed, could not exceed 70 to 80 feet, and found ourselves upon a small plain, which (with the surrounding district) was called by the natives the Rangitahi or Ngatitahi.

We proceeded down the plain for about 4 miles, intending to camp as quickly as possible, as there was every appearance of wet.

Whilst preparing to camp, a strong south-east gale commenced, bringing with it heavy showers of snow, which fell so fast as to cover the ground to the depth of five inches in less than two hours.

Finding it impossible, in consequence of the violence of the storm, to set the tents, being entirely without firewood, and the cold being intense, we re-packed, and determined (although then after 4 o'clock, p.m.) to retrace our course to a spot where we had rested at mid-day, and at which we had found some dry wild Irishman.

This place my brother-in-law and myself reached about 6 o'clock, the darkness being only relieved by the snow on the ground; and after considerable trouble (having in fact to cut the driest pieces of wood we could find into shavings) we succeeded in building a fire. Strange and the natives came up some time after; one of the latter having shown strong signs of giving out, was with great difficulty prevented from lying down in the snow.

Being still unable to set our tents, we spread them over our blankets, and the following morning they were frozen as hard as boards.

On the Sunday morning, after thawing the tents, &c., before the fire, and finding the weather very treacherous and bitterly cold, we determined on returning to our camp in the cañon, where there was abundance of firewood. This we reached about 2 o'clock in the day, the snow resting so thickly on the ground, and more particularly on the grassy parts and on those spots where we had to make our way through wild Irishman, &c., as much to impede us.

I had begun to suspect, from the very unsatisfactory replies given to my questions by the native, Napera, that he was not too well acquainted with the road; but in the course of the Monday afternoon he positively and earnestly assured me that, by the road he proposed following, we should reach Kaiapoï in three or four days.

Relying upon his repeated assurances to this effect, I determined, notwithstanding the unpleasant nature of the weather, and

that the mountains were completely covered with snow, to make an effort to get across them to Port Cooper, intending to return to Nelson by one of the steamers.

We accordingly devoted the morning of Monday, the 16th (which was very fine and sunshiny), to preparing food for four days, so that no future delay need occur from the necessity of cooking provisions.

We resumed our journey at 10, a.m., and followed our previous course along the Rangitahi plain, down which we proceeded south-east for about five and a-half miles, when we passed a small river flowing across the plain in a north-easterly direction, to the foot of a block of hills called by me the Alma Heights.

Here it is joined by another small river, flowing from the N.E., and the course of both then becomes about S.S.W., curving gradually more to the west at the base of a range of high grassy hills.

We camped about two miles beyond the point at which we passed the river, at the foot of a long spur of the Inkerman Range, distinguished by a very peculiar square block of rock on the summit of the first point of the ascent.

Next morning, following the guidance of Napera, to which I implicitly submitted, according to His Honor's restrictions, but against my own judgment, which inclined me to follow the course of the river, we ascended the Inkerman Range (by the spur above alluded to) until we reached a height computed by me at 6,000 to 6,400 feet.

This point we reached about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and then, for the first time, Napera thought proper to inform me that, as the mountains were so entirely covered with snow, he could not find his way.

Seeing the impossibility (from the quantity of snow) of proceeding across the mountains, and finding the weather still very uncertain, I at once determined on returning to Nelson.

I was the more fixed in this determination by the supposition that Messrs. Weld and Clifford had already followed down the course of the river above mentioned, and that it would be a useless expenditure of time and money to go over any more of the ground which they had already traversed.

In accordance with this determination, we at once retraced our steps, and reached Mr. David Kerr's, on Thursday evening, the 19th, about 6 o'clock, p.m. Thus, leaving the summit of the Inkerman Range at 3 o'clock, we reached our Saturday night's camp at half-past 5, from whence we walked to Mr. D. Kerr's (a distance of not less than 39 miles), without fatigue, in two days, although it had taken us, when accompanied by the natives, four

days and a-half to travel over the same ground.

Having thus given you an outline of our journey, I now beg to offer some remarks on the ground we went over.

The river Wairau, from the entrance of the bush above the Top House flat to its junction with the Kopiowenuku, at the base of Turk Mountain, has level banks on both sides, extending in some places upwards of a quarter of a mile to the foot of the mountain ranges through which it flows. These banks are old boulder bars, above the reach of floods, and afford very good travelling. They are mostly covered with grass, wild Irishman, and scrub, although in some few places they are swampy, and in others the bush extends to the very edge of the river.

In one place, on the right bank, about nine miles up, the river flows at the foot of a very steep hill covered with wood, but the opposite bank is perfectly level, and for the most part open.

At a point about 14 miles up, the river falls with great rapidity for about 600 yards through immense boulders of rock, and the bush extends to the very margin of the banks.

But I see nothing to prevent a perfectly easy road, either bridle or dray, from being made from the entrance of the bush to Turk Mountain at a very trifling outlay, the principal work necessary being to clear scrub and to cut a few drains.

From the banks at the foot of the northern slope of Turk Mountain, the river flows through a rocky cañon between Turk and Mangerton for about three-quarters of a mile, where some small amount of quarrying and blasting would be necessary, but nothing which would entail very heavy cost.

Beyond the eastern end of the cañon to the Rangitahi plain, the banks of the river are perfectly open, and the expense of making a road would be trifling, although perhaps for three or four miles it would exceed the expense of a road below Turk Mountain.

Over the Rangitahi plain and the lateral valleys a horse might be galloped.

From the summit of the Inkerman range, a very extensive view is obtained.

The country to the south-east appears to consist of parallel chains of grassy mountains, attaining an elevation of 1,800 to 2,000 feet above the level of the plain, and curving gradually from north-west round to south-west.

To the north-east, at a distance of about 18 miles, a river was seen, flowing through a valley surrounded on all sides, except the north-west, with grassy hills, some parts of which were very little above the level of the valley.

From the distance, it was impossible to say what the course of the river was, but I conjectured it to be (from its position) the head waters of the Branch.

Beyond the low hills, at the south-east end of the valley last referred to, to the horizon, no higher ground was seen.

Further to the eastward, at a distance of about 40 miles, high rocky mountains were seen, covered with snow, which I supposed to be the inland Kaikoras.

From the north, round to north-west, nothing was seen but the high peaks of the rocky mountains through which the Wairau flows, attaining to the north-west and west-north-west a very considerable elevation—assumed by me at little under 7,500 to 8,000 feet.

The country from the north-north-east round by eastward to south-west within the boundaries above mentioned, was fairly grassed, but distinguished by an almost total absence of wood, which is only found in the gullies and small valleys in the rocky mountains. These may however be reached with drays from almost any part of the district.

The tract appeared to me to contain not less than 200,000 acres, available as useful cattle feeding country.

In conclusion, I beg to state that, from observation, as well as from the assurances of the natives since my return, I am satisfied that the country I went in search of does exist; but I recommend that any further exploration should be deferred until a more seasonable period of the year.

I believe that, instead of crossing the Rangitahi, we ought to have continued up the Wairau River for about 13 miles, and then crossed the range on the left bank, in a south-west direction, which would have brought us to the head waters of the Wai-au-toa, in a valley called the Maunga Tawai.

I have supposed that the river flowing at the south-eastern end of the Rangitahi plain joins the Wai-au-toa, but my want of knowledge of the country beyond what I actually saw, gives a colour of greater uncertainty to all my conjectures in these respects.

I have enclosed a sketch of the course of the Wairau, &c.; showing the route I followed.

I have not expatiated on the picturesque and beautiful character of much of the scenery through which I passed, as I believe this report will be looked on rather in an utilitarian than in any other point of view; but I may say, that to the lover of scenery bold and beautiful, of

rough rocks,
And quarries whose heads touch heaven;—

a visit to the Rangitahi would not be time lost, or labour misspent.

I have, &c.

WILLIAM THOMAS LOCKE TRAVERS.
Nelson, 25th April, 1855.

P.S. As a few words on the geology of the district may not be unacceptable, I beg to add, that the mountains are composed of highly crystalline schist, in which are found veins of porphyry and quartz; but, although I searched with some diligence, I did not succeed in finding any trace of metallic minerals, or anything to indicate their probable existence, except in one part of the Inkerman range, where a black killas, containing a good deal of hornblende, was found in contact with veins of quartz. Whether this killas indicates the presence of any metallic mineral, or not, I cannot say. The prevailing rock is exceedingly hard, and the summits of the mountains, covered with sharp-pointed angular masses of rock, present very much the appearance of a gigantic cross-cut saw.

