



NEW ZEALAND
GOVERNMENT GAZETTE,
(PROVINCE OF NELSON).

PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY.

All Public Notifications which appear in this Gazette, with any Official Signature thereunto annexed, are to be considered as Official Communications made to those Persons to whom they may relate.

By his Honor's command,

S. L. MULLER, *Provincial Secretary.*

VOL. III.

NELSON, SATURDAY, MAY 26, 1855.

No. 8.

Provincial Secretary's Office,
Nelson, May 25, 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,
S. L. MULLER,
Provincial Secretary.

REPORT OF AN EXPEDITION WITH A
VIEW TO THE DISCOVERY OF A DIRECT
LINE OF ROUTE BETWEEN NELSON AND
CANTERBURY.

TO THE PROVINCIAL SECRETARY, PROVINCE OF
NELSON.

SIR—I have the honour 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 the 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 hills 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 from 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 on 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 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 and 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 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 Knikoras 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 bonds, 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 Tarndale.

I gave the name of Tarndale 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 Dashwood's Waihopi and Acheron Pass, is penetrated, as I have already described, by the upper

Provincial Secretary's Office,
Nelson, May 25, 1855.

TENDERS will be received on or before the 30th of June, from persons desirous of contracting to execute any of the following WORKS:—

To keep the Waimca Road in a good state of repair, at per mile, from the bridge at Ellis's to Dartnall's corner, Richmond, for a period of two years, from the 1st of July, 1855.

To keep the road through Maddox's Bush in a good state of repair, at per mile, from Ladley's Bridge at the end of 40 Line, to Plank's, for a period of two years, from the 1st of July, 1855.

To keep the Suburban North Road in a good state of repair, at per mile, from the town of Nelson to Mr. Wells' iron gate, for a period of six months, from the 1st of July, 1855.

To keep the Suburban North Road in a good state of repair, at per mile, from Mr. Wells' iron gate to the end of Black Road, for a period of six months, from the 1st of July, 1855.

Tenders will be received for portions of the above works.

Specifications of the above works may be seen on application at the Public Works Office.

By his Honor's command,
S. L. MULLER,
Provincial Secretary.

COLONIAL BANK OF ISSUE.

TOTAL Amount of Notes in circulation at the Office of the Colonial Bank of Issue,

at Auckland, on the 28th day of April, 1855, being the close of the preceding four weeks.

£5 and upwards £6,525
Under £5 4,125

TOTAL . . . £10,650

Total Amount of Coin held by the same Office on the same day.

Gold £4,013
Silver 21

TOTAL . . . £4,034

I, Alexander Shepherd, the Colonial Treasurer, do hereby certify that the above is a true account, as required by the Ordinance, No. 16, Session VIII.

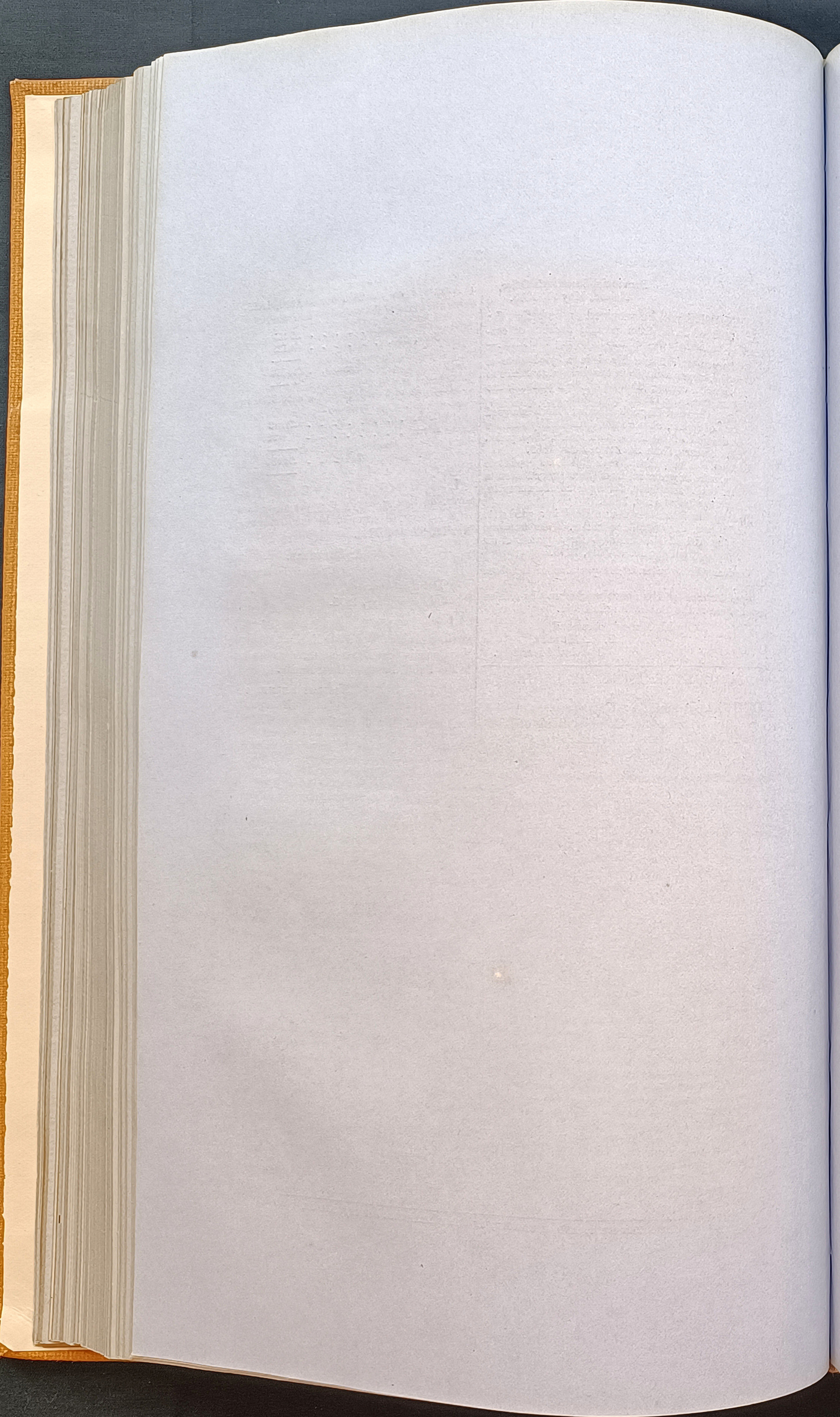
A. SHEPHERD,
Colonial Treasurer.

Dated at Auckland,
this 3rd day of May, 1855.

The sum of Six Thousand Pounds (£6,000) sterling has been remitted to England, through the Commissariat Department, for investment in the Public Funds of Great Britain.

WILLIAM HULME,
Manager.

Auckland, May 3, 1855.



Wairau. The hills around Tarndale are generally grassy, the highest being bare-topped and shingly, especially on the south and west sides.

The valley itself averages a mile, or 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 Tarndale is undoubtedly the little lakes, or "Tarns," from which I derived its name. They are or 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 sedg 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 (Tapuacenuku, 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 more 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 Tarndale, 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'Cabe, who had reached the preconcerted 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 of it deflected slightly to the eastward of the direct course, and as Tarndale was probably by a few miles nearer to the Clarence than to the Acheron, I 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 "Barefall," and we then followed the ordinary

route to the junction of the Acheron with the Clarence (Waiantou).

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 10 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 Tunkuka, 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 Flaxbourne, and Mr. M'Cabe and myself rode on up the Clarence (Waiantou).

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 Waiantou, 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 centre 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 plain.

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 Tairādale.

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 more perfectly 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 Tairādale 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 most frequently the appearance of pulverized rock, with a remarkably 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 a basaltic appearance, but I am inclined to believe that the purely volcanic formation rarely exists except in the Kaikōra 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, Nelson,
May 25, 1855.

TENDERS will be received at this Office until the 11th of June next, from persons desirous of contracting to execute any of the following **WORKS** :—

To supply Sawn Timber, to be delivered at the House on Acre No. 662—Red Pine or Totara, at per hundred feet, White Pine, at per hundred feet.

To make certain alterations in the House on Acre 662, to adapt it to the purposes of a Lunatic Asylum.

To gravel part of Waimea Road, near Cling's and Captain Nicholson's.

To gravel about 15 chains of the Suburban North Road, near Bungate's.

Specifications of the above Works may be seen on application at the Public Works Office.

By his Honor's command,

S. L. MULLER,

Provincial Secretary.

Provincial Secretary's Office,
Nelson, May 25, 1855.

TENDERS will be received at this office until the 30th of June, from persons desirous of contracting to execute any of the following **WORKS** :—

To supply sawn timber, for additions to the Nelson Gaol, to be delivered on the premises—red pine and totara, at per hundred feet; white pine, do.
To build a new wooden house for the gaoler, also a large common room for prisoners, and to make various alterations in the present gaol.

Plans and specifications of the above works may be seen on application at the Public Works Office, on or after the 4th June.

By his Honor's command,

S. L. MULLER.

Provincial Secretary.