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ALFRED GREENFIELD, Provincial Secretary.

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Superintendent's Office,  
Nelson, October 25th, 1869.

THE SUPERINTENDENT directs the publication of the following Report for general information.

ALFRED GREENFIELD,  
Provincial Secretary.

REPORT ON THE QUARTZ REEF FOUND  
IN THE WANGAPEKA DISTRICT.

NELSON, October 23rd, 1869.

THE PROVINCIAL SECRETARY, NELSON.

SIR,—In answer to your letter, dated October 14th, I beg to report, for the information of his Honor the Superintendent, that I have visited the quartz reef lately discovered in the Wangapeka district.

On the 18th instant, I wrote a hurried note, giving an outline of the real facts of the case; and

as I have seen no reason since to alter any of the statements made in that note, I will embody it in this report to avoid recapitulation:—

“To his Honor the SUPERINTENDENT, Nelson.

“SIR,—As I have a chance of sending to Nelson, I will write a few lines, merely to say that I have seen the reef, which appears to be about two and a-half or three feet thick, running N.N.W., and dipping about 80 degrees to the east. In many places you can see the gold with the naked eye; and before I had been there more than a few minutes, I succeeded in getting a very nice specimen from the solid reef, which I will bring to Nelson. Of course I cannot say whether this is sufficient to pay for working, as a very small part of it has been opened, and I suppose nothing but actual mining will prove it. However, of this there is no doubt—it is a gold-bearing reef, and crops out in a gully about 800 feet above Blue Creek, and runs almost in the same direction, so that it will be easily worked by tunneling from the steep hill-side, without sinking shafts. There is water-power to drive any quantity of

machinery, and, if sufficiently rich, doubtless it will be worked extensively. There is another reef, about fifty yards from the large one, and apparently running in the same direction, but whether it is gold-bearing or not, I cannot say, as it has not been broken into.

"I only arrived here a few hours ago, and have had a very little chance of examining anything; but I thought it would be satisfactory to you to hear from me by the earliest possible chance, particularly as my examination so far is exceedingly satisfactory. I will spend another day or two, and then return if nothing further turns up.

"I have, &c.,

"JAMES BURNETT.

"Blue Creek, October 18, 1869."

With the kind assistance of Mr. George Sinclair, I have compiled a rough sketch map of the district, from the junction of Rolling River with the Wangapeka, to the outcrop of the reef on Culleford's claim between Blue Creek and Nuggety Creek, (marked B on the plan and section). It must be remembered that this plan is only intended to give an idea of the nature of the country and the position of the reef, and must not be supposed to be accurate in details, though the general features are sufficiently correct to illustrate this report. I regret, exceedingly, that I did not take an Aneroid Barometer, so as to ascertain the height of the outcrop of the reef above the level of the creek; the 800 feet put down by me being merely a guess.

It will be seen from the plan and section, that two reefs crop out in a small gully on a very steep hillside, forming a spur between Blue Creek and Nuggety Creek; so far as I can judge, the direction is a few degrees to the West of true North, and as it has been struck in two or three places there will be no difficulty in ascertaining the general bearing when a proper survey is made of the district.

A short distance up Nuggety Creek a large quartz reef crops out very much resembling the one on the hill, and apparently running nearly in the same direction; so I have presumed that it is the same, and, on this presumption, have drawn the supposed continuation of the reef to the Wangapeka river, that is if it runs in the same straight line, which of course is uncertain. On the section, I have presumed that the reef continues down to the level of the creek, at the same angle as it shows itself on the surface; possibly this may be the case, and possibly it may be lost a few feet below where it is visible; in short it requires to be proved. All that we at present know is, that two reefs exist, one of which I am certain contains a considerable quantity of gold; and the other is said also to be gold-bearing, and I do not doubt it, though I have not actually seen it in the solid reef.

From its position, as seen on the section, the reef can be very easily worked by driving from the steep hillside; and till it gets down to the level of the creek (if it can be traced so far) no machinery will be required for pumping water, or raising material. At the same time it will require much judgment and discretion to lay off the various claims in such a way that the natural advantages of the situation may be secured; and that no artificial obstacles shall be created by the conflicting interests of the various claimants. Of course this can only be done after a careful and accurate survey has been made of the natural features of the locality; particularly of the land between Blue Creek and Nuggety Creek, showing the actual position of the outcrop of the reef as

far as it can be traced, and its perpendicular height above those creeks. And as the ground is exceedingly rough, and difficult to survey, a moderately accurate plan will of course be expensive; and yet it is absolutely necessary, as it is quite possible that parts of this land may be enormously valuable, and an inaccurate survey might cause endless litigation. I have myself known a case on the West Coast where a discrepancy of four inches on the boundary line of a small claim was made a ground of action for heavy damages; and three surveys were made before the boundary line was fixed, and legal action taken in the matter. While on this question, allow me to suggest the propriety of surveying from the junction of the Wangapeka and Rolling river to the quartz reef; and also a few miles up the Wangapeka itself, in short, to get a correct plan of the district shown on my sketch.

Of course it is not within my province to comment on the complications which have unfortunately occurred between the purchasers of land supposed to contain this quartz reef and the men who have actually pegged off claims on the ground, where it is either known or expected to exist; but I may mention that, owing to the peculiarity of the position of the ground, it is quite possible that the claims may be selected in such a way that few, if any, of the claimants may reap any advantage from the ground which they now fondly hope and expect to be the foundation of enormous fortunes. And this I say, even supposing the reef to turn out as rich as the most sanguine could anticipate, at all events many will find that the blocks purchased or taken up by them are not worth the purchase money and cost of survey, which will necessarily be considerable. My reason for forming such a strong opinion on this point, is that quartz reefs can only be worked with a considerable amount of capital, so that in most cases the parties interested must form companies before they can even commence operations, and as most of the individual claims do not possess within themselves all the advantages which would justify the expenditure of a large capital they must remain unworked, unless some arrangement can be made to combine, and make use of the natural advantages of the situation.

In my opinion, the best thing to do under the circumstances will be for all the parties interested to unite and form a large company, to test the real value of the reef in any part of it which may be thought advisable, each one sinking his individual interest in exchange for shares in a large undertaking, which will test the value of the discovery, at a very trifling cost to each; and which, if successful, will secure him a share in the profits such as he could not expect to have from one of a number of small companies, working under disadvantages, local and otherwise, which will not be felt by a large concern enjoying the combined advantages which might be secured by an amalgamation of interests. Whether such an amalgamation is possible under the circumstances is exceedingly doubtful; but without something of the kind, I feel certain that most of those interested will never receive the value of the money paid in purchasing and surveying, or the time spent in shepherding their claims.

It is very probable that more reefs will be found in this district, as quartz may be picked up in almost every stream; and small strings and leaders are seen in every direction; but owing to the very rough nature of the country, and the dense bush, it is exceedingly difficult to follow any indications which may be discovered.

I may mention that the whole country, from the Wangapeka Plain to the reef, (about thirteen miles,) and to the snow line on the mountains, is bush. There are several patches of fine flat land suitable for agricultural purposes; and at the junction of the Rolling River there is a good site for a township; and at the junction of Blue Creek and Nuggety Creek, quite sufficient flat land for quartz crushing machines and workmens' houses.

Water-power to almost any extent, may be obtained by going a very short distance up either Blue Creek or Nuggety Creek, as the fall is very rapid and the volume of water considerable. Indeed at present there is sufficient water brought down for digging purposes, to drive heavy machinery.

With regard to roads I may say that nothing is required from Nelson to the Motueka River, except some slight repairs up Norrice's Gully, leading to Spooner's Range. But the road from the Motueka to the Tadmor, though at present pretty good, requires a thick coat of metal for about three miles; if this is done at once it will be a road capable of bearing heavy traffic; but if the heavy traffic comes upon it before it is metalled, it will be almost impossible to make it good. The road over the Tadmor hill also requires metalling, but as at the Nelson side it is exceedingly steep, it would be scarcely wise to go to any expense in that way till it is reformed and the gradients eased, as has been most successfully done on the other side by the District Road Board, from the Chairman of which I am the bearer of a letter to the Superintendent asking for assistance to enable them to do what is necessary to put the roads into such a condition as to bear the heavy traffic which may be anticipated. From the Tadmor hill over the Wangapeka plain little is required till the road enters the bush, thirteen miles from Blue Creek, and about forty-seven miles from Nelson, and here the cart road ends. From this point to the junction of the Rolling river, ten miles, there is nothing to prevent a good and moderately level cart road being formed, at no great expense, except at one or two places where there would be some heavy rock cutting for a short distance. Up Rolling river to Blue Creek, about two and a-half miles, the hills came pretty close to the river, so that heavy side cutting will be required most of the distance, still there is no obstacle of any consequence; and I see no reason why a good cart road should not be made from the Wangapeka plain to Blue Creek, for the average cost of such roads through the bush in this Province.

The whole distance from Nelson is about 60 miles, namely:—

26	miles	first-rate	Cart Road
14	"	moderate	"
4	"	very moderate	"
3	"	bad	"
—			
47	miles		
10	"	good bush	Horse Road
3	"	moderate	"
—			
60	miles.		

The above is merely a rough estimate.

It might be well to consider whether, instead of making a cart road up the Wangapeka, a light tramway like the Dun Mountain might not be constructed at a moderate price; wooden rails could be used in the first place. Should a tramway be made, it would be necessary to bridge the River Dart, which would not be needed for a cart road at present. It is quite unnecessary here to enter into the comparative merits of cart roads and tramways, but as one or the other will probably be required, it is worth thinking about.

Possibly the new wire railway might be sufficient for the ordinary traffic, but as heavy machinery will be required for quartz crushing, the wires will not be strong enough to carry it.

With regard to heavy machinery, of course it cannot be taken up till there is something better than a horse road.

It would be most satisfactory if a few tons, an average sample of both reefs, could be procured at two or three different places and sent to Nelson to be tested, it could easily be brought down by the return pack-horses and drags, and some simple machine for crushing it might be improvised here, so that it could be tested under our own eyes, and not sent elsewhere. For before going to the heavy expense, both public and private, which will be necessary to erect machinery on the spot, it would be well to ascertain, definitely, whether there is a reasonable chance of permanent success, of which I trust there is little doubt.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

JAMES BURNETT.

P.S.—I have neglected to mention that a ferry over the Motueka River is very much needed, as at present there is no chance of foot passengers crossing when the river is a little flooded.