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PRELIMINARY REPORT ON JANE RIVER GOLDFIELD.

GENERAL.

On the 7th August last, after a prospecting campaign extending over five months, R. Warne discovered payable gold in a small creek heading from the Western foothills of Algonkian Mountain, and flowing to Jane River. After pegging a Reward Claim of 20 acres in extent, together with two other areas of 20 acres and 10 acres respectively, the finder obtained 14 ozs. of gold over a period of 5 days from the small creek on the Reward Claim. Later 29 oz. were won during a fortnight's work. Numerous miners have since made their way to the field, and at the present time 33 men are mining and prospecting for gold in the vicinity of the original discovery.

LOCATION and ACCESS.

Jane River gold-field is situated on the western foothills of Algonkian Mountain at 1½ miles east of Jane River, in the middle western part of the State.

Access at present is gained by means of a foot track 22 miles in length and connecting with the West Coast Road at 3/4 of a mile west of Stonehaven Creek, about 12¼ miles from Hobart. The track was cut out by piners operating on Huon-pine beds at Jane River and is most unsuitable for access to the gold-field. Very little attempt was made to obtain suitable grades for the track and numerous streams, including 4 rivers, have to be crossed along the route. It is necessary to negotiate the rivers 10 times, and as the waters rise rapidly during rainy periods it is impossible to cross them when in flood. Men have been held up for as long as ten days in the areas between rivers, and considering that all food has to be man-packed the problem is a serious one.

Across Franklin River, which is the largest stream, a wire walk has been constructed, but the remaining streams are crossed at normal water levels by means of logs. The track has been so cut up by miners walking along it that it now resembles a quagmire along much of the route.

Over Mt. Mullens and Staff Hill to the south of Calder Pass the grades are exceptionally steep and the miners have great difficulty in climbing these heights when packed with provisions etc.

GEOLOGY.

A narrow belt of rocks, about 1½ miles wide, of probably Silurian age extends for several miles in a longitudinal direction through the area. These rocks consist of sandstone, slate, dolomite and breccia conglomerate.

Chloritic, sericite, and quartz sericite schists of Pre-Cambrian age extend over large areas and border the Silurian rocks on the east and west sides of that belt.

Recent alluvium in the form of angular to slightly water-worn gravels, together with sands and clays, extend along the courses of the streams. No igneous rocks have been disclosed in the area.

ECONOMIC GEOLOGY.

(a) Primary Deposits:

Minute quartz veins and bunches of quartz traverse both the Silurian and Pre-Cambrian series of rocks in the District. No economic minerals have yet been disclosed in close connection with the quartz. In a number of places outcrops of iron oxide have been located. These may represent gossanous cappings of sulphide lodes, but are probably simple impregnations of the country rock by oxide of iron solutions.

The creeks draining the areas in the immediate vicinity of some of the iron oxide outcrops have been tested for gold but up to date no metal has proved to be shed from them. Gold was not visible in those occurrences of iron oxide deposits examined. In the reward claim creek alluvial gold has been proved to exist up stream as far as the east boundary of the 20 acres reward, as originally applied for. Beyond this point, to the east, gold cannot be located in the creek. This fact suggests that the gold has been shed from a reef or formation near the locality at which it ceases to exist in the alluvials. Owing to a heavy covering of rotting vegetation, peat, and thick undergrowth, no outcrops are here visible and until this area can be cleared by fires and the bedrock exposed by alluvial workings there will be little opportunity of disclosing any possible reefs or veins at this point.

(b) Alluvial Deposits:

Approximately 100 ounces of gold have been won during recent months, and all of this has been obtained from alluvial deposits along the courses of streams. Alluvial gold exists in several creeks in the vicinity of the reward claim. Six small creeks are being, or have been, worked for their gold content. Although each of these streams have proved more or less payable, the small creek flowing through the reward claim, and to the west thereof, appears to be the only one containing an unusually rich deposit. In the workings on reward claim the creek alluvium is 2'6" deep. The top 18" consists of dark coloured loam containing small pieces of quartz and the lower 12" is made up of angular quartz of 1½" average size, together with a little sand and clay.

About 40 cubic yards of material has been worked here for a yield of 45 ounces of gold, so that on a conservative basis the ground may be said to produce an ounce of gold to the cubic yard.

Lower down the same creek where the stream bed has been pegged by miners right claims, the deposit varies from 3 feet to 16 feet in depth, and is gold bearing in varying degrees throughout its length. In one of these claims an ounce of gold per day is being

obtained in washing by means of prospecting dish.

The gravels of other creeks being worked in the vicinity have all proved to be shallow.

The gold is generally of a coarse, sharp nature and in only a few instances is slightly waterworn. The largest gold nugget was found by P. Hartnett on his claim in the reward creek, and weighed 17 dwts. 21 grs. Several other nuggets weighing up to 7 dwts. have also been won.

The streams worked have only small catchment areas and water for sluicing purposes is scarce. Some small dams have been constructed in the creek beds and others are in the course of erection, but it is doubtful whether these will be adequate for continuous sluicing, particularly during summer months. The present methods of working the deposits are by means of sluice boxes and prospecting dishes.

EXTENSION OF THE FIELD.

Although very little prospecting is being attempted outside the small area in close proximity to the reward claim, promising gold prospects are said to have been secured in several places as far as 7 miles to the south of the workings in the direction of Lancelot Hill, and 4 miles to the south-east at the western edge of Prince of Wales Range.

CONCLUSION.

Payable alluvial gold is being won over a small area from the beds of several creeks flowing to Jane River from Algonkian Mountain. Thirty-three miners have won approximately 100 ounces of gold, 45 ounces of which were secured by R. Warne from the reward claim. Gold bearing veins or reefs have not yet been discovered. The field generally is still in the early stages of development and intensive prospecting to the south and south-east of the workings will in all probability disclose other areas containing payable gold.

ACCESS RECOMMENDATIONS.

The greatest difficulty being experienced at present is the unsuitability of access to the field, thereby restraining the development of the district.

By adhering to the present general line of route it would be possible to avoid crossing Jane River, but for a pack-track it would still be necessary to bridge Franklin River, Lodden River and Erebus Rivulet. The two latter streams have open valleys and when in flood spread out from their normal beds and cover wide areas adjacent to the banks. The construction of bridges and approaches would be most expensive and it is doubtful whether they would survive heavy flood waters carrying logs etc. The route would also entail over 10 miles of cording across boggy plains and much sideling cutting over Mt. Mullens and elsewhere.

After considering all facts it is recommended that the present route be abandoned and that an officer of the Public Works Department, experienced in track forming, be instructed to investigate and, if possible, mark out a suitable route for a pack-track to the field.

The most likely route appears to commence from the West Coast Road at a point about one mile east of King William Saddle (113 miles from Hobart). Thence follow southerly the western fall of King William Range and westerly and south-westerly around the head-waters of Surprise River to gain the valley of Erebus Rivulet. The latter could then be followed southerly to the gold-field. No large bridges would be necessary along this suggested route.

(Sgd.) F. Blake.
ACTING GOVERNMENT GEOLOGIST.

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