

1854-5.

VICTORIA.

NORTH AUSTRALIAN
EXPLORING EXPEDITION.

COPY CORRESPONDENCE.

LAI'D UPON THE COUNCIL TABLE BY THE COLONIAL SECRETARY,
BY COMMAND OF
HIS EXCELLENCY THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR,
AND
ORDERED BY THE COUNCIL TO BE PRINTED.

6th February, 1855.

By Authority :

JOHN FERRES, GOVERNMENT PRINTER, MELBOURNE.

CORRESPONDENCE.

His Grace the Duke of Newcastle to His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor.

Downing Street,
31st August, 1854.

SEPARATE.]

SIR,

I transmit to you copy of a despatch which I have addressed to the Governor of Western Australia, with its enclosures, containing the appointment of Mr. A. C. Gregory to command an intended expedition to explore the interior of Australia from its Northern shores.

2. It would have been far more satisfactory if a project on so great a scale could have been concerted by Her Majesty's Government with the several local governments of the Australian Colonies. But the despatch to Governor FitzGerald explains at length the difficulties and delays which have been encountered even in forming it, and the correspondence required for such a concert as this would have unavoidably protracted the undertaking beyond all reasonable time.

3. It appeared to them better that the Expedition should be at once undertaken by the home authorities, and application made to Parliament for the necessary funds. But in taking this resolution they confidently relied on the willingness of the several Provincial Governments and Legislatures to co-operate towards so great an object, whether by furnishing suggestions for its execution or contributing to its assistance in any of the modes which local experience will fully suggest, and to which I need only advert in a general manner.

4. You will, therefore, bring the consideration of the subject before your Council at the earliest possible opportunity.

5. Sir Charles Fitz Roy has been instructed to communicate to you at once the intelligence of the arrival of Mr. Gregory at Sydney. You will on your part address to Sir Charles Fitz Roy any communications you may from time to time have to make on the subject of the Expedition, sending duplicates to the Secretary for the Colonies.

I have, &c.,

(Signed)

NEWCASTLE.

Lieutenant Governor
Sir Charles Hotham, K.C.B.,
&c., &c., &c.,
Victoria.

[ENCLOSURE.]

Downing Street,
31st August, 1854.

SEPARATE.]

SIR,

You will probably have been rendered aware by the reports of the Parliamentary Debates of last Session and from other sources, that Her Majesty's Government have been long considering the project of dispatching an exploring expedition to lay open, if favoured with success, more of the interior of the great Australian continent than the many energetic but partial attempts hitherto made, have succeeded in developing.

2. This scheme originated with the Council of the Geographical Society, who corresponded with the Colonial department on the subject of it during last winter. But it was ultimately considered by Her Majesty's Government, that the importance of the subject rendered it more advisable that the Expedition should be undertaken under their own superintendence, and as a matter of public concern; and Parliament has now placed at their disposal a sum of £5,000 for the purpose, and will undoubtedly give further assistance if it should be requisite.

3. Great difficulties however have presented themselves as to the necessary arrangements. The hostilities in which this country is involved, have necessarily directed the time and thoughts not of Her Majesty's Government only, but also of many of those whose professional knowledge and experience might have been of the greatest assistance in another direction. Of the distinguished Australian explorers now in this country, some are incapacitated by reason of health, and others by the circumstance of their services being required in other directions, from taking the command.

4. It would be however a subject of great regret if, now that the money has been voted and preparations partially made, the Expedition was not able to start at the best period for commencing operations next year, which on the northern coast of Australia seems generally thought to be from February to April.

5. I subjoin copies of certain portions of the correspondence which took place early in the present year between the Colonial department and Captain Stokes and Mr. Sturt, who were consulted in order to obtain the benefit of their advice, and the former of whom I had at one time hoped to secure for the command of the Expedition.

6. You will collect from these documents that the general views of those who have considered the subject appear to be, that Moreton Bay would be a convenient rendezvous for the land portion of the Expedition—that they might then be conveyed by sea to the mouth of the Victoria River, on the north-west coast—that it would be advantageous, if possible, that they should act in concert with a Government vessel, which might be employed in surveying operations in the Gulf of Carpentaria and neighbourhood, while the land explorers were engaged in the interior.

7. Her Majesty's Government are, however, fully aware that such projects, especially where they involve so much of combination, can only be submitted generally to the heads of such an expedition, to whom great latitude must be left as to the mode of carrying his instructions into execution.

8. They have now come to the determination of offering the command of the Land Expedition to Mr. A. C. Gregory, Assistant Surveyor in Western Australia. They have been induced to take this course both by the very high testimonials which have been given to the abilities and fitness of this gentleman for the purpose, by such authorities as they have been able to consult in England, and also by your own report concerning him, particularly that contained in your despatch of 6th June, 1852.

9. Should Mr. Gregory accept this charge, which, I trust, notwithstanding its arduous and responsible nature, you will find him ready to do, it is the wish of Her Majesty's Government that, without writing for further instructions, he should proceed immediately to Sydney, where he will find such instructions awaiting him, and where his party will be organised.

10. You are authorised to supply Mr. Gregory with the necessary funds for this purpose, which will be repaid to the local Government from the Commissariat chest.

11. If you are aware of any persons in your Government well qualified and willing to serve under Mr. Gregory in subordinate capacities, or if he has himself any assistants whom he would be anxious to engage, you are at liberty to place them at his disposal; but it must be understood that this permission does not extend to persons who are to take charge of scientific departments of the Expedition, as there are already gentlemen of this class with whom Her Majesty's Government have been in correspondence. Any such persons, therefore, who may wish to join the Expedition, could do so only as volunteers.

12. Copy of this despatch has been transmitted by the same mail to Sir Charles Fitz Roy, and likewise to the other Australian Governors. Sir Charles Fitz Roy will, therefore, be fully prepared to receive Mr. Gregory, and to render him all assistance in his power. And I have every reason to hope for the zealous co-operation of the several local Legislatures

Geographical Society, 25th August, 1853.
Capt. Stokes, 16th Feb., 1854, and another 10th March.
Capt. Stokes, 25th March.
Capt. Sturt, 10th April.
Capt. Sturt, May.

and Governments in a scheme intended for the development of the vast and unknown resources of their common Continent.

13. You will, on receiving this despatch, immediately communicate with Mr. Gregory, and if he should accept the command of the Expedition, inform both the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and Sir C. Fitz Roy, and the other Australian Governments immediately of his having done so, and of his intended movements.

I have, &c.,
NEWCASTLE.

Governor Fitzgerald.

[SUB-ENCLOSURE No. 1.]

3, Waterloo Place,
August 25, 1853.

MY LORD DUKE,

I am directed by Sir Roderick Murchison to enclose the accompanying estimate, &c., drawn up at your Grace's request, of the probable expense of the proposed Expedition under Mr. Ernest Haug, to explore that portion of Northern Australia included between the Victoria and Albert Rivers, as recommended by the deputation of this Society, which had the honor of waiting on your Grace on the 28th ultimo. Allow me at the same time to suggest that the estimated amount of several of the items may be considerably lessened in various ways through the kindness of the Admiralty and Ordnance Boards, allowing thus a greater outlay upon other articles of necessity. Thus, a free passage out in one of the Government ships, the loan of certain instruments (others to be furnished by this Society), as well as of the requisite fire arms, will, of course, materially diminish the expenditure under these headings. It remains but to mention, that the Expedition should be at the mouth of the Victoria River by the end of the month of March; and to remain,

My Lord Duke, &c.,
NORTON SHAW,
Assistant Secretary of Royal
Geographical Society.

His Grace
The Duke of Newcastle.

Estimate, &c., of the proposed North Australian Expedition under Mr. Ernest Haug.

The mouth of the Victoria River having, after due consideration, been selected as the starting point, it is proposed, that the Expedition shall ascend this stream as far as its watershed, (probably about three or four hundred miles south of Cambridge Gulf,) thence deflecting eastward, as the nature of the country and the facilities of travelling may permit; the explorers are expected to strike the head-waters of the Albert, descending which stream to the Gulf of Carpentaria they will meet a small vessel prepared to receive them.

It will at once be seen that such an exploration must make known the physical characters and productions of a considerable part of the continent, respecting which, we are at present wholly ignorant; a part so remote from any of the existing settlements, as to render it improbable that the enterprise of the colonists will prompt them to undertake this research, but which comprehends districts in which, with suitable encouragement, the industry and capital of British subjects will probably at an early period be advantageously engaged, situated as it is almost directly between our rapidly increasing Australian Colonies and the ports of India and China.

If accessible tracts of land of great extent and capability are discovered, the prompt sales which will follow must far more than refund the outlay, but even should the Expedition, contrary to all expectation, prove a failure, the very fact that the tract in question is worthless, must be of great importance, since it will reduce the limits within which productive research may yet be made, and future expenditure of life, labor, and property in this quarter will be saved; moreover, without regard to the profit which may or may not be immediately derived from the discovery of the physical characters of this particular part of Australia, the mere addition to our correct geographical knowledge, and the numerous points of scientific information which must be collected, will amply suffice to recommend the proposed enterprise, and to justify the outlay on the part of the nation. Without particularly dwelling on what has been done by the Governments of other countries for geographical research, as for example by Russia in exploring Siberia, by France in Egypt and Africa, and by the United States in the expeditions of Lewis and Clarke, Fremont, Emory, Stansbury, Lynch and others; it may be well to cite a few of the many precedents which have already been given in this country, in supporting the exploring labors of geographers. It will be enough to allude to the Arctic Expeditions of Ross, Parry, Back, Franklin, Richardson, &c., to that of Schomburgh in British Guiana, to Chesney along the Euphrates, to those in Australia under Mitchell, Sturt, Grey, Lushington, Kennedy and others; to those in Central Africa

under Denham and Clapperton, Richardson, Barth, Overweg, and Vogel, the last of which is still in progress under the direction of the Foreign Office; and finally, to the contemplated Expedition up the Chadda, at present under the auspices of the Admiralty. The expense of the projected Expedition is necessarily involved in some degree of uncertainty; yet, by careful enquiry into the cost of former exploring expeditions in Australia, and by consulting with those who have had personal and practical acquaintance with travelling in that continent, the required sum may be stated by approximation.

It is true that the mode of conveyance and the means of subsistence may be liable to considerable modification, but in some way or other the party will have to be both conveyed and fed; and, although the items may be changed, the general result will probably be but little altered. The sum, according to the calculations revised by the committee, may be set at £2500, which expenditure may be distributed under the following heads, viz:—

E S T I M A T E.

THE PARTY.

Commander	1	} Staff.	
Surgeon and Naturalist	...	...	...	...	...	1
Assistant Surveyor	...	...	...	...	...	1
Storekeeper and Overseer	1	} Men.	
Blacksmith	...	...	...	...	...	1
Carpenter	...	...	...	...	...	1
Bullock drivers and herdsmen	...	...	...	...	...	8
							14	

PROVISIONS,

CALCULATED FOR FIFTEEN MONTHS.

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
4,000 lbs. flour	50	0	0			
600 „ salt	2	0	0			
200 „ tea	12	0	0			
150 „ tobacco	6	0	0			
100 „ goats and sheep extras	50	0	0			
	5	0	0			
				125	0	0

CLOTHING.

20 jackets	8	0	0			
50 pairs of trowsers	20	0	0			
60 „ shoes	36	0	0			
24 blankets	20	0	0			
14 ponchos of oil cloth	2	0	0			
14 belts	5	0	0			
16 hats	3	0	0			
				94	0	0

CONVEYANCE.

20 horses or mules	300	0	0			
40 oxen	240	0	0			
40 ponies	30	0	0			
40 pack saddles	80	0	0			
20 riding saddles	100	0	0			
800 horse shoes	20	0	0			
3 drays and harness	52	0	0			
				822	0	0

ARMS AND AMMUNITION.

14 double-barreled rifles	80	0	0			
20 revolvers	60	0	0			
200 lbs gunpowder	20	0	0			
800 „ lead	15	0	0			
100 rockets and blue lights	5	0	0			
Percussion caps	2	0	0			
				182	0	0

Amount carried forward £1223 0 0

Amount brought forward £1223 0 0

CAMP STORES.

	£	s.	d.	
Carpenter's tools	5	0	0	
Smith's	5	0	0	
Cooking utensils	5	0	0	
Cutlery	5	0	0	
Tarpaulins	12	0	0	
Folding boats	16	0	0	
Tents	10	0	0	
Cords, waterskins, India rubber } sacks	5	0	0	
				63 0 0

INSTRUMENTS.

1 chronometer	40	0	0	
2 sextants	10	0	0	
2 mountain barometers	10	0	0	
1 hygrometer	1	0	0	
1 azimuth compass	2	0	0	
1 artificial horizon	3	0	0	
1 microscope	5	0	0	
1 medicine chest	15	0	0	
				86 0 0

VOYAGE.

Passage for the commander and } the assistants, and freight for } outfit of the Expedition from } England to Sydney or Singa- } pore	190	0	0	
Hire of a vessel to convey the } Expedition, with its cattle, } provisions, and outfit, from } Sydney to the Victoria	338	0	0	
				528 0 0

PAY.

Eleven men during the Expedition ...	600	0	0	
				£2500 0 0

(Signed)

NORTON SHAW.

[SUB-ENCLOSURE No. 2.]

14, Westbourne Terrace,
16th February, 1854.

MY LORD DUKE,

In compliance with your Grace's request, I have the honor to submit the following general scheme for the exploration of Northern Australia. It has just been returned from Captain Sturt and Mr. Eyre, whom I have consulted in accordance with your Grace's wish.

The country lying between the head of the Gulf of Carpentaria and the northern parts of the Moreton Bay district is quite unknown, except on the routes of Mitchell, Leichardt, and Kennedy. Sir Thomas Mitchell, on his last expedition from Sydney, reached within 400 miles of the Gulf, and the extensive grassy plains and other attractive features observed by him in a north-westerly direction, render the investigation of that space highly desirable; Captain Sturt has also penetrated from South Australia to within the same distance from the Gulf, and it may be remarked that the examination of the continent within a space of 400 miles only from the southern shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria would further the immediate views of the colonists, open up commerce with the Indian Archipelago, lead to the extension of our settlements northwards, complete the labors of previous explorers, and solve geographical problems of great interest.

Among the advantages offered by the Gulf, as a centre, for the purposes of exploration, are the facilities afforded by its numerous rivers for penetrating the immense area, already pointed out, by a succession of comparatively short journeys from a depôt, acting in concert, along the coast. To the want of such a support may be attributed the disasters which have befallen previous explorers, and in the Expedition now under consideration, the employment of a vessel appears to me highly essential for a moving depôt, for exploring rivers and the country adjacent, and it would also enable subsidiary parties to communicate with the main body of explorers, eastward of the Victoria.

Having thus noticed the intraversed country southward of the Gulf of Carpentaria, I proceed to that lying to the westward, in the direction of the Victoria River. The distance between the latter and the nearest part of the Gulf (Limmen Bight) is about 300 miles, and this interval forms one of the routes of exploration recommended by me in my published account of "Discoveries in Australia," printed in 1846.

The country between the Victoria and the Gulf presents many points of scientific interest, especially in regard to its geological conditions, and if mineral wealth should result from this Expedition, I believe that it will be found in that vicinity. To discover the sources of this river, and to examine the country southward, and thence to the head of the Gulf, will form an important part of the undertaking. It will determine probably the northern boundary of the Great Central Desert, and the character of the country between it and the rivers draining northward.

Although the Victoria has been recommended as a point of departure for the Expedition, yet it seems to me desirable to leave that question open, in case the leaders, who should not be fettered with orders, deem it advisable to commence operations at another point.

The most suitable place for organising the Expedition is unquestionably Moreton Bay. The force of the land party need not exceed twenty persons, carefully selected, including of course men of science. An essential qualification in the leader must be considerable experience in Australian travelling, and intercourse with the natives, such as Captain Sturt possesses in an eminent degree.

The time likely to be occupied in an undertaking of this nature must depend on circumstances, which, if favorable, would probably admit of completion in about a year after leaving the settled districts.

In estimating the expense of such an undertaking, it seems desirable to me to name a sum sufficient to meet any unlooked for circumstances, incidental to the nature of the service.

The object is, I imagine, to make known fully the capabilities of the northern portion of the Australian Continent, and for such a purpose £5,000 (five thousand pounds) may be required.

Perhaps it would be advisable to leave the details to one who should be responsible for the entire management of the undertaking. In conclusion, I beg to observe to your Grace, that the employment of a Government Steamer would, I am satisfied, materially ensure the success of the Expedition.

(Signed) I am, &c., STOKES.

His Grace the Duke of Newcastle.
&c., &c., &c.

[SUB-ENCLOSURE, No. 3.]

Downing-street,
10th March, 1854.

SIR,

I am directed by the Duke of Newcastle to request a fuller explanation of your views on several of the points touched upon in your letter of the 16th ult., on the subject of the proposed Australian Exploring Expedition.

2. You state that the examination of the continent within a space of 400 miles from the southern shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria would further the immediate views of the Colonists. I am to ask whether your view is that any portion of the £5000 which you assume to be required for the purposes of the expedition, and if so, what portion is to be devoted to the purpose of examining the region in the immediate vicinity of the gulf, instead of being applied to that of an exploring journey towards the interior.

3. Is it your intention that the depôt of which you speak as to be formed on the shore of the gulf, should be used as a central point from whence these short exploring journeys in the neighbourhood of the gulf are to be made?

4. Is it further your proposal that a distinct and separate journey should be made either from the Victoria River to the Gulf, or from the Gulf to the Victoria River.

5. Is it your view that these several and comparatively short expeditions should be undertaken in lieu of that more extensive line of investigation from some point on the shore, to the central interior of the continent, which it was the original intention of the Geographical Society to undertake?

6. For what purposes do you consider that the employment of a Government steamer would be desirable?

7. Do you propose that the expedition should have a naval as well as a land commander; and, if so, what assistance is the former to furnish towards the general purposes of the investigation?

8. As the object of His Grace is to obtain information which may at once serve for a guide to Her Majesty's Government as to the objects and probable course of the expedition,

and as a warrant for proposing the application of public money towards it; I am to request a detailed statement both on these points and also as to the general heads of the probable expenditure, so far as your own experience or that of the gentlemen with whom you have consulted may enable you to furnish it.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) F. PEEL.

Captain Stokes.

[SUB-ENCLOSURE No. 4.]

14, Westbourne Terrace,
25th March, 1854.

SIR,

In reply to your letter, dated 10th March, requesting further information "as to objects and probable course of the Expedition," and as to the "general heads of the probable expenditure," I beg to offer the following observations:—

2. It appears to be assumed in your letter (2) that the examination of the Australian Continent within 400 miles from the southern shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria, on the north coast, is inconsistent with the exploration of the interior. But the map shews that a space of 400 miles from the Gulf in south-easterly, southerly, and south-westerly directions, extends over a considerable part of the unknown interior, including the Victoria River, and the points reached by Mitchell and Sturt from the southward. As the views of the colonists are, therefore, embraced in the general objects of the Expedition, it was not intended that any portion of the £5,000 I thought necessary should be appropriated as you appear to suppose.

3. With reference to your enquiry (3), the vessel proposed to form part of the Expedition would serve as a *moveable dépôt* for the general purposes of conveyance and co-operation, and be of great service in contributing to, and storing the geological, botanical, and zoological collections.

4. In answer to question (4), it is to be remembered that the object is to ascertain the nature of the continent southerly and easterly, from the Victoria. This river has been considered the western limit of the country to be examined, which extends eastward over the area, draining into the northern coast, and towards the interior—the former including especially the rivers flowing into the Gulf of Carpentaria. A great number of streams were crossed by Leichardt on the shores of the Gulf, the mouths and courses of which are still unknown. Some of them are reported to be larger than the Albert, which I found navigable for vessels drawing twelve feet.

5. It may be found desirable to commence this investigation from the Victoria, passing up that river, and ascertaining the nature of the country beyond its head waters. From thence it may be arranged to return to the mouth of the Victoria, or to pass eastward to the mouth of the Albert, or some other point on the shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria; or it may be considered preferable to proceed from the Gulf, for the examination of the same area, returning either by the same or another route, as circumstances may dictate. All the experience and scientific authorities agree as to the country to be investigated, and also that the precise mode or plan of examination should be left entirely to the judgment of the leader.

6. My proposal referred to in (5) is not in lieu of the original intention of the Geographical Society, but indicates the comparative facility with which that scheme may be carried out. It has been proposed that a mainland party (7), should examine the distant interior, and that a Government steamer (6), should be the means of conveying the party and generally co-operating with it, in providing supplies and a secure retreat, as well as a place of safety for the harvest of the collectors such as previous explorers have so much needed. At the same time parties from the vessel would be employed in examining rivers and the country between the coast and the main body of explorers in the interior, so as completely to fulfil the original intention of the Geographical Society. On the score of economy, the employment of a Government steamer is also to be strongly recommended. The high rates which prevail in the Colony, and the uncertainty of meeting with a vessel adapted for such an expedition, combine with the reasons mentioned to strengthen this opinion.

7. The only portion of (8) which remains to be noticed relates to "a detailed statement" as to the "general heads of expenditure." This, of course, must depend on the formation of the party, and the terms upon which their services can be secured, particularly including the well known explorers Captain Sturt and Dr. Thompson, who have volunteered, and have been strongly recommended by the Geographical Society.

8. It is difficult for me to say more on this head, until the intentions of His Grace, with regard to the management of the Expedition, are further developed; and I fear that I have but indifferently furnished the information which his Grace required. But the items of expenditure must depend on the leader of the party, and on the plans and arrangements which he may be instructed or enabled to carry out.

9. The sum of £5,000 which I have named, after consulting Captain Sturt and Mr. Eyre, at the request of His Grace, is, as I have before observed, exclusive of the employment of a Government Vessel.

(Signed)

I am, &c.,
STOKES,
Captain R.N.

Frederick Peel, Esq.,
Colonial Office.

[SUB-ENCLOSURE No. 5.]

St. Edmonds, Tivoli,
Cheltenham, 18th April, 1854.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am sure from your knowledge of the interest I take in Australian matters, particularly those of a geographical or scientific nature, you will excuse my troubling you with so formal a looking document as that which I venture to enclose to you. I would indeed have transmitted it to Mr. Peel, but that I have not the pleasure of his acquaintance, although my brother-in-law, Mr. Venables, was more than thirteen years private secretary to his excellent father. I have heard from Captain Stokes the result of his interview with the Duke of Newcastle, and the desire of His Grace that he would send in an outline of the plan, &c., Captain Stokes would propose for carrying out the object of the North Australian Expedition; however able a navigator, my worthy friend is not the exact man to give the information required. The subject indeed is one that could only be properly treated by an experienced individual, and I am the less reluctant to intrude on you, because Captain Stokes informs me, and I presume that the Duke of Newcastle only considers him as the promoter of the Expedition, so far as he can assist in laying down or recommending any plan of operation.

2. In the enclosed draft of instructions I think you will find that I have not only embraced the Duke's views of the interior exploration, even into the desert itself, but those of more interested individuals, who would gladly turn this undertaking of the Government to their own advantage. I have defined, as clearly as I can, the line which the Expedition ought to take, and the objects it should have in view.

3. The Duke will observe that I divide the service into two distinct branches, the one for the exploration of the north-west interior, the other for that of Amheims and Oundumer's Lands, or the country between the Victoria and the Albert Rivers; nor do I think the necessity of the enterprise can be put on stronger grounds than those on which I have placed them. If indeed no ultimate advantage were to be anticipated from the Expedition, I feel that the extension of our geographical knowledge of so mysterious a portion of the continent as that which it is proposed to explore, would in itself be sufficient to justify the Government in prosecuting the investigation.

4. If I may judge from past experience, it would take about fifteen months to perform the work I have marked out, and £5,000 would, in my opinion, cover all expenses. If the Expedition is to start, it ought to do so by the end of May or the beginning of June, so as to be in the Victoria by the latter end of November.

5. You will observe that I have left the employment of the *Acheron* an open question, she may or she may not be employed; but it is not perhaps known to the Duke that there remain 400 miles of the west coast to be surveyed, and that although the north coast is surveyed for general purposes, it is not virtually so.

6. The whole undertaking is worthy of his Grace's patronage, and if properly carried out, will be the most important in the results of any expedition that will have been sent into Australia. I am sure neither Mr. Peel nor yourself will think me officious, I certainly do not intend to be so, but to save trouble on a subject on which so few are conversant,

Believe me &c.,

(Signed)

CHARLES STURT.

[ENCLOSURE No. 1 IN SUB-ENCLOSURE No. 5.]

Colonial Office,
Downing-street.

SIR,

Her Majesty's Government having decided on fitting out an expedition for the express purpose of exploring the Northern and North-Western part of the Australian Continent, and the Duke of Newcastle having every reason to believe that you possess both the zeal and the ability to conduct successfully such an undertaking, I am directed by His Grace to offer the command of it to you; and I am to request, in the event of your accepting this

offer, you will put yourself in early communication with this department, and that you will prepare a Return of the number of individuals you would propose to take with you on the expedition, and of the stores you may consider advisable to procure in this country.

2. As it is the Duke of Newcastle's desire that this undertaking may be rendered as extensively useful in its results as possible, His Grace has decided on sending out a Botanist and a Geologist with the expedition, as well as such other scientific gentlemen as the nature of the service may seem to require; and it is also His Grace's wish that the expedition may be fitted out in such a manner as shall be most likely to ensure success.

I have, &c., &c.,

[ENCLOSURE No. 2 IN SUB-ENCLOSURE No. 5.]

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE NORTH AUSTRALIAN EXPEDITION.

1. The North Australian Expedition is fitted out for the express purpose of exploring Northern and North-western Australia, and of prosecuting such enquiries as may be deemed in connection therewith.

2. The parts of the Continent it is proposed to explore being at too great a distance from any of the settled districts, to be attained overland from them without greatly exhausting the energy and resources of the expedition, it has been decided that you proceed in the first instance to New South Wales. You and the individuals who may accompany you from this country will therefore be provided with passages to Sydney, and conveyance for your stores found you by the first convenient opportunity.

3. On your arrival at the seat of Government you will report yourself to the Governor General, to whom you will be the bearer of letters, and you will take his opinion as to your future proceedings.

4. Sea voyages, however short, being generally injurious to animals, and as it is of the utmost importance that you should commence your explorations with your horses and cattle in the best possible condition, the Duke of Newcastle has suggested to Sir Charles Fitz Roy that Moreton Bay would probably be the most eligible place at which to place your animals, and to make your definite arrangements. That settlement being the nearest point to the field of your operations, would, it appears to his Grace, be the most convenient from which to take your departure.

5. Presuming that you will finally complete your arrangements at Moreton Bay, I am to direct, that as soon as you shall have organised your party, so as to satisfy yourself as to its efficiency in every particular, you proceed by sea to the mouth of the Victoria River, on the north-west coast of the continent, discovered by Captain Stokes in latitude , and longitude , where you will disembark with your whole party, and with such a supply of provisions as will enable you to keep the field for eight months, that being the period you will probably require to complete the first stage of your exploration.

6. Having come to an understanding with the commander of the vessel as to the time when he shall return to the Victoria, to meet you on your return from the interior, you will, when ready to move forward, proceed up that river, carefully surveying and laying down the country as you pass through it. On reaching the head of the Victoria, you will cross the high lands in which it may rise, in order to strike the opposite fall of waters, by which you will descend into the interior as far as those waters will take you. You will halt the main body of your party at certain favourable points, and will make, or cause excursions to be made, to the westward of your line of route, to ascertain the nature of the country in that direction. If the great central desert extends to the westward from the point to which it has been penetrated, it is more than probable that any stream you may trace in a southerly direction will lead you direct into it. Should this prove to be the case, and that the stream, like all the central streams of Australia, should fail you, and cease to flow, you will adopt every precaution not to endanger the safety of your party in any attempt you may make to enter it, which you are not prohibited from making, if you should feel that you can prudently do so; but you will never move the main body of the Expedition until you have ascertained that there is a place of safety in front of you to which to take it.

7. The desire of Her Majesty's Government is, that you endeavour to gain as extensive a knowledge of the north-west interior of the continent as you possibly can—that you determine the northern limits of the great desert, and that you ascertain whether or not there is an inland sea at any tangible distance to the south, and, if not, what the nature of the country is where such sea may be supposed to exist.

8. The discovery of an extensive pastoral territory, stretching into the extra-tropical interior, would be of incalculable advantage to the Colonies of South Australia and Swan River, limited as both of them are in their grazing capabilities; or if too distant to be practically available, such a territory would form a connecting link between them, and so promote their general welfare. On the ascertained fact of the existence of an inland sea, if of any

magnitude, would be the medium of facilitating any future intercourse between the northern and southern coasts, more especially if an available country should be found upon its shores. You will, therefore, keep the attainment of these objects steadily in view, and you will use your utmost endeavour, consistently with a due regard to the safety of yourself and of your party, to solve the questions they embrace.

9. It is not the desire of Her Majesty's Government to fetter your movements in carrying out these important investigations. The region into which you are to penetrate being entirely unknown, you will, of course, be influenced in your operations by the nature of the country you may discover, and the facilities or impediments it may present to your progress.

10. Whilst engaged in this survey, you will lay down with as much accuracy as possible the principal features of the country through which you may pass—the direction and elevation of its mountain chains—the course of its rivers, and the character and capabilities of the more depressed interior into which you may descend; and you will make such general observations on the character of the country as its appearance may justify you in doing.

11. You will note the number of native inhabitants with whom you may communicate; their manners, customs, and condition; and you will make collections of their war and hunting weapons, and of any other utensils or curiosities they may possess.

12. Having completed this your more interior survey, and satisfied yourself as to the several points to which your attention has been attracted, you will return to the Victoria River by such new line as may be open to you, and will give you the most extensive knowledge of the country; and you will communicate to me, for the information of the Duke of Newcastle, the result of your investigations, transmitting to me at the same time a copy of your journal, and such curiosities and specimens as you may have collected, by the vessel you will have appointed to meet you at that place of rendezvous.

13. Having made arrangements with the commander as to the time and place where you shall again meet, and received a fresh supply of provisions, you will enter on the second stage of your exploration, and, according to the original recommendation of the Royal Geographical Society, you will proceed to examine the country between the Victoria River and the River Albert.

14. In the prosecution of this survey you will trace down any rivers you may intersect, more especially those falling northwards, or towards the sea, if they should be promising in their appearance, in which case you will ascertain the nature of the country and their practicability at their sea mouths; you will examine the mountain ranges, and ascertain to what distance they stretch into the interior, and you will note down in your journal any peculiarity of appearance, or construction they may present to your view.

15. It would appear that there is a probability that an elevated country lies between the meridian of 18° and 21° S. and the parallels of 135° and 138° E. I am directed therefore to draw your particular attention to that locality, since, if any high lands should be found to exist, they may present a more practicable and preferable point from which to cross to the eastward or to the south-east, than the line pursued by Dr. Leichardt, or any other nearer the coast; and if, in coming on any high lands in the direction indicated, you should discover any stream or river falling to the southward, you will be at liberty to trace it, and endeavor either to connect your survey with that of Sir Thomas Mitchell on his Victoria River in latitude 24° , and in longitude 114° , or to cross direct to the eastward, in order to gain the western basis of the ranges, dividing the interior from the coast; but I am to press upon you, that however important the discovery of a nearer and better line of route to the eastern provinces from the Gulf of Carpentaria would be, it would require the extreme of precaution on your part to push on this investigation, as it is more than probable you will encounter many difficulties; should you fail in discovering any new line, or be disappointed in the nature of the country, you will turn northwards, and will endeavor to find inside Dr. Leichardt's track a shorter and more direct line of route to the eastward so as to avoid and cut off the great circuit that enterprising explorer was obliged to make in descending to the coast. There can be no question but that the interests of the eastern province and of commerce would be greatly promoted by the establishment of a practicable road between them and the Gulf of Carpentaria, insomuch, that it is impossible to foresee the extensive and beneficial results to which it might lead, in facilitating our intercourse with the islands in the and Chinese Seas; your spare time would therefore be well and judiciously occupied by surveying the country through which such road would pass, and having satisfied yourself, as far as circumstances will permit, as to the practicability or impracticability of establishing any such line, you will direct your course to the Albert River, endeavoring to strike it on its upper branches, and surveying it carefully as you proceed down, with a view to ascertain the nature of the country in its neighbourhood, and particularly of the Plains of Promise, and whether it possesses the requisites for a settlement, should it hereafter be thought advisable to establish a settlement on its banks.

17. Having thus completed the service required of you, you will proceed to your place of rendezvous at the embouchure of the river, where you will re-embark on board of the vessel that will have been sent there to receive you, and will return to Sydney, where you will pay off your men and dispose of such of your animals as you may bring back, and of your surplus stores, retaining the instruments and such other articles as the Governor General may deem necessary.

18. Having made up the accounts of the Expedition, and secured all papers and collections, you will return with them to Europe by the first favorable opportunity, together with such of the scientific gentlemen as may desire to accompany you, and you will on your arrival in London report yourself to this Office, and deliver over the journals and other things connected with your Expedition, to enable the Right Honorable the Secretary of State to lay the result of your investigations before Her Majesty's Government.

19. As you will be held responsible for the conduct of this Expedition, the Duke of Newcastle considers it but just that you should have the selection of those on whose temper, firmness, and perseverance you yourself will have to depend. The only consideration his Grace would impose is, the necessity that he should sanction and confirm the appointment of the scientific gentlemen to be employed under you.

20. As there can be no doubt, you will meet numerous, and, perhaps, powerful and warlike tribes of natives in the tropical regions through which you will pass, I am directed by the Duke of Newcastle to express his earnest hope that you will use every means in your power to procure a friendly intercourse with them, and that you will not proceed to extremities without great and urgent necessity. His Grace confidently relies on your forbearance to those unhappy people, and he trusts that you will preserve that distance between your men and the natives which is the best security against any misunderstandings.

21. You will be accompanied by a botanist and geologist, who will take the superintendence of those departments; but the Duke of Newcastle expects that you will cause specimens of Natural History to be carefully procured and preserved, for which purpose you will have to employ a competent curator.

22. You will keep a register of the barometer and thermometer three times a day—you will note all atmospheric changes—enter on the pages of your journal the results of any experiments you may make, and of all phenomena you may observe.

23. It is further the Duke of Newcastle's desire that you establish a base line as soon after landing as you can, upon which to carry on a system of triangulation—that you verify your positions by frequent lunar observations—and that you ascertain the heights of the mountains, and the general level of the interior above the sea. Anxious to make this enterprise useful in a scientific, as well as in a commercial and geographical point of view, His Grace trusts that you will give that general superintendence to the scientific branch of the service as will stimulate those under your command to use their utmost endeavours to carry out His Grace's wishes, and to add to the credit of the enterprise.

24. The Duke of Newcastle is aware that there are many duties you will be called on to perform, to which it is unnecessary to call your attention. These points he leaves to your experience and judgment; and I am to express His Grace's earnest hope that you may return in safety and success from your labors and researches.

Lastly. You will avail yourself of every opportunity to communicate your progress to me for the information of the Duke of Newcastle.

Colonial Office.

Downing-street.

[SUB-ENCLOSURE No. 6.]

Tivoli, Cheltenham,
May, 1854.

MY LORD DUKE,

Although I was uncertain whether recent political events might not have rendered it expedient to postpone the prosecution of the North Australian Expedition to a period of less anxiety, yet taking, as I do, the most lively interest in it, I ventured, on the 17th of last month, to transmit to Mr. Roberts the draft of a letter of instructions, similar in some respects to those with which I myself had been furnished, when about to be employed on services of a similar kind, but much fuller in its details, as I endeavoured not only to point out what appeared to me to be the best and most eligible course for the Expedition to pursue, and the objects to be obtained, but the numerous duties to which the Officer to whom your Grace may be pleased to entrust the conduct of it will have to attend. I thought it probable that some of my suggestions might not occur to your Grace, as experience alone suggests them to me: and I felt that a document on which the leader of so difficult an undertaking was mainly to be guided, could not be too full. But I am apprehensive that I may not have been sufficiently clear in my communications to Mr. Roberts, in explaining the views I have been led to form of the past and present state of the Australian continent; I venture, therefore, to forward a

small map of it for your Grace's inspection, that will, perhaps, explain my views better than anything I could write.

2. In elucidation of this map, I would respectfully observe, that when I was in the interior of Australia, on my third and central expedition, I crossed, in about latitude 26° S., what at first sight appeared to me to be a vast stony plain, but which eventually proved to be a channel of fifteen or twenty miles in breadth, running longitudinally from east to west to a seemingly interminable distance. In crossing this singular feature, my horses left no track behind them; it was totally destitute of vegetation, but was covered over with fragments of rocks, the scattered and shivered remains of sea dounes, varying in size from four to ten miles or more, parallelograms in shape, and but little rounded by attrition. From this channel, which being as level as the ocean, and having no object visible along its even ridge by which to guide the traveller over it, required the extreme of caution to traverse, I descended some two or three feet to an earthy plain or channel of equal breadth with and running parallel to the one I had already crossed and separated from it by a long line of polygonum, like a hedge; not a blade of grass was to be seen upon its surface either, but the whole space resembled the dried-up bed of an immense shallow lake, and was intersected by numerous minor channels for carrying off its superfluous waters. The whole region bore the resemblance of an approach to a vast body of water, insomuch, that I momentarily expected to see a mass of it glittering to my left, my course being at the time towards the north; but in this hope I was disappointed, although the conviction on my mind is, that I could not have been far from some such feature.

3. Now there can be no doubt but that the two channels I have mentioned are at times under water to the depth of three or four feet, and that they must at such times have a breadth of between thirty and forty miles.

4. Before I crossed them I had been running down the waters falling northward from the south; after I had crossed I came on the waters falling southerly from the north, and as the creeks on both sides of these channels were found to lead direct into them, it is clear that I had passed over the lowest part of the interior, and that the earthy channel is the great receptacle of all the central drainage of the Continent thereabouts; but so level is the interior I had been traversing, that I was unable satisfactorily to ascertain its general dip. Accident, however, disclosed that to me which I could not otherwise have discovered, for in tracing down one of the creeks to the south of the great central drainage I stumbled upon a small pool of brackish water containing a certain description of fish. Whence these fish could have been brought, or how a salt water pond could be permanent in the bed of a fresh water creek I know not, nor is it probable I should ever have known, if, in the course of subsequent investigation fully two degrees to the eastward of the spot at which I then was, in tracing up Cooper's Creek, the Victoria of Sir Thomas Mitchell, I had not discovered a long sheet of water, also in its bed, between large sheets of fresh water, in taste and color similar to that in the little pool I have mentioned, and, in like manner, full of the same kind of fish, of all sizes and of all ages. It immediately occurred to me therefore, and was indeed confirmatory of my previous conclusions, that all the creeks I had traced south of the central channel were ramifications of Cooper's Creek, which, in seasons of inundations, lays the whole of the country to the westward under water. The discovery further satisfied me that the general dip of the continent was from east to west, and consequently, that the accumulated waters of the interior must be carried to the latter point, along the great central channels to which I have so often had to draw your Grace's attention.

5. If the hypothesis I have laid down is correct, it involves a question of deep importance and interest to ascertain what ultimately becomes of those waters, whether they contribute to the formation of an inland sea, separated from the outer ocean by the Wall of the Great Australian Bight, or whether by gradual depositions in the lapse of ages they have thrown up an elevated country, where that sea might be supposed to exist. In either case the discovery would be fraught with the most beneficial consequences to the contiguous Colonies.

6. My own conviction is, that the continent of Australia was once an archipelago of islands, or that the western coast was separated from the eastern by a broad and open sea, having a group of islands, of which South Australia was the most considerable in its south-east quarter, and consequently, that the whole space, within the blue lines on the chart, must have been the bed of this sea.

7. The farthest point I gained in endeavoring to reach the centre was to the 138° meridian, and $24^{\circ} 49'$ of latitude, and I may be permitted to hazard an opinion. The desert, into which I had already penetrated more than five hundred miles, would have been found to extend two hundred miles beyond that point, if I could have pushed on, thus giving a breadth to the desert, from north to south, of more than seven hundred, and as it would be unreasonable to suppose that such a feature would speedily contract, the probability appears to be, that it extends far away to the west.

8. Should this conjecture be correct, it is obvious that the nearest point from which its northern limit could be gained, would be from the heads of the River Victoria, discovered

by Captain Stokes on the north-west coast, in latitude and in longitude as the drainage to the south from the highlands, in which the River may be supposed to rise, would most probably lead the explorer direct to it, if not right into the desert itself.

9. It was with a view to ascertain the real limits of the desert, that in my former paper I ventured to recommend the exploration of the north-west interior, as I deem it of great geographical importance not only to determine that point, but whether an inland sea or an available country exists at any reasonable distance to the south from the north coast.

10. Under any circumstances, if I have rightly understood your Grace's desire to make this Expedition one of geographical discovery, a descent to the south, from the heads of the Victoria, would place the party in the most commanding position to explore that entirely unknown part of the continent, which for aught we know, may be of the most fertile and valuable character.

11. Again your Grace will observe that I have drawn two lines on the map, the one to the north-west from the banks of the Darling River, which I discovered in 1828, the other to the north from South Australia, into which I penetrated along the line of the Murray River in 1830.

12. These lines indicate the directions taken by vast flights of birds migrating to the north from the located districts, and as reasonable conclusions may be drawn from such phenomena, and as those birds only frequent the richest and best watered valleys in those colonies to which they come, some indeed in which gold has since been found, so it is natural to infer that the country to which they return is equally fertile, and as the two lines of migration meet between the 18th and 20th parallel of latitude, and the 136th meridian, so I hope a fertile and hilly country may be found there.

13. Should this prove to be the case, and that a stream should be discovered leading to the east or to the south-east, it might open out a shorter and more practicable line of route to Moreton Bay and to the eastern colonies, than the circuitous one pursued by the intrepid Leichardt.

14. Should any expedition be successful in the attainment of these two great objects, the discovery of an inland sea, or of an available country in the north-west interior of the continent, through the medium of which any further communication with the north coast from the south would be facilitated, and the marking out of a line of road from the Gulf of Carpentaria to the eastern provinces, it will have performed a work of lasting utility; for in so doing, it would connect every link in the great chain of communication round the shores of Australia, and would throw open the interior of that mighty continent to enterprise and to commerce.

15. It has been with an earnest desire to promote these beneficial ends that I have presumed to trespass on your Grace's time in this and my former letter. I believe I have touched on most of the points to which I was anxious to direct your Grace's attention.

16. As I stated to Mr. Roberts, I think that £5000 would well cover the expenses of the expedition, and such a sum, may I be permitted to add, could not in my humble opinion be more judiciously or more beneficially spent, where it would be spent in the cause of geography, science, and commerce. It may appear to your Grace that the task I have assigned to the explorer is too great, but it is not greater than the range of previous explorations; and if I had not unfortunately been confined to one spot from the want of water, elsewhere round for 300 miles for six months, on my last expedition I should have run over more ground than that I have now marked out for exploration. I feel satisfied that it only requires judgment and perseverance successfully to perform the journey, or I should say the service which would not require more than fifteen months for its completion, if the officer to whom the conduct of the expedition may be entrusted has sufficient experience to avoid delays and embarrassments to which he would otherwise be exposed.

17. It only remains for me to observe that there still remains a considerable portion of the western coast of the Continent unsurveyed, about 400 miles, and that although the north-west coast is sufficiently laid down for ordinary purposes of navigation, it is not for practical ones. Whether your Grace has ever contemplated a marine survey simultaneously with the inland survey, I do not know, but it appears to me that such a survey would be exceedingly desirable. The employment of the *Acheron*, that vessel being on the spot, would enable the Admiralty to complete the examination of those parts of the coast of Australia which I have mentioned, at much less expense than under ordinary circumstances, and her co-operation would very materially diminish the expense of the exploring expedition.

18. It appears therefore to be a question well worthy of consideration whether such a survey of the coasts should not be made as would render available and enhance any important discovery that might be made.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) CHARLES STURT.