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Report on the General Features of the Interior of South Africa, between Barkly and Gubuluwayo; To Accompany Map of the Route

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Prospects of a Road from Delagoa Bay to the Transvaal.—Judging by the high price of all European produce at Leydenburg, it would be highly advantageous to the country to open up a good road from the Bay, and, as far as we could ascertain from the state of M. Nellmapius' road, after it had been closed for several months during the war, the original road company commenced their work very thoroughly. The station-houses are as well made as the better class of Boer houses in the Transvaal, and the kraals for cattle, &c., are well designed.

The country between Pretorius Kop and the Bay appears to be swarming with Kafirs, who, though fond of hunting, evidently pay great attention to their crops, principally mealies and manioc.

At present the Kafirs carry up burdens of about 75 lbs. weight on their heads from the Bay, and from their kraals to Pilgrim's Rest. An organised party of men to carry goods along the road might assist in supplying the Gold Fields, but the difficulties of establishing a waggon transport with oxen do not seem insurmountable. The climate does not appear to be adapted to horses.

Railway.—As regards the prospects of a railway:—looking to the expenses of such works in other parts of South Africa, it does not seem probable that it could be constructed under 12,000*l.* per mile. Assuming that the distance to the high veld will in no direction be less than 150 miles, the cost would not be less than 1,800,000*l.*; but 3,000,000*l.* is not too high a sum to allow, keeping in view the nature of the work. The maintenance expenses over a line which passes for 40 miles over a swamp, and for 110 miles continually ascends to a height of 7000 feet will be very great. There appears to be no prospect of such a line paying for several years to come; but that it would materially help and hasten the development of South Africa there can be no doubt. At the present time, progress is very much retarded for want of iron and timber at reasonable prices.

IX.—*Report on the General Features of the Interior of South Africa, between Barkly and Gubuluwayo; to accompany Map of the Route.* By ALEX C. BAILIE, Government Land Surveyor.

THE route about to be described leads *viâ* Taongs, the Batlapin capital, where Mankoroane is chief; Mamusa, which is David Massouw's station (he being head of a very large Koranna family); Rietfontein, which is where Montsioa, the chief of the Baralongs, now lives; Kanye, the chief town of the Bamanketsi,

whose chief is Gaseitsibi; Molopolole, where Sichele, chief of the Bakwena, lives; Machodi, the head station of Leuceve, chief of the Bakgatla; and Shoshong the most central station of the interior, where Khame, chief of Bamangwato, lives.

Before proceeding further, I will give in a tabular form the approximate distances (as obtained by trochiameter measurements by me) from Barkly to each of the different stations, giving also the distances between each station for the convenience of reference.

From.	To.	Miles.	From.	To.	Miles.
Barkly ..	Taongs	78	Taongs ..	Mamusa	51
„ ..	Mamusa	129	Mamusa ..	Rietfontein ..	98
„ ..	Rietfontein ..	227	Rietfontein	Kanye	88
„ ..	Kanye	315	Kanye ..	Molopolole ..	61
„ ..	Molopolole ..	376	Molopolole	Machodi	44
„ ..	Machodi	420	Machodi ..	Shoshong	166
„ ..	Shoshong	586	Shoshong	Gubuluwayo ..	300
„ ..	Gubuluwayo ..	886	Molopolole	Shoshong (direct)	128

From Kimberley to Barkly is 24 miles, making the whole distance from Kimberley to Gubuluwayo 910 miles round by the Limpopo River, and 828 when the direct road from Molopolole to Shoshong is used.

The first 18 miles from Barkly to Taongs is over strong hills and through sandy flats, after which, to the Hart River the soil is good and hard; the road then follows the east bank of the river over a series of limestone and sandy ridges, the latter studded with trees (fine mimosa), and then crosses the river into Taongs.

The Hart River is a narrow stream, with low sedgy banks in the wet season, which takes its rise above Mamusa and winds along the Transvaal border into Batlapin Territory, entering the province of Griqua-Land West above Springbok-fontein on the N.E. boundary, and joining the Vaal at Likatlong. In very dry seasons it often ceases to flow, but, even in great droughts, water is to be had by digging a few feet in its bed.

Taongs is situated among very stony hills, and contains a large population. It is not, however, a strong position for natives.

The soil about Taongs is very fertile, and capable of raising large crops of grain; but as the Batlapins do not irrigate, their crops are entirely dependent upon the rainfall.

Leaving Taongs for Mamusa the road crosses a hill, and after travelling 12 miles, a small Baralong village, called Mulium, is reached on a tributary of the Hart.

After leaving Mulium, the road crosses a succession of hills for 11 miles, when water is found in a small kloof about 200 yards on the east of the road. Thence down a long gentle slope and the Hart River is crossed. Then over a low flat sandy ridge. After this the road sometimes follows the Hart for a short distance and at others strikes across low grassy ridges with grey granite cropping out, until near Mamusa, when some sandy ridges are crossed.

Mamusa is situated on and about a grey granite hill, with one or two trees studded about its summit.

After leaving Mamusa the road crossed a hill or two and a level grassy plain was reached. About 9 miles from Mamusa water is found in a pan about $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile to east of road.

Eleven miles further on there was a pan with water about 100 yards to east of road, and about half-way between this and the previous outspan was a dry pan, which in good seasons has water.

Then for about five miles you have low grassy ridges or swells—the soil is red and sandy. The next trek brings you to a pan about 50 yards to west of road, with water. Four miles further across a plain, and water is found in a large pan about 500 yards to east of road. This is rather a marked spot, as at the road, on the west side, there is a low stony ridge covered with scrub. Five miles again brings one to a very large pan, marked on the map as “Pan with geese.”

Nine miles over an undulating country, almost hilly, brings you to a pan, with a permanent fountain at the west corner. This is called Umgala—the resident so-called chief is a bushman called Jachim. The fountain at this place is slightly tainted with sulphur. Eight miles more, over grassy plains, undulating country, and a grassy ridge studded with bush, and a hollow is reached between two ridges. Here water was found down the hollow, about 1000 yards to west of road.

The country from Mamusa to this may be described generally as high and level, undulating gently, with occasional saucer-like pans, and not a tree the whole way.

Three miles further on, you come to the first hills from Mamusa. Here one road from Taongs comes in on the west. The country is pretty, being well wooded with mimosa-trees.

Nine miles through hills, where there are trees and Kaffir gardens, and Konana is reached,—this is one of “Montsioa’s” out-stations, and is in charge of “Nathaniel.” Here there is a

permanent supply of water, obtained by making shallow wells in the bed of a dry rivulet.

And here I would like to say that wherever water is mentioned as being "in Pans," the supply cannot be depended upon for drought; although I believe that in every place where I found water on my way up, the supply must (except in very exceptional seasons) be permanent. My reason for this supposition is that I travelled this part of the journey just before the *very* dry season of 1876 was broken up by rains.

Eighteen miles through a country that is bushy and undulating (almost hilly), and you come to the Maritzana River. Here, although water is always obtainable in very dry seasons, it gets scarce. Maritzana is a sandy river which seldom runs, but water is found at a few feet below the surface.

From Maritzana to Rietfontein is 18 miles. This portion of the road is grassy with wood—not thickly wooded. The soil is red and good, though sandy: a succession of low, flattish ridges are between Maritzana and Rietfontein. Rietfontein is where Montsioa now lives; it is a tributary of the Molopo River, being 7 miles from that river over a gentle decline. At Rietfontein there is abundance of water. Molemo's station is on the Molopo. He is a subject (younger brother) of Montsioa's. Up to this, what wood there is is all mimosa.

After leaving Molemo's, the road for 33 miles crossed a succession of well-wooded, sandy ridges. Water is, even in the best seasons, very scarce here. Limestone occasionally crops up. At this outspan there are cross-roads, one running east and west, and another branching to west. Two miles on, road comes in from Konana on west. About 1 mile on saw a hole, where water was got at about 8 feet under a red sandstone boulder. Trees of different kinds and capital pasture.

About 6 miles further on, hills are seen E.N.E. about 12 miles off; these were said to be at Moilwe's station. Two miles on, a pan is on the east of road, and about 100 yards off the road in a direct line to the middle of the mountains mentioned above. A mile further on, and a large flat ridge with a sandy soil and abundance of wood of different kinds of acacia.

From this place to the Matabeli country the country is thickly wooded with good timber for beams or poles. The trees put out leaves without rain early in spring—at least they did in the spring of 1876—which, together with other observations of my own, and information gained from traders and natives, leads me to believe that water can be found very near the surface all over the interior along the route traversed by me. The absence of underwood in the interior forests strikes one.

The country consists of large, flattish, sandy ridges, with

shallow valleys, occasional pans, and limestone cropping up on the ridges.

Ten miles on, a large pan is reached, where a road branches off to north-east. There is a small stone hillock in this pan: $\frac{1}{4}$ mile on, a large pan is crossed, with groups of boulders in it. Quarter mile more and road joins from lower Molopo on west. Three miles more brings one to a large pan, and 4 miles beyond this is a permanent water called Moschwane or Vaal-pense-pan. From here a range of hills is sighted, running from south-west to north-east roughly.

The last stage described is a very heavy one, the sand sometimes reaching one-third diameter of the wheel. Six miles on, a dry valley was reached in a hollow. Road crosses a few small hills from this, and winds among the range of hills sighted before, for 15 miles, to a stony valley. From this the road winds among hills up a broad valley, with gardens and trees; range of hills still continuing to east. This range is really a succession of ranges or double hills. After travelling along 5 miles, water is found in shallow wells, about 6 or 8 feet deep, dug in a rivulet. Four miles more bring you, after winding through a gorge, to Kanye, Gaseitsibe's station. About 3 miles from Kanye, a road enters from south-west. Kanye is 3756 feet above the level of the sea.

From Kanye to Mochaning, where Montsioa lived at the time I went up country (September 1876), is a distance of about 12 miles over a few rather stony ridges. At Kanye a large supply of water is obtained by sinking wells less than 10 feet deep, through a yellow sandy soil.

At Mochaning there are very strong fountains.

From Mochaning the road winds up a long valley for about 15 miles, and then crosses between a row of stone koppies (huge boulders piled upon each other), the passage where the road passes being not more than a hundred feet wide. Then another mile on and a similar range of koppies is passed, parallel with the former, though not so marked. The first range of koppies is very peculiar, the hills in some cases being terminated in a single stone.

Three miles more and a petty chief, Pilana, who has married one of Sichele's daughters, is found located among some stony hills. From Kimberley to Molopolole, the only country which can be said to be naturally fortified by hills, stones, and cover, is that lying between Mochaning and Pilana's, its only drawback being the want of water. At Pilana's there is abundance of water. From this to Sichele's is an undulating country with sandy soil, and two sand rivers in which water can be got by digging a few feet. From Pilana's to Molopolole is 28 miles.

Molopolole is situated on a hill with other hills in the foreground, which command it. It would still, however, make a good fortress if there were any probability of getting water on the hill. The hill on which Sichele's town is built is very rocky, and, in addition to this, is covered with hillocks of stone and great boulders under which the native huts nestle. The water supply is abundant, even in dry weather. In the immediate vicinity of the town there is no wood. This remark applies to all native (interior) locations, even where I have described the country as well wooded.

From Sichele's to Shoshong is 128 miles by the nearest route, but as this is in the tropics and is across a gently undulating country, with only two permanent waters, and the heaviest sand I have seen in the interior, it is only traversed in the best seasons without risk. Here again, at the risk of becoming tedious, I am confident that water could be obtained at a very small cost. At each end of this road the country becomes hilly. Indeed every native town in the interior, except Montsioa's, is among hills.

In consequence of the disadvantages mentioned in connection with the short road from Molopolole to Shoshong, the more circuitous route by Machodi and the Marico and Crocodile, or Limpopo, rivers is often travelled.

From Molopolole to Machodi is 44 miles, through a rich undulating country, with a yellowish sandy soil and two permanent waters which divide the road moderately equally for travelling purposes into three stages. The trees still remain principally acacia. The grasses all over the interior are exceedingly rich. Thirty miles from Machodi, crossing a dry river, called the Notoane, in which water is found only in the best seasons, twice within a few miles, across a heavy, sandy country, which undulates gently, and the Marico is reached.

From this the road follows the Marico for 27 miles to its junction with the Crocodile. Thence it follows the Crocodile for 45 miles. After striking the Marico, to where the road leaves the Crocodile, the soil is deep and black. From the Crocodile to Shoshong is 64 miles, over an undulating country with a deep yellow sandy soil, a salt spring about 32 miles from the river, occasional pans, and two permanent waters, both of which have been obtained by digging.

At the first, 23 miles from the Crocodile, an abundant supply has been obtained by digging 3 feet through peat. At the other, which is 27 miles from Shoshong, water has been found at about 20 feet, through soft cheesy-looking soil, very like the surface-soils of the Du Toit's Pan and Bultfontein. After leaving Molopolole, acacias become less and less prominent

as one advances, although they never quite disappear. Twenty miles from Shoshong, hills are reached.

Shoshong is one mass of hills. It is just in the tropics, and has very rich soil in the basin between the hills and about the station. Here Messrs. Francis have a splendid well, 86 feet deep, on a little rise in the basin, which is about 20 or 30 feet above the surrounding country.

From Shoshong to Magalapsi River is through hills, over a deep black soil for the first 12 miles, and then over a ridge with sandy soil and granite boulders for the next 16 miles. This is a permanent water. Not many years ago this place was infested with tsetse fly, and now, since buffalo and other game have been driven out, it is so healthy that the chief Khame has made it one of his principal cattle-posts. Both Khame and Lobengula are of opinion that the fly disappears from a district when buffalo do. They are both thinking, experienced men.

From Magalapsi to Tati water is scarce, but yet not so scarce as to make travelling dangerous in any season except extreme droughts. The distance is 142 miles, through hilly country. The road follows, very nearly, the summit of the watershed between the Zambesi and the Limpopo.

Several dry sandy rivers are passed, where water can be had by digging.

From Tati River (Gold Fields) to Gubuluwayo the country undulates for 38 miles, when it becomes hilly, and the road winds through masses of small stony hills made of huge blocks of granite piled up. These hills appear to be in concentric circles, and are nearly all conical. From this to Gubuluwayo the country is hilly, well wooded, with innumerable rivulets, and very deep rich soil in the valleys.

The distance from Tati to Gubuluwayo is 129 miles. The first 38 miles mentioned above take one over an undulating country, with three permanent waters at Mapani-pan, Umkweban River, and Imbakwe River. The soil is deep and black, except near the river, where it is sandy.

The Matabeli or Amandebele country produces an abundance of rice, and all kinds of grain grow well. It is also one of the richest gold countries in the world, if reports be true. Lobengula, the chief, has promised me not to allow any one in to prospect who is not recommended by the British Government. The Portuguese had made several attempts to get concessions.
