

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE HISTORY OF HUNTER'S RIVER

Exerpts from *Historical Records of New South Wales. Vol. IV. Hunter and King. 1800, 1801, 1802. Edited by F.M. Bladen. Sydney: Charles Potter, 1896.*

(pps. 433, 439)

GOVERNOR KING TO THE DUKE OF PORTLAND

Sydney, New South Wales, 8th July, 1801.

My Lord,

.....p. 439.

The Lady Nelson returned here the 15th May, and sailed from hence with another Colonial vessel [the Francis] the 9th instant to examine and survey the Coal River, sixty miles to the northward of this place, from whence a prize vessel, purchased by an individual in this colony, has just returned with 150 tons of very fine coals and timber, which he has sold to the master of the Earl Cornwallis, going from hence to India, for £3 per ton. Being very anxious to ascertain how far that place can be depended on for a supply of that necessary article, and to ascertain its situation so far as to determine on the propriety of making a settlement there, I accepted Lieut.-Colonel Patterson's offer of going in the Lady Nelson to assist Lieut. Grant in making such observations as might guide my conduct in undertaking an establishment at that place, the result of which I shall inform your Grace on the schooner's return, as she is to be dispatched with a load of coals as soon as possible after their arrival. Ever since I took the command, an experienced miner with eleven men have been employed boring in the most likely place to produce coals in this neighbourhood, as stated in my former dispatches. He has got down ninety-six feet, but no coals, except very thin veins. As he is confident of coming to a bed of coal, it shall be continued until he gives it up, or until I receive Lieut.-Colonel Patterson and the other officers' reports, who are gone to examine the Coal River. As the Lady Nelson will return here by the 1st August, I intend to dispatch her and another Colonial vessel, in September, to survey and examine Bass's Strait, and the south-west coast, as fine weather may then be expected.

I have, &c.,

PHILIP GIDLEY KING.