

The breadth of this river, named the Hawkesbury, is from three hundred to eight hundred feet; and it appears, from the soundings we had, to be navigable, for the largest merchant ships, to the foot of Richmond Hill; but as the water, near the head of the river, sometimes rises, after very heavy rains, thirty feet above its common level, it would not be safe for ships to go far up; but fifteen or twenty miles below Richmond Hill they would lie in fresh water, and perfectly safe. I speak of Richmond Hill as being the head of the river, it there growing very shallow, and dividing into two branches.

The high rocky country which forms Broken Bay, is lost as you proceed up the Hawkesbury; and the banks of the river are there covered with timber; the soil a light rich mould; and, judging from what we saw of the country, I should suppose it good land to a very considerable extent. The other branches of fresh water are shoal, but probably run many miles further into the country than we could trace them in our boats. On these rivers we saw great numbers of wild ducks, and some black swans: and on the banks of the Hawkesbury several decoys were set by the natives, to catch quail.

Richmond Hill (near the foot of which a fall of water prevented our proceeding further with the boats, is the southern extremity of a range of hills, which running to the northward, most probably join the mountains that lie nearly parallel to the coast, from fifty to sixty miles inland. The soil of Richmond Hill is good, and it lies well for cultivation. Our prospect from the hill was very extensive to the southward and eastward; the country appearing, from the height on which we were, a level covered with timber. There is a flat of six or seven miles between Richmond Hill, and a break in the mountains, which separates Lansdown and Carmarthen Hills; and in this flat I suppose the Hawkesbury continues its course, but which could not be seen for the timber, that, with very few exceptions, covers the country wherever the soil is good.

The great advantage of so noble a river, when a settlement can be made on its banks, will be obvious to your Lordship.

The settlement made at Port Jackson, near the head of the harbour (Rose Hill) very fully answers my expectations; the soil is exceedingly good, lies well for cultivation, and is well watered. Twenty miles to the southward there is a considerable river, the source of which I suppose to be at the foot of the mountain. The banks of this river, which most probably empties itself into the Hawkesbury, are

high, the soil a good light mould, and covered with trees. The wood of some of the trees is very high: they are about the size of large walnut trees, which they resemble: they shed their leaves, and bear a small fruit, which is said to be very wholesome. This river likewise rises 30 feet above its common level. It is, as far as I have seen it, from three hundred to four hundred feet in breadth. I named it the Nepean; and its source will be traced in the course of the winter. From its banks I hope to reach the mountains, which has been attempted by a party, who crossed the river; but, after the first day's journey, they met with such a constant succession of deep ravines, the sides of which were frequently inaccessible, that they returned, not having been able to proceed above fifteen miles in five days. When they turned back, they supposed themselves to be twelve miles from the foot of the mountains.

As the land, for several miles to the southward, and twenty miles to the eastward, of Rose Hill (that is, to the banks of the Nepean) is as fine land for tillage as most in England (some few spots excepted, the soil of which is poor, and bears a very small proportion to the good land) I propose that tract of land for those settlers who may be sent out; and though they will be placed at some distance from each other, for the convenience of water, from one to three or four miles, they will have nothing to apprehend from the natives, who avoid those parts we most frequent, and always retire at the sight of two or three people who are armed.

As the labour of clearing the ground of timber will be great, I think each settler should not have less than twenty men on his own farm, which I suppose to be from five hundred to one thousand acres. It will be necessary to give that number of convicts to those settlers who come out, and to support them for two years from the public stores. In that time, if they are at all industrious, they will be in a situation to support themselves; and I do not think they would be able to do so less time. At the expiration of the two years, they may return half the convicts they have been allowed, and want no further assistance from government.

It may be necessary to grant lands to officers and soldiers, who, becoming settlers, will, of course, be entitled to every indulgence; but few of the officers now here have reaped any good advantage from being allowed convicts; and it is attended with unavoidable inconveniences, from the convicts being left so much to themselves, and from their mixing with the soldiers