

(No. 29.)



1856.

T A S M A N I A.

L E A S E D L A N D S.

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E.

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Colonial Secretary, and ordered by the House
to be printed, 22 December, 1856.



Surveyor-General's Office, 10th April, 1848.

MY DEAR SIR,

It has occurred to me that that portion of the Government Notice, No. 71, of the 21st day of June last, making the extension of the term of the Grazing Licences from five to ten years subject to the payment of an additional rental of ten per cent., is likely to prove injurious to the Revenue, as well as unsatisfactory to the Lessees of the Crown, who deem the measure propounded for the purpose of abstracting as much as possible out of their pockets without regard to the value of the land.

You will perceive, on reference to the Returns of Lands leased by Tender, which were forwarded to you from this office a short time since, that nearly all the lots so leased realized prices much beyond the rental fixed by the Government, and which, I think, may fairly be attributed to the fact of the Lessees of such lots availing themselves of the occupation of the adjoining land without the payment of any additional rent.

The Government Notice, No. 69, which renders all Crown Lands hitherto unlet available for rental at the upset price of £1 per 100 acres, has compelled those individuals who have hitherto appropriated to their use more land than their Licences sanctioned to make application for the surplus quantity, and, consequently, in many cases to surround by land leased under the new regulations the lots which they had before rented by Tender.

I therefore anticipate that many of the Tender lots for which high prices have been paid, and which are now surrounded by leased lands, will not be renewed this year, and, consequently, will have to be again exposed for Tender, with the uncertainty of their being again let, even at the upset price,—inasmuch as in many cases their extent would render them of very little use to any one except the individual by whose land they might be surrounded, and who, aware of this fact, would probably prefer running the risk of the land being taken by another party to making another offer for its occupation.

I think, however, that were the Government to remit the ten per cent. to be paid upon the renewal of the Licences after the first five years, many would be induced to pay for lots which otherwise they will throw up, either with the view of obtaining the land at a less amount of rental, or for the purpose of occupying it without paying any rent whatever.

There can be no question but that, even at the upset price, the rents for Crown Lands in this Colony, compared with those chargeable in New South Wales, are very high, and therefore ought not to be augmented in consequence of the period of the Licence being extended to ten years; a term, in my opinion, not too long to enable the Lessee to derive a proper benefit from the improvements which he must necessarily make before occupying the land, and which eventually will be beneficial to the Crown.

It is my intention to address the Government on this subject,—before doing which, however, I should be glad to have before me any remarks which your experience may enable you to suggest, and therefore would feel obliged by a reply at your earliest convenience.

Yours very truly,
R. POWER.

The Honourable the Collector of Internal Revenue.

I CONCUR with the Surveyor-General in thinking that payment of the ten per cent. should not be enforced. The Order in Council now in force in New South Wales was not known when the Notice, No. 71, was published in this Colony. Under that Order, the lessees of intermediate lands,—those which may be taken to correspond with those open for leasing here,—are not liable to any increase until after eight years; and assuming four acres of Waste Land in this Colony to be sufficient at an average to carry one sheep, they pay only £10 as rent where the Tasmanian Settler pays £160. The Van Diemonian is now charged sixteen times as much as the Port Phillipian. If the ten per cent. be enforced, he will be charged more than seventeen and a half times as much; for this apparently trifling increase is equivalent to more than a rent and a half at Port Phillip. To insist upon it would, I fear, therefore, under the alteration of circumstances produced by the Order in question, be only to excite dissatisfaction; and so perhaps to diminish, instead of increasing, the Revenue.

ADAM TURNBULL.

11th April, 1848.

MY DEAR SIR,

I SEND you back your letter, with a short memo. annexed to it. I quite concur with you in the opinion that the ten per cent. ought not to be enforced in the face of the regulations now in operation in Port Phillip. It seems to me, that it will soon be a matter of some difficulty to maintain even the minimum rate of £1 for every 100 acres.

Were it not that the lessees are generally owners of other lands, which they cannot abandon, the thing would be impossible. Why should a new Emigrant stay here, and as a lessee, pay a pound for what he can get, on the opposite side of the water, for the sixteenth of a pound?

Faithfully yours,
ADAM TURNBULL.

I enclose the printed paper you require.

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