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H O U S E O F A S S E M B L Y .

DISTRICT SURVEYORS' REPORTS.

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DISTRICT SURVEYORS' REPORTS.

COUNTY OF BUCKINGHAM.

Huon Road, 3rd July, 1882.

SIR,

I AM sorry to have to present you with such a meagre report of the progress of settlement in this District. There has been very little survey work done by me during the past year, the whole amounting to but 41 lots, with an area of 1584 acres, comprising 38 lots ordinary Crown land, area 1272 acres; 2 mineral lease lots, area 300 acres; and 1 town lot, area 12 acres.

The high wages paid for labour at the mines in the northern districts continue to attract the small settlers from their usual occupations on the land. This, in a great measure, accounts for the small quantity of land taken up during the year.

The main efforts of the settlers at the present time seem to be directed to the cultivation of small fruit for the jam makers and in extending their orchards, which appear to thrive much better here than in the drier climate of Hobart and other inland parts.

I have, &c.

JAMES COMBES, *District Surveyor, South Buckingham.*

To the Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

TASMAN'S PENINSULA.

Carnarvon, 1st May, 1882.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to report, for your information, the progress this District has made during the last twelve months. There has been very little land taken up under the 24th section, only about 16 small lots, and they were taken up mostly for the timber.

There are a number of men employed splitting palings at the Cascades, Norfolk Bay, Long Bay, and Carnarvon.

The contractors will soon complete the tracks from the Cascades and Newman's Bottom. People can then get in to see the land.

Nearly all the pasture land on Tasman's Peninsula is now rented for sheep and cattle.

There has been nothing doing on Forester's Peninsula.

I have, &c.

ARCHD. BLACKWOOD, *District Surveyor.*

To the Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works, Hobart.

Stone Buildings, Hobart, 29th July, 1882.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to forward my annual report upon the settlement of Crown lands in my District. I regret that it has not been furnished sooner. I was anxious to have explored more of the country to the south west of Mount Lloyd to ascertain approximately the amount of good land, before doing so, but very severe weather, together with other circumstances, have prevented me.

Less agricultural sections have been taken up during the past year than in any other in which I have had charge of the district. I attribute this to two causes,—one, I believe, to be owing to the high price of tin. Many people who would have selected land have had their attention directed to the mines. And, again, owing to the entire absence of roads into the unsettled portions where good land exists, many have been deterred from selection; for instance, in the Parish of Uxbridge, although all the land has been taken near the new road, there still exists a considerable quantity of good land without one, but none of it has been purchased,—in fact, not one lot has been taken during the past year.

The Parish of Uxbridge, Mount Lloyd, and the Valley of the Florentine, are the only portions of my district which contain any extent of good land. The remainder of the district in which Crown lands exist is chiefly of a very inferior quality, containing in places small patches of from 15 to 50 acres of good soil.

A large extent of first-class agricultural land still remains to be selected in the vicinity of Mount Lloyd. I believe that as soon as the road at present being formed into it is completed, a large amount will be purchased.

It has been reported to me that a considerable amount of splendid land is to be found up the Russell's Falls River, in the vicinity of the new track that is being cut to the west. I cannot vouch for the accuracy of this, as I have not had the time to visit it; but if it is the case, it must be a long distance to the west, and would require a large outlay upon roads before it would be settled upon.

No minerals of any value have as yet been discovered in my district; but the new track which is being cut to the west from Russell's Falls will greatly assist the exploration of that portion.

I believe that this summer this country will be well prospected, and it may lead to valuable discoveries.

In my last report I stated that gold-bearing reefs had been discovered between the Navarre and Guelph Rivers. In justice to myself I mentioned at the time that the statement was made upon the specimens shown me by the prospectors, which were very rich. It has since been proved that the specimens never had been taken from that locality.

I have, &c.

THOMAS FRODSHAM, JUN.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

COUNTY OF KENT.

Franklin, Huon, 31st July, 1882.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to submit for your information the following report upon my Survey District, to which I have appended some remarks upon the West Coast, being the result of observations made while engaged upon surveys in that locality during the past six months. This annual report should in ordinary course have reached you much earlier: my absence at the West Coast, as above noticed, has caused the delay:

Progress of Settlement.—I am still unable to report any extensive or satisfactory demand for land for agricultural purposes, although since the date of my last report a very general increase of prosperity throughout the District may be noted, prices obtained for produce (particularly fruit) having ruled higher than usual. The paucity of selection is, I imagine, largely owing to the attractiveness to the working class of the high rate of wages given in some mining localities, which has the effect of drawing from the District a number of that portion of our population from which the ranks of the agricultural settlers are usually recruited.

Timber Trade.—Has also improved during the past year, the demand for all descriptions having been much better, although the prices obtainable are still too low to warrant extension of the trade, or to justify much speculative outlay in road-making, &c.

Fruit-growing.—As previously indicated, this industry has enjoyed a season of exceptional prosperity ; both demand and prices for jam fruits have been encouraging, and although the apple crop—as regards certain descriptions—has been generally light, the prices ruling for all kinds have been far above those of past years ; pears, plums, &c. have also proved profitable to the grower.

It appears that this industry, for which the soil and climate of the Huon are so particularly suited, will bear extension, especially having in view that this District has so far been exempted from the plague of the “borer,” which has so seriously affected other less fortunate fruit-growing localities.

Quantity and quality of Land, &c.—In previous reports I have pointed out the impossibility of giving even approximate information that can be relied upon as to the area of land available for agricultural settlement, the whole of the unsettled country being so thickly wooded that examination of its character is impracticable ; the same rough character and the cost of clearing being also obstacles to rapid settlement.

Requirements of District Roads, &c.—I am still unable to recommend the undertaking of any works of magnitude having for immediate object the opening up of the back lands for settlement, but would rather urge the improvement of existing lines of communication,—as first of importance of which I may name the portion of the Main Road between Victoria and Franklin, in the original vote for which Franklin to Honeywood was included, and the amount nearly all expended south of Franklin. Although this amount has been since supplemented, it has proved insufficient, and I am of opinion that a further expenditure of at least £2000 is requisite to widen this road and place it in so substantial a condition as to bear the increased traffic, after which the sum allowed for maintenance should suffice to keep it in a proper state of repair. I am also of opinion that the continuation of this road from Honeywood to Southport should be classed as a “Main Road,” and the several Trusts through which it passes relieved from the burden of its maintenance, allowing the local funds to be expended in the more legitimate object of improving the ordinary cross roads. I would not, however, be understood as advising the immediate construction of this road, but simply selection of permanent route, forming where required, and providing necessary bridges and culverts ; also the expenditure of a sufficient sum yearly to maintain it in a fit state for horse traffic. There has been some agitation in the District recently on the question of a project for opening communication with Macquarie Harbour, *via* the Huon Valley and a line indicated by Mr. Surveyor Jones. As a matter of opinion, I regard the project as premature, as the difficulty of getting from the terminus on the Gordon of the track cut by Jones to Strahan at Macquarie (40 miles by water) would, under present circumstances, prevent any material portion of the traffic to West Coast taking that direction. I should therefore only advise such improvements on the route as will allow of horse traffic as far as the Craycroft River, but strongly recommend that the present “cart track” be continued as such from the She-oak Hills as far as the Arve (there being no practical difficulty). This will much facilitate the future operations of prospectors by enabling supplies and horse-feed to be carted thus far. It will also be a step in the direction of communication with Macquarie, which we may look upon as looming in the near future, and as well affords an outlet for the best and most extensive area of good agricultural land (situate up the Arve) of which I have a knowledge in the District. The pack-track from the Arve is, I believe, fairly equal to present requirements as far as Blake’s Opening ; but from thence it is reported that a deviation is necessary to avoid the hills which render the present route impracticable for horses.

It was proposed last season to cut two other tracks for prospecting purposes, *viz.*, from Huon Valley north towards Mount Anne, and south towards head of Craycroft River. Owing, however, to bad weather, these works were postponed, but the information since acquired of the country they would penetrate renders it most important that they should be carried out as early as possible in the coming season. These tracks will pass along the belt of limestone hereafter referred to, immediately adjacent to which promising indications have been found of gold, tin, and lead. The southern track should form a junction with the one cut from Southport, and proceed thence to Port Davey. If these suggestions are adopted, I anticipate that the prospecting of this large area of country will be actively proceeded with next summer.

Waste Lands Act.—I have noticed with approval suggestions that have been made for rendering still easier the terms upon which homesteads may be secured in the heavily timbered portions of the Colony. The present Waste Lands Act has so far worked well, and I have never advocated the “giving away” of land, believing that its value should to some extent recoup the outlay for roads ; but I hold that the present satisfactory state of the revenue justifies extra liberality, with the view of permanently settling on our lands many of those attracted by our mineral wealth, as well as our native-born population : moreover, the objection I have indicated as regards “giving” does not apply to the system of leasing proposed. I am also of opinion that the restriction should be removed which prohibits selection of more than one lot, seeing no good reason for its continuance,—speculative selections of the lands I am treating of having become a thing of the past.

I would therefore suggest leasing for 7 or 10 years, rent free (applicant paying £1 application and usual survey fee), of areas not less than 25 or exceeding 100 acres, with right of purchase, on 14 years’ credit, same terms as at present, but certain specified improvements to be made,—say residence

within 12 months, and 10 per cent. of area leased to be cleared by end of second year of holding, or equivalent improvement, on penalty of forfeiture; second selection allowed when conditions of first (residence and clearing) complied with, and so on up to the limit specified. Selectors under 24th Section who have *bonâ fide* complied with residence claim allowed to select again, and so on up to limit fixed of 320 acres. I have before advised (last year's report) an alteration of the 28th Section, and think the provisions of this section should also apply to lands settled upon under the new proposal of leasing.

Mining for Gold and other Minerals.—I have nothing fresh to report under this head, as, although promising indications have been found, nothing has yet been reported as at present payable.

Coal is still being placed in the market from the mine at Port Cygnet, but, in the absence of a tramway, necessarily in very limited quantities. I am informed that, as the quality is good and the demand encouraging, arrangements are in progress for the expenditure of capital on appliances for transport and shipping. This is an important industry, and it is to be hoped that it will become successful. Exploration of Western Country and prospecting for minerals has been vigorously carried on during the past twelve months, with the result that much valuable information and some highly promising indications have been obtained, pointing to the probability of future discoveries of value. I have ascertained that a belt of limestone country (primary) exactly similar to that at Beaconsfield is traceable in a north and south direction for some 30 miles (between Mount Anne and head of New River), in connection with which the occurrence of alluvial gold in small quantity is noted. Some of the quartz reefs in this locality have also been proved to be auriferous. Samples pronounced by experts to be "stream tin" have been brought in from two places widely apart: a specimen, probably from the outcrop of a lode, submitted for assay was pronounced to contain the same mineral, and I have myself obtained lead by hand-crushing from some of the stone brought in. Copper of good description (peacock ore), and said to be in quantity, has been found in two places south of Macquarie, (between there and Port Davey). Bearing in mind the small beginnings of the now established mining wealth of the North, we have, I think, good reason for hope from the progress that has so far been made in the South.

Remarks on West Coast.—As intimated in the former part of this report, my employment for a time on the West Coast has afforded opportunities for observation of which I have availed myself. Passing overland from Bischoff, *viâ* Pieman and Heemskirk, to Macquarie, (with stay at each place), I noticed, first, the similarity of general features of the country formation, &c., with that of the south west, judging in the latter case from descriptions given and specimens of rocks submitted by prospectors. Secondly,—the result of Californian experience—the strongly-marked auriferous indications presented by a large area in which I should imagine the finding of lodés or quartz reefs is only a question of time, and will no doubt follow, as in other places, the profitable working of the alluvial deposits. Thirdly, the very remarkable metalliferous indications literally staring one in the face, in passing over the Heemskirk country, as for some ten miles specimens of chlorite, tourmaline, and porphyry, all more or less impregnated with tin, may be picked up almost at every step,—the history of mining in the past teaching us that such surface shows are indicative of much hidden wealth somewhere in the vicinity; at the same time it is no less a fact that the successful development of "lode-mining" has hitherto been slow, and we have no reason to expect this condition to be entirely reversed on the West Coast, but may reasonably look for failures, each of which will have the effect of retarding progress.

Requirements of West Coast.—I am certainly not an advocate for a large expenditure on railway communication between Macquarie and Heemskirk,—a project which I look upon as premature, for reasons which I will proceed to point out. First, I am of opinion that in the event of the West Coast proving to be what we hope and expect as a mineral country, its proper and eventual outlet will not be Macquarie, but Hobart, *viâ* the valley of the Derwent. Intervening mountains, now-a-days, present no formidable obstacles to engineering progress, and may be "got over," as in the case of Mont Cenis, without extraordinary cost. Much will, of course, depend upon the value (agricultural or mineral) of the country such railway would pass over: this should be carefully ascertained by exploration as information of value for the future. Secondly, I am of opinion that all the requirements of Heemskirk may be met in a manner involving far less cost to the country without in any way retarding its development; my own personal observation of the difficulty and risk attendant upon communication by sea only with Trial Harbour convinces me that, for purposes even of development, this place, as a (so-called) "Port," is entirely unsuited, and that the importance of the mining interest demands recognition, by the provision of necessary facilities for communication, in order that the capital employed in developing our resources may not be, as at present, too heavily handicapped. In my view, however, all that is required is a cheap and moderately substantial tramway,—not, I may remark, such a one as Bischoff, which is practically a railway with a wooden top,—but merely something to answer present requirements, similar to those constructed in this district for bringing out logs and split timber from the bush, which, last a certain number of years, serve their turn, and are abandoned, or give place to something better. Such a tramway could be constructed from Macquarie to North Heemskirk (say 30 miles), to and through

the mining region, for £15,000, or an average of (including bridges), £500 per mile. The Huon cost is from £200 to £300 per mile. Having had some experience in the construction and working of such a road, as a part proprietor, as well as opportunities of observation in the case of similar roads in the Huon District, I have some knowledge of the subject, and would supply any further information required, as to size of rails, best form of wheels, &c. I estimate the expenses (keep of horses and drivers' pay) on such a line of road as I have suggested, at West Coast rates, would be about three-pence per ton per mile (reckoning half a load returning), or 6s. per ton for the whole journey of 30 miles. A charge of 1s. per ton per mile should, I imagine, be sufficient to cover all expenses, including ordinary repairs; and as I perceive that it is estimated that the present cost of conveying goods landed at Boat Harbour to the mines is £1 per ton, the amount I have named could not be considered excessive by the Mining Companies. Such a tramway would last, and I believe prove equal to the traffic, for the next ten years. A railway for the same 30 miles (with gradients of 1 in 40) would cost—say £100,000, representing £5000 per annum interest—so that a delay of even three years (during which the railway cannot be expected to be reproductive) would save the cost of the tramway, added to which the additional bridges proposed to be constructed for ordinary cart traffic would not be required.

Agricultural Settlement.—It is, I conceive, of very great importance as regards the future of this part of the Colony, that agricultural settlement should be promoted and encouraged in every possible way, entirely regardless of any direct advantage to the revenue by the sale of land. I cannot speak favourably from personal knowledge of the quality of the land on the West Coast; but I am informed that considerable areas suitable for cultivation are to be found in the vicinity of the Henty Rivers, and also between Heemskirk and Pieman, and on the banks of the Gordon. I quite concur with a suggestion made by the Press that the agricultural capabilities of this part of the country should be ascertained and reported upon by a competent and reliable officer, (this can only be done by the cutting of tracks), so that their extent, &c. may be known. I would further suggest that such areas as recommended should be at once proclaimed agricultural areas, the boundaries marked on the ground, and afterwards thrown open for selection to "lease," upon the terms and conditions defined in the former part of my report.

Pine-cutting, &c.—The enquiry mentioned above (examination of land) should include, as well, examination and report upon the locality and extent of beds of pine, whether of the ordinary kind, or of the variety known as the "King William." I am able myself to report the discovery of an apparently extensive area of the latter sort, situated on high land (which this variety appears to favour) near the north-east angle of Strahan Town Reserve. As far as I was able to judge, I should imagine this description of timber stands pretty thickly upon several hundreds of acres: the outlet for it will be what is known as "Long Bay." As but little appears to be known of this description of timber, which is wonderfully light, I forwarded a specimen of it to the Museum, Hobart. I am aware that the cutting of this timber (pine) is at present prohibited, it being in fact quite time that its wholesale exportation in the log, with no benefit to the country, should be put a stop to. It is however hardly desirable, in view of the probable requirements of the West Coast itself for timber for building and other purposes, to continue such prohibition permanently; and I can see that a difficulty arises in connection with this subject to the carrying out of my proposition for the leasing of lots in agricultural areas. This difficulty I would meet by issuing special licences for pine-cutting *without charge*, and imposing an export duty of so much per 100 feet, varying in accordance with the size of the timber; viz., least for boards, &c. up to one inch in thickness; somewhat more for planking up to 3 inches; above that size treated as in the log, with an almost prohibitory duty. The effect will be to employ Tasmanian labour in cutting it (encouraging saw-mills, large employers of labour), and cheapen the article to the local consumer. It will also I think be advisable to afford some especial protection to saw-mills, by granting leases of extended areas proportionate to the capital expended.

In conclusion, I would say that although, having in view the requirements of the agricultural and pastoral districts as regards roads and railways, I advocate caution and economy in dealing with West Coast wants, I would yet strongly urge the necessity for liberal expenditure in improving the means of communication to and through this remarkable country, in which the heavy scrub presents such a formidable obstacle to the explorer.

I have, &c.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands.

G. INNES, *District Surveyor.*

COUNTIES OF MONMOUTH AND SOMERSET.

5, *Davey-street, Hobart, 2nd August, 1882.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to submit the following annual report of the District under my charge, commencing with the northern portion in the County of Somerset, Parish of Peel, where three sections, each containing 320 acres, have been applied for under the 24th Section of "The Waste Lands Act, 1870," and surveyed to Thomas J. Exton, E. T. Oldham, and Joseph Wade re-

spectively. These sections form a portion of Lot 63, 1700 acres, leased to G. T. Scott, and are principally of a rather stony description; but towards the north end of the original lot the land is of medium quality. I believe the remainder of Lot 63 has recently been applied for by Mr. Scott.

In the County of Monmouth, Parish of Yarlinton, eight selections have been made, comprising 395 acres. Some of these sections have been marked off, and the plans of the remaining lots will be furnished at an early date.

In the Parish of Whitefoord 125 acres have been applied for in three lots. In the Parish of Jervis only one small selection has been made, and in Hartington two lots, of 25 and 30 acres respectively.

In the Parishes of Bisdee, Huntingdon, and Ormaig, three small sections have been taken up, with two small sections in the vicinity of Prosser's River.

In the County of Pembroke, Parish of Nugent, one lot of 25 acres; in the Parish of Forcett, one of 40, and in the vicinity of Tin Pot Marsh, one of 100 acres, have been applied for.

In the County of Glamorgan, vicinity of Tooms' Lake, one section of 50 acres has been applied for.

Under the 27th Section of the Waste Lands Act, in the County of Pembroke two applications have been made for 100 acres each; and in the County of Glamorgan, vicinity of Lisdillon, 761 acres have been applied for in three lots, the smallest of 99 acres being purchased at £1 per acre, by E. H. J. Mitchell, at the land sale held on the 10th May last. These last-named lots were surveyed during the month of June, 1881; and on the 16th of August I was instructed to proceed to the Parish of Wycombe, in the Deloraine district, and also to the Nimmo Gold Field, in the Mersey District, to inspect and check some surveys previously made by other surveyors, the accuracy of which had been disputed; thence I was hurriedly called upon to organise a party to go into the south-western portion of the Colony in search of Mr. Surveyor Jones's track party coming overland from Macquarie Harbour to the Huon, then overdue. On my return I prepared plans of all my surveys effected to date and forwarded them to your Office. My next duty was to make a survey of the Cascade Factory reserve, with a view to adjusting a matter of alleged encroachment in connection with it. Said survey was performed prior to the 6th December last. The greater portion of the time since the middle of December has been devoted to working up arrears of surveys, under the Mineral Lands Act, in the Scottsdale and Ringarooma districts.

A perusal of a portion of what I have written will show that the greatest increase of settlement in my district has taken place in the County of Monmouth, and I am of opinion that this settlement will be considerably extended; and I shall take an early opportunity of furnishing a full and careful report on a large area of agricultural land said to exist in the locality of Hobbs' Bluff. I regret very much that my time has been so much taken up with other important duties during the past year as to prevent my being able to supply the information in this report, as I believe this subject to be of considerable importance to the district under my care; and in apologising for the late date of my report, I desire to inform you that I was not forgetful of the matter, but deferred writing it in the hope of being able to gather some reliable and valuable information respecting the extent and quality of the tract of country above referred to, with a view to furthering future settlement.

With regard to minerals, I am glad to be able to report the discovery of a gold-bearing reef on the Campania Estate, the property of Mr. Brock. This reef has been prospected with very satisfactory results, and the proprietors are now procuring machinery for the further development of the mine, with sanguine anticipations of success.

The Jerusalem coal-mine is still in active operation, and is proving a valuable property. The coal mine at York Plains, the estate of Mr. Lord, is also being developed, and is yielding satisfactory returns.

I regret the foregoing report does not contain so much information as I could wish, the reason being attributable to the fact of my being so much occupied out of my district during the year. I therefore trust it may meet your approval.

I have, &c.

EDWARD A. COUNSEL, *District Surveyor.*

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works, Hobart.

River Forth, 20th April, 1882.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to forward my annual report on the District under my charge.

In reference to agricultural land, most of the lots, since my last report, have been taken adjoining former selections, or in the vicinity of roads, with the exception of the Pine Road, where about 1000 acres have been surveyed awaiting the construction of that thoroughfare. Many of the applicants seem to prefer inferior soil adjoining their previous selections, or in the vicinity of passable roads, to going further back and getting better land without means of access. Although I have had to mark off lots scattered all through the district, they have been so small or isolated that they call for no special remark. In the vicinity of the Penguin the most important of my operations have taken place, where about 1000 acres have been surveyed for agricultural purposes, and about 900 acres under the Mineral Leases Act. Three of these sections are about 17 miles up the Pine Road, and two of them contain an immense lode nearly a chain wide in places, from which have been obtained silver, lead, copper, and antimony, and the present manager reports 15 per cent. of tin in some of the specimens.

Some very promising specimens of copper and traces of other metals have been found about two miles back from the coast at the Penguin. One company has been formed, I understand, to work these sections, they having found some good specimens of black copper ore, with other ores of that metal, and traces of other minerals. The old Penguin Silver Mine, as it is called, is again being worked, and I believe the prospects are encouraging. Another mine adjoining this, called the Neptune, has been carrying on operations for some months: they are working on a lode of silver-lead, and it seems to me, as far as I am able to judge, one of the most promising things of the kind found on this coast. There is a good field for prospecting in this neighbourhood, as that large tract of country known as the Dial Range extends inland for 30 miles or more, and I quite believe that it is all mineral-bearing. I drew attention to this matter in my report of the 7th April, 1879; and should one of these sections on which they are employed now prove productive, it will only be the commencement of a large mining area. This extensive tract of country, bounded by the Leven and the Blythe, and a few miles of good land on the coast, is, with a few exceptions, only fit for mining purposes, as it consists generally of steep, rocky hills, and broken ground; some of the hills, I imagine, having an altitude of over 2000 feet. Several mining sections have been marked off between the Forth and Wilmot Rivers, and are being worked by the Barrington Copper Company. They have copper there, but I do not know whether their prospects are encouraging or not. The land they are at work upon is nearly useless for anything else. The Wilmot country, to the south of these lots, still remains in a state of nature. A good many selections have been surveyed there, but, for the want of a road and bridge, purchasers cannot get on their land to make improvements. I sent in a few applications some months ago for land there, but have not heard whether they have been gone on with. I am to show this land to some intending purchasers in a few days: they want about 1000 acres; but whether it will suit them after seeing the means of access, which takes about five hours to walk seven miles, it will be for them to decide. I know the ground is good enough there. I have every reason to believe that a bridge and about 8 miles of cart-track beyond would cause the sale and settlement of at least 5000 acres of agricultural land, besides opening up the country for prospectors. It is very well known that good indications of various minerals have been found in numerous places between the Forth and Wilmot Rivers, but it is doubtful whether any systematic search will be made until better means of communication are given. Since my last report, I may mention that I have been employed by the Mount Bischoff Company to examine the country between the Leven and Penguin and Mount Bischoff, for the purpose of ascertaining the practicability of getting a road to connect these points. I found it could be done in about the same distance as to Emu Bay by the Tramway. I bring this matter under notice because such a thoroughfare between the points mentioned would have to pass about twenty-five miles through my district, and the construction of such a work would effect a good deal of prosperity near its course. The *Launceston Examiner* at one time rated me for not mentioning the tin mines (at what they termed Mount Housetop), but, unfortunately for me, they were not in my district. However, I can now with certainty report the existence of tin in my district, as I found it in small quantities some miles to the south of Housetop. I have never before drawn attention to the large deposits of iron ore that exist in this district. I do not suppose that mineral is to be found in larger quantities or masses in any part of Tasmania than it is at the Blythe and Penguin. It might be worth while for prospectors to examine the country in its neighborhood to see if more valuable minerals accompany it.

I have, &c.

RICHD. HALL.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

WELLINGTON, RUSSELL, AND WEST COAST.

Wynyard, 30th May, 1882.

SIR,

THE chief event in the Survey District under my charge during the year 1881 has been the revival of mining at Mount Heemskirk and the West Coast, and a consequent move of population in that direction. Although it is now some five years since the existence of tin lodes at Mount Heemskirk became known to the public, somehow or other no great interest was attached to the question of how best to turn these discoveries to profitable account, and at the close of 1880 it had become a settled conviction with most people that Mount Heemskirk was too poor in minerals to be of any value as a mining field.

In 1881 renewed interest was manifested from the fact that Victorian capital was being invested in these fields, and just at the most fortunate time the Government of Tasmania despatched Mr. G. Thureau to report upon the prospects of the West Coast. The favourable opinions expressed by Mr. Thureau at last convinced the public that they had been too hasty in condemning what now appeared to be one of the most important mining fields in the Colony, and, as might have been expected, the public rushed from one extreme to the other, forming the most extravagant notions as to the immense results that were at once to flow from small efforts at developing the numerous tin lodes.

Simultaneous with this movement at Mount Heemskirk, a good many men were attracted to the gold fields north of the Pieman River; and as the mines at Mount Bischoff were demanding labour, and men were in request to work at the roads on the North-West Coast, the rate of wages rose higher than has ever been the case during my experience.

It is not to be wondered, therefore, that nearly all the young men of this district preferred the certainty of working for high wages to the chance of farming for low prices; and as prices have been very low for the past few years, this sudden demand for labour at the mines and public works saved the district from utter stagnation. This state of affairs, then, accounts for the fact that scarcely any agricultural lands were taken up in 1881, and there is not much prospect of an increased demand for 1882. Indeed, it would be safe to say that no extension of settlement has taken place on agricultural lands during the past year, for the few lots taken up are for the purpose of securing timber.

The construction of the Main Road from Wynyard to Stanley has opened up a narrow strip of good land, and the greater part of it is taken up or applied for, and probably by next year all the frontage lots will be sold. With this one exception, no fresh clearings have been made, I mean in new localities. In the older settlements progress has been slow, but quite as much as could be expected considering the attractions at the mines.

As year by year intending settlers have to go further back from the roads, and as road construction has not yet overtaken existing population, it must naturally follow that the demand for Crown land is limited to the requirements of a few men who combine timber-cutting with a little farming,—it is useless for the settlers to grow crops that cannot be got to market.

Seeing what a large population is likely to flow into the mines and gold fields of this district, and viewing the fact that this population will be consumers and not producers, it seems to me that some scheme of roads should be initiated so that the farmers may have a prospect of supplying these miners with produce, and thus obtain a home market for stuff which they cannot sell in the neighbouring Colonies on account of high protective duties. Road lines should be laid down to connect the North-West Coast with Mount Bischoff, Long Plains, and the Pieman, and other lines to connect the Derwent with Mount Heemskirk, and the Huon with the Gordon; and although it is not expected that macadamised roads should be constructed at once in all these directions, yet if a little were done in each year it would all help towards securing good roads for the future, an advantage which the present system of cutting tracks does not secure. For instance, a road line with suitable gradients should be laid down to connect Mount Bischoff and Mount Heemskirk, and all future expenditure in that locality should be on that line, so that by degrees a cart-road would be formed. As it now is, though a large sum of money has been spent on a track which for four months in the year is good enough, yet in winter time and after heavy rains the tracks became impassable and the progress of the country seriously retarded. On the other hand, if the tracks are made in a more substantial manner the cost is so great that it would be better to construct roads at once. If, as is expected, 1000 men are at Heemskirk next summer, the construction of a road between Bischoff and Heemskirk will become a work of pressing emergency.

To illustrate the advantages the Colony has derived from a small expenditure on tracks, I may point out the recent rush to the Long Plain Gold Fields. The first discovery of gold in that vicinity was made by a party under my charge cutting exploration tracks between the Arthur and Pieman; and although the existence of payable gold was known, yet the inaccessible nature of the country prevented miners from giving it a trial. As soon as the Government track was cut through,

men began to examine the locality, and the best patch of alluvial gold ever worked in Tasmania was discovered. At the lowest calculation, £16,000 of gold has been obtained from that locality, and so long as the track was passable men could do very well indeed. Now that the winter storms and rain have made the track impassable the men have left, and the progress of the country delayed for another year. Additional tracks are being made, and I believe the Government contemplate still more. This will lead to further discoveries, and as the country becomes better known a demand for better roads will be felt. I therefore think it would be wise to have some definite scheme of roads to work upon.

Noticing, first, the older mining settlements, we find that Mount Bischoff still holds its pride of place as the most profitable mine in Tasmania. The Mount Bischoff Company has paid £90,000 in dividends during 1881, a sum greater than all the dividends paid by public companies in Cornwall. There is no change to report in the prospects of this mine. Its machinery is added to and improved every year, and it is now one of the most complete dressing-plants in the Southern Hemisphere. I believe it is contemplated to introduce the electric light to illuminate the worksheds and the town.

Some stir was made over the discovery that tin-bearing wash is found under the basalt; the discovery is by no means a new one, as it was pointed out by Professor Ulrich some eight years ago; but up to the present time no steps had been taken to prove the value of the wash. As far as my judgment goes, I think the wash will be found in small patches under the basalt, but that very little of it will be good enough to warrant extensive underground operations.

During the year an effort was made to work the silver-lead veins on the north bank of the Waratah, but as yet the prospecting operations have not proved the existence of the lode at a depth. The North Valley Company has fallen upon troublesome times, having exhausted the ore in the accessible workings, and having neglected to provide for future operations.

The West Bischoff Company at the end of the year were almost ready to start their battery. Since that they have made a start, and are now sending ore to market. Their operations will be watched with great interest, as giving a fair proof of the probabilities of lode-mining in Tasmania.

The town of Waratah continues to advance, and its once rough and rude surroundings are now giving place to signs of comfort and prosperity; and as the Van Diemen's Land Company are now about to convert their tramway into a railway, the town is certain to increase still more rapidly.

The great excitement of the year was at Mount Heemskirk, and it may be said that the turning point in the fortunes of the West Coast was reached last spring. Once the public became convinced that tin lodes could be had for the simple looking for, the place was soon swarming with prospectors, and discoveries of promising lodes were reported every day. But, unfortunately, the thing was overdone, and prospects unduly extolled, hence the inevitable reaction set in, and the place is once more undergoing a depression. As yet, too little is known of the peculiarities of these lodes to admit of a safe expression of opinion as to their permanency at a depth, and from what I have seen of the country I am of opinion that nothing definite can be ascertained unless the lodes are tried at such a depth that the country rock is likely to be more settled than it is near the surface. The country is so irregular and "knocked about" that it is very unlikely the lodes will be undisturbed near the surface, and therefore it is not surprising that up to the present time the lodes have proved very uncertain and subject to many irregularities as to size and dip. The lodes are not confined to the granites and porphyry, but are found in the slates as well, and it is generally the case that the veins in the slate, though small, are more dense than in the porphyry. Very little alluvial tin is found; some few patches are found to pay, but they are of such limited extent that they are not likely to play an important part in the future history of mining operations.

As the leading mineralogical features of this district have already been reported upon by Mr. Thureau, there is no occasion for me to go into details on the subject, but confine myself to remarking that since Mr. Thureau's visit so many important facts have come to light that his report is now out of date, and it would be advisable that he should again visit the district.

It is not unlikely that other minerals besides tin will be found at Heemskirk in sufficient quantities to warrant mining for them; several promising copper lodes have been discovered, and what appears to be a rich vein of bismuth. The slates near the granite appear to be very metalliferous, and promise well for silver and lead.

During the time prospectors were so numerous about Mount Heemskirk, several more adventurous parties pushed their way into the country near the Gordon and King Rivers. No important discoveries were made. A little gold is reported, but nothing to warrant expenditure. A little copper was found south of Macquarie Harbour.

There is still a vast area of country untraversed by prospectors, and a further expenditure on tracks is much required. All the country up the valley of the Pieman is quite unknown, and very little careful prospecting has been done between Macquarie Harbour and Port Davey.

Turning to the country north of the Pieman, we find a very promising state of things. The former tin discoveries at North Pieman have been taken up afresh, and mining operations are being carried on. In addition to promising lodes, sufficient stream tin has been found to warrant operations, and I have little doubt but that a population will soon be settled at that locality. Other tin veins have been found on the Magnet Range, thus verifying the opinion I expressed in former reports that the country at the north and south of the Meredith Range would prove metalliferous.

In gold mining two new developments have to be noticed. Attention has been directed to the deep ground near the Pieman River, and several companies have been formed to bring water to the ground and give the deposits a trial. So far, very little energy has been shown in the matter, and nothing has been done to prove whether the ground is payable or not. If these deposits could be made to pay for working, an immense impetus would be given to the progress of the district. Some modification should be made in the regulations so that a certainty of tenure may be given to companies working such claims in a *bonâ fide* manner.

During the year a good lot of gold was obtained from the Lucy Rivulet, but the ground was soon worked out, and the hopes of finding reefs ended in disappointment.

The Long Plains gold rush properly belongs to 1882, so it may be dismissed by saying that it has turned out one of the richest patches ever found in the Colony. I am confident that next summer auriferous reefs will be found at the head of the Savage and Donaldson River,—reefs which I believe have furnished the gold of Long Plains and Badger Creek, as well as the poorer deposits of the Arthur and Hellyer.

To enable prospectors to examine the country at the head of the Savage and Donaldson, I would advise that a track be cut from Kay's diggings, at the junction of the Arthur and Hellyer, in a southerly direction to Long Plains, and a cross track from Mount Bischoff to Pyramid Hill.

I must confess to a feeling of disappointment that no good discoveries have yet been made in the country south of the Gordon and Macquarie. I do not yet abandon the hope, and it seems to me that the country is worth a systematic examination under Government direction.

I would respectfully suggest that during the summer of 1882-83 further explorations be undertaken to ascertain a good route for a road to connect Mount Heemskirk with the Derwent, and that the South West country be examined and reported upon by some one experienced in mineralogy and prospecting.

Looking back at the past five years in the history of the West Coast, it must be confessed that a great change has come over the prospects of that portion of the Colony, and a large area of country for a long time looked upon as useless now promises to become a valuable mining region, employing a large industrial population,—a population which will help the agricultural and pastoral districts to increased prosperity.

I confidently look forward to a rapid development of mining on the West Coast, now that the preliminary difficulties are over.

Although, strictly speaking, it is not within my province to discuss matters of administration, I may venture to express the hope that before another year has gone by a Mining Department will be organised. We now have in this Colony six Mining Commissioners, an Inspector of Mines, an Assayer, and we are shortly to have a staff of skilled men to work the diamond drills. Besides these officials we have within the Colony many men of wide experience in mining matters; and it seems very desirable that something should be done to bring to a focus all these scattered rays. If a Mining Department were created, its business could be carried out by men having experience in mining matters, and by others having the necessary office training. The Department could manage all such work as the preparation of charts of mining districts, geological maps, receive and deal with all applications for leases, and all other matters in connection with the Gold Fields and Mineral Lands Act. It would also act somewhat in the way of a Bureau of Mining, such as exists in California, and explained some little time ago by an article in the *Mercury*. Some such scheme as is there sketched would give a grand lift to mining in Tasmania. Now that mining is becoming our leading industry, it seems time that it should be administered by a Department, instead of being merely one amidst the multitudinous subdivisions of the Lands Office.

When one sees the careful attention given to mining matters in other Colonies, and the many advantages Australian and American miners possess over the less fortunate people of Tasmania, it does seem time we made a start to keep pace with the age.

I have, &c.

CHAS. P. SPRENT, *District Surveyor*.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

COUNTY OF DORSET.

Moorina, 4th July, 1882.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to forward the annual report for this year of my Survey District, kept back till now awaiting some information asked for at your hands (by letter of 5th May last), which it appears, by the delay, you do not intend to furnish me with.

Although dating as above, I am confining this report to the period ending 30th of April last, which is the date the annual reports of the surveyors are usually made up to.

In preceding reports an approximate estimate of the areas of agricultural, stanniferous, and auriferous lands in my district were given; but inasmuch as that a large extent of country is by Proclamation withdrawn from the operation of the 24th Section of the Waste Lands Act, I presume I may be allowed to leave the first subject untouched. With respect to the second, I am happy to be able to say I believe that tin-mining is only in its infancy in the country this paper refers to, a great extent of tin land having lately been taken up, fresh discoveries of alluvial tin ground being continually made, and a most important one is now inciting enterprise, *i.e.*, the discovery of tin ore beneath the basaltic formations of the agricultural Crown lands, which promises to be rich in ore and of great extent in the yet unalienated Crown lands, and even running under some of the purchased lands about Branxholm and of the Upper Ringarooma agricultural settlement. If these lands can be utilised for farming on the surface, and the extraction of rich deposits of tin ore at great depths beneath, surely revenue and prosperity must be the result. The increased area taken up for tin mining, and the great necessity of water for mining operations thereon, has induced several companies to set about bringing water from great distances for the supply of the miners, of which I may mention the following:—The North Brothers' Home Company has had a race set out from the Legerwood River, a distance of over 20 miles, for working their claim on the bank of the Ringarooma River. The Mount Cameron Hydraulic Company intend to bring water a distance of 16 miles from the head of the Mussel Roe River on to tin country also on the banks of the Ringarooma River, at a point north of Mount Cameron. They purpose erecting two miles of fluming along their line of race, which race is to be cut six feet wide at top and two feet deep, with a fall of four feet per mile, at a cost of £230 per mile, or £3680 in all, estimated capable of discharging 60 sluice-heads of water at a height of about 180 feet above the Ringarooma River. The Esk Company have secured 816 acres of land, and are constructing a dam across the Ringarooma, at a point where that river is 60 feet wide. The dam is to be 162 feet long, and 12 feet wide on the top and 45 feet on the base, with a vertical height of 27 feet. Its object is to drive an overshot water-wheel of 20 feet diameter and 18 feet clear in the breast, as a motive to double-acting plunger-pumps, to work horizontally, and drive water at the rate of 40,000 gallons per hour day and night through wrought iron pipes of 16 inches diameter, forming a column 3100 feet long, discharging the water into a reservoir 300 feet perpendicular height above the river, and capable of holding three million (3,000,000) gallons, the position commanding a large extent of terrace country. The Edina Company's race, of 8½ miles in length, is now discharging water on to claims on the bank of the Ringarooma at another point. Beside these are the Arba, Brothers' Home No. 1, Little Cascade, Moorina, Pioneer, Dorset, A.B.C., Ruby, Mount Cameron, Native Lass, and several other companies, all of which have water schemes of several miles in length. Since my last report much tin land has been taken up in new localities,—for instance, at the Arnon River, the Forresters' River, north of Mount Stronach, the top of Mount Maurice, and also at its base, near the township reserve of Maurice,—but as the surveys of these lands have been put into other hands to do, I have had no opportunity of inspecting these new discoveries or estimating their value to the country. Although so much additional tin country has of late been taken up, nearly all of it has not yet got into working order for producing ore, but the deadwork—of building dams, cutting races, &c.—is being vigorously pushed on by most of the lessees. Notwithstanding the increased area under lease, it is a matter of surprise that the production of ore finding an outlet at the Port of Ringarooma (that is from Mount Cameron, Moorina, and their vicinities) has been steadily falling off, as will be seen by the following figures of the tin ore carried by the steamer *Avon*, which enjoys a monopoly of the trade from that port:—In 1880 this vessel took therefrom to Launceston 30,529 bags; in 1881 only 23,641 bags,—making a difference of 6888 bags (about 340 tons) of tin ore less last year, although her trips of once a week were regularly performed each year. I have no figures to show what quantity has gone by way of Bridport from the neighbourhood of the Dorset River and Ruby Flat country, but I believe it is something considerable. With the increased acreage taken up, and the increased water facilities, the future output of tin ore should be largely on the increase instead of on the decrease.

The sanguine expectations of the Mount Cameron gold field, I am sorry to say, have not been realised. An idea is held by some that the principal reefs holding gold at or near the "Cap" are in reality true tin lodes beneath, as tin ore seemed to come in where the gold appeared to go out: whether the opinion is a correct one I do not know, or what may be the result would be premature for me to predict. Gold claims are still held at Waterhouse, Mount Horror, Pearce's Rush, near Branxholm, and the Camden Plains; but as yet all seem barren of good results.

Having in view the great extent of tin country exhibiting itself in my district, and the large supplies of water necessary for all mining purposes, I think it would be advisable for the Government

to initiate a system of storing water wherever that could be done, at suitable heights, by seeking out naturally-formed reservoirs on all streams and large watersheds, where, by throwing dams across the outlets, the water could be conserved in large quantities and sold out per sluice-head as required by the miners. Such reservoirs would be valuable property, even should all mining cease, as means of irrigating the land, which would then be put to other uses.

Most of the roads in my district are in a frightful state, particularly the one from Moorina to the Port, and there is no hope of anything better than its present state this winter. The teamsters continue taking down tin ore, but many tons of goods remain at the Port which they are, on account of the state of the road, unable to bring up to the mines. I am unable to estimate the population, but it must be large, from the quantity of goods on which duty has to be paid and colonial produce consumed.

Since my last annual report, and up to the 30th April last, the following survey work has passed through my hands; viz.—96 gold fields claims, amounting to 947½ acres; about 35 miles of water-rights, 176 tin sections, amounting to 5640 acres. The agricultural surveys only amount to 2140 acres. The surveys of town allotments, connecting surveys, and surveys of roads, are not included in the above figures.

I have, &c.

JOHN R. HURST, *District Surveyor.*

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works, Hobart.

P.S.—The figures as to survey work stated above give no idea of the real amount of surveys made in my district for the period, as, independent of two surveyors under private engagements, there have been five others sent in under the authority of your Department, of whose operations (although I am nominally in charge of the district) I am not permitted to be cognisant of.

J. R. H.

COUNTY OF DORSET.

Moorina, 1st August, 1882.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor, in making my annual report of progress in the Survey District under my charge, to draw your attention to the fact that it is utterly impossible for me to do so with any degree of correctness, as various surveys have been made by other surveyors of which it is altogether out of my power to furnish particulars.

The agricultural advancement may be reckoned as *nil.*, the amount of land selected for the year being only two 100-acre lots. This may be, and is partly attributable to the fact, that good land that is known to exist on the heads of the Mussel Roe River is totally inaccessible on account of the absolute non-existence of roads leading to it, and that isolated patches of good alluvial land on the banks of the various streams being supposed to contain minerals, intending selectors are thereby deterred taking it up, as they may at any moment lose it by its being leased over their heads for mineral purposes.

The large and steady rise in the price of tin ore has caused a great deal of prospecting to be done, and generally with very satisfactory results; as although the output of ore has not increased to any appreciable extent, for the reason that most of the land taken up is situated on high level terraces, to which it is impossible to convey water for sluicing purposes by gravitation, yet on these claims large and expensive works are in course of construction with a view of pumping and conserving water, so that in a few months, it may be safely predicted, the output of ore will be very largely increased, as all those large and rich deposits of tin on the north and east banks of the Ringarooma River will then be under the command of water, and, being on a high level, there will be no difficulty in the way of fall for tail-races, and that hitherto untried method of mining for tin in this district, known as "hydraulic sluicing," will be brought into operation.

During the year I have surveyed 70 lots under the Mineral Lands Act, of an aggregate area of 2500 acres.

The excitement created by the discovery of gold at Gladstone caused a rush at the Mussel Roe, and a large area of land was taken up under the Gold Fields Regulations. A considerable amount of prospecting was achieved, though, I regret to say, without satisfactory results, as most of the leases are now abandoned, the numerous reefs that were discovered not being proved to be auriferous.

Under the Gold Fields Regulations I have made surveys of 36 lots, with an aggregate area of 360 acres.

I have, &c.

E. GLOUCESTER WALPOLE, *District Surveyor.*

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

Fingal, 1st August, 1882.

DEAR SIR,

I REGRET having neglected to furnish a report on the progress of Agricultural Settlement in this District by the 1st of May.

I have been much occupied for the last few months and the matter escaped my recollection.

I take this opportunity of drawing your attention to a difficulty which is likely to arise in the working of mines—in consequence of land having been alienated in mineral districts—from the fact that there is no power of bringing water through private property. This difficulty would be increased if selection were permitted in mining districts, although it is certainly most desirable that the cultivation of suitable land should be encouraged there, while there is a local market, provided only some means could be devised to give a sufficiently permanent tenure to secure improvements without interfering with the development of mining. I look upon the alienation of land which afterwards proves mineral-bearing as a very small evil. If sold at £1 per acre there will be on an average little direct loss of revenue, and there is no fear now that mines of any promise will remain unopened on selected lots.

I am doubtful if much improvement would be made under a leasehold system: at all events hitherto no improvements have been made on crown land under such a tenure. On the land held under "quiet possession," nothing, so far as I know, was done except fencing.

The difficulty of bringing roads, and especially water-courses, through alienated land without the payment of exorbitant compensation, is the greatest objection to permitting the purchase of land in mineral districts.

As concerns land already sold, I would suggest the passing of an Act allowing water to be brought through alienated land on payment of compensation, the amount of which should be fixed in the same manner as where land is taken for roads or railways. This measure might apply to water taken for irrigation, mining, or machinery.

I do not think such an Act would be much used.

If the power to bring the water existed, in nine cases out of ten the matter would be privately arranged between the parties; for then the measure of compensation would be simply a liberal estimate of the possible injury or inconvenience to be sustained by the landowner, instead of, as it will be now, a liberal estimate of the possible profits of the enterprise for which the water is needed.

There may be objections to such an Act which would outweigh the arguments in its favour, but I venture to make the suggestion for your consideration.

I have, &c.

GEORGE C. SMITH.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works, Hobart.

REPORT on the progress of Agricultural Settlement in the Survey District of GEORGE C. SMITH.

SIR,

THERE has been but little progress in Agricultural Settlement in this District during the past year.

About thirty lots have been taken up, of which the greater number are near St. Mary's, a few along the coast, and two or three near Deddington.

In most instances these selections have been made by persons who already hold land and are gradually increasing their holdings.

This is not generally an agricultural district, and that portion of it where the largest area of land fit for cultivation exists is, as mineral-bearing land, exempt from selection.

I have, &c.

GEORGE C. SMITH, *Surveyor.*

To the Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works, Hobart.

Beaconsfield, 3rd August, 1882.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to report progress of survey and settlement in District under my charge.

In the Deloraine portion of the district not many selections have been made, and these principally in the vicinity of the Cheshunt Estate.

The bulk of the surveys have been made in the West Tamar District, in which I include the Silver Mines, the stimulus to agriculture being the market afforded by Beaconsfield.

In the vicinity of the Franklin Rivulet, near new line of road from Beaconsfield to Green's Creek Road, in a new tract of country, four one hundred acre sections have been selected, and one of the maximum area. There is a considerable quantity of good Crown land in this quarter which would be rapidly taken up were means of communication opened with Beaconsfield.

In mining surveys, some twenty have been made in the vicinity of Anderson's Creek, which gives fair promise of becoming a grand reefing district, the whole of the Asbestos Range, from what is known as the Eldorado Rush to Badger Head, being mineral-bearing, gold and copper having been discovered; and lately three sections have been taken up for the purpose of working the asbestos found in the serpentine rock about Anderson's Creek. Gold in quartz has also been discovered near York Town, close to the Asbestos Range, and several leases applied for. This is, however, very recent, and sufficient development has not yet been made to allow of any opinion being formed as to the importance of the "find," except as proving that gold is spread over a large part of the Asbestos Range. Owing, however, to the impenetrable nature of the scrub (bauera), prospecting will be a matter of difficulty; and I respectfully refer to my letter on the subject of opening up tracks to allow the Asbestos Range and spurs therefrom to be prospected.

I have, &c.

H. PERCY SORELL, *District Surveyor.*

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

Deloraine, 16th August, 1882.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to forward you my annual report upon the District under my charge; and feel gratified that my experience, and endeavours to promote settlement, will enable me to report to you a large amount of progress during the past twelve months.

Agriculture.

Under this head 16 sections have been taken up by *bonâ fide* settlers,—embracing an area of 1548 acres surveyed, and in addition 10 other sections now under survey, of 3863 acres,—making the very satisfactory total of 28 sections, with an aggregate area of 4213 acres, 3863 acres of which have been taken up in consequence of the intention to erect a bridge over Dynan's Ford, strongly suggested in my last report. There are still large areas open for selection in the Parishes of Alphington, Lincoln, and Roland. These areas would meet with ready application were it possible to penetrate the heavy scrub in order that applicants might view before applying. This is more especially the case with a large tract of good land situated to the north west of the Great Western Range of mountains, and east of the Mersey River. I would suggest the inexpensive mode of letting these tracks by tender to local talent, by which means a track three or four feet wide for 7 or 10 miles might be cleared for the small sum of £10 to £15. The work could be let, and inspected by the Surveyor in charge of the District, subject to the approval of the Minister or Engineer-in-Chief. Application has been made to me personally for land to the extent of 10,000 to 15,000 acres; but, from the above cause, I have not been able to meet the very heavy demand, causing considerable disappointment, as the applicants had travelled from Ballarat, Geelong, and other distant places.

Mineral.

Rapid selection has taken place under this head in the vicinity of Mount Claude. Many of the claims taken are being vigorously opened up,—that of the Mount Claude Company occupying the premier position. This Company have expended some thousands of pounds in development; have opened three or four faces across the lode of metal; have constructed a difficult and costly tramway for considerably over a mile round the western point of Mount Claude; have also cleared a dray-road from the Dasher River to the tramway terminus (a distance of 11 miles),—bridging creeks and gullies, for the purpose of carting materials and their metal to place upon the market. I have surveyed 32 sections in this locality, comprising an area of 2128 acres, which have every appearance of being rich in ores.

Gold.

I have surveyed 29 sections for gold leases, making an area of 285 acres. The heavy winter has prevented most of these sections from being worked in a spirited manner; but the preparations now being made leave no doubt that they will be thoroughly tested during the coming months. Recent discoveries along the Forth River return most encouraging prospects; and, with the assistance of tracks and means of crossing the river, which are very pressing requisites at the present time, this locality will soon become a large field for mineral operations.

I feel it desirable to point out to you the large amount of annoyance and deception occasioned by leaving the old pegs standing in the ground after the applicant has failed to comply with the regulations, in forwarding fees, &c.,—often misleading *bonâ fide* miners, preventing them from taking up the ground and working it. I have known two valuable sections of 10 acres each held thus for two or three months. The posted notices left standing leave the impression that the applicant had complied with the regulations. By this means speculators hold claims until the result of the adjoining sections is known, and then take them up or abandon them as the case may be.

Roads and Bridges.

Great difficulty has been experienced in trying to obtain a good graded road to connect Bischoff and the western portion of the Island in general with commercial centres; and in all cases the route which appears to me to be the one, and only natural outlet, has been unaccountably overlooked. The track I allude to is the one leading through the large extent of level country running in a south and westerly direction along the east of the Forth River, known on the chart as the Emu Plains.

Having, during the performance of instructions to traverse the Forth River, had ample opportunities of inspecting this country for about 15 or 20 miles back from the present Van Diemen's Land track, and from representations made to me personally and by letter from the prospecting parties who last summer traversed this country through to Heemskirk and Bischoff, I am strongly of opinion that a good and substantial track (to be afterwards improved upon for road purposes) could be found that would connect these two places in about fifty to sixty miles from the western point of the Great Western Range, and would be the means of opening up very extensive areas of both agricultural and mineral country. The latter is known to be rich; and only the great difficulty of obtaining the necessaries of life has prevented discoveries from being followed up to more successful issues. A reward of 320 acres would induce some of the old pioneers to point out the most direct and feasible route. I would suggest that this country be thoroughly explored, with the object in view, during the coming summer months.

The track to Oliver's New Country, and thence along the plains, has had so much traffic upon it that now it has become almost impassable. I believe a good track could be had by going between Mount Claude and Van Dyke. This would avoid the wet marshes, and cut off 6 or 7 miles in distance, besides being a much better route. Should the Government decide to expend money in improving and clearing this track, it would benefit prospectors going into the back country. Recent discoveries on the Forth River have made the requirements of this track greater than formerly.

In concluding my report, I feel that I cannot urge too strongly the cutting of tracks wherever required. They help both the selector and prospector at the same time, and during the last year have been found to be of great assistance to both.

I have, &c.

HENRY J. CHALMERS, *District and Mining Surveyor.*

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works, Hobart.