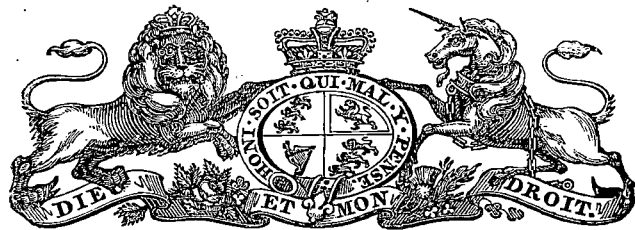


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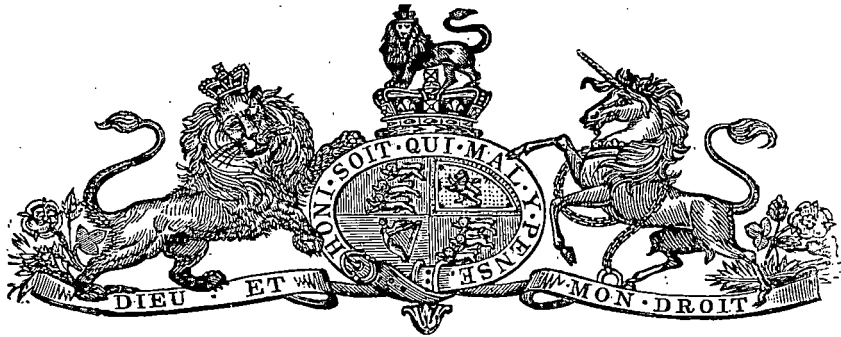
1892.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS:

REPORT FOR YEAR ENDING 30TH JUNE, 1892.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command.



Conservator of Forests' Office, Hobart, 29th July, 1892.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to submit for your information my Annual Report of the work of my Department for the year ending 30th June, 1892.

Little has been done in Forest conservation, but every effort has been made to protect our forests, and exhibit and advertise our timber in London.

Reports on the Windfall and Epping Forest Timber Reserves, Timber Reserve and Forest at Fortescue Bay, Timber and Land Parish of Northallerton, Land enclosed by the Government at the Epping Forest Railway Station, Maria Island Wattle Production, Strahan and Zeehan *re* Mr. Cane's Saw-mill Reserve, and the Settlement of Fisherfolk on Hunter's or Hummock Island, have been submitted by me to you; and I have also performed other work under your instructions not connected with my Department.

The applications for the right to strip wattle-bark, and receipts from this source, have not been satisfactory. The prices realised and quoted for wattle-bark have generally been so low that in many cases it has been to the advantage of the lessee not to strip,—the expenses of forwarding the bark to market not returning sufficient to clear the expenses of stripping, &c.

I forwarded per *Lufra* to London a small shipment of best blue gum consigned to the Agent-General, to test its marketable value and suitability for street pavements in the towns of England. I regret to state that the price offered in London would not be sufficient to cover the cost to England, which is to be regretted, as no better timber could be found for the purpose; and it is evident that so long as cheap pine can be obtained, and the prejudice against Tasmanian timber continues, this class of timber will command the market, and completely shut our hardwood out.

The Agent-General writing to the Honorable the Premier, under date 18th March, 1892, says, "I have the honor to forward herewith copies of correspondence relating to blackwood timber as a substitute for Memel oak, used in this country for staves for beer-casks." Sample casks, one each of blackwood and red myrtle, also staves of the same, will be forwarded to London early to test the market, as there is a general opinion that better timber cannot be found for making beer-casks than red myrtle; and, if it can be brought into successful competition with other woods now used in London, it should be the means of directing the attention of timber dealers and others in England to the forests of valuable timber now lying waste in this Colony.

Every endeavour has been made during the current year to obtain samples of seasoned ornamental Tasmanian timber to send to England for ornamental purposes. It would be of little use to send anything except seasoned timber; and, as no seasoned stocks are available to draw from, it would be useless to send green stuff, so I have had to abandon the idea for the present. However, Mr. R. Honey, the proprietor of the Timber Seasoning Works (Reiser's Patent), Port Adelaide, has entered into negotiations with Messrs. Risby & Co., sawmillers, of this City, to erect a small quick-seasoning plant in their timber-yard. This is now in course of erection and will be ready to commence operations in a few weeks, when a large quantity of ornamental timber now being collected by me will be operated on, to be applied to Exhibition and other purposes.

Having been appointed Inspector under "The Crown Lands Act, 1890," the first selection under which will fall in during the month of November next, I have forwarded notices giving to all selectors six months' notice of my intention to inspect their selections, as there are 230 selections to inspect, distributed over the whole Colony. I have made it my duty, when in the vicinity of

any of these selections, to examine them and note what has been done in the way of improvements. I find a great many selectors have more than complied with the requirements of the Act, and will save future inspection. Huon Piners on the West Coast at the present time are labouring under very great disadvantages, having to incur a very considerable outlay before they place their pine on the market. In the first place they have to pay the licence fee, provide rations, and pay wages, &c.,—the timber cut by the men in their employ remaining in the bush for perhaps one or even two years before a flood of sufficient volume comes and enables them to float it to the depôt. An extraordinary flood may come and carry a portion away to the open sea. Considering the risk in this direction, and other losses sustained by these men, I would strongly urge the partial or whole reduction of the royalty. Further than this, the heavy outlay necessitated, as above stated, to place Huon pine on the market leaves open a ready market for New Zealand and other foreign pine, which can be introduced and sold cheaper than the Huon, which is equally as good if not a better timber for the purpose required. It is therefore advisable to give this matter careful consideration, with a view to a more general use of the Home-grown article. The removal of the royalty would at once release many hundreds of logs that would be absorbed by the foreign trade. The forests would also be improved by allowing the large and old timber to be cut down, and give room for the young forest, which in many places is very promising, to mature. The supply of Huon pine will last for many years to come—virgin forests yet untouched existing in the Macquarie and Port Davey districts.

Large quantities of Huon pine at Port Davey on the Davey River, matured and fit for market, could be better utilized than by letting it go to decay as at present. I therefore recommend for your consideration the desirability of making such arrangements that this valuable property shall be opened up to the public. Some supervision will of necessity have to be made to save the forest from wholesale destruction, to preserve the young forest, and to protect the Revenue should the Government consider it necessary to continue the export duty on pine. The young forest would be improved by the removal of the old and matured timber, and the removed timber would be better represented as a cash value in the pockets of the people than as it now stands going to waste in the forest.

Large quantities of seeds of indigenous trees have been distributed during the year. Demands from England and Germany have been forwarded, with instructions as to habitat and propagation—*Eucalyptus Gunnii* being most in request. All seeds are tested before being sent away.

I have now on hand a large collection of the above seeds, also some of our most beautiful berries and shrubs, which are intended for distribution shortly. Applications are frequently made for plants of shrubs, but the cost would be too great for me to undertake their collection.

The applications for Huon pine plants have been very numerous, which have been met by the distribution of many hundreds of plants; and it is very gratifying to know that many of those previously distributed are doing well, especially where localities suitable for their growth have been chosen.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

W. T. H. BROWN, *Conservator of Forests.*

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.