

(No. 102.)



1878.

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TASMANIA.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

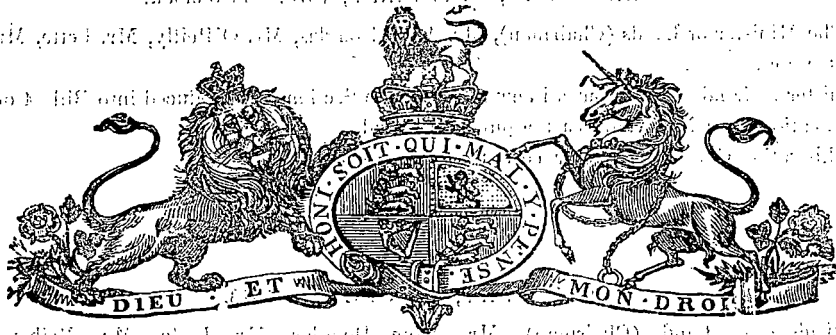
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THE CROWN LANDS BILL, 1878.

REPORT FROM THE SELECT COMMITTEE, WITH MINUTES  
OF MEETINGS AND EVIDENCE.

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Brought up by Mr. Minister of Lands, and ordered by the House to be printed,  
October 25, 1878.



**SELECT COMMITTEE appointed on the 25th September, 1878, on "The Crown Lands Bill."**

**MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE.**

- |                        |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| MR. MINISTER OF LANDS. | MR. BELBIN.          |
| MR. O'REILLY.          | MR. SCOTT.           |
| MR. DOUGLAS.           | MR. LETTE.           |
| MR. BALFE.             | MR. REIBEY. (Mover.) |
| MR. MITCHELL.          |                      |

**DAYS OF MEETING.**

- |                                |                               |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Wednesday, 9th October, 1878.  | Thursday, 17th October, 1878. |
| Thursday, 10th October, 1878.  | Friday, 18th October, 1878.   |
| Friday, 11th October, 1878.    | Tuesday, 22nd October, 1878.  |
| Tuesday, 15th October, 1878.   | Thursday, 24th October, 1878. |
| Wednesday, 16th October, 1878. | Friday, 25th October, 1878.   |

**WITNESSES EXAMINED.**

- Mr. H. J. Hull, Deputy Commissioner of Crown Lands.  
 Mr. William Smith, Chief Clerk, Public Works Department.

**R E P O R T.**

Your Committee, having made due enquiry into the probable effect of the provisions of the Bill remitted to them for their consideration, and having also taken evidence on the working of the existing Waste Lands Act in many important particulars, have the honor to submit their Report.

In some respects the proposed Bill meets with the approval of your Committee. It appears very desirable that settlement on the Crown Lands of the Colony should be encouraged by a reduction of the terms upon which small selections for *bona fide* agricultural occupation can be obtained; but, at this late period of the Session, it appears to your Committee that sufficient time cannot be given to the due consideration of the important questions involved in a Bill having for its object a revision of the mode of dealing with the Crown Lands of the Colony.

While, however, recommending the postponement of the general question of dealing with the Crown Lands, your Committee, in view of the Bill providing for the maintenance of the Main Roads receiving the assent of the Legislature, are of opinion that a short Bill amending the 100th Clause of the existing Waste Lands Act, in respect of the distribution of aid from the Land Fund to the various Road Trusts, should be introduced.

To assist in carrying out that object, your Committee have considered and revised the Schedule of Road Trusts as contained in the Bill which they have had under their consideration, and they recommend that the aid to Road Trusts should, for the future, be distributed as indicated in those revised Schedules.

NICHOLAS J. BROWN, *Chairman.*

Committee Room, 25th October, 1878.

## No. 1.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 1878. 11 o'clock.

*Present*—The Minister of Lands (Chairman), Mr. Adye Douglas, Mr. O'Reilly, Mr. Lette, Mr. Reibey.

1. Committee met.
2. The Minister of Lands pointed out all new matter up to Section 38 introduced into Bill 24 of this Session.
3. Communication from Mr. Andrewartha put in and read.
4. After deliberation Committee adjourned until to-morrow at 11.

## No. 2.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1878.

*Present*—Mr. Minister of Lands (Chairman), Mr. Adye Douglas, Mr. Lette, Mr. Reibey, Mr. O'Reilly, Mr. Belbin, Mr. Mitchell.

1. Minutes of former meeting read and confirmed.
2. With reference to Clause 48 Committee are of opinion that 38 Sect. of 34 Vict. No. 10 should be retained.
3. Clauses 53, 54, 58 approved of.
4. Clause 60, last paragraph not approved of.
5. Clause 61 objected to.
6. Clause 67 (tendering), 3 for, 4 against.
7. Clause 68, maximum area of 10,000 acres agreed to.
8. Ordered that Mr. H. J. Hull, Deputy Commissioner of Crown Lands, and Mr. William Smith, Chief Clerk of Public Works, be summoned to attend next meeting.
9. Committee adjourn until to-morrow at 11.

## No. 3.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11, 1878.

*Present*—Hon. C. O'Reilly (Chairman in absence of Minister of Lands), Mr. Douglas, Mr. Scott, Mr. Reibey, Mr. Lette, Mr. Mitchell.

1. Mr. James Scott, elected by the House, attended as a member of Committee in place of Mr. Whitehead resigned.
2. Minutes of former meeting read and confirmed.
3. Mr. H. J. Hull, Deputy Commissioner of Crown Lands, attended the meeting and put in papers containing certain information connected with the matter before the Committee.
4. Mr. Hull was examined at length.
5. Committee adjourned at 1 o'clock to Tuesday at 11.

## No. 4.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1878.

*Present*—The Hon. C. O'Reilly (Chairman), Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Reibey, Mr. Lette.

1. Minutes of former meeting read and confirmed.
2. Mr. H. J. Hull further examined.
3. Committee adjourned at 1 P.M.

## No. 5.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 1878.

*Present*—Mr. Minister of Lands (Chairman), Mr. Adye Douglas, Mr. Lette, Mr. Belbin, Mr. Mitchell, Hon. C. O'Reilly.

1. Minutes of last meeting read and confirmed.
2. Mr. William Smith, Chief Clerk of Public Works, examined.
3. Clause 14 considered. Committee determine new Clause be drafted.
4. Clause 17. Committee decide to strike out Sub-sections 2 and 3 and substitute the following:—"That "all lands not being town lands, or proclaimed by the Governor in Council to be pastoral lands, shall be deemed to be agricultural land, and open for selection under the 19th Section."
5. Clause 18. Struck out.
6. Clause 19. Price altered from "30s." to "20s." an acre, and Clause altered to read "one lot of agricultural land not exceeding one hundred acres."
7. Clause 21, Sub-section 3. "Ten years" altered to "five years."
8. Clause 23. Ordered that after the word "to" on line 44 be added the words "clear and cultivate such lot, and shall continue yearly and from year to year to clear one-twentieth of the area of such lot, or expend the sum of 2s. 6d. per acre per year, or partly the former and partly the latter condition."

9. Clause 24. Amended by striking out the word "fifteen" (15), line 10; and after the word "him" in line 3 striking out "without any further payment," and substituting the words "upon payment of balance of purchase money due," and in line 4 "by Sub-sections to be altered in accordance with conditions specified in Sec. 23."

10. Committee adjourn at 1 o'clock until 11 o'clock to-morrow.

No. 6.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1878.

*Present*—Mr. Minister of Lands (in the Chair), Mr. Lette, Mr. Scott, Mr. Douglas.

1. Minutes of last meeting read and confirmed.
2. Clause 25. Postponed.
3. Clause 26 considered. Committee agree the Clause be struck out, and recommend that officers should be appointed to report annually whether conditions of purchase are being fulfilled by conditional purchasers.
4. Committee adjourn until to-morrow at 11.

No. 7.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1878.

*Present*—Mr. Minister of Lands (Chairman), Mr. Lette, Mr. Mitchell, Hon. C. O'Reilly.

1. Minutes of last meeting read and confirmed.
2. Clause 27. Agreed to.
3. Clause 28. Committee recommend Clause be amended by striking out the words "make" and "selection" in line 41, and adding after the word "shall" the following words: "be capable of holding at any one time," the words "more than one ungranted lot selected."
4. Clauses 29, 30, 31, 32, approved.
5. Clauses 33 to 37 postponed.
6. Adjourn to Tuesday next at 11.
7. Mr. W. Smith to be summoned again.

No. 8.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 1878.

*Present*—Mr. Minister of Lands (Chairman), Mr. Balfe, Mr. Lette, the Hon. C. O'Reilly.

1. Minutes of last meeting read and confirmed.
2. Mr. William Smith, Chief Clerk Public Works, recalled and further examined.
3. Committee adjourn until to-morrow at 11, in order to allow for full meeting to discuss Clause 95.

No. 9.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1878.

*Present*—Mr. Minister of Lands (Chairman), Mr. Lette, Hon. C. O'Reilly.

1. Minutes of last meeting read and confirmed.
2. Committee adjourn until 11 to-morrow, to allow of further meeting.

No. 9.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1878.

*Present*—Mr. Minister of Lands (Chairman), Mr. Lette, Mr. Abye Douglas, Hon. C. O'Reilly, Mr. Belbin.

1. Minutes of last meeting read and confirmed.
2. Committee considered Schedule.
3. The Committee are of opinion that it is desirable to introduce a short Bill amending the Land Act as to the distribution of Aid from the Land Fund to Road Districts.
4. Adjourn until to-morrow at 11.

No. 10.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25, 1878.

*Present*—Mr. Minister of Lands (Chairman), Mr. Lette, Mr. Abye Douglas, Hon. C. O'Reilly.

1. Minutes of last meeting read and confirmed.
2. Draft Report considered and approved of.
3. Committee separated.

## EVIDENCE.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11, 1878.

HENRY JOCELYN HULL, *Esq.*, *Deputy Commissioner of Crown Lands, examined.*

*By the Chairman.*—1. You have been Deputy Commissioner of Crown Lands for some time? Yes, for about 7 years.

2. You have had much experience in the administration of the Lands Department? Yes, for nearly 30 years.

3. I refer you to Clause 21 of 24 Vict. No. 10, which provides for certain areas being proclaimed Agricultural Divisions: has that clause been brought into effect? Not under the present Waste Lands Act; but one area in Gould's Country was proclaimed under former legislation.

4. No extensive settlement has taken place in consequence? About fifteen lots have been taken up.

5. What were the conditions of purchase? Residence for the whole time on the land, 6*d.* an acre for first 3 years, 1*s.* an acre for next 2 years, and 2*s.* an acre for the residue of term, and to pay 20*s.* an acre at expiration of 20 years. All the selectors in Gould's Country have taken advantage of Section 30 of the existing Act.

6. *By Mr. Scott.*—In 1869 did Dr. Butler withdraw a large area from sale in the County of Dorset? I believe he did; but that was on account of reported gold discoveries.

7. *By Mr. Lette.*—Do you think this Clause (21) desirable to be left in? I see no necessity for it.

8. Do you think the whole country ought to be thrown open to selection? Most decidedly. I do not think you can force a person to take land where he does not want it; and, therefore, I think it would be far better to throw the whole country open for selection.

*By the Chairman.*—9. The lowest upset price is 5*s.* per acre. Has any been sold at that price? Very little indeed since the present Act came into force.

10. You think it advisable that the price should be raised? There are some pastoral lands not worth 1*s.* an acre. No; I deprecate the selling of land for less than £1 an acre. I would certainly sell none for less than 10*s.* I would rather see one uniform price for all land, say £1 an acre for agricultural and 10*s.* an acre for pastoral lands.

*By Mr. Douglas.*—11. What has been the average price of land sold during the last 7 years? For agricultural land £1 7*s.* an acre, and for pastoral land 16*s.* 2½*d.*

*By the Chairman.*—12. The lowest upset price of agricultural land is fixed at £1 an acre, (Clause 23). Do you think that agricultural land in the heavily timbered districts and in the open country should be classed at the same price? I certainly think that £1 an acre is little enough. I should make no distinction.

13. I draw your attention to Section 24 of present Act: a large quantity of land has been purchased from the Crown under that Section? Yes.

*By Mr. Douglas.*—14. Would you restrict the area to 320 acres? No, I think not.

15. Would you make it 640? Yes.

*By the Chairman.*—16. Has Clause 24 of the present Act tended towards the *bonâ fide* settlement of the lands of the Colony? Undoubtedly. 2260 purchases have been made under the 24th Section, embracing an area of 155,000 acres, nine-tenths of which I should say would be under 100 acres each.

17. This clause provides for credit being given. Do the majority of selectors avail themselves of the credit? Yes. I may add the late Attorney-General gave his opinion that we cannot sell for cash under the 24th Section; and I now refuse to take cash sales under Section 24.

18. Are you aware of many of these selectors being in arrear with their instalments? By a return furnished there appears a large number; but you can hardly call them defaulters, as many are only in arrear three months.

19. Are the payments under 24th Section punctually made? Yes; payments are very well made.

20. Is it the practice for parties to ask for moderate extension of time when unable to pay? Yes and I have found it very advantageous to extend such time: they usually pay according to promise.

21. Do they complain of the terms of purchase being harsh? No.

22. Do the public dealing with the Department complain? No.

*By Mr. Douglas.*—23. How many of the 2260 are absolute defaulters? About 25 or 30 are *bonâ fide* defaulters.

24. What per-centage have paid up? A very small one indeed.

25. Have not even those who have paid up held on credit for some years upon paying the final amount? Yes.

26. Have you any return showing the presumed loss to the Crown as between the credit and paying system? No.

27. Would it be desirable to lessen the amount of discount so as to equalise the purchases? Yes, very desirable.

28. Would it be desirable to increase the area of land for selection to 640? Yes, with the same conditions as to improvements.

29. Under the present Act they have power to select from 15 up to 320? Yes.

30. In these selections are the majority under or above the 100 acres? Nine-tenths are under 100 acres.

*By the Chairman.*—31. Then, in your opinion, the 24th Section amply provides for the requirements of the case? Yes. I would suggest that the words "the same not being under lease or licence" would be an improvement to it.

32. Would that withdraw a large area from selection under the clause of this Act? No; not in agricultural districts, and very little land is selected in purely pastoral districts.

*By Mr. Lette.*—33. If these lots were reduced to 100 acres, residence not required, and no interest added to purchase money, do you think it would be an improvement on the clause as it stands, and that a cultivation section should be insisted upon? It would be far better to have a cultivation or improvement than a residence clause. A residence clause would not increase the selection of our waste lands.

34. Would not this invite lessees to take up land purposely to keep away selectors? No; we should not offer it for rental if, from information in the office, the lands appeared to be fit for agricultural purposes.

35. Do you not think it advisable that there should be an office in the south and one in the north to which to send applications for land, information, &c.? No; there should be but one office, in Hobart Town; otherwise the Department would get into confusion, unless you kept them quite distinct, in which case a double staff would be required. We have a branch office at Launceston which appears to answer every purpose.

36. Have any *bonâ fide* selections been made on leased lands by small selectors? Not many in the pastoral districts.

37. Any in "Monto's Marsh," in the County of Buckingham? Yes, but that is not a pastoral county.

38. The present system of surveys is by contract surveyors: does delay ensue in connection therewith? Only lately, since the discovery of the tin mines, but it is not so now, as very little land is taken up under "The Mineral Lands Act."

39. Have there been complaints of these delays? Yes, in many instances.

40. And of inconvenience in not being able to occupy the land? Yes.

41. Of any selectors commencing their operations before the survey was effected? Yes, many have asked me if they could go on the land to commence "scrubbing."

42. Do you remember many cases in which persons have suffered from losing land they have improved? No, I cannot remember any.

43. Can you propose any plan for remedying the delay in surveys? No, unless we have Government surveyors. The reason assigned in some instances is the scattered nature of the lots. The District Surveyor would lose money by having to proceed at once to make the surveys, and therefore they are left until other selections are made.

44. If a selector selects any land in a part of the country where it is inconvenient to effect an immediate survey, has the selector to wait until other selections are made before the District Surveyor carries out the survey? Yes.

45. Can you suggest any remedy? Only by having Government Surveyors.

46. Do you think it would be more expensive? Yes, much more.

*By Mr. Lette.*—47. Has each surveyor a sort of vested right in his district in carrying out surveys? Yes; the Regulations allow the Surveyor-General to send others into a district, which is occasionally done.

48. Are you aware that some district surveyors have employed other surveyors to do the work? Yes.

49. Should not an applicant have the power of calling in another surveyor in case of delay? Yes, an authorised surveyor, within (I would suggest) 3 months of the survey fee being paid.

50. Do you think it would be desirable that young men under 21 should be allowed to select? Yes.

The Witness withdrew.

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TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1878.

HENRY JOCELYN HULL, *Esq., re-examined.*

*By Mr. Mitchell.*—51. With reference to Questions 9 and 10, how do you reconcile your evidence with your statement that some crown lands are not worth 1s. an acre, and yet you advise that they should not be sold at a lower price than 10s. an acre? I would rather see them in the hands of the crown than sold for 10s. an acre.

52. What are your reasons for thinking the State would benefit through the lands remaining in the hands of the Crown? By leasing the lands on a fixity of tenure, say 14 years certain, they would ultimately become more valuable.

53. Are you aware of any one instance in which a leaseholder of crown land has improved it during his lease,—any particular land by any particular man? Yes, by Mr. Walter Gellibrand, where out of 500 acres rented 250 were rung; according to the Surveyor's Report.

54. Are you aware that in the coarse pastoral land of the Colony the tendency is to become more scrubby and therefore of less value? No, I am not.

55. You think therefore it would be a benefit to the State to retain possession of these rough waste lands? Decidedly, rather than sell them at 1s. an acre.

56. Have you any practical knowledge of the value of any land? Yes, I was a practical farmer before I went into the office, and I have a thorough knowledge of the value of land.

*By Mr. Reibey.*—57. Are not lands worth more than 10s. an acre now being offered for sale at the upset price of less than 10s.? There are lands offered at 5s. an acre, but I am not aware of their value.

58. Has any Report been obtained as to the value of these lands? Yes; the following,—Lot 6001, 500 acres, in Parish of Florentine, County of Cumberland, “very good pasture land south of fence, but of very little value outside of fence. The timber on about 250 acres has been rung for some years, value over the whole about 25s. an acre. (Signed), G. C. Smith, 15th October, 1861.” Lot 3885, 394 acres, “poor pasture with exception of south-east corner, value 5s. (Signed), G. C. Smith, 28th Oct., 1865.” Lot 3443, 728 acres: “this lot is of little value, the greater part being covered with scrub, and affording hardly any pasture, value 5s. (Signed) G. C. Smith, 27th October, 1874.” Lot 7000, 50 acres, value 10s. an acre. (Signed) T. Wedge, November, 1877. Lot 7001, 50 acres, value 10s. an acre. Lot 7002, 116 acres, value 10s. an acre.

59. Then no report has been obtained of the value of these lands since 1864? No.

*By Mr. Lette.*—60. Have all these lots been put up before? Yes, over and over again.

61. At what upset price? Speaking from memory, the two lots now put up at 5s. have been put up at same price several times, but Lot 6001 has never been put up under £1 until now.

*By Mr. Mitchell.*—62. Are you aware that when Mr. Gellibrand rung this land he knew it to be crown land? I cannot say.

63. Unless you actually saw these lands how can you possibly form any opinion as to their value? From the reports of the surveyors.

*By Mr. O'Reilly.*—64. Referring to Question 27, with reference to the amount of discount, do you think that the system of rebate provided for in the Waste Lands Act of 1863, which provides “that in every such case a deduction shall be allowed in the sum added to the price of the land by way of premium for the allowance of credit proportionate to the then unexpired period of credit,” more equitable than the system now in force? Yes; I would suggest such a clause as 33 of that Act instead of the one now in use.

65. You think such a provision tends to secure the revenue to the crown without doing an injustice to the purchaser? Yes.

66. Referring to Clause 27, can you offer any suggestions as to its provisions? I would suggest that no grant should issue for lands selected under Section 24 until it was proved to the satisfaction of the Governor in Council that improvements to the value of £1 an acre had been made on the land so selected.

67. With reference to your reply to Query 31, referring to leased lands, (the same not being under lease or licence), would not such a provision in the 24th Section have the effect of closing all such land to agricultural settlement? Yes, of course it would.

68. In what way do you think it advantageous to the State that leased or licensed land should not be left open for selection under the 24th Clause? I think we should get a better and more permanent rental, and it would not affect the revenue much, there being so little taken up in pastoral districts.

69. Do you think it would be more advantageous to the State to have these lands occupied under rental or suitable portions sold for agricultural settlement? I think it more advantageous to lease them, as there are so few selections made out of leased lands.

70. Will you name the counties you deem pastoral? Cumberland, Glamorgan, Somerset, Lincoln: and in those counties only I recommend permanent tenure be given to lessees.

71. *Re* clause 28, which provides for an expenditure on roads under certain conditions, does the supervision of this expenditure come under your immediate control? No.

72. Are you aware of any lands purchased on credit being abandoned after an expenditure has been incurred under this section? From enquiry, I find there is but one instance on the southern side, and not a single instance on the northern side. (Return handed in.)

73. With reference to this matter, and to Mr. Morrison's reply, who says there is one lot in Honeywood District, and several lots in Oyster Cove District, do you know of any cause for those lots having been abandoned? The cause assigned *re* Oyster Cove was in consequence of the expenditure having been diverted from the road surveyed to give access to these lots. I had an official communication to that effect.

74. Can you offer any suggestions to be provided for in future legislation on this clause? I think that *bonâ fide* settlement should be insisted upon before any expenditure is made. With regard to Section 26, I would suggest that the land should be forfeited to the Crown if within one year the selector has not by himself, his tenant or servant, commenced to clear and improve the land so selected.

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 1878.

MR. WILLIAM SMITH, *Chief Clerk Public Works, examined.*

*By Mr. Douglas.*—75. You are Chief Clerk in Public Works Branch of the Lands and Works Department? Yes.

76. Are you acquainted with the working of Section 28 of "The Waste Lands Act?" Yes; the whole of the expenditure under that Section is incurred through my office.

77. Do you furnish plans to the Minister before any expenditure takes place? A plan is furnished from the Lands Branch showing the lots taken up under 24 Section, or if not completed an officer is employed to examine the books and complete plan.

78. That is done after an application for expenditure? Yes.

79. Have you any Returns showing the number of appropriations and the money so appropriated? A Return is furnished to Parliament every Session showing the amount authorised and expended under the 28th Section.

80. Have you any practical knowledge of the working of that Section of the Act? Yes, so far as I can learn from correspondence in the office and so far as my duties are concerned.

81. Do you think it works beneficially or otherwise? Beneficially to a certain extent; but when an application is made it is often very difficult to decide the extent to which an expenditure is warranted under the Section, the interests of the applicants in many instances not being identical,—selectors imagining in many cases that they are entitled to the amount derived from their several lots to be appropriated in affording them each a separate road.

82. Is any usual practice adopted as to appropriating the money? Supposing a road is within 3 or 4 miles of land, how would the office lay out the money? The wishes of the selectors would be consulted before appropriating the money.

83. Is there any other portion of the operation of this Act which goes through your particular Department? No.

*By the Chairman.*—84. Is not the expenditure, as a rule, laid out on a main road to these settlements? Yes; but the nature and extent of the expenditure much depends on the Minister who may be in office at the time.

*By Mr. Lette.*—85. As far as you are aware, is it the rule to be guided by the wishes of a majority of the selectors? Yes.

*By Mr. Douglas.*—86. Up to this time have all applications for expenditure been carried out by the Department? No; there are many cases in which it is not done. Sometimes the parties interested do not agree in their recommendation, or the Minister may not consider the locality fairly entitled to expenditure; but I do not know any application refused where the expenditure would be beneficial to the locality as a whole.

*By the Chairman.*—87. What evidence guides the Minister in determining whether the locality is entitled to the expenditure or not? I place before the Minister all the evidence I can get: reports from the Overseer of Works, charts showing the lots, and information from local parties.

*By Mr. Lette.*—88. Can you recommend any better mode of expending the money? Not at present; but I think it would be an advantage to have an officer on our staff whose sole duty should be to enquire into and report upon the various applications for expenditure. He would be of great assistance to the Minister in determining whether the selections were solely for agricultural purposes, and in deciding upon the most desirable works to have carried out.

The Witness withdrew.

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TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 1878.

MR. WILLIAM SMITH *re-examined.*

*By Mr. O'Reilly.*—89. *Re* interests of applicants (Query 81) not being identical: in such cases what has been the practice in expending the funds? There is not a universal practice or custom. In some cases the expenditure is deferred by the Minister, or in others it is appropriated on various roads or outlets to the several lots as may be desired by the applicants and sanctioned by the Minister.

90. Previous to 1873 there has been but a small expenditure under Sec. 28? Yes.

91. Can you call to mind many instances since 1873 in which expenditure has been incurred on more than one road in a locality entitled to an expenditure? I would rather examine the details of expenditure before answering that question. I think there were several such cases in Port Cygnet District, and in the Huon District generally.

92. In the Port Cygnet District I observe the Governor in Council sanctioned an expenditure of £400. Can you call to mind from Report (H. A. Paper 43, Sess. 1875) on how many roads this was expended? I could not without referring to my official documents. I can remember expenditure on three separate roads in Port Cygnet District.

93. Who was Minister of Lands and Works then? Mr. Moore.

94. There has been a large expenditure in the Oatlands District? Yes.

95. Has the expenditure there been on different roads in the same way? Yes.

96. And in Castra? Yes.

97. And Deloraine? Yes.

98. Then this appears to have been generally the practice to spend portions of the sum appropriated on various roads? Yes.



99. The object, I presume, is that various land selectors, or groups of land selectors, may obtain some benefit from the funds? Yes.

100. Does this method receive the approval of the land selectors so far as you are aware from your official communications? Yes.

101. So far as you are informed, officially or otherwise, have many lots been abandoned after opening up roads to these selections? I do not think so.

*By Mr. Balfe.*—102. In some districts one main road through a 500-acre block might be entirely useless, from the physical features of the country, to one-half or even the majority of the selectors? Yes.

*By Mr. Lette.*—103. Is it not the rule, then, as stated in Answer 84, that the expenditure is incurred on a main road? That depends on the interpretation you put on the term "main road," each of which may be the main road to the several selections interested. The Department confines the expenditure, as far as practicable, to one road; but in many cases it is not possible to benefit the whole of the lots in one locality without expenditure is incurred on two or three or more roads.

*By the Chairman.*—104. Do you think there should be any check, as suggested in Sec. 38, on the expenditure of 10s. an acre? I do not think this arrangement would be an improvement on the existing law.

*By Mr. Balfe.*—105. Would not the purchase of the selections be more likely to be completed if the roads were made available as soon as possession was taken and cultivation commenced? Yes, I think so.