

(No. 23.)



1877.

SESSION III.

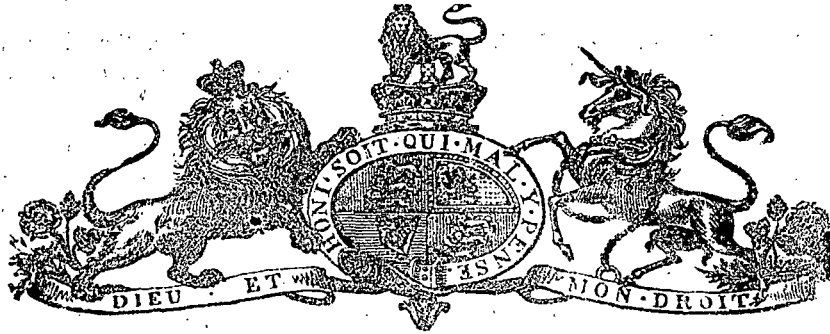
T A S M A N I A.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

VALUATION OF PROPERTY:

FINAL REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS.

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Crowther, and ordered by the Council to be printed,
July 31, 1877.



Hobart Town, January, 1877.

SIR,

WE have the honor to report that we have inspected the properties in the Districts of Port Sorell, Emu Bay, and Russell, and have compiled new Valuation Rolls for the same, which we append hereto.*

The District of Port Sorell is a very extensive one, and, although there is a very large proportion of barren country within its boundaries, there are included in it numerous blocks of the most fertile soil, generally of limited area, and, where unimproved, covered with a dense forest of heavy timber and scrub, the labor and expense of clearing which is so great that comparatively a small portion has yet been brought into cultivation.

The greater part of the cleared land is even yet encumbered with dead, standing, and fallen timber, necessitating a yearly expense in clearing.

The principal cultivators are small owners or tenants, and wheat, oats, and potatoes the grain and roots generally grown; English grasses of all descriptions grow most luxuriantly on all the cleared lands.

The crops produced are sometimes very heavy, but owing to the humidity of the climate the cereals are not of first-rate quality.

There are some extensive blocks of land that have been under cultivation for many years, either occupied by the owners or let in larger farms to tenants; these lands have been more thoroughly cleared of timber, and are of first-rate quality; the marshes occasionally included in them are of the most fertile description, and fatten many cattle for the market.

As a rule, all through this district the land that is lightly timbered is of a very barren description, producing little herbage for either cattle or sheep; open grassy hills or plains are not to be found.

The land near the coast where flat is, with very few exceptions, sandy and poor, with occasional belts of wet and swampy tea-tree scrub; the grass growing upon it is sour and unfitted for the support of stock.

The produce of the farms is carted to the different shipping-places along the coast; the roads, where passing through the forests of gigantic trees, with thick scrub, are generally in a bad condition, and, as the sun cannot penetrate the thick growth of underwood, they remain in this state the greater part of the year. The distance of the farms from the nearest shipping-places is not, however, generally great, seldom exceeding ten miles, and generally ranging from two to seven. In those cases where the distance is greatest the roads have been made, and are in a fair condition a considerable part of the way.

The township of Latrobe is the most considerable and thriving in the district, and the properties therein are relatively the most valuable of any we have yet visited,—a great part of the trade of the District being carried on at the numerous stores that form the principal part of the township.

The River Mersey bounds the township, but is not there navigable; the produce is shipped in small craft in an inlet so narrow that it is difficult for vessels of any size to turn.

The townships of Torquay and Formby, at the mouth of the River Mersey, are both much smaller and less thriving; but the harbour is safe and good, and the depth of water at high tide is sufficient for vessels of considerable tonnage.

At the mouth of the River Don the saw-mills and other establishments of Henry & Co. form, with the numerous cottages occupied by the workmen employed, a good-sized township. The harbour here is sufficient for small craft, and steamers of small draught, but is not comparable to that at the mouth of the Mersey.

There is a large trade carried on from this port in timber and coal by Henry & Co., who have a large saw-mill and some miles of tramway laid down for conveying timber from the back forests.

* These Rolls with others will be printed in a separate volume.

The township of Hamilton-on-Forth is small and inconsiderable, the river not being here navigable for vessels; the produce has to be conveyed to the mouth of the river in boats and barges, to be there shipped.

The township of Ulverstone at the mouth of the River Leven is, next to Latrobe, the most thriving township in the District; property here, with that exception, bearing a higher relative value. Its prosperity depends principally on the export trade in timber and palings, for which the slab road to Castra has given great facilities.

The harbour at the mouth of the river is sufficient for small traders to Victoria and the other colonies, but is not equal to the mouth of the Mersey.

Penguin Creek is another small harbour or roadstead sufficient for the small craft which take away the produce of the farms in the back settlements.

The land from Latrobe to Torquay, and also to Formby, is, with few exceptions, of the most barren description, generally hilly, stony, and poor.

The land from the Don to the Forth, about seven miles, through which the road passes, is of the richest description, and, having been cleared for some years of the dense forest that originally covered the soil, is comparatively little encumbered with timber, and either covered with English grass or cultivated; the settlers here have the advantage of two harbours at the mouth of the Rivers Don and Forth, from either of which their produce can be shipped.

The country adjoining the River Forth is hilly, and for the most part covered with heavy timber. With the exception of the block between the Rivers Forth and Don there are no extensive clearings.

The land from the Forth to the Leven is sandy and poor, with occasional blocks of rich soil in the back woods. In this portion of the district is situated "Castra," the block of land formerly reserved for settlers from India. Of this block nearly 9000 acres have been taken up, but as yet only two lots are actually occupied, although the land is generally of good quality; the distance from port of shipment, and the roads (with the exception of the slab road, extending eight miles from the Leven,) are so bad that it is almost impracticable to cart produce thence to the port.

The country between the Leven and the Emu Bay District is of similar character,—near the Coast, where low, sandy and poor; where hilly, rocky and covered with timber, with occasional patches of rich deep soil within two to four miles of the coast. There are no extensive clearings, the country being settled by small occupiers, having a greater or smaller portion of their locations partially cleared and cultivated, splitting and carting palings to the coast being the principal employment.

The District of Emu Bay, extending from the River Blythe to the Sisters Creek, includes within its boundaries three of the large blocks of land granted to the Van Diemen's Land Company, containing 210,000 acres. Of this a small portion only has been alienated, consisting principally of small farms at the back of the Township and along the sea-coast, between the Emu and the Cam Rivers, as well as some township lots at the port.

The principal part of this land, having been cultivated for years, has been more thoroughly cleared, but has become in some parts again overgrown with scrub. A great portion is now in grass, having been cropped for many years in succession.

The Township of Burnie is now, since the discovery of Tin at Mount Bischoff, thriving and prosperous, and the properties therein increasing in value; and from the large and extending traffic to the Mines, the Township is likely to become a place of some importance.

The Van Diemen's Land Company are now forming a tramway through their land to Mount Bischoff, which must tend to advance the prosperity of the District, and to open up and increase the value of the very large extent of land they hold.

The land belonging to the Company is, for thousands of acres, covered with a dense forest of timber, principally Myrtle; the soil, a light ferruginous loam, (valuable only for the timber that grows upon it,) when cleared is said to be of inferior quality.

The Hampshire and Surrey Hills are large undulating downs; the land appears to be of good quality and thickly grassed,—but the climate is cold and wet, and militates against the production of grain.

The land from Emu Bay to Table Cape is similar in its general characteristics to that before described,—rich soil in detached blocks, hilly and covered with dense forest; adjoining the sea-coast, poor, rocky and hilly. Near Table Cape is a small block of land well cleared; near and beyond Wynyard, extending to Jacob's Boat-harbour, the good land approaches the coast-line, but hilly and very broken in character; the land beyond, to the boundary of the District, is wet, sandy, and swampy. In no part of this District, excepting the Tin Mines, has settlement extended far into the interior.

At the mouths of the Rivers Cam and Inglis are harbours accessible at high tide to small vessels, which carry away the produce of the settlers,—timber, paling, and blackwood logs.

In this District the production of grain is comparatively trifling, a great part of the cleared land being sown with English grass, which thrives well.

The District of Russell, extending from the Sisters Creek to the North-western extremity of the Island, comprises within its boundaries three of the blocks of land belonging to the Van Diemen's Land Company.

The Circular Head block, containing 20,000 acres, includes the Township of Stanley; about 4000 acres in the immediate vicinity of the Township is the finest grazing land in the Colony, cleared of timber, and laid down with English grasses.

The land from Circular Head to Duck River is of the poorest description, sandy and wet, of little value for any purpose; there are some blocks of good soil away from the road that have been cleared and cultivated for years, and form valuable properties.

There is a block of fertile soil of about 1000 acres at the Montagu, on the road from the Duck River to the Company's land at Woolnorth; this block is occupied by a few agriculturists, who are mostly employed in growing potatoes for the Melbourne market.

The Van Diemen's Land Company's land at Woolnorth,—100,000 acres,—is of the poorest description, only about 6000 acres of it being available for grazing or agriculture; the road to it, when the tide is in (for the sea-beach is the only available road), is impassable, and when the tide is out, unsafe without an experienced guide.

There is a great sameness in all the North-west Coast country; where the land is flat, it is sandy and swampy, with stunted timber and heath growing upon it. The good land, found in larger or smaller patches in the hills, is invariably covered with a thick growth of timber and scrub, gigantic eucalypti, myrtle, sassafras, and tree-ferns, and occasionally beds of blackwood, a valuable timber largely exported to Melbourne; in fact, nearly all the produce of the North-west Coast finds its way to Melbourne.

The greatest drawback to the advancement of the North-west Coast is the labour required to clear the land of the dense forests that cover the thousands of acres of the best soil. The roads are also a very great hindrance to the carting of timber and produce to the different ports.

The country is well watered; and if the finding of Tin and other Minerals induces a large influx of labourers, many of whom may remain to settle on the land, this part of Tasmania may ultimately become prosperous.

	£	s.	d.
The total value of the properties in the District of Port Sorell, as shown by the Roll forwarded herewith, is	30,202	0	0
The total value as shown by the Assessment Roll for 1876, excluding Crown lands held under grazing licence	23,870	0	0
Increase	£6322	0	0
The total value of the properties in the District of Emu Bay, as shown by the Roll forwarded herewith, is	8751	0	0
The total value as shown by the Assessment Roll for 1876, excluding Crown lands	6129	0	0
Increase	£2622	0	0
The total value of the properties in the District of Russell, as shown by the Roll forwarded herewith, is	6918	10	0
The total value as shown by the Assessment Roll for 1876, excluding Crown lands	5960	0	0
Increase	£958	10	0
Showing a total increase on the value of the properties in the three Districts of ..	£9902	10	0

We have the honor to be,
Sir,

Your obedient Servants,

G. A. KEMP,

FRANCIS BUTLER,

} *Property Valuation,*
} *Commissioners.*

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.



Hobart Town, June, 1877.

SIR,

WE have the honor to report that we have inspected the properties in the Districts of Selby and George Town, and have prepared Valuation Rolls for the same, which we append hereto.*

The District of Selby is an extensive and scattered one, comprising within its boundaries the suburbs of Launceston, and the outlying country districts of Scottsdale and Ringarooma, Piper's River, and the West Tamar.

The suburbs of Launceston contain many substantial and handsome residences, surrounded with gardens, orchards, and meadow lands, interspersed with small farms of English grass and agricultural lands, which, independently of their natural fertility, are valuable from their proximity to the city.

Patterson Plains, which includes the village of St. Leonards, in the valley of the North Esk, with its handsome residences, shops, and cottages, contains well-cultivated meadow and arable lands, and is a small but valuable portion of the district.

The properties near the confines of the districts of Evandale and Longford, and along the banks of the Tamar, used for both sheep feeding and agriculture, are valuable for the richness of the soil, proximity to the city, and good roads.

Pattersonia, about twelve miles from Launceston, is a poor extent of country, stony and hilly, with little land fit for cultivation: there are one or two farms bounding the road of a better description, cleared of timber and laid down with English grass. Myrtle Bank, about eight miles beyond Pattersonia, is a small block of rich heavily timbered scrub land, the greater part of the cleared land in which is laid down with English grass.

The road to Launceston is rough, stony, and hilly; but, being the most direct road from Launceston to the tin-mining country in the vicinity of the Upper Ringarooma, the traffic is now considerable.

The Upper Piper is a large settlement of small farms. It has some fine land within its boundaries, and some cultivation is carried on; but the keeping of small dairy farms and fattening a few cattle seem to be the principal means of support of the occupiers of the farms in this locality. The road to Launceston is very bad, stony, and hilly, making the carriage of grain difficult and expensive.

Scottsdale, situated on the road from Bridport to the Upper Ringarooma, is a block of rich red soil of some extent, but like all soil of this description it is heavily timbered. There are many good cottages, and a good deal of land cleared, the principal part of which is now laid down with English grass in consequence of the teams belonging to the small holders of land being engaged in carting tin and stores between the mines and Bridport. The road from Scottsdale to the Upper Ringarooma passes through barren forest and wet button-grass marshes, almost valueless for any purpose. Approaching the river you again meet with the red soil and dense forest. There appears to be a considerable extent of rich land in the vicinity of the river.

Where the land has been even partially cleared English grasses flourish most luxuriantly, milch cows are kept, and cattle fattened for the market. In consequence of the tin mines rendering labour expensive, and absorbing the attention of the settlers, but few improvements are being made.

Selby may be considered a well-watered district—the North and South Esk, the Ringarooma, Piper's and St. Patrick's Rivers, Distillery Creek, and numerous small streams running through it. There is, as usual, a large extent of barren country within its boundaries, the hills generally being steep, stony, and poor.

* These Rolls with others will be printed in a separate volume.

The District of George Town, extending from twenty miles beyond Launceston to the coast, and along the coast to Cape Portland, the north-eastern point of the Island, is the most barren we have visited, consisting principally of extensive flats of sandy soil with hillocks of quartz covered with a scanty growth of stunted bushes and heath, interspersed with gum and other trees of small size, the hills away from the coast being rough and poor. In some parts inland the timber is larger, but in no part do you meet with those giants of the forest which are so abundant on the North West Coast. The land on each side of the Tamar, from the boundaries of Selby to George Town and Kelso, is generally of a poor description, a very small portion being fit for cultivation. It supports a limited number of sheep and cattle, which roam over a large extent of country to obtain a scanty subsistence. There are some good properties on the banks of the river, and some orchards; but little attention is paid to them, and the produce is, in consequence, of little value.

The extensive works of the Tasmanian Charcoal Iron Company at Lempriere, on the West Arm near Ilfracombe, afford employment to a large number of workmen. A large amount of capital has been expended in the erection of the necessary plant and buildings for reducing the ore, a railway and engine for bringing the ore from the mines, a jetty, managers' and overseers' residences, numerous cottages for the workmen, and coke furnaces.

The works of the Tamar Hematite Iron Company near the head of the Middle Arm are not now in operation. The buildings and plant are upon a much smaller scale than those of the Tasmanian Charcoal Iron Company, but a large expenditure has been incurred in the erection of buildings and construction of a tramway to bring the ore from the mines to the works.

The country thence to Kelso is of the poorest description, soil unfit for cultivation, stunted timber, and coarse grass, with occasional belts of tea tree, and wet sandy flats.

The Nine Mile Springs, about eleven miles from George Town, is a very busy little township, called into existence by the numerous gold-mining claims worked in it and the immediate neighbourhood, and the quartz-crushing machines at work and being erected. The country around is barren, of little use for any purpose but mining.

The only other gold-field now worked in the district is the Leura, on private property at the Piper's River. This mine has the advantage of a large supply of water, obtained from the river for the purpose of crushing and washing. A tramway conveys the stone from the mine to the crushing mill.

The Australasian Slate Quarries, about eighteen miles from George Town and adjoining the abandoned gold diggings at the Back Creek, are now opened out, and a manager's house and stores erected. A tramway of about three miles to the shipping place has been constructed, and a breakwater is in course of construction to facilitate the shipment of slates.

The land between George Town and the Lower Piper is of the poorest description, with low stunted scrub and quartz occasionally showing. On and near the banks of the river it is of a better description, but very limited in extent. There is some cultivation, but the greater part of the cleared land is sown down with English grasses to feed dairy cows or to fatten cattle. Thence to Bridport the land is of the poor description general throughout the district.

Bridport is a small township consisting of an inn and a few cottages on a barren sandy spot. The Rivers Brid and Great Forester joining here form a harbour for small craft, only to be entered at high water.

This township is the shipping place for the produce of the farms at Scottsdale and Upper Ringarooma, and for the tin mines in and near the latter country.

The land around and extending to Cape Portland is generally poor, with extensive sandy flats and occasional sand hills, swamps here and there, with belts of tea tree scrub and small rises covered with quartz pebbles; a large and very wet marsh on the northern side of the Great Forester River, a limited quantity of better land around the Waterhouse Station, and a large marsh on the eastern bank of the Ringarooma River, being the principal exceptions.

There are some spots where grass is to be seen, but these are not frequent. A few thousand sheep and two or three hundred head of cattle roam over this extensive country and manage to exist upon the scanty herbage it produces.

The gold diggings at Waterhouse, with the ruins of numerous houses and the Government buildings, are in this portion of the district, about midway between Bridport and Ringarooma.

At the mouth of the Ringarooma is the township of the same name newly established, at present consisting of two inns and a few stores and cottages.

The Ringarooma river is the shipping place for the tin obtained at Mount Cameron and the district around. The harbour can only be entered at high water, and the channel from the bar to the jetties at the township is narrow and tortuous.

The successful working of the mines can alone keep this district in a prosperous condition, nearly all the flour and other necessaries of life being imported into the district, and a very limited portion of the land being capable of sufficient improvement to fit it for growing grain or fattening stock.

These districts being the last on which we have to report, we have the honor, in accordance with your request, to append a sketch of the principles on which we have made our valuations of the properties in the different districts, these principles having received the sanction of the gentlemen who were associated with us in the districts of Glenorchy, Fingal, and Hamilton.

As respects properties which are held under rental, we have, as a general rule, held that the rent paid to the landlord was good evidence of the rental value of the property, unless some special circumstances had in any degree altered that since the commencement of the tenancy, or some special information had indicated that the rent paid was either more or less than the present rental value of the property.

In valuing agricultural lands we have given due consideration to the surrounding circumstances, such as the distance from market or place of shipment, and the condition of the roads over which the produce had to be carted, as well as the general quality of the soil.

In estimating the value of orchards, hop grounds, and gardens, we have applied the same principles, assisted by the recorded values of other properties under rental but otherwise similarly situated.

Land laid down to English grasses we have valued according to its situation and quality of soil, whether flat meadow land by the side of a stream or hilly land away from water: we have also taken note of the distance from market, and the facility of getting thereto fat stock and dairy produce.

In valuing sheep and cattle runs we have taken into consideration the goodness of the pastures, whether open downs, thickly or lightly timbered. The number of stock per one thousand acres the land would probably carry has also been taken into account. Extensive but poor and rough runs we have not considered so valuable in comparison to their carrying capacity as the better class of grazing lands.

In all cases we have been guided by the number of stock actually depastured on the property, together with the distance from market or place of shipment and facility of conveying the produce.

In estimating the value of machinery for mills, quartz crushing, &c., we have obtained all the information we were able as to their cost and the quantity of manufactured material they were able to produce, and valued them accordingly.

In all cases we have been materially assisted by the recorded values of properties under rental but otherwise similarly situated.

In valuing the lands in the districts through which the Main Line Railway passes, although we have taken into consideration the increased facility of sending their produce to market, we have taken no account of the probable increased value given to those lands which, being now used as sheep runs only, may through the increased facilities become more valuable for agricultural purposes.

The total value of the properties of Selby (excluding the mineral leases), as shown by the Roll forwarded herewith, is	£	s.	d.
	24,110	16	0
The total value, as shown by the Valuation Roll of 1876, excluding properties belonging to the crown, is.....	18,583	0	0
Increase	<u>£5527</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>0</u>
The total value of the properties in the District of George Town (excluding mineral leases and properties connected therewith), as shown by the Roll forwarded herewith, is.....	7768	0	0
The total value, as shown by the Valuation Roll of 1876, excluding properties belonging to the crown, is.....	5397	0	0
Increase	<u>£2371</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

The value of lands leased for mineral purposes in the District of Selby is £5070 5 0

The value of lands leased for mineral purposes, and properties connected therewith, in the District of George Town, is..... £1675 5 0

But as new leases are being constantly granted, these amounts are subject to a continual addition.

The boundaries of the District of Selby having been lately altered, and now including some portion of what was formerly in Fingal, it is necessary to add that, although the whole of the lands in the District of Selby held under mining leases are included, the Roll sent herewith does not include those private properties which were formerly in the District of Fingal.

We have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servants,

G. A. KEMP, } *Property Valuation*
FRANCIS BUTLER, } *Commissioners.*

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.