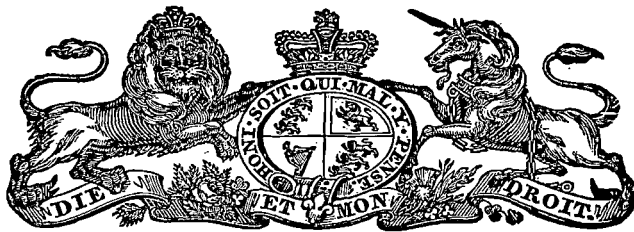


(No. 63.)



1880.

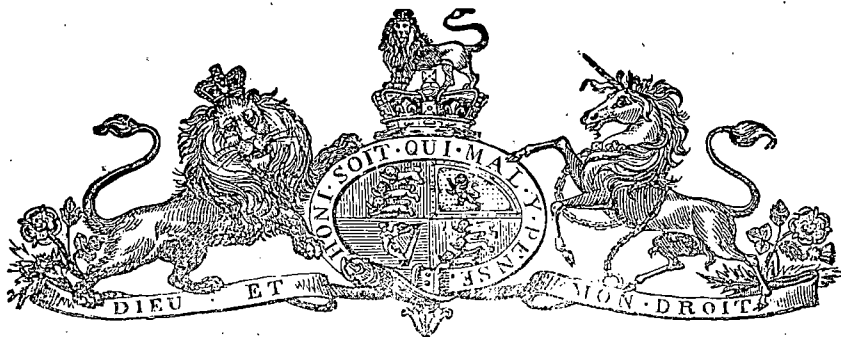
TASMANIA.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

GOLD FIELDS OF TASMANIA:

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT FOR 1879.

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Moore, and ordered by the Council to be printed,
September 15, 1880.



REPORT ON GOLD FIELDS OF TASMANIA, 1880.

Office of Gold Fields, Launceston, 3rd September, 1880.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to submit the following Report upon the several Gold Fields of the Colony:—

Beaconsfield.—The principal claim of this Gold Field, the Tasmania Company's, still continues to yield magnificent returns, and has, since crushing operations were commenced in July, 1878, produced upwards of £140,000 worth of gold. Several companies holding claims in the neighbourhood are engaged in active operations, but with no very satisfactory results, little in fact beyond prospecting having yet been accomplished. Only quite recently the erection of a powerful steam pump on one claim has overcome the unusual quantity of water, and afforded greater facilities for testing the value of the ground. A considerable number of miners have been and are still employed prospecting the country around; and at the Blue Tier, a continuation of Cabbage Tree Hill, a number of leases for quartz mining have been taken up. Considerable sums of money are being expended in prosecuting the industry in a legitimate manner. In my last Report I mentioned that several abandoned alluvial claims had been taken up for the purpose of working a conglomerate locally termed "cement." The attempt has been attended with very marked success. There are now five batteries driven by steam, having together 35 head of stampers engaged; and the yield of gold, varying from 3 to 10 dwts., is sufficient to give remunerative returns. Another battery of ten head for the same purpose is in progress of erection. One battery of five head, driven by water power, is successfully engaged in crushing alluvial tailings. At the Blue Tier above mentioned, at a spot about five miles distant from the alluvial workings at Cabbage Tree Hill, a considerable quantity of gold in alluvial deposit is being found. It is generally coarse and remarkably rough, and amongst it numerous nuggets have been found, one weighing as much as a pound and a half, the largest yet found in Tasmania. It is in shallow deposit. The same description of cement is also found at this place. The township continues to grow in importance; there are about 300 houses and cottages, and a population of about 1150.

Lisle.—Latterly this Gold Field has fallen off, both as regards the number of men employed and the quantity of gold produced. The population does not exceed 600, but all are fully employed. The whole of the gold yet discovered is in alluvial deposit, and many of the shallower claims have been already worked out. Several parties of miners have, however, traced gold into deeper ground. Claims are also being taken up on the terraces and water-races, cut at a high level for sluicing. Although the population has decreased, the nature of latest mining operations indicates more promise of permanency than at the date of my last Report.

Nine Mile Springs.—In my last Report I referred to the discovery of a reef, supposed to be a distinct line from any previously known. This reef, since named the New Chum, has proved to be unusually rich, and the prospectors' claim has already yielded £30,000 worth of gold. A number of leases have been taken up on either side, and active operations are being carried on. The discovery has also given an impetus to mining generally in the neighbourhood, and numerous prospecting parties are engaged, some with very fair prospects of success. The New Native Youth Reef is still the scene of active mining operations. The population has increased lately, and is now about 750.

Back Creek.—Recent discoveries of gold in alluvial deposit have led to a considerable addition to the population, which now numbers about 150. Several alluvial claims are being profitably worked.

Denison.—A number of quartz claims have been taken up under lease, principally near the Golconda Reef, in the direction of Lisle. Several trial crushings have yielded a low average, and the gold is of poor quality; but the facilities for mining are great, and operations are being actively carried on with a very fair prospect of success.

Waterhouse.—Mining operations have altogether ceased at this Gold Field. The numerous reefs known to exist are not sufficiently rich to be worked profitably with present mining appliances and during the continuance of the present high rate of wages.

Mount Barrow.—A limited number of miners are prospecting about here, and Camden Plains in the neighbourhood, and some are getting a small quantity of alluvial gold.

Mount Horror and Boobyalla Plains.—A few miners still continue to prospect about, and a very small quantity of gold has been procured in alluvial deposit.

Mount Cameron.—Gold has been known to exist in the neighbourhood of Mount Cameron, in the north-eastern district, for some time past, and has been found in small quantities in the alluvial deposits of tin which have been mined there. Within the last month an auriferous reef, reported to be unusually large, has been found, and a prospector's claim taken up. Several applications for leases on the line of reef have been made. Time has not yet allowed a practical test of the value of the discovery to be made.

Dorset River, Ringarooma District.—Small quantities of alluvial gold have been found in the tin mined in this place for some time past, but no discovery of an auriferous deposit of any importance has been made. Within the last week, however, the discovery of auriferous quartz on the surface has led to an application for a prospector's protection order, which has been granted.

Fingal.—Quartz-crushing still continues at the Black Boy and Alpine, but with no very encouraging results. Several quartz claims held under lease are being mined to a limited extent. I have not had occasion to visit the district since the date of my last Report.

Scamander.—So far as I can learn, nothing has been done to test the value of the reefs taken up at this place.

River Cam.—The recently reported discovery of gold in alluvial deposit in the neighbourhood of the Cam caused some excitement, and many miners went there from Lisle and other places. Few, however, remained long enough to give the place a trial. The men at present on the ground appear to be satisfied with their earnings, and a considerable quantity of gold of a superior quality, much resembling the West Coast gold, has been brought from there. A large area of country extending inland is known to be auriferous, but a very small part of it has been thoroughly examined. It is generally difficult of access, and has no settled population.

Minnow, River Mersey.—Traces of gold were found in the vicinity of the Minnow Rivulet, a tributary of the Mersey, in 1877; but although prospecting has been more or less continued since, only within the last few weeks a discovery of sufficient importance to induce persons to secure claims has been made. Auriferous quartz, of a very promising character, has been found, and several applications for leases put in; and I believe considerable excitement exists. I have not yet visited the place.

The West Coast.—The expectation that a Gold Field of considerable extent and importance would be opened up at the Pieman River, on the West Coast, in the summer of 1879-80, to which I gave expression in my last Report, has not, I regret to say, been realised; but sufficient has been done by the few men who have remained there, in spite of the hardships they have endured, to confirm me in my opinion that that part of the country will yet be the scene of an active and extensive mining industry. A considerable quantity of gold has found its way from there, and the miners who still remain in the district must necessarily have had strong and substantial inducements to continue their operations in such a place. The same drawbacks to prospectors to which I referred in my last Report,—the inaccessibility of the place, the absence of a settled population, and the distance from the settled districts, the want of tracks passable for pack-horses, and the dense (almost impenetrable) scrub covering the country,—still continue to operate. I believe there are less than 50 men now engaged in gold-mining. I have seen some extremely rich specimens of auriferous quartz, but no defined reef has yet been discovered.

Port Cygnet.—A small area at this place has been found to yield alluvial gold, some on Crown land, some on private property. The gold is of good quality, and is in shallow deposit. There are from 25 to 30 miners employed.

Southport.—Traces of gold have recently been found on the River Lune, and two prospectors' protection orders obtained; but no further discovery has been reported.

The following comparative statement will show the improvement in the gold-mining industry since the close of 1879 :—

	1879.	1880. To 31st August.
Value of gold produced from quartz	84,395	95,000
Estimated value of alluvial gold produced	146,500	90,000
	<u>£230,895</u>	<u>£185,000</u>

I have, &c.

BERNARD SHAW, *Commissioner of Gold Fields.*

*The Honorable the Minister of Lands and Works,
Hobart Town.*