

(No. 44.)



1900.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND SURVEYS:

REPORT OF THE SURVEYOR-GENERAL AND SECRETARY
FOR LANDS, 1899-1900.

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

Cost of printing—£34 10s.

TASMANIA.

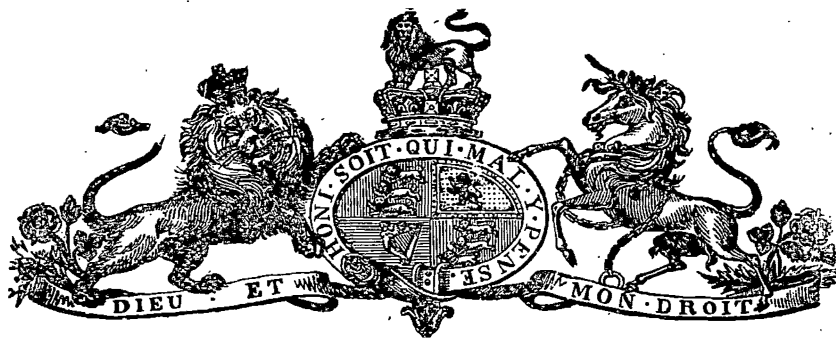
R E P O R T

OF THE

SURVEYOR-GENERAL AND SECRETARY
FOR LANDS

FOR

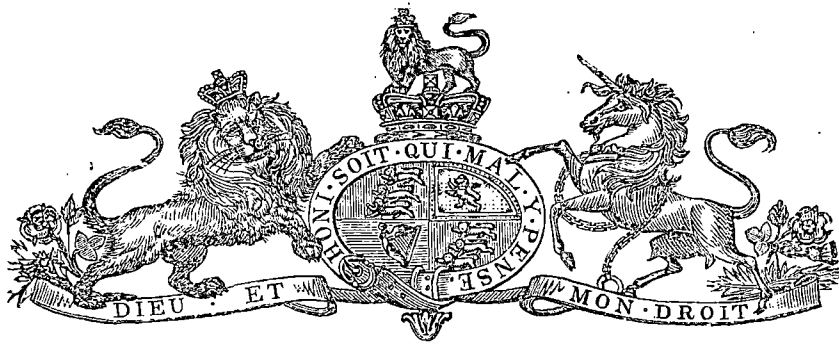
1899-1900.



Tasmania:

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1900.



DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND SURVEYS.

*Surveyor-General's Office,
Hobart, 13th July, 1900.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to furnish you with the following Report on the working of the Department of Lands and Surveys for the twelve months ending 30th of June, 1900.

REVENUE.

The total territorial revenue collected by the Department of Lands and Surveys during the year ending 31st December, 1899, was £55,860, and the total sum collected during the year ending 31st December, 1898, was £60,205. These figures show a shortage of £4345, which shortage is wholly due to the greater amount collected as Survey Fees during the former year. The estimate made by me in April, 1899, of the revenue to be collected for that year, was £56,400, thus showing a difference between the estimate and the actual receipts of only £540. The revenue collected during the six months ending the 30th June, 1900, is £25,463, and the revenue collected during the corresponding six months of 1899 was £25,425, showing a very slight difference of £38 in favour of the later period. The separate headings from which the total receipts are made up are set forth in Appendix A to this Report, Return No. 1.

LAND SELECTION AND SETTLEMENT.

The progress of settlement under "The Crown Lands Act, 1890" (54 Vict. No. 8), continues to be of a highly satisfactory description, notwithstanding the exceedingly liberal provisions of the several amending Acts which have come into operation in the *interim*.

The number of selections made under the 31st Section of the Crown Lands Act, 1890, is 373, comprising a total area of 23,803 acres, as compared with 207 lots, comprising an area of 11,863 acres selected during the 12 months ending the 30th of June, 1899, or an increase of more than double the area, whilst there is a steady increase under every separate Act, including the sale of second class land under the Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1895, to which is credited 75 lots, comprising a total area of 6685 acres—there also the increase is nearly 100 per cent. The grand total of lots purchased during the 12 months just closed is 643, embracing 38,211 acres, and the number of lots disposed of during the previous 12 months was 385, embracing a total area of 20,974 acres. These figures (*vide* Return No. 2, Appendix A), show an increase of 17,237 acres, which is the greatest that has taken place during the last 10 years, whilst the total area sold has only once been exceeded during that period.

The sum realised from the sale of country lands, 20,071 acres, during the year 1898, was £24,455, being an average price per acre of £1 4s. 5½d., while the total area sold during 1899, was 32,050 acres, which realised a sum of £40,815, being at the rate of £1 5s. 5½d. per acre. These comparisons show that the increase in the area disposed of is considerable, and that the price obtained for the lands at per acre is an improvement upon last year's transactions. This is very encouraging information, having in view the fact that there is a growing demand for second class land under "The Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1895," in substitution for ordinary selection at £1 per acre, which materially affects the total receipts from the lands sold.

It may be observed, on reference to Return No. 7, Appendix A, that the rich lands in the County of Devon continue to be much favoured by selectors, and there can be no doubt that in years to come, when the heavily timbered lands in the interior are brought under cultivation, it will embrace the finest agricultural districts of the Colony.

Should the construction of the proposed railway from Railton through the Sheffield and what is known as the Wilmot country, towards the West Coast, be proceeded with during the next year or so, a further increase in selection is certain to follow, as there are comparatively large areas of agricultural land still available for selection, but which are too far from market to be profitably opened up in the absence of railway communication with the business centres—indeed the margin

of profit that can now be realised under the most favourable conditions in the back districts of Devon affords only a small return to the hardy settler for his labour and outlay, owing to the great expense incurred in carting his produce to market.

Selection under Part IV. of "The Crown Lands Act, 1890," which was designed to encourage cultivation in mining districts, has been, practically, a dead letter during the year, owing to its having been discovered that, when such selection, or portion thereof, was found to contain mineral, and resumed for mining purposes, there was no provision in the Mining Act to lease or otherwise treat with the miner to work the land for mining purposes. It is, I understand, intended to remove these obstacles now standing in the way of progress, by Legislative authority, during the present Session of Parliament. This is a matter of dual importance to the staple industries of the Colony, as it will enable the selector to pursue his calling in mining centres, where the best market for his produce can be readily obtained, while it will afford the miner a ready supply of fresh butter, milk, and vegetables at his own door, instead of being dependent upon the knocked-about, and, therefore, inferior, imported article.

RETURN of Applications under 31st Section of the Crown Lands Act, 1890, and the Crown Lands Amendment Acts, 1893 and 1894, from the 30th June, 1899, to the 30th June, 1900.

	CROWN LANDS ACT, 1890 (31ST SECTION).					CROWN LANDS AMENDMENT ACTS, 1893 AND 1894.				
	No. of Applications received.	Total Area applied for.	No. of Applications on which Survey Fee paid.	Area on which Survey Fee paid.	Amount of Survey Fee paid by Applicants.	No. of Applications received.	Total Area applied for.	No. of Applications on which Survey Fee paid.	Area on which Survey Fee paid.	Amount of Survey Fee paid by Applicants.
					£ s. d.					£ s. d.
Buckingham	69	2212	42	1901	200 15 0	71	2324	38	1208	179 0 0
Cornwall	12	555	9	295	45 5 0	8	300	6	250	33 0 0
Cumberland	6	190	4	150	20 10 0	2	76	2	76	10 5 0
Devon	180	16,673	81	6606	643 5 0	87	3570	39	1512	207 15 0
Dorset	47	3792	33	2520	251 15 0	35	1463	25	1128	147 5 0
Glamorgan	2	100	Nil	Nil	Nil	1	50	Nil	Nil	Nil
Kent	21	857	14	606	83 10 0	14	401	9	260	42 15 0
Lincoln	4	755	2	420	28 5 0	2	50	Nil	Nil	Nil
Monmouth	13	586	5	117	22 5 0	13	522	9	372	49 10 0
Pembroke	29	2297	13	446	70 10 0	17	555	10	245	42 5 0
Somerset	2	40	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Wellington	83	7874	45	4330	396 10 0	62	2667	32	1385	184 5 0
Flinders	1	16	Nil	Nil	Nil	4	125	2	50	8 0 0
King Island	102	18,842	59	10,062	711 15 0	11	500	6	275	35 5 0
Westmorland	17	1510	12	886	98 5 0	3	145	2	100	12 10 0
TOTAL	588	56,299	319	27,739	2572 10 0	330	12,748	180	6861	951 15 3

RETURN of Applications under Section 4, Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1895, from 30th June, 1899, to 30th June, 1900.

	No. of Applications received.	Total Area applied for.	No. of Applications on which Survey Fee paid.	Area on which Survey Fee paid.	Amount of Survey Fee paid.
		Acres.		Acres.	£ s. d.
Buckingham	21	2037	10	1120	97 0 0
Cornwall	2	80	Nil	Nil	Nil
Cumberland	10	560	3	160	23 10 0
Devon	21	2122	7	625	57 15 0
Dorset	19	1518	8	710	76 15 0
Glamorgan	4	470	2	110	17 5 0
Kent	6	612	5	581	51 15 0
Lincoln	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Monmouth	9	477	5	300	33 15 0
Pembroke	18	1945	12	1100	109 15 0
Somerset	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Wellington	9	510	3	180	23 10 0
Westmorland	18	2198	6	630	55 15 0
Flinders	9	780	2	80	12 10 0
Total	146	13,309	63	5596	559 5 0

*RETURN of Applications under Section 49 Crown Lands Act, 1890,
from 30th June, 1899, to 30th June, 1900.*

	No. of Applications received.	Total Area applied for.	No. of Appli- cations on which Survey Fee paid.	Area on which Survey Fee paid.	Amount of Sur- vey Fee paid.
		Acres.		Acres.	£ s. d.
Buckingham	14	750	6	250	33 0 0
Devon	5	168	3	105	16 10 0
Dorset	37	1915	13	885	89 0 0
Montagu	28	712	10	95	39 2 6
Monmouth	1	50	Nil	Nil	Nil
Franklin	2	420	Nil	Nil	Nil
Russell	2	20	2	20	10 5 0
Cornwall	1	3	1	3	4 0 0
TOTAL	90	4038	35	1358	191 17 6

POSTPONED INSTALMENTS.

The following Return gives the result of each month's transactions under Sections 5 and 6 of "The Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1894," for the 12 months ending June 30th, 1900. It shows the total area upon which postponement was granted (at 5 per cent. interest), to be 29,386 acres, and the amount of purchase-money deferred to be £5863, also the interest collected on such postponements to be £329, as against 28,583 acres, involving a sum of £6543 for the previous 12 months, upon which interest amounting to £356 was collected.

The following Return gives the result of the monthly transactions under this heading :—

RETURN of Instalments postponed, showing Total Areas of Selections and Amounts of Purchase Money deferred in respect thereof, for the period of Twelve Months ending 30th June, 1900.

Month.	Area.			Amount of Purchase Money deferred.		
	A.	R.	P.	£	s.	d.
1899.						
July.....	4574	0	0	851	15	5
August	4588	2	15	1007	19	11
September.....	3452	3	39	671	7	0
October	1873	0	6	302	4	9
November	2176	1	19	282	5	2
December	732	2	0	98	12	6
1900.						
January	1686	3	1	455	16	4
February	2911	0	17	660	8	2
March	1703	1	14	260	10	2
April	2411	3	7	512	16	10
May.....	1385	0	14	282	1	0
June	1890	2	32	477	15	3
TOTAL	29,386	1	4	5863	12	6

Interest collected for 12 Months ending June, 1900, £329 2s. 6d.

SUBDIVISIONS.

The following Return for the past three years ending 30th June last shows that the number of Subdivisions dealt with under the Crown Lands Amendment Acts, 1894 and 1895, is growing "small by degrees and beautifully less."

This special legislation has been most beneficial, and has well served the purpose for which it was introduced. Taken in conjunction with the special provisions for the postponement of instalments, it has, under careful administration, enabled the department to square up matters, and

not only to save their homes, but to place selectors who had become hopelessly in arrears with their payments, in a better position than they had hitherto enjoyed for very many years:—

Period.	Subdivisions granted.			Subdivisions being dealt with.		
	No of Lots.	Area granted.	Area reverted to Crown.*	No. of Lots.	Area to be granted.	Area to revert to the Crown.*
		Acres.	Acres.		Acres.	Acres.
Twelve months ending 30th June, 1898	38	2051	3611	16	676	1329
Ditto 30th June, 1899	24	1396	2574	21	844	1891
Ditto 30th June, 1900	16	595	977	18	952	1018

* As the result of Subdivision.

ARREARS OF INSTALMENTS.

The following Statement in regard to the arrears of land instalments bears practical testimony to the watchful and persistent efforts that are being made in the administration of "The Crown Lands Act, 1890," and the Amendments thereunder. It shows that the arrears are less by £6453, and that the sum unprovided for is £4503 less than it was at this time last year, and makes a total reduction of £21,600 in the arrears of purchase-money at 31st December, 1895.

Arrears of Instalments of Purchase Money for Crown Lands on 31st December, 1899.

	£26,883
	£
Postponement granted to the amount of	3150
Subdivisions arranged for and pending	2982
Leaving a balance unprovided for	20,751
	£26,883

FORFEITED LANDS.

It is satisfactory and indicative of general progress to find that both the number of lots and area of country land forfeited for non-payment of instalments during the year 1899, appears in a diminishing form, there being only a total of 147 lots comprising 9081 acres, as compared with 160 lots comprising a total area of 11,332 acres in 1898.

If we turn to the forfeit list in the year 1896, when the new land policy may be said to have been fairly in operation, some idea may be gained of the enormous amount of work that has been accomplished by the small and reduced staff of the department. In that year the number of Town and Country lots forfeited to the Crown was 417, containing a total area of 22,500 acres, being 231 lots and 13,237 acres greater than recorded for the year 1899, while the practice now is to retain no purchase on the books of the department, for which provision is not made where more than one instalment of the purchase-money is in arrear. The following Return gives particulars of the forfeitures of Country lands in the various Counties.

RETURN of Country Lands forfeited in 1899.

County.	No. of Lots.	Area.		
		A.	R.	P.
Buckingham	15	794	3	2
Cumberland	2	197	2	33
Glamorgan	11	1143	1	23
Kent	10	406	2	13
Pembroke	20	823	1	5
Monmouth	13	516	0	33
Cornwall	6	245	2	0
Devon	24	950	2	36
Dorset	24	2075	3	19
Flinders	4	444	3	29
Westmorland	4	246	1	31
Wellington	14	1235	2	36
TOTALS	147	9081	0	20

INSPECTION OF SMALL SELECTIONS.

The following return shows that out of a total number of 43 lots inspected by the Chief Bailiff of Crown Lands since the 30th of June last, 12 are being resided upon and improved; that 25 lots are being improved only; while 6 lots, which have neither been occupied nor improved in any way, have since been forfeited to the Crown for non-compliance with the residential clauses of the Act under which they were selected:—

INSPECTION of Lands selected under Crown Lands Amendment Acts, 1893 and 1894.

County.	Resided upon and improved.			Improved, but not resided upon.			Unimproved and unoccupied.			Total Lots inspected.			Forfeited.		
	No.	AREA.		No.	AREA.		No.	AREA.		No.	AREA.		No.	AREA.	
		A.	R. P.		A.	R. P.		A.	R. P.		A.	R. P.		A.	R. P.
Pembroke.....	8	312	3 39	16	578	1 5	4	113	1 10	28	1004	2 14	4	113	1 10
Somerset	1	49	1 20	3	143	2 4	...	...	...	4	192	3 24	...	...	...
Glamorgan	1	48	2 28	2	99	2 32	...	...	...	3	148	1 20	...	...	...
Cumberland	2	71	2 16	4	174	0 16	2	49	2 20	8	295	1 12	2	49	2 20
TOTAL	12	482	2 23	25	995	2 17	6	162	3 30	43	1641	0 30	6	162	3 30

TOWN LANDS.

The accompanying list of Town Lands (Return No. 8, Appendix A.) sold during the years 1898-99 is of a comprehensive and satisfactory nature in more senses than one, as the lands comprised therein extend to almost every district in the Island, and the increases in the total number of allotments and areas disposed of, as well as in the total proceeds from sales, are considerable. The Return shows that there was a grand total of 667 lots sold during the year 1898, comprising 558½ acres, which realised £26,677, and that there were 915 allotments, containing 840½ acres, sold during 1899, which realised a total of £27,579.

PASTORAL LEASES.

It is gratifying to be able to report that the largest revenue results have been obtained in regard to Pastoral Leases and annual licences issued for the occupation of Crown lands during the last 10 years (*vide* Return No. 6, Appendix A.). The total area leased during the year 1898 was 242,613 acres, and the rent received £5295. During the year 1899 there were 216,634 acres so held, and the rent received from same, £5725; while the amount of rental received during the first six months of the current year is £3748, and for the same period of 1898, £3220. Reference to Return No. 3, Appendix A., will show that the total number of leases and occupation licences issued during the 12 months ending 30th June, 1900, was 384, embracing an area of 281,695 acres, at an annual rental of £1770, and that during the previous 12 months 408 lots were dealt with, embracing an area of 255,119 acres, at a yearly rental of £1205.

The grand total area of pastoral land held under lease or licence at the 31st December, 1899, was 976,457 acres, at an annual rental of £6028, as against 929,985 acres held under lease, &c., at the 31st December, 1898, at a yearly rental of £6187 (*vide* Return No. 4, Appendix A.), being the substantial increase in the area of 46,472 acres. The slight falling off in the rental over an increase in the area shows that a lower quality of land is now being occupied than formerly. This is, unquestionably, a sound indication that the increased supervision which I have advocated for years is having the desired effect in checking the unauthorised occupation of pastoral lands.

The services rendered by Mr. J. C. Penny, the Chief Forest Officer, have resulted in pastoralists feeling compelled to take up areas totalling 67,841 acres under rental that had previously been run over, without paying one penny-piece, either in rental, taxes, or otherwise, for the use of it. His report is attached in Appendix B. As the result of personal interviews with parties reported to have been running stock on Crown land illegally, negotiations are pending for the leasing of additional areas, to the extent of between 40,000 and 50,000 acres. The areas referred to above are in the Lake Country and on the north-east part of the Island, comprising the principal districts in which the depasturage of stock unlawfully upon Crown land has been most prevalent. It is, however, carried on in other places to a considerable extent.

THE TIMBER INDUSTRY.

The administration of that portion of "The Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1898," which authorises the leasing of Crown lands for sawmilling, and the Regulations issued thereunder, has proved a difficult matter. The prescriptive right to the timber upon a defined area, which was so much

sought after by sawmill owners previous to the passing of the above-named Act, has not resulted in the *bonâ fide* cutting of timber upon a large scale. Indeed, it is questionable whether the maximum area of 5000 acres, as provided for in the Act, is not in excess of actual requirements, and whether it has not rather acted in the direction of speculation, in the hope of floating companies in the English market, than in the systematic development of the timber industry. As the Act only became law in November, 1898, there are no data by which to compare the year's proceedings ending 30th June, 1900. Thirteen leases have, however, been issued during that period, embracing a total area of 28,571 acres, at an annual rental of £287; and 11 licences have been issued under the old Regulations (now repealed) covering an area of 2998 acres, at a rental of £110. Thirty-nine applications for leases have also been received, extending over a total area of 13,358 acres, out of which survey fees were paid on 13, comprising an area of 5100 acres. Several companies are, I believe, in course of flotation in London to work these timber areas.

LIST of Sawmill Areas applied for during the Twelve Months ending 30th June, 1900.

SITUATION.	NO. OF APPLICATIONS.	AREA APPLIED FOR.		
		A.	R.	P.
County of Buckingham—				
Parish of Pedder	1	50	0	0
„ Ranelagh	2	400	0	0
„ Coningham	1	200	0	0
TOTAL	4			650 0 0
County of Devon—				
Parish of Alphington.....	1	250	0	0
TOTAL.....	1			250 0 0
County of Kent—				
Parish of Honeywood	5	625	0	0
„ Thanet	1	375	0	0
„ Garrett	7	775	0	0
„ Leithbridge	2	374	0	0
„ Blakeney	2	1000	0	0
TOTAL.....	17			3149 0 0
County of Lincoln—				
Dove River.....	3	2000	0	0
TOTAL.....	3			2000 0 0
County of Montagu—				
Vicinity Mt. Heemskirk	1	100	0	0
Macquarie Harbour	1	1000	0	0
TOTAL.....	2			1100 0 0
County of Monmouth—				
Parish of Jervis.....	1	300	0	0
TOTAL	1			300 0 0
County of Pembroke—				
Parish of Tunnah	2	250	0	0
Tasman's Peninsula	3	1900	0	0
TOTAL.....	5			2150 0 0
County of Wellington—				
Parish of Gibson	1	200	0	0
„ Poilinna.....	1	639	0	0
„ Williams	4	2920	0	0
TOTAL	6			3759 0 0
GRAND TOTAL...	39			13,358 0 0

*LIST of Sawmill Areas applied for during Twelve Months ending 30th June, 1900.
upon which Survey Fees have been paid.*

SITUATION.	NO. OF APPLICATIONS.	AREA APPLIED FOR.			
		A.	R.	P.	A. R. P.
County of Buckingham— Parish of Ranelagh.....	1	200	0	0	200 0 0
TOTAL	1				
County of Devon— Parish of Alphington.....	1	250	0	0	250 0 0
TOTAL	1				
County of Pembroke— Parish of Tunnah	1	150	0	0	
Tasman's Peninsula	1	500	0	0	650 0 0
TOTAL	2				
County of Kent— Parish of Honeywood	1	100	0	0	
„ Garrett	1	100	0	0	
„ Leithbridge.....	1	200	0	0	
„ Blakeney	1	500	0	0	900 0 0
TOTAL	4				
County of Lincoln— Dove River.....	3	2000	0	0	2000 0 0
TOTAL	3				
County of Montagu— Vicinity of Heemskirk	1	100	0	0	
Macquarie Harbour	1	1000	0	0	1100 0 0
TOTAL	2				
GRAND TOTAL...	13				5100 0 0

FORESTRY.

While the duties performed by the Chief Forest Officer are of a most valuable order, and the result of his labours amply justify the appointment, it will not be forgotten that the office was created mainly for revenue purposes, and, in connection with the Forest Reserves that were proclaimed previous and since the date of his appointment (now totalling some 150,000 acres), was only intended as a first step towards initiating a thorough system of State forestry in Tasmania. The idea is not a new one; it may be said to have originated in the year 1886, when Mr. George S. Perrin, F.L.S., F.R.G.S., F.R.H.S., (now) Conservator of State Forests in Victoria, was appointed to that position in Tasmania.

Mr. Perrin's retirement to Victoria in 1889 was a loss to Tasmania, as the work he was engaged upon was then thrown aside. The subject was again revived in the year 1898, when I was asked to furnish a report upon the timber industry of the Colony. That report was forwarded to, and the suggestions it contained commended by Mr. Perrin, whose later experience gave him "more confidence to once again draw the attention of the Government to his former exhaustive report, and to urge that no further time should be lost in taking steps to save from reckless destruction the valuable forests of Tasmania."

As an expert with large experience, Mr. Perrin considers that conservation can only be effectively carried out upon a broad and liberal policy, and he has pointed out that, however great the necessary outlay to establish satisfactory forest management, it is invariably a most profitable investment of public funds.

Mr. Perrin lays much emphasis upon the necessity for having specially-trained officers in any colony undertaking forest conservation. He gives the following list of subjects in which cadets desirous of becoming officers of the Forest Department should be required to pass an examination:—

1. Simple surveying, with use of the theodolite, &c.

2. Botany and economic Forestry.
3. Elements of Geology,
4. Elements of Chemistry, } as applied to soils, manures, &c.
5. Book-keeping.
6. Levelling and Road-making, principles of, &c.
7. The management of Stock, Machinery, &c.
8. A practical course of Nursery work in the rearing and transplanting of trees.

This is all excellent advice, and, inasmuch as the forests of Tasmania, which form one of the country's best assets, and must be of much greater value when Australian Federation has been accomplished, no consideration of the expense involved should be allowed to stand in the way of its adoption. I therefore commend the reforms indicated by Mr. Perrin to the most favourable consideration of the Government.

The following return is compiled from figures kindly furnished by the Collector of Customs:—

Export of Timber from Tasmania.

1898.

	Value. £
Sawn and log timber, 6,716,398 superficial feet	19,697
Palings, shingles, staves, and other shaped pieces, 1,666,953 in number...	7465
Value of Export, 1898.....	<u>£27,162</u>

1899.

Sawn and log timber, 10,417,936 sup. feet	32,801
Palings, shingles, staves, and other shaped pieces, 1,431,941 in number...	6741
Value of Export, 1899.....	<u>£39,542</u>

Although the figures quoted show a considerable advance upon the operations of the year 1898, both as to the quantity and value of timber exported, yet it is not one-tenth part of the quantity that should have been shipped to outside markets in consideration for the large area of land that has been taken up for timber purposes under the sawmill regulations.

WATTLE-BARKING.

Twenty-one licences were issued for Wattle-barking last season, over a total of 15,704 acres, which realised £58 11s. During the previous season there were 12 licences issued, over a total area of 15,755 acres, and the sum received for the same was £58 18s.

As the licences for one year have no connection with those for any other, it is singular that the result (as to area and revenue) should be almost identical, while the number of licences for last year is almost double that for the previous season.

CLOSER SETTLEMENT.

The importance of the subject of the resumption of Agricultural lands for closer settlement, which was referred to in my Annual Report last year, continues to command much and increased attention in the neighbouring Colonies. In view of the special advantages which Tasmania possesses for the introduction of a system of land purchase by the State for intense cultivation, and for the establishment of manufacturing industries, I venture to believe, that the following brief references to what is being done in other countries, will be found sufficiently interesting to justify a place in this Report.

It is recorded in the Annual Report of the Surveyor-General of New Zealand that the "Cheviot Estate continues to progress satisfactorily." The value of improvements required by law amounted to £16,832, but the actual value was £49,738; whilst the number of people residing on the estate was 838. Six estates were purchased, and one leasehold surrendered to the Crown during the year 1899, comprising a total area of 90,708 acres. These lands have been subdivided into 276 areas (for leasing) with the result that at the date of the report there were 11,663 acres, or only about one eighth of the whole unselected. The annual rental payable on the leases was £22,633 13s. 4d. In addition to the above, 35 selections were made in the properties that had been acquired prior to the year 1898. The number of estates acquired since the Act authorising the same came into operation in 1894, was 46, comprising a total area of 243,947 acres. The number of persons residing on these estates at the 31st of March, 1899, was 3077, and the number of houses erected thereon was 813; whilst the value of the improvements on the estates amounted to £129,133 18s. 9d.

The following is given as the total cost of the estates purchased by the Crown, £1,202,246; and the cost of roads, surveys, administration, &c., £53,862. The lands disposed of are let at an annual rental of £57,747, while the unlet lands are valued at a rental of £4503, the last two items making £62,250; it will thus be seen that if the whole of the lands were let at the given rates, the rentals would bring in a return of 5·17 per cent. on the capital invested in the properties.

The rentals at the date of report are said to be actually yielding a return of 5 per cent. on the capital sunk in the purchases by the State.

The following particulars are taken from last year's Annual Report of the Department of Public Lands, Queensland:—since the Agricultural Land Purchase Act came into operation in December, 1894, fourteen estates have been resumed by the Crown, comprising a total gross area of 123,786 acres, at a total purchase price of £307,022, being an average price per acre of £2 9s. 7½d. Seven of the estates, containing a gross area of 79,772 acres, had been thrown open to selection up to the 31st of March, 1899, at a total price of £215,641 12s. 11d., being an average selling price of £2 14s. 0¾d. per acre. At the period stated 75,767 acres had been selected. The total number of farms disposed of was 620, and the number of persons selecting the same was 583, leaving 4004 acres to be taken up out of a total of 79,772 acres, while the total value of the improvements effected under the entire scheme is put down at £70,709 4s. 5d.

The foregoing brief resumé of the experience gained in Queensland on the closer settlement principles adopted in that Colony, must be very satisfactory to those who are responsible for the introduction of the policy under which such results have been attained.

It is officially recorded in the report of the Surveyor-General of South Australia, dated 15th August, 1899, that under the closer settlement Act (No. 688 of 1897), an area of 26,188 acres was purchased during the year, and that all the land offered had been leased at satisfactory rentals, averaging a return of 4 per cent. on the purchase-money, and yet not one of these Colonies (perhaps New Zealand excepted) is so well adapted to intense cultivation of the soil for agricultural and horticultural products as the rich river valley lands along the Derwent and tributaries, or have they the abundance of water, or anything like the natural facilities for utilising the same by gravitation for manufacturing purposes. Indeed, Tasmania possesses an almost inexhaustible water supply in the numerous Lakes of the central plateau, lying back from the eastern face of the Great Western Range, which could be readily made available, either for irrigation purposes, or as a motive power and by which almost any degree of pressure could be obtained.

In view of the near approach of Australian Federation the great advantages of our water power should commend themselves to the most earnest consideration of all who feel an interest in the development and welfare of the country.

PROSECUTIONS UNDER THE CROWN LANDS ACT.

The number of prosecutions for the illegal cutting of timber on Crown Lands, tells its own tale as to the necessity that exists for the most vigilant and constant supervision over the Crown estate, and affords tangible evidence of the good work being done by the Bailiffs of Crown Lands.

Of the cases reported no fewer than 27 seizures and prosecutions were instituted, the most important of which occurred on the West Coast. The sales of the timber seized realised £32 5s. 9d. The result of 17 cases was a fine in every instance. In ten cases of seizure, the timber was subsequently released on payment of Licence fees to cover the period of operations.

MR. PENNY'S REPORT (Vide Appendix B).

The result of Mr. Penny's inspections of selections taken up under the provisions of the Crown Lands Amendment Acts, 1893 and 1894, is very satisfactory, and is a marked improvement upon those that have been furnished in previous years. It shows that the rate of improved selections, as compared with those upon which the conditions of the Acts had not been complied with, is 90 per cent., and is confirmatory of the contention I have always held, viz., that field inspection is the only means by which "dummying" can be effectually checked.

Attention is drawn to a long stretch of pine country between Port Davey and the Pieman, and to the necessity for local inspection to prevent the illegal cutting of our most valuable timbers on the West Coast.

One of the most important features of this report is, however, that which deals with the difficulties experienced in bringing the new regulations for saw-milling into practical operation. It is pointed out that "in only a few instances as yet are timber areas being worked," thus showing the necessity that exists for insisting upon the areas being worked, and not merely to be held for speculative purposes.

SURVEYS.

The ordinary surveys of the Colony are well in hand and call for no special remarks, although the work fluctuates considerably, and in the old settled and pastoral districts involves much loss of time in travelling. The majority of the staff, or district surveyors, have been kept going throughout the year. In several instances district surveyors have been unable to cope with the demands made upon their energies, and it has been found necessary, in many cases, to call in the assistance of authorised surveyors to prevent the work falling into arrears.

The grand total number of lots and the area surveyed throughout the Island is 57,905 acres and 2872 lots respectively. The proportion of the work which has been entrusted to authorised surveyors is approximately one-tenth of the whole area, being 5474 acres.

The following Returns give a summary of instructions issued and surveys ordered and received during the 12 months ending 30th June, 1900 :—

RETURN of Number of Instructions issued to Surveyors for the Twelve Months ending 30th June, 1900.

Name of Surveyor.	Survey Department.	Mines Department.	TOTAL.
Archer, C. M.	76	31	107
Combes, H.	115	—	115
Dove, H. P.	10	144	154
Eddie, G. T.	75	33	108
Frodsham, T.	56	—	56
Flannigan, M.	66	4	70
Hall, A. C.	108	7	115
Hardy, W. M.	52	3	55
Hinsby, J. H.	38	—	38
Innes, E. G.	33	3	36
Jones, D.	5	96	101
Clark, T.	46	270	316
Windsor, F. E.	50	14	64
Wilson, C. S.	36	213	249
Authorised Surveyors ...	142	146	288
	908	964	1872

RETURN of Selection and Auction Surveys received during the Twelve Months ending 30th June, 1900.

Survey District.	Officer in charge of Survey District.	Selection Surveys.		Auction Surveys.		Mineral Surveys.		Total.	
		Area in Acres.	No. of Lots.	Area in Acres.	No. of Lots.	Area in Acres.	No. of Lots.	Area in Acres.	No. of Lots.
Deloraine and Mersey	Archer, C. M.	870	26	893	12	66	11	1829	49
Buckingham	Combes, H.	1159	35	668	6	—	—	1827	41
Cumberland	Frodsham, T.	1234	36	623	11	—	—	1857	47
Dorset	Eddie, G. T.	2608	51	1264	23	538	45	4410	119
Devon	Hall, A. C.	5278	95	756	13	—	—	6034	108
Franklin	Innes, E. G.	673	19	738	8	—	—	1411	27
Fingal	Clark, T.	470	11	338	12	7007	231	7815	254
Moorina	..	44	2	55	2	2096	112	2195	116
Montagu	Wilson, C. S.	251	20	540	1041	7185	158	7976	1219
Oatlands	Hardy, W. M.	759	16	1143	13	—	—	1902	29
Russell	Jones, D.	—	—	34	139	862	56	896	195
Tasman Peninsula	Hinsby, J. H. . . .	2097	33	509	9	—	—	2606	42
Wellington	Windsor, F. E.	4416	79	300	8	773	17	5489	104
King Island	Flannigan, M.	6108	57	56	51	20	1	6184	109
	Authorised Surveyors..	3851	68	412	292	1211	53	5474	413
	TOTAL	29,818	548	8329	1640	19,758	684	57,905	2872

SPECIAL SURVEYS.

Under this heading, the extension of the Town of Zeehan necessitated the survey of 91 allotments; the extension of the Town of Queenstown, 76 allotments; and the subdivision of portion of the Town of Strahan, 225 allotments. The laying out and subdivisions of portions of the new Towns of Magnet and Darwin made 139 allotments and 188 allotments respectively. In addition to the foregoing, 82 allotments were surveyed in the Town of Derby, and 128 allotments for occupation in the Town Reserve at Macquarie Heads. In all these cases the surveys have all been well and accurately made, and referred to standard marks carefully selected in the most convenient situations.

Twenty-four miles of roads have been surveyed, by requisition, from the Public Works Department—in small sections—throughout the Island.

It is a matter of much satisfaction to me to be in a position to state that there is every prospect of a number of "Trig. Stations" being erected on the West Coast during next summer. It may be remembered that attention was directed to this subject in my last and previous years' reports, in order, primarily, that the relative position of detached groups of surveys may be determined and accurately entered upon the plans of the Survey Department; and, secondly, that these stations may be utilised as the basis of a system of triangulation to be extended to and connected with the Geodetic Survey of the Colony, as time and opportunity may permit of this important work being undertaken.

Applications continue to be made from local bodies to this department, to reproduce and mark the boundaries of old town sections. The latest to hand is a revival of former applications from the Devonport Town Board to fix the alignment of certain streets whereon the original survey marks have been long since effaced, and the fenced lines are known to be considerably out of their true position. I would be quite willing to recommend that such applications should receive the favourable consideration of the Government, and am prepared to assist such local bodies—as far as practicable—but there is no fund or appropriation set aside to defray the cost of standard surveys of the kind, and inasmuch as the fee simple of the lands fronting on the streets of Devonport has long since passed away from the Crown, and the boundaries may have been fenced out of position, and claims arise by right of occupation, it does not seem reasonable that the State should be called upon at this late date—many years having elapsed since the original survey was made and accepted by the grantee—to rectify and take the responsibility of the complications now involved, which in reality lie with the present owners of the properties and the local bodies.

Another subject akin to the above is the actual necessity that exists for redefining the boundaries of the Crown Reservations or esplanades along our rivers and lakes. The responsibility of establishing these boundaries rests either between the State and the subject, or entirely with the former, inasmuch as hundreds of surveys have been made and grant deeds issued for the lands described as "fronting on a Crown Reservation" where the frontage lines have never been run. Where they have been established, as provided under the later regulations, the responsibility appears to be divided and to rest with either party requiring the information. The custom has been in regard to esplanade frontages that they are occupied by the abutting purchasers—so far as their lands extend. In some instances, houses are actually erected on the Crown Reservation, which has been occupied for years and years without one farthing having been paid for the use thereof. Had this department not moved in the matter, it would not be long until numerous claims would have been made for Crown Grants, on the grounds that such lands had been occupied for half a century or over. The very pertinent question with which the department finds itself confronted, and upon which action is to be taken, is to ascertain the position of the boundary of the esplanade, which in the majority of cases can only be determined by actual survey. Again, the local bodies prefer claims—as in the case of the New Norfolk Road Trust—against the department, for the resetting out of the esplanade frontages. The local councils or road trusts have no funds for such works any more than the department. It is quite evident that the subject must be taken up, as a survey is necessary in such cases, and that such survey can only be effected satisfactorily by an officer of the Survey Department where all the original survey and other data can be placed at his disposal. But either the present survey vote must be considerably increased, or separate appropriation must be made to defray the cost of the work, which must be done on carefully-defined lines. Where any local body exists, and is going to derive any advantage from the outlay, it would appear only reasonable that a portion of the expense of the survey should fall upon such body. Stringent regulations would have to be prescribed for maintaining the survey marks when established, otherwise they would soon be destroyed, and the value of the work thereby neutralised.

UNDERGROUND MINE SURVEYS.

In view of the number of mining accidents which have occurred during the year and the almost certainty of their greater frequency in the future, as the number of persons engaged in mining multiplies, I feel it almost imperative to revert to this very important subject, to which

attention was directed in my Annual Report for the year ending June, 1898—perhaps I could not do better than reproduce the paragraph here, as follows :—

“There is still a question in regard to underground mine surveys to which it appears to be essential that I should make some reference. These surveys are required by the Department of Mines every year, to show what progress is being made in the workings, and for the prevention of accidents by explosions between adjoining mines, and for other purposes. They are at present being carried out by any surveyor holding authority from the Commissioner of Crown Lands to make ordinary surface surveys, and under instructions from the mine manager. Such surveys, to be reliable as a safeguard against mining accidents and the sacrifice of human lives, require to be made with extreme accuracy, and should, I maintain, be entrusted only to surveyors of recognised high standing in their profession. Is this the practice?—or can it be expected that the results are satisfactory under the conditions stated? The inconsistency of the position is apparent from the fact that, while it is stipulated that the individual must have been authorised to make surveys by the Surveyor-General's Department to be eligible to undertake mine surveys, yet the latter Department may not be represented on the Board of Examiners appointed to enquire into the qualifications of the person employed; it may be that there is not an authorised land surveyor on such Board. No serious accident has occurred, so far as I am aware, which has been traced to an error in the underground mine survey; but such may happen at any time, and it appears to be essential in the interests of the mining community, that all reasonable safeguards should be provided in order to minimise, as far as practicable, a possibility of any catastrophe.”

Since that time I am not aware that any material alteration has been made in the mode or conduct of these surveys, and yet, although the constant and skilful inspection of mines is admitted and provided for, I know of no branch of survey work within the whole scope of its application in which less has been done to remedy existing dangers, or where the necessity is so great for keeping up a systematic and well-regulated system of surveying. It should be borne in mind, in this connection, that it will be a matter of impossibility to make a complete survey in the future after years' workings will have accumulated, without the record of progressive and accurate mine surveys having been kept up. Faulty and incomplete surveys of such a nature could never be relied upon where scores of souls may be dependent upon the minute accuracy of a plan. What I am suggesting has had to be faced elsewhere, as it will have to be in Tasmania. In Ballarat alone an underground survey, which has been in operation for five years and not yet finished, has cost the Victorian Government thousands of pounds.

It must be clearly understood that in making these remarks I do not in the least wish them to have any personal reference to any officer of another department—no doubt the best is being done in the circumstances—but I simply desire to direct attention to a most important survey matter which seems to come within the proper sphere of this office.

OFFICIAL INSPECTIONS.

The following is a record of a number of matters that came under my notice during my tour through the North-West and Western Districts in March last :—

DEVONPORT.

Commencing with Devonport, the Chairman of the Town Board represented to me the need that exists for a re-survey of that portion of Devonport West, called Wenvoe—also, the area lying between Percy and William streets respectively, and northerly to the railway, also of a portion of Devonport East, owing to the effacement of the original survey marks and the palpable encroachments that exist on the streets. The request which has been made on several occasions in one form or other, is one, that, if granted, would involve the Government in an expenditure of many hundreds of pounds. So far as Wenvoe is concerned, I pointed out to Mr. Luck (Chairman of the Town Board) that it was in reality a private town, when laid out, that the Government would accept no responsibility whatever as to the original survey thereof, that the encroachments formed a subject for the employment of a qualified surveyor in the first instance, and that the total cost of the survey should be borne by the Board, but that I would be quite prepared to supervise the work on these conditions. In regard to the other portions of the town there is no doubt as to the necessity that exists for a re-survey being undertaken, in order to set out the alignment of the streets for Town Board purposes.

As the frontages are occupied in a most irregular fashion, it is impossible for even a professional surveyor—let alone a layman—to determine the original, or, in fact, any regular street boundary for the allotments, without either completely upsetting the records of the title, and encroaching considerably upon the streets, or totally disregarding the frontage fences. The town, in relation to street alignment, is certainly in a deplorable condition; in some instances there is an obvious discrepancy of as much as 10 links between the correct and fenced line.

Although I should like very much to see the boundaries of the allotments on the ground brought into harmony with the descriptions in the titles, yet the undertaking of a re-survey by the State, of the lands for which Crown grants have been issued, would, I fear, form a precedent which

it would be hard to resist in many other cases, and might lead to a greater outlay than the circumstances of the revenue may warrant.

The principle by which I am guided in this matter is, that once an allotment or parcel of land has been surveyed, and the Crown grant issued, it is the duty of the purchaser to maintain his boundary-marks, and if, through his neglect, such marks are obliterated, it is not the province of the State to reproduce them. In this instance, as the Board needs assistance, and as the original survey (which was made many years ago, when a lower standard of accuracy was demanded than under the present Regulations) may have contained some discrepancies in the instrumental or chainage work, I am prepared to recommend that a re-survey be effected by the Government of the particular portions referred to, provided the Town Board gives an undertaking to bear one-half of the cost of such re-survey, the total not to exceed £150. Should the arrangement be approved, I would propose to give every landowner the land he has fenced and occupies, as far as practicable, by special Act of Parliament, whether it should or should not be found to agree with the particulars of his title. This is, in my opinion, the only practical solution of the difficulties that surround such cases.

WYNYARD.

Leaving Devonport, I journeyed on to Wynyard, and inspected some surveys in that district. I found that two unauthorised persons were being employed to make surveys for the Department. The District Surveyor, who is the officer responsible to the Department for the work, has been "brought to book" for a breach of the Regulations, and called upon to dispense with the services of any assistants, except "by the consent, first obtained, of the Surveyor-General."

ROSEBERY.

From Wynyard, I proceeded to Rosebery, and observed the improvements that are being made by the persons who are still "squatting" on the Tasmania Copper Co's. leases. These persons have made repeated applications to be allowed to purchase the areas they occupy, but their applications have always been refused, consequent on their proximity to the site upon which it is understood the Copper Company intends to erect a smelting plant. I see no reason to recommend any fresh line of action in the circumstances, as it is believed still that the erection of the smelters is to be undertaken in that locality at no distant date. Building is not being rapidly proceeded with on the town allotments, although I noticed several new places since my last visit. When the Tasmanian Copper Co. commences operations, and the Rosebery Station is fixed, the town will improve. The road leading from Rosebery to Williamsford is in good order, but the conveyances plying between the railways are quite inadequate to the demands made upon them in holiday times, with the result that many persons are compelled to cover the distance—5 miles—on foot.

ZEEHAN.

I attended to a number of matters at Zeehan, and inspected the allotments surveyed for sale on the Silver King property, against which the company protests. There are visible outcrops of gossan on some of these allotments, carrying prospects of galena. Although the company has shepherded a large extent of land right into the town for years, to the detriment of the district, it is not deemed advisable to hamper their operations by the sale of these allotments. They have accordingly been struck out of the sale list.

Mr. Haberlein, Manager of the Tasmanian Smelting Company, brought under my notice his application for 10 acres of land, for which he desires to acquire the freehold, as a residential site for his permanent offices. What he requires can only be done by special legislation, as it has been already suggested. The smelters are in full blast, and reduce large quantities of ore taken from various mines in the fields of Zeehan and Mt. Read daily.

The Zeehan Electric Light and Power Company obtained the lease of its site, and has commenced to erect its station-building fronting on Main-street. There is little sickness now at Zeehan as compared with former years, which speaks well for the improvements in the sanitary arrangements of the place. The town is gradually moving along with the progress of the district.

STRAHAN.

The most stirring subject at Strahan is unquestionably the action of the department in ejecting persons who are in illegal occupation of the esplanade; but the opposition offered is not likely to be of a formidable character, and it will be a good job when all obstructions to traffic and the unsightly tenements have been removed.

I visited an island in Swan Bay by request of, and in company with, the Local Board of Health, and selected a small island—shown on the district chart—for a quarantine station. It contains about 25 acres, and appears to be suitable for the purpose named. The only exception that might be taken to its position, is in reference to the allotments of land purchased on the mainland, some one and a half miles across the bay, but I don't think the residents on the mainland need apprehend

any danger from the site chosen and approved of by the Board's Physician as a quarantine station—the prevailing wind is in the opposite direction.

I also made an excursion to Macquarie Heads, and was present on the occasion of 25 shots of dynamite being let off on the bar, with the object of making a channel. The operation was in every respect successful, except that the result was *nil*, as far as could be ascertained.

The two persons squatting on the reserve near the harbour-works afford some accommodation to the workmen, and may, I think, be left there temporarily if the Marine Board offers no objection to their presence, but they will have to remove ultimately.

The harbour works are only in their initiatory stage as yet, and the contractor will require to lay half a mile of tramway to convey the stone to the breakwater site before the main work can be entered upon. I took the opportunity, when at the heads, of walking over to Cape Sorell Lighthouse, which is a stately structure, over one hundred feet high, and from the summit of which I obtained one of the best views I have ever seen of the western chain of mountains, the line of "Professors" in the West Coast Range being especially conspicuous, and quite grand enough to justify their illustrious nomenclature, in more senses than one.

QUEENSTOWN.

Typhoid fever still prevails at Queenstown, although the hospital authorities had just removed into the new building which is on a commanding situation, and of ornate design. It is a great boon to the patients and, being well fitted up with the latest improvements, is a great convenience to the attendants.

There were twenty-four (24) patients at the time I called—mostly fever cases.

I desire to bring under your notice for consideration a proposal for straightening the channel of a portion of the Queen River through the town, commencing opposite the railway station. The esplanade on either side of the river, which is somewhat "in and out," was purposely left extra wide when the town was surveyed, to allow for overflows in flood-time. If the channel were straightened the water would then run away much more rapidly than at present, and thus the flooding of the river flat would be obviated. There is a good fall in the river to facilitate the work, which would be reproductive, as it would leave sufficient land to subdivide into a number of allotments for sale in a popular part of the town, from which good prices would be realised. It would be essential that the channel work should be effected before the sale. The Town Board quite favours the proposal, which I have every confidence in recommending to your careful consideration. I shall recommend for your approval the reservation of an area between Lynchford and the "13-mile" (on the old Linda Track) for the preservation and growth of timber. This is the best-timbered land now in the locality.

Although I miss some of the former occupiers in the valley of Conglomerate Creek (*alias* "The Piggery,") there are still a number left which it is believed accounts largely for the prevalence of typhoid fever in the town—by reason of the pollution of water, which reckless or indifferent persons are sometimes tempted to drink. It looks clear and good, but, from my own experience, I know that the hill streams must be little better than flowing channels of fever germs. I have never altered my opinion as to the desirableness of preventing settlement in the locality referred to, and had the action of the Department not been frustrated at the outset, there would now be no residents in "The Piggery."

The Mount Lyell Company is desirous of acquiring still another small area to the rear of their railway station.

GORMANSTON.

The Town Board of Gormanston waited upon me to represent their claims to the inclusion of the Linda Settlement in their jurisdiction, and also with regard to the withdrawal of Section E 1 from auction, at the last land sale. This section was struck out at the instance of the Secretary for Mines, who considered the land was required for mining purposes.

The Town Board claims that if the land is not required for sale that it should revert to its control, as it formerly consisted principally of street land. I am of opinion that it might be sold without jeopardising any mining interests. The same course should, in my opinion, be adopted in relation to the so-called Dam Site, which is neither suitable, or, so far as I can see, required for, the storage of water.

The Board desires to know when amount from sale of lands, said to be £850, will be available for expenditure on Honeysuckle Road? This is a Public Works matter.

LINDA VALLEY.

At the Linda Valley I was interviewed by some 15 persons on the subject of proclaiming the recently-surveyed allotments a separate town for the benefit of the inhabitants, and the accommodation of the mining population engaged upon the North Mount Lyell, Lyell Tharsis, and other mines in the neighbourhood. These people have endeavoured to settle in an orderly condition. The formation of streets, and obtaining a water-supply, will necessitate a very moderate outlay as compared with the amount which was required to lay out a town in the Gormanston centre, and they fear that the Government subsidy from the sale of the Linda lands will be largely appropriated to the improvement of the Gormanston streets by the reason of the fact that the latter, having a much larger population, will return the majority of members to the Town Board. So long, however, as they are impressed with the fact that Linda will get the proportion of land fund due to it expended in that locality, I don't anticipate that any serious consequences will ensue from their being included in the Gormanston boundaries.

Apart from the allotments surveyed for auction in the Linda Valley I have had some small areas surveyed nearer the North Lyell Mine for occupation under residence licence, by local persons who are not in a position to purchase. The site selected is the best available in the locality.

KELLY BASIN.

At Kelly Basin I was waited on by 18 of the residents, who are anxious to purchase the areas upon which they have made improvements. They ask that their improvements shall be protected to a fair valuation only. Of course, they have no claim or *locus standi*, although possessed of residence licences, as they have been in unauthorised occupation of Crown lands, withdrawn from the residential clauses of the Mining Act. But some action must be taken to place these people in a proper position; either they must be removed from their habitations, or they must be called upon to purchase out the areas at a fair valuation.

Another deputation waited upon me to protest against the action of Parliament in authorising the sale of lands on the esplanade to Messrs. Lynch, Smith, and Pedder respectively, but that was a subject, the propriety, or otherwise, of which I was not prepared to discuss.

The Progress Committee brought under notice the necessity for obtaining telegraphic communication with other parts of the Colony. This will soon be provided by the North Lyell Company, by making the connection to Gormanston.

The Recreation Committee requests that a reserve be surveyed for that purpose, and is prepared to bear the cost of such survey, so that the request may be fairly complied with.

The Progress Committee is desirous of having, also, a sanitary site set apart for the health of the people, and promised to furnish a chart with the position desired indicated thereon.

A requisition was also preferred for the cutting of a pack-track from the south end of Darwin to Kelly Basin, at an estimated cost of about £500. I am inclined to think that the present track from Lynchford would answer the purpose, with, perhaps, a short branch or two to connect it with the principal mines. The distance of the new track asked for would be between five and six miles.

KING RIVER.

I have to recommend that a town reserve be made between the King and Governor rivers, to include the intervening portion of the North Lyell Railway. It is a very suitable site, and will be about three-quarters of a mile from the smelters site, with the recommendation of being out of the line of the prevailing winds, and will embrace the junction of the company's branch to the smelters. The land has been withdrawn from the operations of the Mining Act, and I have taken the extra precaution to have a notice inserted in the West Coast newspapers, warning persons against squatting on the reserve. To avoid confusion of names, I have suggested that the name of the "Little Governor" be altered to that of "Baxter" (by which it is already known to some of the local people), as a compliment to the well-known contractor of the North Mount Lyell Railway.

DARWIN.

I made a careful inspection of the town allotments surveyed for auction in the Darwin Reserve, and have caused some necessary corrections to be made in allotments before the day of sale. The town reserve is well situated, and takes in the junction of the proposed branch railway to the Mount Jukes mines. It crosses the railway at about 17 miles from Kelly Basin. The smelters site, having only quite recently been decided upon towards the King River, is likely to interfere with the approaching sale of Darwin lots.

MOUNT FARRELL DISTRICT.

My return journey included a trip to the Mount Farrell mines. They are situated from six to seven miles, generally speaking, from the Pieman crossing of the Emu Bay Railway, along the

Mole Creek-Rosebery Track, and lie along the western slopes of Mount Farrell, between the Murchison and M'Intosh rivers. They are approachable by pack-track, the greater portion of which has been "corded," and other portions are now being so treated. There are some five or six claims upon which prospecting has been done, and a considerable amount of such work is being done on the Murchison, the North Murchison, the Farrell, and North Farrell sections. The last-named is packing out ore, the returns from which, it is believed, are paying at least working expenses of the mine. It has very good prospects ahead, as also have the Murchison and other claims, but inasmuch as the Government Geologist, Mr. Twelvetreese, is about to visit and report upon the Farrell district, I shall refrain from further reference to my notes in regard to its prospects from a mineralogical standpoint, beyond remarking that it is mineral and promising country throughout the field.

An item which is essential to enable the Osborne blocks, to the south of the Murchison Co.'s property, to be even prospected, is the making of a pack-track from the proposed town reserve to the former, or Osborne blocks. The distance is about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles. I recommend this matter to your favourable consideration. There is abundance of material along the route.

In reference to a site for a town, there is a very eligible one just outside the mining leases and across the main track. Already a suitable building for an hotel is being built, and several small stores and huts have been erected thereon. It will be better to lay out as many sections for town purposes as it is contemplated will serve for present requirements. These can be added to as occasion requires it, and allotments marked off for sale. With your approval I shall take the necessary steps to have the above put in hand. As to the immediate requirements of the locality, the greatest is a road or tramway to connect it with the Emu Bay Railway near the Pieman; and, as on previous occasions, I favour the latter as the most economical mode of opening up such country. A road would cost not less than £500 per mile, but much will, I presume, depend upon the character of Mr. Twelvetreese's report as to whether the construction of a road is likely to be undertaken at an early date. There is one thing certain, viz., that the pioneers in such districts deserve every consideration, as they have many privations to undergo during the early stages of prospecting the ground.

BISCHOFF AND THE MAGNET.

My inspection of the town site selected, and of the recent allotments surveyed at Magnet in anticipation of the recent land sale, was very opportune, and resulted in some corrections being made in matters of detail affecting the survey. The situation, although rough, and in some places steep, is the best available, and the District Surveyor, Mr. Jones, has displayed good judgment in laying it out. While in the neighbourhood, I selected a spot near the Magnet Mine to commence the cutting of a track thence to the Balfour mining district. This work might be proceeded with early next summer, as the route to be traversed forms a very promising belt of mineral country.

I also inspected a point on Knole Plain discovered by Mr. Jones, and believed to be the north end of the base of verification laid down by the late Surveyor-General, Mr. James Sprent, during the progress of the Trigonometrical Survey of the Island about half a century ago. This is a valuable discovery if it prove to be correct, and a proposal will be made to you to sanction its verification at as early a date as convenient, and to re-establish the station.

EXPLORATION TRACK-CUTTING.

As I have already reported to you, when Mr. T. B. Moore (who is in charge of the party employed in marking a track from Birch Inlet, in Macquarie Harbour, to Port Davey) broke through the last 25 miles to replenish their provisions from the dépôt he had previously placed at Port Davey, they found, to their chagrin, that all the stores had been stolen. The party were, in consequence, reduced to severe straits and compelled to live upon a scanty supply of oatmeal for some days. Mr. Moore then decided to return to the Mainwaring River, where there was still the remnant of the supplies carried from Birch Inlet, along the new track, and to send one of the party into Strahan to communicate with me and await further instructions. After conferring with Mr. Moore I decided to continue operations in view of the probability of a moderate autumn following a very wet summer on the Coast, and that it would not take more than about six weeks to complete the through track.

The country traversed is mineral-bearing almost from end to end. No agricultural land, nor scarcely any timber of any value, was met with.

At the time I received your instructions to join Messrs. Lonergan and Clayton (The Chairman of Directors and the Engineer of the North Mount Lyell Company) at Strahan, and proceed with them to inspect and report upon railway-station sites, &c., on the North Lyell Railway, I had completed arrangements to make a trip along the new track as far as marked, but, owing to the cost and uncertainty of getting to and from Birch Inlet and Kelly Basin, the bad weather, and the time it would take, I was compelled to abandon the idea for the present. However, from carefully scrutinising Mr. Moore's notebook, and from information received from the independent

testimony of prospectors who travelled over large portions of the track, I am quite satisfied that he is making a good job.

In regard to the stolen provisions at Port Davey, the act was a dastardly one, and, no doubt, was committed by some of the boatmen visiting the place. The matter was put into the hands of the police, but no clue has been found that would lead to the apprehension of the offenders. The boat placed in the inlet for the safety of the track party in the case of emergency was taken away by two prospectors, brought over to Kelly Basin, and left there. This was also a most improper proceeding, but one for which no remedy could be suggested at the time.

By last report, dated 13th April, 1900, Mr. James Moore and party were getting on well with the marking of the track from the Linda Track, at the Franklin River, to the Gordon, in the neighbourhood of "Gould's Landing," and he expected to complete it by about the 20th of next month. This should be a useful line of communication for prospectors.

I interviewed Mr. Ewart, who is in charge of the party on the track being marked between the Red Hills and the Eldon Bluff. He reports that he has well marked it for more than half the distance, has been through, and blazed the route to Lake Augusta. He may be expected to complete the line about the 15th proximo. As in the case of the Port Davey track, prospectors are already availing themselves of the advantages it offers to get into the country it traverses.

The exceptionally wet weather that has prevailed during the summer on the West Coast has been very trying to the track parties, who, necessarily, have been exposed to its inclemency in an especial manner, owing to the constant shifting of their camps along the routes.

KING ISLAND.

I paid an official visit to King Island in May last, and report thereon as follows:—

The west coast of King Island, which has, so far, proved most attractive to settlers is open country, with patches of ti-tree scrub and comparatively young gum timber of the *Eucalyptus globulus* species. There is, however, evidence, in many places, that large trees were plentiful at an earlier period, and that they have been destroyed by bush fires. The coast-line is bordered by sandy rises and hillocks (around which mangrove, boobvalla, and ti-tree are conspicuous), flattening out to almost level country half a mile inland. The flat, open country, when in its natural state, is generally covered with a thick growth of needle-rush, interspersed with tussocky white native grass and patches of low ti-tree scrub and stunted bracken fern. It is moderately watered.

Commencing at the southern end of the island, the best areas yet opened up are those at Surprise Bay, where Mrs. Bowling, with her large family (now grown up), and Mr. Bentley respectively have made happy homes. The sand there is solid, and limestone prevails at intervals.

The unselected land between Surprise and Fitzmaurice Bays is of the poorest description—covered with stunted bracken, heath, and ti-tree at intervals. A fine dairy farm has been established at Fitzmaurice Bay by Mr. M'Mahon, who yards about 60 cows in the season, from which he obtains the grand return of one ton of butter per month. His pretty homestead faces the Southern Ocean westerly, the green and gently-sloping pasture tapering down to the water's edge is, indeed, a charming picture. The greatest undertaking the fortunate owner of this valuable property has had to face has been the erection of such wire fences as have been found essential for stock purposes; summer firing and sowing grass seed have done the rest. Similar, though not such prime land, extends, and has been slightly improved, along to the Ettrick River and Currie Harbour, but there is ample evidence that better progress is contemplated.

Travelling north from Currie Harbour for about eight miles the settlement known as "Porky Lagoon" is reached. This is one of the very best, though not the largest, settlements on King Island. It furnishes cheerful homes for the Robinson families (of whom there are four) Messrs. Rivett-Carnac, and Fred Bowling, &c.; in fact, from a small rise on Mr. George Robinson's estate 13 places can be counted within a radius of a mile and a half. I ventured to suggest that it should be called "View Point." This settlement is splendidly watered, and its selection by the Robinson family, who were pioneers of the locality, augurs well for their good judgment of its value in the first instance. No one who has partaken of their genuine English hospitality can but rejoice in their good fortune.

Another 11 miles north brings the traveller to Yellow Rock Rivulet, which, at its outlet into the ocean, faces two islets, called New Year's Islands, distant about three miles. It is a favourite resort for mutton-birds (the sooty petrel) during the breeding season. The sand-ridges here are higher than towards the south end of King Island, and thus afford better shelter for stock from the prevailing westerly winds. There is no better feeding ground on the whole of the island than that produced on Mr. Fred Bowling's property. Yellow Rock takes its name from the bare yellow

granite rock in the locality, which has been exposed to the bleaching ocean for ages. One of the earliest, and unsuccessful, attempts at settlement on King Island was made at Yellow Rock, of which some relics are still to be found.

Next to Yellow Rock is the fine estate of "Yambacoona," owned by Messrs. Stephenson and Gunn, of Launceston. This property, which has been well improved, consists of some 7000 acres, which have been fenced, and a large portion subdivided into paddocks. 800 acres have been broken up with the plough during the last three years, and 300 acres is the record for last year. Men are employed at the plough week in and week out all the year round. Thirty miles of wire fencing have been erected on this property, at an average cost of £15 to £20 per mile. The homestead has been established on a very eligible site, overlooking a nice sheet of water about three miles in circumference, and carrying abundance of wild fowl, consisting of black swan, widgeon, and ducks of several varieties. It rejoices in the unpoetical name of "Bob Lagoon." The home-dwelling, which is a neat and comfortable building, adds much to the appearance of the surroundings, while the commodious wool-shed, stable, and barn, are of the substantial and useful order. Notwithstanding the many drawbacks incidental to commencing on a new and out-of-the-way place, and the high price which has prevailed for store stock, together with the outlay that has been incurred, it is gratifying to be able to say that Messieurs Stephenson and Gunn have received a satisfactory return for their enterprise.

With the exception of the area ploughed by Messieurs Stephenson and Gunn, little has been done anywhere on the land but burning off, fencing, and sowing grass seed, which latter operation is almost exclusively confined to the now comparatively well-known species of trefolium called *Melilotus Officinalis*, and spear grass; but there is evidence sufficient to show that trefoil, Dutch, or white, red, and alsyke clovers, English rye, fescue, and other grasses, will also thrive on the island. The character of the country generally appears to be best suited to "melilot" and spear grass, the former to the flats, and the latter to the rises; the growth in either case being luxuriant. The best country will carry a beast to the acre for nine months in the year, and the clover parts will fatten the same number—in special cases a beast-and-a-half to the acre. Melilot, although falling short of the return from clover, has unquestionably been the main factor in opening up this country, for the reason that constant firing is essential in the earlier stages of improvement; that it carries a heavy flag which draws the fire all over the ground; that seed germinates better after a fire has passed over it; and, being an essentially hardy, fast-growing plant, it kills all rubbish, even to the bracken fern. The spear grass is little inferior to its rival when sown on the rises. Melilot is not only good as green pasture, but it would, evidently, make good ensilage, and, turned into hay, becomes a most aromatic and serviceable fodder.

The fears which formerly prevailed in regard to the poisonous tare (*Lobelia*) and unsound country, are now dissipated. Although stock suffers at times from what is locally termed "coastal disease," if left on the unimproved lands amongst the sandy hummocks—for a long period, it is only necessary to remove them to the better country to restore their health again. Experience has shown that where unsound land has been burnt out and melilot sown the cattle disease disappears.

King Island has afforded selectors (with a little capital) the best opportunity for investment that has been presented to them in this Colony for many years, and yet, strange to say, the bulk of all the picked spots has fallen to a class of English yeomanry, with, in most cases, no colonial experience whatever, whilst Tasmanians on the spot, and their more enterprising cousins across the straits, considered the project unworthy of their attention. Many have since, with commendable good sense, been content to follow the admirable example set by the Britishers. Selection may be said to have commenced on King Island in the year 1891; since that time 229 lots have been taken up, comprising an area of 23,375 acres, and, at the present time, 100 lots have been applied for, comprising an area of 19,437 acres. Most of these applications have been received since my visit to the island in May last.

Having written so much upon the portion of the island where selection has taken place, and which is looked upon so favourably, it is meet that I should make special reference to the class of country by comparisons with other places, inasmuch, as the results obtained so far are, indeed, perplexing. The soil, as I have stated in my opening remarks, is of a light, sandy nature, and if its value were gauged by similar-looking country on the mainland it would be set down as *nil*,—it would not bring half-a-crown an acre under the hammer; and yet, so far as pasture is concerned, there is little land available in any of our settled districts equal to it; not only this, but potatoes, mangolds, turnips, and all kinds of vegetables grow excellently there, while the clearing of the land is a mere bagatelle.

I am at a loss to account for the fertility of the soil. The constant firing over the lime-stone, which is highly impregnated with phosphates and carbonates, and the natural rains thereafter, produce a natural coating of manure every year, and are, therefore, responsible, in a great measure, for the vigorous growth which is so noticeable. Then, again, the fair annual rainfall (some 30 inches)

and the mildness of the climate are other important elements of productiveness. Whether the unusual growth will prove permanent is a matter for conjecture, which experience alone will determine.

Starting at the south-east end of the island there is a comparatively large area of forest country extending northwards beyond the Fraser River. I was unable to spare the time to explore this country much beyond Grassy River, but, from all the information I could gather upon it, and from such observations as I could make, this block comprises some fairly-extensive areas of good land, carrying considerable beds of large timber of fair quality, composed of blue and swamp-gum, also some patches of good blackwood. From sand and limestone the country changes, along the east coast, to granite formation for some miles. The scrub, which is met with nearly all over the forest, extends down almost to the water's edge. Nearing the Fraser River it consists of dogwood, ti-tree, native olive, with large tree-ferns of the two kinds (*Dicksonia Antartica* and *Alsophila*), with abundance of bracken-fern growing to a considerable height, in places.

The large timber on this land would be valuable if readily accessible to market; but, the distance inland to get to it, and the absence of anything like a safe shipping harbour around that portion of country, render it of little commercial importance. It will be as well to protect it, however, for a time, as a timber or forest reserve. The country, inland, in a northerly direction, becomes very swampy and low-lying. There is some good land towards the head of the Sea Elephant River, but beyond that river, the north-eastern division of the island is of poor description, consisting of low, rushy, and ti-tree marshes or swamps, and heathy rises, which produce other coarse herbage.

SAND BLOWS.

The question of "Sand Blows" or Drifts is one of considerable moment, and, if not effectually checked in its early stages, is likely to prove disastrous in the future. Already a large area right across "Stokes's Point" is covered with white drift sand, which is still making northwards, and another overflow has occurred at Yellow Rock. The western coast is necessarily exposed to the full force of the unbroken westerly gales and (being composed of soft sand for nearly its entire length) wherever the rough vegetation is broken along the shore there is the greatest danger of sand-drifts becoming a menace to the inhabitants.

REQUIREMENTS OF SELECTORS.

The greater portion of the road between Currie Harbour and Surprise Bay, a distance of about 20 miles, has been formed, and small bridges and culverts put in where necessary: but its being through soft sand nearly all the way, makes travelling very heavy for man and beast. Material for road-making is scarce, but in most cases the wheels have gone through the blinding, and the bridges and culverts stand in much need of being re-blinded. One or two slight deviations would be a great improvement on the present track, notably near the south boundary of 199 acres (E. Wicks, purchaser), to the south of the Ettrick River, where the road could be easily straightened and a better grade obtained. Repairs are much needed in several places on the road from Currie Harbour to Yambacooona (near the north end of the island), a stretch of some 25 miles. These repairs are not of an expensive nature.

The people of King Island are entitled to every consideration in the matter of improving their means of communication, but their case is a difficult one. In the first place, they are in an isolated position, and dependent almost entirely upon the regular trading of the s.s. *Yambacooona*, for intercourse with the outside world, and secondly, it is quite impracticable to provide them with good roads. Owing to the soft, sandy nature of the country, every foot of road would have to be macadamised to reduce the heavy draught to reasonable proportions. The question therefore suggests itself—How can these deserving settlers be best served upon economical lines? At present the bulk of settlement is situated miles from the port of shipment (Currie Harbour). In fact, two of the principal settlements, viz., Yambacooona and Surprise Bay, are a day's journey to and from Currie Harbour. The residents of Surprise Bay may see the steamer pass (if in the day-time) but at Yambacooona or "Porky" there are no means of ascertaining when the steamer arrives, and inasmuch as their business is wholly confined to trading in stock, it is of the utmost importance to be able to meet the boat promptly. The stock-owners, especially at Yellow rock and Yambacooona, are suffering much inconvenience in this respect, and the trouble must continue under the existing conditions.

If a telegraph line were established from Currie to each end of the island it would be a great boon to the people, the cost would be trifling, and the work would at least be partially self-supporting. I recommend this proposal very strongly to the favourable deliberation of the Hon. the Minister of Lands.

The jetty at Currie Harbour, which is some 150 feet long, with cattle-race for nearly the full length, is a good and substantial work: but accommodation for berthing a vessel is needed along the southern side of the jetty. This is a small matter, but it would prove of the greatest utility in the event of two vessels or crafts arriving there at the same time.

Some minor matters that came under my notice have already been reported to the Department of Public Works, and will probably receive due attention. My excuse for referring to them is that there is now no permanent Inspector of Works employed on King Island.

A substantial and convenient hall has been erected for public entertainments and other purposes about midway between Currie Harbour and the Porcupine Settlement. The site, which was chosen by the inhabitants, is a suitable one.

I visited Cape Wickham when in the north of the island, and, by the courtesy of Mr. Johnson, the Lighthouse Keeper, ascended the tower, which is 180 feet high, and sighted Cape Otway, in Victoria, 48 miles distant. It may not be generally known that this lighthouse is the same height as the one on Gabo Island, and that they are the highest on this side of the Equator.

The reserves at Cape Wickham and Currie Harbour are considerable, and comprise some good land.

Mr. Huxley, the Lighthouse Keeper at Currie, who is well posted in the affairs of the island, has been a useful resident, and many times rendered timely aid to the inhabitants in cases of sickness and accident, before the services of a medical practitioner were available.

REPORTS OF DISTRICT SURVEYORS.

The reports of the District Surveyors, contained in Appendix C., give particulars of the progress of settlement that has taken place in their respective districts, and the most favourable localities in which good agricultural land is still to be found, together with other matters of importance. Mr. Wilson's report on the district of Montagu is somewhat extensive, and shows that he takes a keen interest in all matters tending to the advancement and development of the mining fields on the West Coast. He makes reference to the mining laws in certain respects, which his long and close relationship with their operation have suggested, and which are worthy of consideration. Other matters mentioned in this report have already received attention.

EXPLORATION TRACKS.

The first reports under the new system introduced last summer, by which a certain sum of money was placed at the disposal of the Department of Lands and Surveys for cutting tracks in new country, appear, together with map of routes in the Appendices. Special reference to these works is made on pages 20 and 21 of this Report, under the heading of "Official Inspections." They will be published separately with sketch maps of the routes.

DRAFTING ROOM.

The Chief Draftsman reports as follows:—Twenty-three town plans and 2 county plans have been drawn during the last twelve months, and 88 town and 36 county plans have been posted up to date. Last year, 59 town plans were posted up, showing an increase of 29 for this year, which is indicative of the increased demands for town lots (principally on the West Coast), necessitating the more constant issues of these plans. A compilation of a plan of the suburbs of Hobart, in 4 sheets, and to a scale of 4 chains to an inch, has been commenced, and 2 sheets completed, but, owing to the pressure of current work, had to be put on one side for the last few months. This plan, like the one of the City finished last year, will be of great utility when completed, giving, as it will, particulars of boundaries, &c., of all alienated lands.

The April Land Sale this year was the largest that has taken place during the last 19 years in which I have been in the department, and, I believe, for many years before that; this was also very largely due to the developments on the West Coast.

The number of survey plans dealt with was 3558, as compared with 2629 last year, the large increase necessitating employing two examining draftsmen, one on lands and the other on mines plans.

Requests for the survey, proclamation, &c., of 52 new roads have been received from the Public Works Department during the twelve months under review, and are now in various stages of dealing, 36 having been proclaimed under the Land Vesting Act. Eighteen old roads have been closed under this Act, and 13 under the 29th Section of the Crown Lands Act, 1890.

Since September, 1899, 60 cases in connection with the acquisition of lands for the Emu Bay to Ulverstone Railway have also been dealt with under the Land Vesting Act, which was made to apply to railways under Act 62 Vict. No. 45. This method of dealing with railways, as with roads, has proved far more satisfactory to the departments interested than the old system of conveyance, to say nothing of the legal fees saved.

Six hundred and fifteen grant deeds have been prepared in duplicate during the twelve months, being 17 less than last year, which was the highest on record; but had it not been for the pressure of other work, this year would have exceeded last year considerably, numbers having to be delayed. The work will, I hope, be up-to-date before the end of this month, as 70 deeds have been engrossed after hours. The increase here, too, is largely due to the number of lots purchased for residence areas in mining towns. The method of indexing charts and plans suggested by the Hon. the Minister of Lands works very satisfactorily, and is a considerable saving of labour at periods of stock-taking in connection with Audit Inspections.

RETURN of the principal Office Work performed in the Drafting Room of the Department of Lands and Surveys during the Twelve Months ending 30th June, 1900.

Plans prepared.	County and Town plans completed and drawn	29	
	Ditto ditto posted up to date	124	
			153
Applications dealt with.	Crown Lands Amendment Acts, 1893 and 1894 (selection)	340	
	Crown Lands Act, 1890 (31st Section).....	597	
	Ditto (auction and private purchase).....	124	
	Ditto (rent)	455	
	Ditto (selection in mining areas)	91	
	Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1894, 10th Section (reduction of area)	32	
	Ditto, 1895 (for purchase of second-class land)	152	
	Residence Areas Acts, 1891 and 1893 (purchase)	251	
			2042
Grants prepared.	Grant-deeds prepared in duplicate.....	...	615
Diagrams and Surveys received.	Selections	548	
	Auction and residence areas	1640	
	Real Property Act	19	
	Re-surveys, &c.	233	
	Mineral-sections	1076	
	Public Works roads	42	
			3558
Diagrams and Plans examined.	Computed and examined.....	2427	
	In course of examination	59	
	Unexamined.....	94	
	Mineral-sections examined	978	
			3558
Diagram books and grant schedules.	Diagram books prepared for binding.....	27	
	Grant schedule books ditto.....	4	
			31
Claims for Grants.	Claims for grants under the Real Property Act and through the Supreme Court dealt with.....	...	8
Instructions for Surveys.	Instructions prepared and issued to Surveyors for land surveys .....	...	908
	Instructions prepared and issued to Surveyors for mineral surveys .....	...	964
Surveyors' accounts.	Surveyors' accounts in triplicate passed for payment .....	...	289
Roads.	Roads described for opening, by Proclamation, under Land Vesting Act .....	...	36
	Roads described for closing, by Proclamation, under Sect. 29 Crown Lands Act, 1890.....	...	13
	Ditto, ditto, Land Vesting Act .....	...	18
Descriptions.	Descriptions of lands required by Railway Department.....	...	58
	Descriptions of allotments furnished to clerical branch for contracts for sale of land .....	...	583
Plans of Districts.	Road Districts described for Proclamation	3	
	Recreation ditto	1	
			4

BOARD OF EXAMINERS FOR SURVEYORS.

The Secretary reports as follows :—

“ During the twelve months ending 30th June, 1900, the Board has met twice for the transaction of routine business, and in March last, the annual examination for surveyors was held. Two candidates presented themselves, and each having passed a successful examination, has since been admitted to practice. As an intermedium between the Government of this Colony and those of the various Australasian Colonies on all matters pertaining to the admission of surveyors, the Board of Examiners continues to perform important duties. Correspondence with similar Boards on the mainland and in New Zealand has been frequent, and cordial relations with them fully maintained.”

DEPARTMENTAL.

The following Staff changes have been made during the 12 months ending 30th of June, 1900 :—

W. C. Cato, appointed Clerk, *vice* T. Midwood, transferred to the Public Works Department to take up special duties therein, from 1st October, 1899.

R. J. Hawson, appointed Junior Clerk, *vice* J. D. Tanner, transferred to the Ordnance Stores, from 1st December, 1899.

M. M'Phee, appointed Junior Draftsman, 1st March, 1900.

A. G. Smith, appointed Clerk, Launceston Branch Office, 1st January, 1900.

A. L. FitzHerbert, appointed Junior Clerk, Launceston Branch Office, 1st April, 1900.

W. Langdon, appointed Bailiff of Crown Lands, Zeehan, 16th May, 1900.

M. F. Daly, appointed Bailiff of Crown Lands, Queenstown, 16th May, 1900.

Mr H. P. Dove was relieved from the position of District Surveyor for Moorina on 21st January, 1900 ; and Mr. J. A. Sorell, who contracted rheumatic fever whilst exposed to the inclemency of the West Coast climate, and who subsequently had to undergo a severe medical operation, was compelled to seek leave of absence and a temporary change to the warmer climate of Queensland last year. The work of his district is being satisfactorily carried on by Mr. C. M. Archer.

CONCLUSION.

Whilst it is gratifying to observe that the necessary brief references made in this Report to the various branches which come within the administration of this Department bear testimony to a year's satisfactory progress, it is meet that consideration should be recorded to the Officers, one and all, who have cheerfully borne the extra tax which has fallen upon their energies, and which has only been disposed of by many unremunerated hours of overtime work. It is my pleasure to record my appreciation of the generous feeling of co-operation extended to me by the Heads of other Departments in our official relations, and especially in regard to the Government Printer, with whom I am necessarily brought into frequent contact.

I have the honour to be,

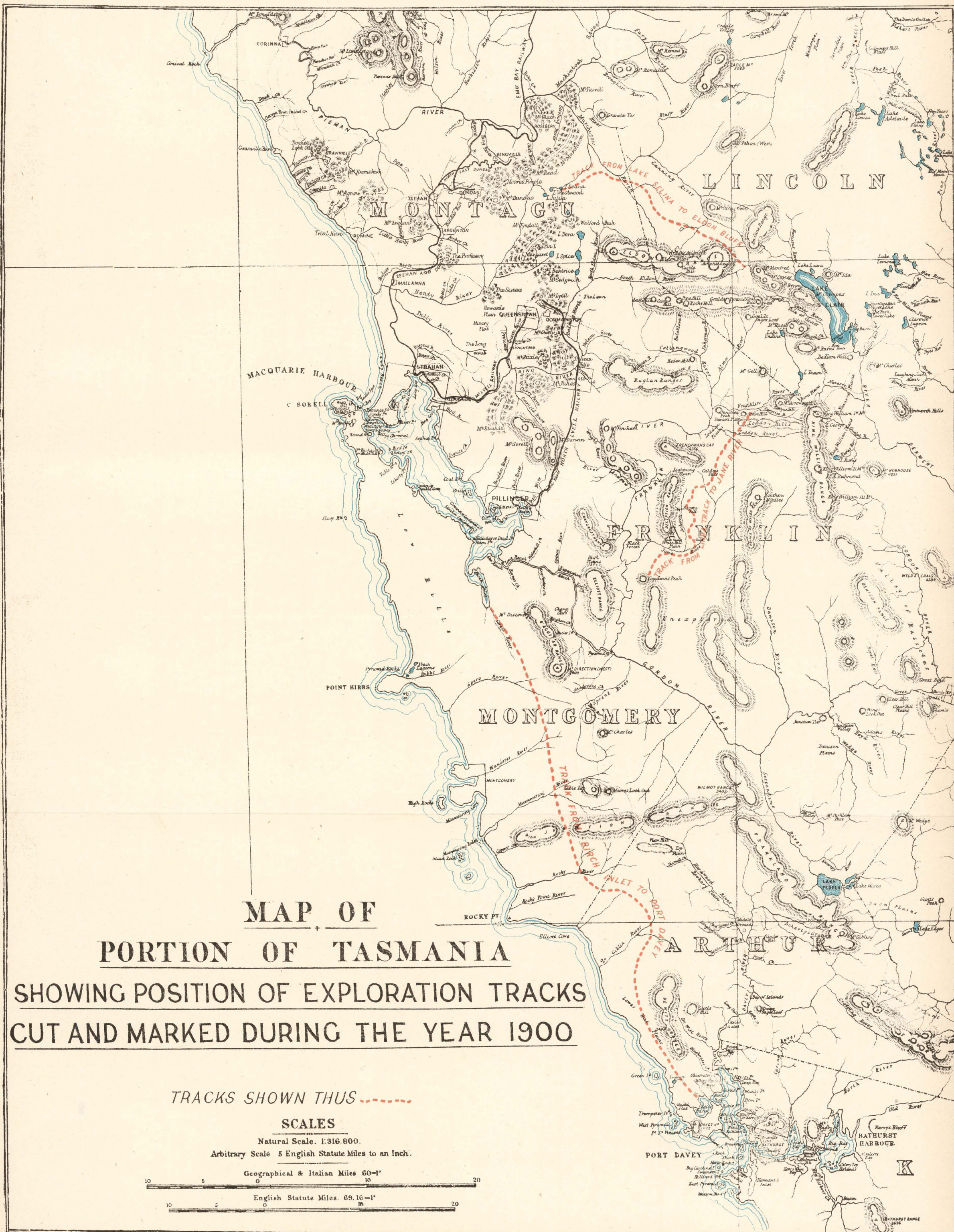
Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

E. A. COUNSEL, *F.R.G.S.*,

Surveyor-General and Secretary for Lands.

The Honourable the Minister of Lands and Works, Hobart.



APPENDIX A.

No. 1.

GENERAL RETURN, Crown Lands Branch.

	1890.	1891.	1892.	1893.	1894.	1895.	1896.	1897.	1898.	1899.	1900. First Six Months.
Receipts from all sources ... £	67,707	67,840	54,536	42,493	34,885	40,496	47,209	53,533	60,205	55,860	25,463
Receipts from Deposits and Instalments, 24th and 31st Sections..... £	37,373	34,117	27,712	26,976	21,262	21,877	21,827	21,335*	21,516*	20,086*	8108*
Receipts from other Sales of Crown Lands £	10,074	7947	14,519	5840	5900	6446	8460	14,508	13,501	15,597	8122
Rent of Crown Land for Pastoral purposes £	5690	4627	4047	4181	3038	4594	4365	4787	5295	5725	3748
Fees for Timber Licences, Grant-Deeds, &c. £	1983	1927	1873	1127	1613	1017	1269	1904	1560	2089	1249
Survey Fees £	12,587	19,222	6385	4369	3072	6562	11,288	10,999	18,333	12,363	4235
Area of Country Lands sold .. ac.	42,987	30,649	31,204	19,788	20,866	14,316	16,026	24,519	20,071	32,050	16,352
Area of Town and Suburban Lots sold acres	572	412	306	684	277	269	384	592	558	840	424
Area of Land selected under "Immigration Act" ...acres	217	112	1968	1722	655	558	Nil.	118	Nil.	Nil.	120
Area of Land leased for Pastoral purposes acres	93,026	37,234	63,530	63,805	46,002	236,345	241,587	258,861	242,613	216,634	183,802
Number of Applications for Selection and Purchase	1924	1305	1385	770	1487	899	1009	2037	1702	1663	776
Number of Grant-Deeds issued	530	525	454	555	341	397	432	606	629	635	330

* And selections under Crown Lands Amendment Acts, 1893 and 1894.

No. 2.

RETURN showing the Number of Lots and Area of Land purchased under "The Waste Lands Act, 1870," "The Crown Lands Act, 1890," The Crown Lands Amendment Acts, 1893 and 1894, and "The Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1895," during the Twelve Months ending 30th June, 1899, and 30th June, 1900, respectively.

	Twelve Months ending 30th June, 1899.				Twelve Months ending 30th June, 1900.			
	No. of Lots.	Area.			No. of Lots.	Area.		
		A.	R.	P.		A.	R.	P.
Crown Lands Act, 1890	207	11,863	3	2	373	23,803	1	33
Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1893 and 1894	134	5204	3	28	195	7722	1	11
Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1895 (Second class land)	44	3905	3	0	75	6685	2	36
TOTALS	385	20,974	1	30	643	38,211	2	0

No. 3.

RETURN showing the Number of Lots and Area of Land for which new Leases have been issued during the Twelve Months ending 30th June, 1899, and 30th June, 1900, respectively, with Rental of same.

	Twelve Months ending 30th June, 1899.			Twelve Months ending 30th June, 1900.		
	No. of Lots.	Area Acres.	Rental.	No. of Lots.	Area Acres.	Rental.
			£ s. d.			£ s. d.
Islands.....	2	—	8 0 0	12	14,271	163 5 0
Occupation Licences	192	67,626	234 19 6	153	48,527	236 0 6
Half-yearly Rentals	214	187,493	962 14 0	219	218,897	1370 18 0
TOTALS.....	408	255,119	1205 13 6	384	281,695	1770 3 6

No. 4.

RETURN showing the Area of Leased Lands in Tasmania, and Amount of Annual Rental of same at 31st December, 1899.

	Area in Acres.	Rental.
		£ s. d.
Leases and Occupation Licences of Pastoral Lands	879,700	5162 16 2
Ditto, Islands	96,757	865 2 6
Total.....	976,457	£6027 18 8

No. 5.

RETURN of Land Sales from 1890 to 1899, inclusive.

YEAR.	NUMBER OF LOTS.			AREA OF LAND SOLD.			AMOUNT FOR WHICH SOLD.			AVERAGE PRICE PER ACRE	
	Country.	Town and Suburban	TOTAL.	Country Lots.	Town and Suburban Lots.	TOTAL.	Country Lots.	Town and Suburban Lots.	TOTAL.	Of Country Lots.	Of Town and Suburban Lots.
				acres.	acres.	acres.	£	£	£	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1890.....	610	207	817	42,987	572	43,558	57,176	8454	65,630	1 6 7	14 15 7
1891.....	451	89	540	30,649	412	31,061	40,623	2588	43,211	1 6 6	6 5 7
1892.....	467	587	1054	31,205	306	31,510	41,447	18,633	60,080	1 6 6½	60 17 9½
1893.....	328	70	398	19,788	684	20,472	26,452	3502	29,954	1 6 8½	5 2 4½
1894.....	445	188	633	20,768	277	21,073	29,584	6159	35,743	1 7 10	22 4 11
1895.....	380	136	516	14,316	269	14,585	20,757	5193	25,950	1 8 11½	19 6 1
1896.....	325	226	551	16,026	383	16,409	20,997	8226	29,223	1 6 2½	21 9 6½
1897.....	432	848	1280	24,519	592	25,111	30,486	22,719	53,205	1 4 8½	38 7 6
1898.....	363	667	1030	20,071	558	20,629	24,455	26,677	51,132	1 4 5½	47 15 9
1899.....	558	915	1473	32,050	840	32,890	40,815	27,579	68,394	1 5 5½	32 16 7

No. 6.

RETURN showing Amount received for Rent of Pastoral Crown Lands and Annual Occupation Licences for the past Ten Years, and for the first Six Months of 1900, respectively.

	£
1890	5690
1891	4627
1892	4047
1893	4181
1894	3038
1895	4594
1896	4365
1897	4787
1898	5295
1899	5725
1900, six months	3748

No. 7.

RETURN showing Area of Country Lands in the various Counties sold from 1890 to 1899 inclusive.

COUNTY.	1890.	1891.	1892.	1893.	1894.	1895.	1896.	1897.	1898.	1899.
	A. R. P.	A. R. P.	A. R. P.	A. R. P.	A. R. P.	A. R. P.	A. R. P.	A. R. P.	A. R. P.	A. R. P.
Buckingham	6150 0 2	2762 0 24	2776 2 16	2396 2 27	1697 3 25	3009 3 16	1351 3 16	2696 2 9	3022 1 21	2435 0 39
Cornwall	3048 0 7	3440 3 33	2929 1 21	1279 2 5	673 2 21	1112 0 30	596 1 16	967 1 12	961 0 10	701 0 5
Cumberland	1083 2 23	1213 3 15	1942 3 25	1395 2 20	382 1 16	117 3 34	1189 2 22	3024 1 10	725 2 39	148 1 37
Devon	9247 2 0	5269 2 39	4732 2 11	3428 3 22	4283 3 36	1973 3 7	1620 3 25	3334 0 26	3024 1 37	6593 2 38
Dorset	4707 3 18	3248 0 29	3278 3 26	1869 1 27	3198 1 37	2145 0 1	2696 2 1	1907 3 6	3588 3 2	3020 0 19
Flinders	2412 0 21	36 0 26	669 3 30	1456 1 25	1047 3 19	460 3 24	25 0 38	132 1 9	265 3 5	230 0 15
Franklin .....	...	...	...	...	...	199 2 3	...	...	...	...
Glamorgan	443 2 35	148 3 0	334 0 9	496 3 18	1064 3 14	160 1 2	419 2 20	240 1 14	163 1 28	...
Kent	2445 0 22	1322 3 38	721 3 22	878 1 13	1736 2 5	1186 0 1	1230 0 31	653 1 9	669 1 3	805 1 18
King Island .....	...	...	1253 3 4	520 0 0	71 3 27	193 3 21	2949 3 34	3707 3 31	2850 2 20	8687 1 6
Lincoln	991 1 3	105 2 24	...	159 2 0	405 3 34	...	171 2 22	470 1 10	...	160 0 8
Monmouth	488 3 6	273 1 30	836 0 8	294 3 17	1180 2 10	692 1 24	407 1 8	490 0 18	166 0 19	718 3 29
Montagu	291 1 35	1664 1 6	749 3 22	1278 2 2	459 3 23	20 0 0	143 2 16	567 3 9	139 2 29	251 3 18
Pembroke	2243 0 12	2676 2 38	1197 1 0	445 3 24	1389 3 33	1353 0 3	840 3 14	2979 2 31	1565 3 37	2574 1 4
Russell .....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Somerset	23 3 16	...	310 0 27	...	557 3 3	...	197 1 8	25 2 30	311 2 4	48 1 0
Wellington	8432 2 28	7979 2 32	8318 0 37	3760 3 20	2573 1 11	1170 1 25	1708 3 11	2813 0 29	1929 0 38	5041 1 19
Westmorland	977 3 1	517 0 9	654 2 23	337 0 30	143 1 6	521 2 25	476 3 6	447 3 4	687 2 14	664 3 11
TOTAL	42,986 3 29	30,648 2 23	31,205 1 1	19,738 2 10	20,768 1 0	14,316 3 16	16,026 2 8	24,518 2 17	20,071 2 6	32,049 1 26

RETURN of Town Allotments sold during the Years 1898 and 1899.

TOWN.	1898.				1899.						
	Number of Lots.	Area.			Purchase Money.	Number of Lots.	Area.			Purchase Money.	
		A.	R.	P.			A.	R.	P.		
					£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Apsley.....	1	10	0	7	20	0	0	—	—	—	—
Brabazon.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	49	3	9
Beaconsfield.....	4	2	2	16½	127	6	8	45	8	2	6½
Branxholm.....	1	0	0	6	8	0	0	—	—	—	—
Burgess.....	2	28	1	13	48	0	0	3	23	3	35
Crawford.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	9	3	14
Currie (King Island).....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	2	1	39¾
Corinna.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	0	0	22½
Campbell Town.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cleveland.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	27	2	23
Dover.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	10	3	6
Dunalley.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	4	0	0
Deddington.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	0	4
Dundas.....	15	14	3	39¾	317	6	8	7	40	1	39
Derby.....	19	44	3	1	263	16	8	3	0	3	38
Devonport.....	4	37	3	39	553	6	8	3	16	1	30
Dallas.....	1	9	0	38	30	13	4	—	—	—	—
Franklin.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	9	2	5
Gormanston.....	56	13	2	32½	2456	0	0	75	17	2	27
George Town.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Heybridge.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	8	93	1	4
Jacob's Boat Harbour.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	10	0	6
Hadsen.....	1	3	1	3	33	6	8	—	—	—	—
Ilfracombe.....	2	2	2	0	53	6	8	—	—	—	—
Lottah.....	1	0	0	37	15	0	0	6	1	2	21½
Lynchford.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	1	2	9
Liverpool.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	23	1	7½
Lymington.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	11	96	1	5
Launceston.....	2	8	3	11	73	6	8	—	—	—	—
Leven.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	18	1	33
Leslie.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	0	0
Marshall.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	5	0	0
Mathinna.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	0	3	6½
Marlborough.....	1	41	0	5	48	0	0	—	—	—	—
Macquarie.....	108	13	2	20½	6549	13	4	26	5	0	2½
Molesworth.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	24	3	12
Nubeena.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	2	0	36
New Norfolk.....	1	25	1	0	45	6	8	—	—	—	—
New Town.....	2	0	2	25½	127	13	4	8	2	0	22½
Pyengana.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	15	0	0
Pioneer.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	0	3	39
Pagunta.....	1	6	1	0	20	0	0	1	0	1	5
Patersonia.....	1	10	0	0	32	0	0	2	17	0	12
Queenstown.....	196	36	0	2	10,180	0	0	356	61	0	17
Ringville.....	2	0	1	36½	40	3	0	—	—	—	—
Ross.....	1	1	0	0	20	6	8	—	—	—	—
Rosebery.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	65	16	0	23
Strahan.....	76	147	2	3¾	2450	6	8	167	127	3	83
Somerset.....	1	0	3	23	5	0	0	—	—	—	—
Tunnack.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	15	3	20
Tyenna.....	1	1	0	0	5	0	0	—	—	—	—
Ulverstone.....	1	13	1	6	40	0	0	3	19	2	35
Uxbridge.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	25	2	23
Victoria.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	9	0	4
Wivenhoe.....	4	33	3	12	89	6	8	—	—	—	—
Woodbridge.....	1	0	1	4	5	0	0	—	—	—	—
Wynyard.....	1	6	3	13	25	6	8	2	1	0	14
Zeehan.....	160	43	3	33½	2995	0	0	83	21	2	19
TOTAL.....	667	558	1	28½	26,677	3	4	915	840	1	18½
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APPENDIX B.

Department of Lands and Surveys, Hobart, 1st July, 1900.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to submit for your information the following Report for the past twelve months on the Forests branch of this department :—

I have, during the year, inspected 44 sections of land that have been taken up under the Crown Lands Amendment Acts, 1893 and 1894. Of these, 40 show that satisfactory improvements have been carried out in the terms of the provisions of those Acts. The remaining four have been recommended to be forfeited for non-compliance with the conditions under which they were selected. These inspections have been made as opportunity offered, when passing through the country in the performance of other duties.

In the month of November last, in compliance with your instructions, I paid a visit to the West Coast, some special matters there requiring attention, and also made inquiry into the surreptitious cutting of pine and blackwood. In each locality where I found timber of either of these descriptions being cut, licences had been obtained, although in one instance there was an irregularity in the way in which the licence had been made out.

In the more accessible places, such as the slopes round Macquarie Harbour and the King River, the Pine has all been cleared out, but it is still to be found in the upper reaches of the King River, the tributaries of the Gordon River, and other small streams. The country, however, over which it is spread is so extensive, reaching from Port Davey to the Pieman River, that it would take a considerable time to become acquainted with the various localities where it is to be found to enable one to detect any cases of pilfering. It would also be necessary to have a knowledge of the parties who would be likely to be engaged in this occupation, and keep a constant watch over their movements, in order to catch them in the act of cutting these trees without proper authority.

When reporting twelve months since on the sawmilling industry, and the timber areas from which the supplies for sawmills in the Huon and D'Entrecasteaux Channel were obtained, I had occasion to report most unfavourably on the condition of things that then existed, viz., timber was being obtained from Crown land for which applications had been lodged with the department, and the survey fees paid, but which had not been surveyed, nor any authority given to enter upon the land; and in some instances timber was being obtained without even an application for a timber area having been made; and this had been going on, in some places, for a long period. Since that time, in compliance with instructions received from you, several visits have been made to the localities where these irregularities were occurring, and considerable time and attention have been bestowed on bringing about a much-needed alteration. This has now been accomplished satisfactorily; and in every case in which timber areas have been applied for, the areas have all been surveyed, and rental paid, and, where necessary, licences for tramways have been issued. In the majority of cases these areas were applied for, and have been taken up, under the old regulations—a licence being issued at an annual rental, fixed upon the report of the Surveyor or officer appointed by the Commissioner for that purpose. In only a few instances, as yet, are timber areas being worked under the more-recently-made regulations, by which a payment is made of One Pound per 100 acres, and a royalty of One Shilling per 1000 superficial feet on timber sawn, and available for construction purposes.

Some amount of opposition has been shown by millowners to the regulations now in force, and an unwillingness to comply with their provisions has been displayed by several of them (in neglecting to supply the required monthly returns of output of timber, and in failing to remit amounts of royalty due); but, inasmuch as the regulations provide for the cancellation of leases in such cases, no difficulty need be apprehended in enforcing compliance with their provisions in these respects.

The amended regulations for felling and sawing timber, that have been approved by the Governor-in-Council to take effect from the 1st proximo, will remedy the several defects that have been found to exist, and render them complete, as far as can be seen at the present time.

It will be necessary to make periodical visits amongst the sawmill proprietors from time to time, to ascertain that they are working within the lines of their timber areas, and, generally, to see that the regulations in other respects are being complied with.

The continual destruction of timber near centres of population renders it desirable to protect any that may be found in suitable places for further supply. It is very evident, as year by year passes, that any beds of timber that can be so preserved will become more and more valuable, particularly where found in easily-accessible places. I would therefore suggest that a small area in the Parish of Lord, near Scottsdale, should be withdrawn from the operation of the Crown Lands Act, and made a reserve for timber purposes. I would also suggest that the area near Nugent (Parishes of Alvanley and Kellevie), reported on by Mr. Dearden, should be made a timber reserve. While passing from Nugent to the Sandspit River, towards the end of last year, I had an opportunity of seeing some of this timber, through which the road passes. It is apparently not an old race of timber, consisting chiefly of swamp-gum, stringy-bark, and blue-gum. The trees are of a medium girth, and very lengthy. The area has been variously estimated—from 10,000 to 15,000

acres; but these estimates appear excessive, and it is doubtful whether there are more than 8000 acres at the outside.

The period from 1st October to 31st March in each year is the time prescribed by the Regulations under "The Crown Lands Act, 1890," during which licences may be issued to remove wattle-bark from the Crown lands of the Colony.

In compliance with your instructions, prior to the approach of that season, I visited the "wattle country" along the East Coast, when I reported that, owing to various causes, there was a great diminution in the area of wattle country available for stripping. The primary reasons for this falling-off being the severe drought of 1897-8, which caused a large number of trees to die; the practice of lessees of Crown land "burning-off" to improve the feeding qualities of the land; the young trees being eaten by stock in dry seasons, when feed is scarce; and the stripping of under-sized trees. In the year 1896-7, I am informed that the right to strip all wattle trees on the Crown lands in the Glamorgan District was disposed of to one individual, and in some localities this right was sub-let by him; and it was during this year that trees were stripped without regard to limit of size. With the view of preventing this wholesale destruction of young trees last season, all persons to whom licences were issued by the department were cautioned against the continuance of the practice. On a subsequent visit to this part of the country, I passed over most of the land where licences to strip wattle-bark had been obtained, but did not observe any instances where the caution given had been disregarded. It would, however, in future, be advisable always to draw the attention of licence holders to the limit of size prescribed by the regulations under which trees shall not be stripped.

A desire has often been expressed to me by lessees of Crown land that leases should embody the right to strip wattle trees during the term of years for which the land is held. This would doubtless be an incentive to lease-holders to foster and protect young trees, but it is improbable that any compensating increase of rent would be received by the adoption of this course. On the other hand, the occupiers of Crown land have a great objection to the presence of the bark-stripper and whether their grievances are fancied or real, they do not hesitate to charge them with various crimes. It would be possible to admit lessees to have the right to strip wattle-bark on the lands they occupy, on payment to the Government of a fixed sum per ton on bark procured, before removal from the ground. It would be much more satisfactory to the Government if some such system were adopted in all cases.

There are in several places fine growths of young wattles springing up, but these will not be available for stripping for several years to come, should they escape being burnt in the meantime. I have learned that in some places where I noticed some fine young wattles, of three or four years' growth, that the fires of last summer have completely destroyed them.

The practice of illegally depasturing stock on unoccupied lands of the Crown has received attention. The two principal parts of the Colony where this is carried on, viz., the Lake country and the north-east part of the Island, have been visited, and in all I have reported 51 cases of persons so offending. To each of these a notice has been forwarded by the department calling upon them to remove all such stock from the Crown lands within 14 days, and threatening legal proceedings in the event of failure or neglect to comply with the demand. In 23 of the cases complained of the land has either been leased, or an occupation licence obtained; and in many other instances the parties have agreed to either apply to have the land put up for rental by auction at the next land sales, or have consented to pay an annual occupation licence. The greater part of the country trespassed upon is of a second or third class nature, although capable of improvement by burning-off, and will improve by being fed-off and run over by stock. It has, therefore, been found advisable to grant occupation licences at 5s. per 100 acres, and, in a few cases, as low as 2s. 6d. per 100 acres, where large areas are taken up. Owing to the rough nature of the country and the large areas to be traversed, it is no easy matter to find actual cases of stock-trespassing.

The majority of the leased Crown lands are not fenced, and not having been surveyed, it is somewhat difficult to locate the boundaries when the position of the land is found.

My inspection of the Lake country was made at the end of the month of March, a time which was found to be somewhat late; heavy rains had been experienced, rendering the country impassable in places.

It was also found, in some instances, that the stock had been removed to the lowlands for the winter months. As it will, I presume, be your intention to follow this matter up, an examination of the Lake country a month or so earlier in the summer will be necessary.

Where leased Crown lands have been fenced I think an investigation would often show that larger areas have been enclosed than the lessees are entitled to. It is commonly found, from the nature of the country, impossible to follow the proper lines; consequently, a give-and-take system is adopted that would invariably be found to favour the lessee to a very great extent. It would, I think, be a good plan in all cases, where practicable, if the Crown Lands Bailiffs of the Districts were to go over the ground with lessees when taking ground up, and fix the boundaries. The Crown Lands Bailiffs would then have a better knowledge of the leased lands, and be enabled to report cases of trespass by stock that come under their notice.

I have, &c.,

J. COMPTON PENNY, *Chief Forest Officer
and Bailiff of Crown Lands.*

The Secretary for Lands, Hobart.

APPENDIX C.

REPORTS OF DISTRICT SURVEYORS FOR THE YEAR 1899.

Survey District of *Buckingham*.—Mr. District Surveyor H. Combes reports as follows :—

Surveys effected.—During the past year I have marked out 35 agricultural lots, varying in size from 15 to 100 acres each, and amounting, in the aggregate, to 1080 acres. In addition to the above, I have marked out four second-class lots, amounting to 560 acres; making in all 1640 acres; in all 39 lots. I have also made six surveys of roads for the Public Works Department, the survey of one school site, and one site for a public hall; amounting to 47 surveys in all.

Lands suitable for Selection.—In the Parishes of Longley, Champ, Coningham, Bagot, and Pedder there is still plenty of good land fit for agricultural purposes; also in the Parishes of Throckmorton and Ranelagh there are large quantities of first-class land, the lack of good roads being the only drawback to selection in most cases. This state of things is much better than it was, and is improving every year.

Progress of Settlement.—During the past year the progress of settlement has been slow, and about the same as previous years. One thing I notice is, that nearly all the settlers appear to be doing well, as, since the late fires, they have had plenty of grass for their cattle, and high prices for small fruit. The latter, I am sure, will cause a lot more land to be taken up. I do not know of anything of importance other than what I have said above.

Roads and Tracks.—Under this heading I must again recommend that a good road be made through the land in the Sandfly, Parish of Longley, the land there being the best in this district and the nearest to market, and the present road is the very worst laid-out road I have seen.

I must again suggest that a track be cut from the present settlement at Judd's Creek through to the road at the head of the River Plenty. I know this would open up a lot of good land, besides being very useful to bring stock through to the Huon.

Beds of Timber.—In the Sandfly, Parish of Longley, I know of a good bed of stringy-bark; area, about five or six hundred acres. Most of the gum has been killed by the late fires. Then, up Judd's Creek and the Russell and Huon Rivers there are some good beds of gum and stringy-bark; the only trouble is there not being any access to them by road.

Survey District of *Cumberland*.—Mr. District Surveyor T. Frodsham reports as follows :—

Progress of Settlements.—During the past year I have surveyed 2770 acres, in 72 lots. One lot contained an area of 126 acres; the balance was in small sections, varying in size from 15 to 50 acres. Five lots out of the 72 surveyed, containing an area of 273 acres, have been subdivision surveys of existing blocks.

The high prices ruling for all descriptions of small fruit during the past two years has created a demand for small sections in the parishes of Molesworth, New Norfolk, Arundel and Uxbridge, many of the selections surveyed in these parishes being now fairly cleared. Considerable progress has also been made in the Parish of Tyenna, the dairying industry having been started on a small scale and many head of fat cattle and sheep have been sent to the Hobart market from this country.

A large area of good land in this locality, north of Russell's Falls River, between the opening known as Frodsham's Gap and the Junee River, still remains open for selection. This land contains some beds of first-class timber.

Timber Beds.—Large areas of splendid timber exist in the following localities :—Uxbridge, south of the present selections; Mt. Lloyd, south of present selections, and Tyenna; north of Russell's Falls and Florentine Valley; but in all cases, at present, they are inaccessible for want of roads.

Lands suitable for selection.—Uxbridge, south of present selections; Tyenna, north of Russell's Falls and Florentine Valley, which contains a large area of splendid land. (*Vide* my former reports.)

The line laid out by the Great Western Railway touches the southern portion of this country, and if this line is ever constructed some thousands of acres of country will quickly be settled upon.

Roads and tracks required.—I have no further suggestions to make upon this subject beyond the ones made in my report last year, but hope to furnish you with a special report upon this subject during the present year.

In conclusion I would draw your attention to the loss of time and trouble caused to many surveyors through the wilful destruction of survey-marks. Several cases have occurred to me during the past year. Corner-pins of roads which have been put in by me and piled with stones I have afterwards found completely destroyed. I would suggest that printed notices drawing attention to the penalty liable for such destruction, similar to the one on bush fires, be printed and forwarded throughout the different districts, to be put up in conspicuous places. I believe this would have a deterrent effect, as I know it has done good in the case of bush fires.

Survey District of *Dorset*.—Mr. District Surveyor G. T. Eddie reports as follows :—

Lands suitable for Selection.—As I have reported on previous occasions, the only good land of any extent now remaining is at the back of Mount Barrow, and up the valley of the St. Patrick's River, but the want of roads prevents people selecting.

During the year the following surveys have been made :—

1778 acres in 40 lots, under "The Crown Lands Act, 1890."

845 acres in 19 lots, under "The Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1893."

788 acres in 12 lots, under "The Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1895," (Second-class land).

8 Public Works Roads.

11 Single lots, Town and City.

437 acres in 7 lots, under 10th section Crown Lands Act, 1894.

1 Re-survey 91 acres.

46 Lots for Gold Leases, many being only plans and reports.

180 acres in 3 lots, under the Mineral Act.

3 Dredging claims.

2 Examination Surveys.

Survey District of *Devon*.—Mr. District Surveyor A. C. Hall reports as follows :—

During the past year the survey work performed is as follow :—

Lands Department—112 lots, area, 6552 acres; roads $21\frac{1}{2}$ miles, connections, 3 miles. Education Department—5 lots, area, 1 acre 14 perches; Mines Department—9 lots, area, 434 acres; 1 water-right (plans and reports). Public Works Department—roads, $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles; connections, 2 miles 15 chains. Railway Department—1 lot, area, 2 acres 2 roods 34 perches. Total—lots, 127; area, 7001 acres 3 roods 8 perches; roads, 28 miles; connections, 5 miles 15 chains.

Lands suitable for Selection.—The Crown lands within a reasonable distance of a market, and suitable for selection are now of very small extent, good patches of land are still available in the Parishes of Nietta, Riana, Lowana, and Narrawa, round the base of the Black Bluff; and a large extent of country, some 15,000 acres, to the south-west of Nietta. This latter, I understand, is of excellent quality.

Roads and Tracks required.—I understand that money is available for making the deviation at the Forth Hill, on the road from Narrawa to Sheffield. Attention was drawn to this matter in my last report. The work is urgently required, as the settlers of Narrawa and Wilmot are put to great inconvenience in carting their produce and supplies, as matters now stand.

It is contemplated making a track from Castra to the Wilmot. This will be of considerable benefit to farmers and others, in travelling stock, and moving from one district to another.

A road connecting Gunn's Plains with Riana, and another connecting Gunn's Plains with Dooley's Plains, would be a great advantage; but these roads, will, no doubt, be opened out, as settlement grows.

A track from the south of Nietta to the Leven River would open up a large extent of good country, but I should recommend the country being first explored and a good line of road surveyed, and the track then cleared.

Progress of Settlement.—Steady and systematic progress has been made by most selectors in clearing and scrubbing their land.

Settlement in the back country is going on. This is most marked in the Wilmot and Narrawa Districts.

At the junction of the Forth and Sheffield roads a small township has sprung up. There are two stores, a post office, two churches, in one of which the public school is held. I think there are about 40 children on the rolls, and the number is likely to increase.

The different towns have shown steady improvement. Particularly is this the case with Devonport. Several very substantial business-places have been erected, and numerous private dwellings.

Mining.—Very little has been done on the mineral portions of the district. The Devon mine, at the Dove River, has sent out a large quantity of rich silver ore; but this mine is heavily handicapped for the want of a suitable road. Machinery is now being erected at the Shepherd and Murphy mine, at Belmont. The Narrawa country will benefit considerably if this mine proves payable. At Mount Claude and Middlesex there is little or nothing being done. Iron ore is still being exported from the Penguin, but not in large quantities. At the Dial Range the Keddie Copper mine is still carrying on mining operations, and the company is deserving of success.

Timber Beds.—No great activity exists in the timber industry. This is due chiefly to most of the Crown land within a reasonable distance of market having been alienated. Palings, blackwood staves, and blackwood logs are exported from Ulverstone and Penguin, but greater difficulty is experienced every year in obtaining suitable timber.

For sawmilling purposes small patches of timber on Crown lands could be obtained in the localities of Pine Road, Castra, Wilmot, North Motton, Nietta, Narrawa, and west side of Leven River, between the Dial Range and the Parish of Lowana. Most of these places are not very accessible.

Re-surveys of Towns.—Attention might be given by the Survey Department to the re-survey of portions of the towns of Devonport and Ulverstone. These towns are quickly growing into

importance, and the land is yearly becoming more valuable, and, necessarily, there are many transfers of properties, requiring re-surveys and sub-division surveys. As, in most instances, all the old marks and corners have been destroyed, and the old surveys defective, it is a most unsatisfactory matter making a survey, requiring considerable loss of time in chaining different sections and finding the alignment of streets. This latter, in many cases, is impossible to do, as the streets are not by any means straight. There is danger of litigation through overlapping in surveys made by different surveyors. Instances are known of encroachments of buildings on streets, and footpaths are made on private property by the town boards.

Survey District of Franklin.—Mr. District Surveyor E. G. Innes reports as follows :—

Since the date of my last annual report I have personally surveyed some 34 lots, ranging from one to five thousand acres in area, and having an aggregate of about 6900 acres. Of this area some five blocks, having an aggregate of 5700 acres, have been marked off as timber leases under "The Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1895," the balance of 29 lots having been selected for agricultural purposes. Besides these surveys, there have been a few surveys for Public Works Department roads, &c., and also a small number of private surveys for the Real Property Act.

Lands suitable for Selection.—In the County of Kent, Parishes of Leithbridge, Honeywood, Price, Thanet, and Garrett, there are still considerable areas of good land suitable for selection for agricultural purposes, and, also, large areas of what might be termed medium or second-class land, suitable for selection by those who hold the surrounding properties. The Parish of Blakeney is very rough, broken, and densely wooded, and contains very little good land. In the County of Buckingham the Parishes of Pedder, Bedford, and Bagot contain very little available land, excepting such as is of second-class quality, and is only suitable for selection by those who own the surrounding properties. Upon South Bruny Island there is still a very considerable area of good land, but, as a large area has been leased for timber purposes, there is only a limited area available for selection, and that only in small blocks of from 25 to 50 acres each.

Roads and Tracks required.—The road to Huon Valley, beyond the Oak Hills, should be extended as fast as possible, there being large areas of land in the various tributaries of the Huon Valley proper, that contain good land, well watered by large streams, that this road would give access to.

The road known as New Road, Franklin, requires an extension into Crown lands.

The Arve Road, Parish of Honeywood, wants extending into the valley of the Arve, to enable selectors to reach the land situate near the head-waters of Arve River.

Scott's Rivulet Road should be extended.

A road is required in the Parish of Garrett to connect what is known as the Slab Road, Southport, with the Main Road, Dover to Hythe, at about 100-acre lot, formerly purchased by Pearson (now the property of T. M. Fisher). This should follow the old Southport slab road to what was known as the Four-mile Peg, and thence to Pearson's lot *via* what is known as Hall's Track. I have been through this country recently, and noted that a road in this position would open some splendid land, and also materially shorten the distance between Dover and Hythe, as it would avoid the long detour *via* Hastings. The grades on the route indicated would be very easy, and no expensive bridges to be built.

Tracks.—A track or tracks are urgently required to open up the south-west portion of the Island, *i.e.*, between the Huon River and Port Davey. There is a large extent of land hereabouts that gives every indication of being mineral-bearing, but, until something is done in the way of opening it up by cutting a few tracks, there is little or no chance of anything being done in the way of prospecting; as, owing to the dense nature of the undergrowth and the wild nature of the adjacent coast-line, it is next to impossible for prospecting or exploring parties to obtain supplies to enable them to carry on their work.

A track from Lomas' Point settlement (sawmilling establishment of Messrs. Davis & Lewis) Lady Bay settlement is required to connect the settlement at Lady Bay with Port Esperance at Lomas' Point settlement. The route would be from the end of the present Public Works road at Lady Bay along the coast-line to Little Garrett's Bight, distance about four miles. At Little Garrett's Bight a track would connect with the tramway connecting with the sawmills and jetty at Lomas' Point, on the south side of Port Esperance, which is a calling-place for steamers and sailing vessels. This would shorten the going from Dover to Lady Bay by at least 12 to 14 miles, and would be a boon to residents.

Progress of Settlement.—During the past year a fair amount of progress has been noticeable throughout the district. Settlers, generally, appear to have to a great extent recovered from the effects of the disastrous fires of 1898. New buildings have sprung up in the place of those destroyed. New fences have been erected, and large areas laid down under grass. Crops of all kinds look flourishing, small fruits are bringing high prices, and the apple-crop promises well. The various sawmills are all busily engaged in cutting timber for export and local use, labourers are scarce, and we have no unemployed in the district.

Our roads and bridges under the Public Works Department are in a fair state of repair, jetties have been repaired in some instances rebuilt, and, altogether, the district is on what may be termed the upward grade.

Survey District of *Fingal*—Mr. District Surveyor Thomas Clark reports as follows :—

During the year 1899 I have received instructions for the following Surveys :—

A.	R.	P.	
9944	0	0,	in 278 lots, Mineral.
460	0	0,	in 4 lots under the C. L. Amendment Act, 1895.
456	0	0,	in 10 lots under 31st section of the C. L. Act, 1890.
390	0	0,	in 9 lots under the 49th section of the C. L. Act, 1890.
386	0	0,	in 12 lots dam sites.
354	0	0,	in 39 lots under Goldfields Regulation Act.
189	0	0,	in 5 lots under provisions C. L. Amendment Act, 1893.
103	0	0,	in 3 lots under Section 10 of the C. L. Act.
25	0	0,	in 1 lot re-survey.
16	0	0,	in 5 lots under 39th Section of the C. L. Act, 1890.
5	0	0,	in 4 lots State school surveys.
5	0	0,	in 1 lot cemetery site.
2	0	0,	in 8 lots under Residence Areas Act.
1	0	0,	in 1 lot police site.
			Roads in 7 surveys.
			Water-rights in 42 surveys.
			640 chains in 12 surveys, dredging claims.

I now hold instructions for 58 uncompleted surveys, consisting of mining, agricultural, dredging claims, roads, dam sites, and water rights. These are very much scattered about the district, and most of the water-rights are not yet ready for survey, owing to the applicants not having the course of races marked out.

I have one assistant who is now in the field at Ringarooma, and I start in the field myself again on 13th instant, and I hope to soon bring all the scattered surveys to a finish.

Lands available for Selection.—About the settlement of Ringarooma there are some thousands of acres of good land available for selection, also a very large area of second class land of granite formation, most of which is to the south of the settlement, and is from 7 to 10 miles distant from the township. The country is well watered, broken, heavily timbered, and covered with a dense scrub. It is the best locality I know of for any intending selectors to turn their attention to. During the past year only 760 acres have been applied for in 8 lots in this locality.

Nearly all the old selectors are making good progress on their lands. I am always ready to give intending applicants all the information I can, free of charge, that will assist them in finding good land.

The land extending from the Dorset River, at Ringarooma, to Lottah, is of granite formation, with a few patches of basalt, the whole of this country would produce good grasses, if cleared; most of this land is more or less tin-bearing.

At Upper George River 165 acres in five lots have been applied for during the past year, also 1 lot of 40 acres under section 10 of the Crown Lands Amendment Act. There is still a fair amount of good and second class lands available for selection about this locality, most of which is between the North and South George Rivers, and extending across the North George River to the Weldborough Road. The country is broken, heavily timbered, covered with a dense scrub, and is fairly well watered by small streams. The old selectors are slowly improving their lands.

St. Marys.—During the past year, 156 acres, in 4 lots, have been applied for about this locality; also, 63 acres in two lots, under section 10 of the Crown Lands Amendment Act. The old selectors are making good progress on their lands, and the whole settlement is making a good advance. There is still a fair amount of good land available for selection about the settlement, but only in small lots. There is also a large area of second class land on the hills some few miles south of the settlement, and this is suitable for grazing purposes.

Blessington.—This settlement is on the Ford River, and is about 30 miles from Launceston by a fair cart-road. One lot of 25 acres has been applied for here during the past year. The old selectors are getting on well by way of improving their lands. The land is well suited for stock and crops, although very cold in winter. There are still many patches of good and second class land available for selection about this settlement, extending from the Ford River towards Mt. Ben Nevis, and north end of Rose Tier. There is a large area of grazing land on the north portion of this Tier, and I think cattle should do well there.

Mining.—The number of lots applied for during the past year for mining purposes, has very much exceeded that of the previous year. There is a deal of prospecting going on all over the district for tin. There is also a fair amount of mining under miners' rights going on in the vicinity of Branzholm, Cascade River, Weldborough, Blue Tier, and St. Helens.

At Lottah the mines are short of water: The Anchor Tin Mining Company are about to construct a race from the South and North George rivers to the mine, a distance of about 30 miles. Mr. Surveyor Simmons has just finished the levels for this race.

St. Helens.—The mines here are also short of water. Mr. Alfred Deedes has taken up 420 acres for tin near here, and if tin keeps up in price I expect he will bring water on to his land from the George or Scamander River.

Ben Lomond.—Mining here is almost at a standstill, owing to the want of water. The Rex Hill Tin Mining Company has a surveyor out surveying races, and intends to construct dams

and store the water for summer use. As far as can be seen at present this is one of the best tin mines in the district.

Gold-mining is steadily going on at Mathinna and Alberton, while at Mangana it is almost at a standstill.

Roads.—The road from Mathinna to Ringarooma has now been formed across the plains on the table-land. To make this road good on to Mathinna, a side-cutting is necessary, more or less, for about five miles from the table-land to the valley of the Dan's Rivulet. If this were done the road could be considered fairly good all through, and would be of great advantage to the Ringarooma and Mathinna people. At Ringarooma a continuation of the Maurice road up the Ringarooma to about Merrick's or Diprose's selections, would assist any intending selectors in that direction. It would also assist miners on Dunn's Creek, and at Mount Maurice.

Tracks.—The track from St. Helens to Upper Scamander is not in good order, but it would not take a deal of labour to clear off the fallen timber. The same remarks will apply to the track from South Mount Victoria to Alberton, also the track from Weldborough, to connect with the Ringarooma Road, which ends about a mile north of Bell's Hill, at a point known as Tracey's old store.

Timber.—In the vicinity of St. Helens, and along the coast as far as Falmouth, the hills are well timbered with ironbark, peppermint, stringy-bark, and a few blue-gums; the best of it has been picked out as far as a cart could get back. The same remarks will apply to the hills about Mathinna, Mangana, and Ben Lomond, with the exception that blue-gum is only found at Mangana, and very little there. At Ringarooma the hills back from the settlement are well timbered with stringy-bark, swamp-gum, peppermint, and white-gum, and, as far as carts can get back, this has been picked over for splitting. There is also a tract of land extending from the Dan's Rivulet across the head of the Scamander River, towards George's River, and flanking Mounts Albert and Victoria on the east. It is well timbered, but, judging by the tops of the large trees, I would not say that it was all sound.

Survey District of *Mcorina*.—Mr. Authorised Surveyor H. P. Dove reports as follows:—

There have been a large number of applications for tin sections in this district during the past year, owing to the increased price in tin; but most of these applications have been for large companies taking up land for the purpose of trying new schemes—dredging, either in the beds of the rivers, or on the adjoining flats. There have been but few new discoveries of tin which could be worked without the laying out of a large amount of money for bringing in water, which has kept the ordinary working miner from taking up sections. The known shallow ground has now been worked out, attention being given to deep-sinking and in dredging, which requires large capital, and can, consequently, only be worked by large companies.

The system of allowing miners' rights is also a great drawback to obtaining revenue from this important district. The number of men working under miners' rights is very large, principally Chinamen; and the water rights being held for the purpose of working these miners' rights completely keeps all legitimate working miners out of the field. This is very noticeable in the vicinity of South Mount Cameron, where there are but few sections taken up, all the water being held, and the land worked under the miner's right. In my opinion, the doing away of the miner's right system would greatly increase the revenue obtained from this north-east coast of Tasmania tin district. A very large area of land has been held during the past year under extended prospecting areas, which may, of course, ultimately do great good to the country, by bringing in foreign capital, but has during this year, kept out the applicants for smaller areas.

This district consists almost entirely of mineral land. There have been but few applications for agricultural land, and I do not see any prospect of an improvement in this matter until there are cheaper means of transit. Most of the available agricultural lands are of the second-class quality, and as the knowledge that these lands can be purchased at a cheaper rate is not yet generally known, I have thought that it would be advisable to advertise this fact through the Colony by a printed notice outside post offices, and throughout the various districts.

The roads and tracks have been considerably improved during the past year or two, and I do not think that there is any particular part where further expense would be justified, until there is more inclination shown to purchase agricultural land.

The timber beds in this district are limited, and as on all mineral lands, most of the timber is of stunted growth—the heaviest timbered land being to the north of Derby, on some Crown agricultural lands, which I have drawn attention to before, and which land is now being opened up by tracks and roads.

In conclusion, I may state that the welfare of this district depends upon the price of tin; and that I do not see much chance of any large increase in settlement until there are improved facilities of transit.

Survey district of *Montagu*.—Mr. District Surveyor C. S. Wilson reports as follows:—

Surveys effected.—During the twelve months 1899-1900 I received 342 instructions for surveys under the Mining Act, and 79 instructions for surveys under the various Land Acts, and in addition to these numbers there were 50 instructions carried forward from 1898, and which were issued to me during the latter end of that year. The applications now awaiting survey, are, I am glad to say, very few indeed, with the exception of a number of water-rights (the traverses for

which cannot be made until the applicants are ready); the survey of the applications for Mineral Leases which I have in hand could be completed within a couple of weeks from this date. I beg to state, that in connection with the survey of mineral leases, Regulation 83 of the Mining Act has been found to be a considerable source of trouble—causing, as it often does, vexatious delays and complications, which act as a bar to the progress of the surveys. This Regulation, in effect, provides that an applicant may at any time withdraw his application, and if such notice of withdrawal is received by the Secretary for Mines within three months of the date when the application was first received, the deposit of rent and the survey fee shall be returned to the applicant and the application fee of one pound shall be forfeited to the Crown. The necessity for such provision as that first quoted is not quite clear; but apart from the bearing it has on the question of surveys there are, I submit, other reasons why this Regulation should be rescinded. Besides the objectionable practices of “dummying,” to which said Regulation opens the door, the revenue is liable to be, and no doubt is, attacked in a way little thought of by the Mines Department. As an illustration, take, for example, an area of 80 acres, the annual rent on which is £20; assuming then, that an applicant applies for and then withdraws his application four times (each term being three months) he then practically secures the ground for twelve months for the sum of four pounds and, consequently, the direct loss to the revenue is about £16 per annum on every application of 80 acres so dealt with. In addition to this amount the possible and far more serious loss arising from outside capital being driven away must also be taken into account. I regret to think that this form of dummying sections is becoming common.

Progress of Settlement.—Settlement throughout this district is rapidly increasing, both as regards population and general advancement. In order to provide accommodation for the influx of people a large number of residence areas and auction lots has been surveyed this year, principally as extensions to the chief mining towns of the district. No better proof can be given that the mining industry, when conducted on legitimate lines, tends to promote and settle a permanent population than by drawing attention, by way of an illustration, to Queenstown, the “smelting town” for the Mount Lyell Mining and Railway Company. Rather less than five years ago the site in question was in its native state, but in the *interim* has been transformed into a busy town of about, as far as can be ascertained, 7000 inhabitants, whose livelihood is dependent solely upon mining. Owing to the inaccessibility of the Mount Lyell Field, and the many difficulties which the company referred to had to overcome, this result—a result due to the successful development of one mine—must be regarded as highly gratifying. Moreover, in view of the fact that railway communication has only this year been established between the works and the Port of Strahan, together with the opinion expressed by eminent mining scientists that the permanence of several of the mines at Mount Lyell is unquestionably beyond doubt, leads one to the conclusion that the settlement of that particular locality is yet in its embryo stage, and this, indeed, applies in a great measure to the whole of the western mining province.

The shipping port of Strahan is steadily coming into prominence. This is, of course, only what could be expected, owing to its position as the natural outlet and as the distributing centre for the principal mining fields of the district. The demand for building sites at Strahan, as in the mining towns, has increased, and it is satisfactory to report that a great number of substantial improvements are being effected, indicating, in a manner, that the settlement of that town is of a *bonâ fide* nature. Briefly stated, the progress of settlement on the West Coast of Tasmania for the year ending 1899 cannot be reviewed other than in satisfactory terms. It should not, however, be overlooked that the projected removal of the sand-bar at Macquarie Heads will be most pertinent to the advancement of this part of the Colony, and possibly, as far as that goes, to the whole of Tasmania. It would seem quite impossible to overrate the importance to be attached to the successful issue of this work, which, it is satisfactory to note, has been commenced during the year.

Selection Areas.—The selection of Crown lands for agricultural purposes has, this year, been practically nil, principally due, no doubt, to there being no effective Act in force dealing with selection in mining districts. As a matter of fact, the various sections of “The Crown Lands Act, 1890,” relating to the selection and disposal of land within “a Mining Area” have been found to be inoperative when brought into contact with the leasing clauses of “The Mining Act, 1893,” and that there appears to be no provision for issuing a lease for mining purposes over land purchased under the 49th Section of the Crown Lands Act, although it is evident that the intention of this Act was primarily to retain the right to the Crown to operate under the Mining Act in the land thus selected; but, in order to carry out this intention, further enactment seems to be necessary. Moreover, any such Act, to be of value, and to be adaptable to the purpose it is to be applied to, should, I submit, contain special provision for the disposal (selection) of land already leased under the Mining Act. At the present time the land in this District at all suitable for agricultural purposes and within reasonable distance of the mining settlements is now leased for minerals; this area, amounting to thousands of acres, is absolutely closed to selection, but there does not, however, appear to be any valid reasons why such a condition of things should be continued. I do not wish to infer that the Crown would derive a large revenue from the sale of the land in question, as the area suitable for cultivation is somewhat limited, merely being patches of good land here and there, but the indirect benefit to the Colony would, possibly, be great, and I certainly think that the mining industry would be materially assisted in having the advantages of being supplied with the locally-grown article. In the event of the Crown Lands Act being amended so as to allow selection over mining leases, it would, perhaps, be in the interests of the

Government, the lessee, and the selector for the lots to be surveyed before the selection thereof. There can be little doubt that, in the neighbourhood of towns, and, indeed, generally under any other conditions, survey before selection has a tendency to induce settlement, besides being better in every respect than the present system of promiscuous application prior to the survey.

In addition to the good land already reported on, there are, in close proximity to the Colebrook mine, at North Dundas, several hundred acres of first-class land, but which is held under lease for minerals. If this land were made available, either for selection or auction (subject of course, to the Mining Act), it would readily be disposed of. The position is exceptionally good, being situate almost in the centre of the thriving mining settlements of Mount Read, Rosebery, and Colebrook, and within about a mile of the Zeehan-Emu Bay railway.

In the neighbourhood of the old Success Mine, North Dundas, there are several fair-sized areas of good land, within easy reach of the Emu Bay Railway, and about $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles north-west of the town of Zeehan, and close to the Success pack-track, there is a small area suitable for agricultural or grazing purposes. At Lynchs' Creek, which is about two miles in a southerly direction from Queenstown, several hundred acres of fairly-good land are to be found, and which, if thrown open, would, no doubt, be selected, owing to its position with regard to market. Between Strahan and Zeehan, and north of the 16 to 17 mile-posts, and on the west side of the railway connecting these towns, there is an area of at least 1200 acres of first-class agricultural land. To the centre of this area would be, approximately, three-quarters of a mile north from the railway line and the Badger River. About 600 acres of this land are already leased for coal, the position of which can be the more readily seen by reference to the mineral chart of Mallana. For the information of the small farmer in particular, I would again draw attention to the fact that there are special inducements offering for those skilled in agriculture to turn their attention to the West Coast, where there is a large and ever-constant demand for produce of all kinds.

Mineral Lands.—Approximately, nineteen thousand acres have been surveyed during the year for mining purposes, the applications generally, as regards location, being distributed throughout the district, and not, as in 1898, confined to one particular line of country. The Mount Lyell mineral belt, which has been established by actual survey as extending from Mt. Murchison in the north to Mt. Darwin in the south, with Mt. Lyell situate about midway between these two mountains, continues to meet with public favour. Throughout the whole length of this belt the surface indications are favourable to the existence of minerals, and I would strongly recommend a geological survey of the country referred to being made as soon as possible. Such a survey would be of incalculable benefit to the mining community, and, with the information to be gained therefrom, an incentive to speculators to develop "shows," which may be discovered from time to time by the prospectors.

The value attaching to an authentic geological survey of the whole of the western mining fields cannot be well exaggerated, and, in the light of the actual developments of the past 10 years, the early initiation of such a survey should receive the fullest consideration of the Government. As you are aware, my official duties necessitate my continually moving about the various fields, and, from personal observation, I have no hesitation in stating that there are thousands of pounds absolutely squandered every year in so-called mining work which could otherwise be allocated to some advantage if there were geological charts available for the guidance of mining companies and prospectors, together with regular visits of a specially-qualified general mining adviser, who should, necessarily, be authorised to direct and advise on mining operations. A move in the direction thus indicated would render at once efficient and active assistance, with a minimum of cost, towards effectively developing the mineral resources of this rugged portion of the Colony, and, at the same time, would be a wholesome check on the too-frequent "wild cat" raids on the public. At Zeehan the output has slightly improved on the previous year's result.

With the advantage of having local smelters, which, it was understood, were specially designed to treat the low-grade ore of this field profitably to those concerned, the year's output, to say the least, is disappointing, and, after all other contingencies are taken into consideration, points to the fact that either the leases are not worked to the best advantage, or that the smelting charges are too high to allow the lodes to be mined with a reasonable margin of profit. Such an important matter as this certainly is, I venture to think, demands the fullest investigation at the hands of the Government. There is, however, one aspect of this question to which I may be permitted to draw attention. The evils of the present law, which enables individual companies to lease from the Crown large areas of mineral lands under the Mining Act, are becoming more and more apparent, and, already, several instances have come under notice. Take, for example, say, a mining company leasing 500 acres. The labour covenants of their lease provides for the employment of not less than 25 men (at the rate of one man for 20 acres) during at least nine months in each year of the term. This minimum of labour, so far as applies to land remote from railroad communication, is reasonable; but where this means of communication is established, special provision should be made to meet such cases. Under the present law, it is patent that monopolies over mineral land (which is possibly one of the best assets this Colony possesses) are easily created, inimical to the interests of the mining industry, and, consequently, to the welfare of the country as a whole. It would, therefore, seem to be the duty of Parliament, when the new Mining Act is under discussion, to provide against unlimited transfer and amalgamation of mining leases. If undue consolidation of leases is not guarded against, then it appears quite competent, under the existing law, for a powerful syndicate to secure the best of our mines, incorporate them into one large mining company, and

then concentrate the minimum number of men required under the labour covenants of their total leases in the work of one particular mine, and close down the other mines until their exigent requirements necessitate their working them. Owing to the improved price for tin ores, the Heemskirk district, which has practically been deserted for years past, has received some attention this year, and several creeks have been "turned over," with payable results. The tin lodes which are known to exist on that field are also attracting capitalists. A few claims are being worked for tin at North Dundas, but, unfortunately, in a somewhat desultory manner.

Tracks.—I take this opportunity of once again advocating the policy of opening up the mineral lands of the West Coast by pack-tracks, and where it is not practicable to do so, then by prospecting tracks. Such means of communication are absolutely essential to the preliminary working and prospecting of the enormous areas already held under lease, and of country not yet taken up, but which is, nevertheless, known to be mineral-bearing. The expenditure of a few thousand pounds on roads and tracks is comparatively insignificant compared with the benefit to be derived from the discovery of even one mine giving employment to several hundred miners. It is worthy of mention that both exploration tracks and pack-roads have, in themselves, been immediately the means of disclosing, with few exceptions, the outcrops of the permanent mines on the West Coast. The famous North Lyell ore-body, which, possibly, may have remained hidden for years, was, in reality, first discovered through the construction of the Government road over that property; but apart from chance finds of this sort, the Government works of the class referred to having, in the past, been proved by actual experience to be an important factor in contributing to the revenue of the Colony, it would seem hardly necessary to suspect that the chief reason for the delay in initiating and maintaining a regular scheme for the opening up of the mineral lands in question is the want of funds. It is, however, significant that, under the purchasing conditions of the Land Acts dealing with the selection and sale of Crown land, a portion (one-half) of the purchase-money is allocated to the making of roads and streets in the locality where the land is selected; and it at once suggests itself that some such principle would work equally as well under the Mining Act, so far as to provide for portion of the revenue accruing from the rents of mineral lands to be devoted to roads and tracks. In this district, considerably over one hundred and sixty thousand acres have been surveyed into blocks: this area, if held under lease, would mean an annual rental of over £40,000, but, of course, the whole of the land surveyed is not so held; still, allowing that only one-quarter (and this is a very liberal average) of this area is yearly paid upon, the rent derived would be at least £10,000 per annum, and one-half of this amount, or £5000, would go a long way towards the construction of new tracks, and the maintenance of the existing ones.

I beg to recommend that the undermentioned localities receive due attention as regards tracks:—

- (a) From the Mariposa mine, at South Dundas, to the Henty Gorge, crossing the southern spurs of Mount Dundas, and thence on to junction with the pack-track which leads from Mount Read to Mount Tyndall. Length about 10 miles.
- (b) From a point on the main road (recently constructed), between the Deep Lead and Rosebery localities, to follow round the northern spurs of Mount Read and to connect with the Red Hills pack-track at Mount Murchison. Length about seven miles.
- (c) From the Rosebery to the Anthony River, *via* the Black Gap, between Mount Black and Mount Murchison. Length about 10 miles.
- (d) From North Mount Lyell, skirting the south-western and western flank of Mount Sedgwick; thence northerly along the western side of Mount Tyndall, to connect with the Mount Read-Tyndall pack-track. The construction of this track would, practically, give access to the whole of the north-westerly extension of the Mount Lyell mineral belt lying between Mount Lyell and Mount Murchison. Length about 10 miles.
- (e) From Howard's Plains, near Queenstown, to a point near Argenton, vicinity of Zeehan. A track was cut through this country many years ago by Frank Long, the discoverer of the Zeehan silverfield; but this track is now blocked with scrub and fallen timber. The route is carefully chosen as to direction, is well graded, and passes through a country likely to contain minerals, but which, owing to the denseness of the scrub, cannot be prospected until reasonable access is provided. Length about 16 miles.
- (f) From Harris Reward (at the King River) to Mount Darwin, crossing that mountain and connecting with the pack-track on the eastern side of the range. A branch from proposed track to Flannigan's Flat would be most serviceable to leaseholders and prospectors in that locality.

Exploration Tracks.—I again beg to recommend the exploration of the country between Birch Inlet (Macquarie Harbour), and Port Davey. Until some sort of communication is established, this large area, probably mineral-bearing throughout, must necessarily remain closed to prospecting. I understand, however, that the work of exploring this country will be commenced forthwith. Other localities deserving of special consideration under this heading are:—From a point on the North Lyell Railway to Mount Craycroft, thence to the eastern slopes of the Elliott Range; from North Lyell Railway, near Mount Darwin, easterly to the neighbourhood of the Frenchman's Cap. The country extending from Mount Murchison to the head waters of the Canning River, in proximity to the Eldon Range; this track, I am glad to hear, is to be undertaken at once. In previous reports I have suggested that a geological examination of the country traversed should be

made, and a chart of the result issued for the guidance of prospectors, and I trust that this recommendation will not be lost sight of.

Trigonometrical Survey.—It is of cardinal importance that a trigonometrical survey of the West Coast should be effected. The scope for the usefulness of such a survey cannot be over-estimated, and, if anything is to be done in the direction indicated, a commencement should be made at once. The advantage of having all surveys correctly located and referred to the one common and permanent *datum* must, of course, be ever-apparent, and it is to be hoped that the Legislature will endeavour, during next session of Parliament, to resuscitate the trigonometrical survey of Tasmania which has, it is to be deplored, been allowed to remain in abeyance for so long. Each year makes the necessity for such a survey more and more evident, and it is truly unfortunate that the western portion of this Colony was not triangulated ten years ago, prior to the land itself having been dealt with by the Crown. As it is, the West Coast Surveys are under all the disadvantages, and encumbered with local difficulties, probably tenfold greater than elsewhere, in the building up of survey after survey upon a more or less inaccurate foundation. That to check and maintain the azimuth of the initial by observation for true meridian in this district is, practically, out of the question, may be gathered from the following:—Six years ago I recorded 283 nights when the sky was totally unfavourable for meridian observation, and 26 nights when partially obscured, leaving a balance of comparatively a few nights suitable for the purpose named, and these nights were confined chiefly to one term of the year; therefore, the greater is the need for a triangulation survey, which should be connected with standard traverses, where necessary. So far as the West Coast is concerned, the natural features afford excellent facilities for triangulation work, the mountains being, with few exceptions, at no greater elevation than 4500 feet—the average ranging generally between 2500 feet and 4000 feet above sea-level—and the summits of which are, as a rule, free of timber, and so distributed as to form triangles remarkably well-conditioned. It is, however, a work which should be undertaken in the summer months, although many of the preliminary operations could be carried out with advantage at various times during the year. There is no need in this Report for a recapitulation of the many reasons for a survey such as the foregoing, and it is earnestly to be hoped that, at no distant date, this matter will receive the public attention which its importance demands.

Counties of Franklin and Montgomery.—Mr. Authorised Surveyor H. F. Miles reports as follows :—

Since taking charge of the surveys in the Counties of Franklin and Montgomery, in July last, I have received 106 instructions for survey, comprising 94 mineral leases, two dredging claims, six water rights, three gold leases, and one timber area.

The area of land applied for under mineral lease is 5402 acres; gold lease, 30 acres; timber area, 1000 acres. Of these instructions thirty-five remain undone, the total number of instructions disposed of during the six months being seventy-one. The major portion of the mineral leases has been applied for in the vicinity of Mounts Darwin and Jukes, and a number of the claims are being vigorously worked, disclosing, in some cases, large bodies of minerals. Most of the leases however, are not being worked, the holders waiting the completion of the North Mt. Lyell Co's Railway before commencing operations, the cost of packing, being, at present, prohibitive.

The North Mt. Lyell Co's Railway from Kelly Basin to Gormanston will probably be completed early this year, and will afford a means of access to the Jukes and Darwin fields. The same company has made a pack-track from Lyell to Kelly Basin.

A new township has been laid out in the vicinity of Mount Darwin, and promises to be the nucleus of a considerable settlement. No selections have been taken up for agriculture, but in the vicinity of the Spero River there is a tract of three or four thousand acres well suited for that purpose.

During the past six months a track has been cut from a point on the North Mt. Lyell Railway, about two miles north of the town of Darwin to the Frenchman's Cap, a distance of about nine miles. This will be valuable as giving prospectors ingress to the country lying north and west of that mountain. The track skirts the north end of the Engineer's Range, and crosses the Franklin river. A pack-track has also been cut from Harris' Reward Gold Mine, to Mt. Jukes to enable the mines there to get supplies out, but this will not be of much use unless the King River is bridged. The only means of crossing, at present, is by a cage. Tracks are in progress from Kelly Basin to Gould's Landing, and from Birch's Inlet to Port Davey, with branches from the latter to the coast, down the valleys of the Wanderer and Mainwaring rivers. It would be well to add to this, a branch down the Spero River, to provide access to the agricultural land in that locality. I would strongly urge upon the Government the advisability of cutting a track from a point on the present Linda Track southward, along the eastern side of the Frenchman's Cap, to connect with the Gordon-Tyenna track. This would open up to prospectors a belt of country that is at present practically unknown. Another track that is needed, would start from about the 3m. 40ch. peg on the North Mt. Lyell Railway, passing round the north end of the Craycroft Range, crossing the Franklin River, and skirting the Deception Range. This track would render the country south and west of the Frenchman's Cap available for prospectors. Some attention has already been directed to it, but want of means of access has precluded any great amount of prospecting. The reserves held by the Great Western Railway Company in that locality should also be defined. At present it is impossible for a prospector to know when he may be trespassing on them.

South of the King River the timber is scarce, being principally confined to the courses of the streams. A large amount of pine has, however, been obtained from the Gordon River, Franklin, and from the neighbourhood of Mounts Darwin and Sorell, but this is rapidly being exhausted. Mr. Hay has a large bed of timber in the vicinity of Liberty Point, on Macquarie Harbour, and has erected a sawmill there.

Three gold leases and two dredging claims have been taken up on the old Flannigan's Flat Goldfield, and a company is projected to work them, with a fair prospect of success. Very little work has been done at the Harris' Reward Gold Field, and I do not think that what has been done has been remunerative.

Survey District of Oatlands.—Mr. District Surveyor W. M. Hardy reports as follows:—

Progress of Settlement.—There has been a falling off of selection proper during the past year, but there is a brisk demand for auction pastoral lots ranging from 50 to 320 acres in area, and I anticipate a still larger demand in the immediate future, as there are thousands of acres in the district that are well worth 10s. an acre, and suitable for grazing. Some valuable lots are being surveyed for next sale.

Bush Fires.—The bush fires that devastated some districts two years ago did a great deal of good in this district. There are places now well-grassed that hardly bore a blade previously, and the land is likely to continue to improve. If runs were burnt out in a careful manner and with proper precautions taken in training previously at night, much good would accrue; as it is, bark and dead limbs are allowed to accumulate on the ground to a dangerous extent.

Unauthorised Occupation.—I had occasion to draw the attention of the department to one or two flagrant cases of this description, and the action taken in each case had a salutary effect on the neighbours around. If the department could make an example here and there of persons who alter their neighbours' landmarks, it would be an advantage.

Unauthorised Splitting on Crown Lands.—There is a good deal of this going on in different places; in some cases my advent amongst them causes them to procure the necessary licences. I notice that a lot of valuable timber is cut to waste for railway sleepers: it is a pity that anyone but competent hands should be employed on this, as the hundreds of trees wasted and sleepers left rotting in the bush might have been saved for the fully-competent man to deal with. It is now hard to procure a decent tree near Rhyndaston, the head-quarters of this industry, and Spring Hill Bottom, where there is a good bed of timber, will soon be just as bad.

Roads and Tracks.—Under this heading there is little or nothing to note. The road inspectors are always ready to facilitate access to newly-surveyed lots, and are evidently well posted up in local requirements.

Selectors on Deferred Payment.—In nearly every case I have seen substantial improvements are the rule, and the people seem comfortable and happy on their lots; there seems to be little or no speculative system in vogue, at present, of securing timber, wattle bark, or holding for a rise in unearned increments, but selectors and purchasers of lands at auction require the ground for personal occupation, and as the price of work is likely to keep up, and stock also, I anticipate that a lot of Crown land will be purchased and leased in my district, but not much selected in comparison.

Minerals.—A prospector paid a visit to a portion of this district last winter, and announced that he had found something; but subsequent assays did not appear to bear out his statements, and he seems to have left the district. There are large deposits of ironstone in places, and, possibly, some day it will be found that there is payable mineral here, sandstone formation notwithstanding to the contrary.

Survey District of Russell.—Mr. District-Surveyor David Jones reports as follows:—

Lands suitable for Selection.—It may be truthfully said that, owing to a great deal of exploration in this district since 1875—and one expedition even previous to that date—there is not much chance of any large areas of good agricultural land being found, so that the areas already known are all that attention can be drawn to. The Emu Bay Company's railway having been completed across the Pieman River to near Rosebery, from Emu Bay, suggests this as a fitting time to refer to the good Crown land, of basaltic soil, that exists south and adjoining the south boundary of the V.D.L. Co.'s Surrey Hills block, and through which the Emu Bay Company's line runs. This land embraces the south portion, or Hadfield Plains, and continues down the wooded spurs from the Plain to the Cue River Flats. These spurs are covered with sassafras, tree-ferns, and myrtles, or, more properly speaking, beech-trees, as the botanical name, *Fagus Cunninghamii*, implies. The distance to the Cue River Flats, from the Plains, is about three or four miles, and on these flats some 2000 acres of land suitable for grazing can be obtained, and some of it would be even fit for cultivation. The flats are well sheltered, being about 500 feet lower than the table-land at Hadfield Plains.

The capital land belonging to the Crown, near the confluence of the Huskisson River with the Pieman River, must not be lost sight of, although some distance west of the Emu Bay Co.'s railway. The area would be from 1000 to 1500 acres, tolerably level. Another extensive belt of good basaltic soil lies to the east of the main road from Waratah to Corinna, and joining same. It extends two miles south of Waratah, and about two miles east to the V.D.L. Co.'s west boundary of their Surrey Hills block, and gradually widening at its south end to about four miles in width. Many applications have been put in for small areas, but no settlement has, as yet, taken place. This is due,

in a measure, to experiments having proved that grain will not ripen satisfactorily here, owing to the climate and the elevation above sea-level, namely, 2000 feet. Root crops, however, do well, such as potatoes, turnips, carrots, &c., and it may be regarded as an ideal country for English grass and clover. On the Pieman River, above Corinna, and also below, near the junction of the Savage River with the Pieman, some fair patches of land can be got, the acreage in the latter place being over 200 acres. Between the Hellyer Bridge, on the road from Wynyard to Waratah, some excellent land can be obtained, suitable for both agricultural and pastoral purposes. This land will, probably, not be in great request until this road has been finished, and easier means of communication assured.

Roads and Tracks.—The Waratah-Corinna Road has been much improved during the last year. The Government voted £400; then the Waratah Road Trust gave £200 towards this road, after having spent large sums previously in renewals and repairs. The Magnet Tin Mining Company (Tas.) and the North Magnet Tin Mining Company contributed £200 between them, the Road Trust and the above companies doing this upon the condition that the Government gave pound for pound. This method gave the respectable sum of about £1200 to be expended on this road, and I must say the work has been well carried out under Sub-Inspector Sloane. The Government is now improving this road at the 18-mile peg from Waratah, completing the south end of the Bald Hill, where some £500 is to be spent, and £400 is also, I believe, to be spent on the Corinna end of this road, so that only eight miles will be left to complete this highway from Waratah to Corinna, when wheeled traffic will obtain instead of, as at present, pack-horses. This road, when opened right through, will help the development of the mines in its vicinity very much indeed.

The pack-horse track from the Waratah-Corinna road through the Rio Tinto Company's ground to Specimen Reef, has been well cut out, where blocked, and made practicable for horses. The track from the same road, seven miles north of Corinna to the Rocky River mine, is being widened and improved, and as this track was graded, the steepest part being 1 in 10, it will, in time, be made available for dray-traffic. I must still advocate the opening up of the east side of the Meredith Range by a horse-track, from near the Mt. Stewart Company's mine, near the north end of this range. This track would enable prospecting to be carried on to its south end, near the Parson's Nose, where tin ore has already been found. Another track that can be recommended would start from Waratah, follow the old Magnet Range Track for $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles, and then branch off along the old Machinery Track to Specimen Reef, for about 15 miles in a W.N.W. direction, to the end of a stretch of open button-rush country; from there, a new track should be cut to the Whale's Head, crossing the head-waters of the Frankland River, where tin ore has been found in fair quantities in the different tributaries of that river. The source of this tin ore has not yet been discovered, and, as this track would cross mineral-bearing country, and the length of new track only be about 20 miles, it may be urged that its construction would materially help towards a very valuable discovery.

The Progress of the District.—During the last few months a township has been surveyed at the Magnet mine (Tas.), and will shortly be offered at auction. Several persons have made inquiries for Crown land, but only a few have put in *bonâ fide* applications, the department not being able to grant the land applied for, in some cases. However, eventually, these difficulties will be overcome.

The Mining Progress.—Some of the mines at the Whyte River District are idle, but tributors are working some capital tin-ore ground applied for there: about 5 tons have been brought in to Waratah, altogether. The New London and Tasmanian Gold Mining Company at Specimen Reef, and the Rio Tinto mine in the same locality, have suspended work for awhile. The Rocky River Mining Company is energetically working, and has just completed the trial survey of a proposed railway line down the valley of the Whyte River to its junction with the Pieman River—a distance of about 8 miles—which I hear is quite satisfactory. The Cape Copper Company, 9 miles north of Corinna, is still prospecting, with a very fair chance of success. At the Magnet mine (Tas.), 5 miles west of Waratah, in a direct line, it is gradually increasing its output of lead and silver ores. For the first three months of 1899, 120 tons of ore were sent away; and during the remaining nine months of that year 700 tons were exported, making a total for the year of 820 tons—average assays being about 100 ozs. of silver per ton, and 25 per cent. of lead—the value at the smelters being about £10,000. The output from this mine now is over 26 tons per week.

The old Mount Bischoff Company's mine keeps up its reputation as a dividend-paying mine. For the first six months of this year the dividends amounted to £36,000; and the last six months, owing to the better price of tin ore, to £54,000, besides carrying a substantial amount to their reserve fund, and also paying the dividend tax. The total amount of ore won for the 12 months was 1930 tons, which gave, by assay, over 1250 tons of smelted tin, and yet the mine looks well. Tributors in the Waratah River have sent away from here about 60 tons of this ore.

At the North Pieman, towards Mount Murchison, some of the sections held are systematically prospected, and promise well. The North Mount Farrell is sending away an excellent class of galena giving a good return of silver and very high percentage of lead. The opening up of this mine is proceeding with vigor.

During the year 1899, 46 applications for leases under the Mines Act of 1893 have been fully dealt with, giving a total area of 1611 acres, 500 acres more than the previous year. Four water-rights have also been disposed of, and 40 licences for dredging claims. The fees are not sufficient

for these claims, as the rivers taken up are in rough country, and subject to heavy floods. Preparatory prospecting is being done on the Savage River and its branches, but whether successful or otherwise, is not known. Nothing is doing on the Whyte River Dredging claims. No dredges have been tried on these rivers as yet; when they are, they will no doubt be watched with considerable interest.

The instructions in hand will be attended to in the early part of this year. The season has been so wet that it became difficult to conduct surveys in rough country at anything like a reasonable speed.

Survey District of Tasman Peninsula.—Mr. District Surveyor J. H. Hinsby reports as follows :—

Surveys.—The following is a list of instructions complied with, issued under the various Acts:—

750 acres, in 2 lots, under the Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1898.

130 acres, in 3 lots, under the Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1895.

530 acres in 19 lots, under the Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1893.

1356½ acres, in 12 lots, under the Crown Lands Act, 1890.

109 acres in 3 lots, under the Real Property Act.

I also hold instructions for 785 acres, in 14 lots; the plans for these I expect to have in by the end of March. It will be noticed that the 1893 Amendment Act takes the lead again in number of selections, and, as the lots are mostly small, I think, suits this district best. The remaining available area being small and the larger areas being of a patchy nature, are better selected in small lots.

The new Timber Act of 1898 is also being made use of for milling purposes, there being several lots applied for under that Act. The Act referred to is very much against the licensed splitter, as what splitting timber there was left, is now being taken up by the mill-owners; there seems to have been considerable vivacity in this direction in anticipation of Federation, which will no doubt give new life to the timber industry. I do not consider the remuneration sufficient for the survey under this Act, as in most cases the lines have to be cut in heavy scrub from start to finish.

Land available for Selection.—There is still a deal of land available for selection on both Peninsulas, but it is very patchy; there are plenty of patches that would make grand orchards, but orcharding cannot be undertaken without capital, as several years must elapse before any return can be looked for, though the climate and soil are all that can be desired for the fruit-growing industry, and the sample of fruit grown by those who have orchards is not to be surpassed by any part of the Island. The splitter has kept the Peninsula going in the past, but the orchardist will do it in the future.

Roads.—The most particular road is that leading to the Cripp's Creek selections, which has already been described in detail in my former reports. The track to Fortescue also wants attention; the road as laid out through Alberry's selections is the best route and grade, though the one at present in use could be made passable at much less expense. The various other roads want more or less doing to them. One very important thing is the state of the Eagle Hawk jetty; this is in a dangerous state and, being a great tourist resort, makes the necessity for repairs all the more urgent at this season. The approach to this jetty is also in a very bad state, owing to the heavy sleeper traffic which has been going on there during the past six months.

Minerals.—There has been nothing found in the shape of minerals of value or otherwise.

Reserves.—Regarding reserves I have not surveyed any this year, but should suggest some alterations in those located at Fortescue Bay; these I will bring under your notice when handing you in the plans of the selections in this vicinity in about a week's time.

I do not think there is anything else worth bringing under your notice in this district.

Survey District of Deloraine.—Mr. Authorised Surveyor C. M. Archer reports as follows :—

Progress of settlement in the district is generally slow. Lands most suitable for selection lie between the Upper Liffey and Jackey's Marsh; but the country is difficult of access, and settlement will be tardy without road communication to assist would-be selectors. Other available land for selection is in the vicinity of Gad's Hill, River Forth, and Upper Mersey, but the want of communication and a payable market prevents selection being at all brisk. No other part of the district supplies lands of any extent for agricultural selection.

There are considerable quantities of milling timber on the Crown lands in the Frankford, Upper Liffey, and Beulah districts, the most extensive timber-beds being in the Forth and Mersey valleys, where the timber is very good.

On account of not having travelled over a considerable portion of the district, my report is more curtailed than it otherwise would be.

Survey District of Wellington.—Mr. District Surveyor F. E. Windsor reports as follows :—

Surveys.—Sixty-seven agricultural selections have been surveyed, comprising an area of 3850 acres; 14 mineral leases, 659 acres; also 9 (plans and reports) mineral leases, 300 acres; 3 township lots, 11½ acres; 3 school reserves, 6½ acres; 6 public works road surveys, giving a distance 9 miles 78¾ chains and 11 miles 37¾ chains of reserved roads and connection lines—making a total of 93 surveys, and giving an area of 4527¼ acres, and 21 miles and 6 chains of roads and connection lines.

The latter part of the year was very wet and stormy, it being almost impossible to do out-door work in the latter part of November and early in December. The winter was more settled, there being very heavy frosts, so severe as to delay agricultural pursuits until late in the season.

The fires from which the district suffered in 1898 seem to be about to commence again, the weather being exceptionally warm towards the end of the year. The caterpillars have again made their appearance, and have completely destroyed the grasses and feed on the back runs, necessitating a speedy sale of cattle in some instances, and probably destroying all the autumn feed.

The butter and bacon factories are still in a flourishing condition, and have, in several instances, extended their operations into the back country. The district now possesses 3 butter factories, 3 bacon factories, and 7 creameries, as well as numerous separators owned by private individuals.

Bee culture is extensively carried on in several localities, some possessing as many as 150 boxes of bees, the price obtained for the honey being 7d. per lb. in the comb.

The crops are not looking so well as they did in previous years at this time, probably, owing to the late season. The prices upon last year's crops did not realise expectations, in fact, many buyers must have lost heavily over the potato crop, as well as those who held on too long in the hope of a rise in the market.

Several families have lately arrived in the district, and some of them now supply milk to the factories. Two school buildings, under the Board of Education, are in course of erection, and are most urgently required in several localities. The bridge on the Main Coast Road, over the Duck River, is an established fact; also a new punt at the Arthur River Ferry.

I would specially draw your attention to the very dangerous state of the road through Dallas' Forest, owing to the decayed state of some of the big trees, which are now a continual menace to life and property of those compelled to travel that road; and if the matter is not at once taken in hand, some very serious accident may, at any time, happen. The distance known to be dangerous is about two miles in extent, which could be made perfectly safe by the expenditure of from £12 to £15 per mile, which sum would, I think, complete all the necessary side-felling; and that amount would be saved to the revenue in repairs to the telegraph line alone, without mentioning the big trees that have to be periodically removed off the road. Large areas have been brought under grass, and steady improvement has been very general.

There is another matter I would bring under your notice, viz.—the wholesale destruction of the marked trees on the side-lines of the sections. Many of the old lines in the myrtle country have almost disappeared, owing to the reckless destruction of marked trees by scrubbers and others, who invariably fall the trees at the spot where the triangles are placed, in order, I suppose, to save the trouble of starting a new chip above the survey marks when falling the trees. Prompt action should certainly be taken in this matter before the lines entirely disappear.

Parish of Marrawah.—In this parish large areas have been marked off, and improvement on some of the old lots has been very marked. Mr. Surveyor Goddard surveyed all the sections applied for in this parish, so I am unable to supply particulars as to area, &c.; also the mineral surveys at Whale's Head. I do not think that the good land is yet exhausted, and, no doubt, more will be selected as the country is opened up and access to the back lands provided. A tramway from the Duck River would be the best means of accomplishing this purpose; and the expenditure would be justified, as this is likely to be a very large settlement in the near future. A jetty is also required, to enable the settlers to export their produce with greater facilities than hitherto, as the freight, owing to the difficulties met with in shipping, is exceedingly high. A school under the Board of Education is urgently required, the site for which has already been chosen by the inhabitants, and some 16 acres marked off by me last year in anticipation. A bi-weekly post and telephone communication would be a great benefit, and will become a necessity if the mines at Whale's Head prove to be a success. The timber, although very large, is unsound, and great difficulty is met with in obtaining posts and rails for domestic use. Some small belts of sound timber are to be met with to the south-east.

Parish of Williams.—Fully 5000 acres of good basaltic land is available for selection, and will no doubt be selected later on, when the better-situated lands are alienated and settled upon. Most of the roads in this parish are almost in a state of nature, merely bullock-dray tracks. The old selections are being improved, and the selectors seem to be able to make a decent living with produce, cattle, and timber. The main coast road requires attention in many places. The new bridge across the Duck River is now an established fact. Some belts of good timber are to be met with in the New Montagu Settlement.

Gibson, Medwin, and Ford—Selection in the two former parishes has been very rapid during the last two years, and most of the old lots that were thrown up have been re-selected in smaller areas, and some 30 lots surveyed, and as many more applied for. The selections in these parishes are being very rapidly improved, and settlement would progress much more rapidly if road construction could be made to keep pace with selection. The outlet of the lots south of Irish Town will be by way of the south road to Stanley. The country is well adapted for road construction, with one or two small exceptions, the whole way. Considerable improvement has been made on the Back Line road westerly from the South road through lands of Pitt, Emmerton, and Murray, and on the South road. The road westerly through the selections of Messrs. Waters, Breheney, and King is the one that will give access to the lots at the back of the Irish Town Settlement when made passable for traffic. The road easterly from the South Road to selections of Messrs. H. F. Ford, Emmerton, and Anthony should be opened on the original surveyed line, through the lots of Breheney and Ford: the one opened by the Public Works Department is altogether impracticable and useless for

traffic, on account of the very steep grades across one deep gully which can be avoided. Some small patches of good stringy-bark timber are to be met with south of Irish Town and at the South Road, and also to the south of the present settlement.

Parishes of Emmett, Anderson, and south of same.—A very large area of good basaltic land is open for selection in the latter parish, but want of a good road into this locality, and the distance from market, deters anyone from settling there. No new selections have been applied for, but the old ones have been improved in grassing and fencing, and are practically used as cattle-runs. Some patches of good timber, suitable for sawmilling purposes, are to be met with to the south of the present selections all the good splitting timber in the vicinity of the selections having been removed years ago. Some small belts of timber suitable for milling purposes are to be met with in the vicinity of the Black River.

Parishes of Myalla and Dallas.—About 2000 acres of good basaltic land is to be obtained in the former parish, to the south of Detention River, to which a track or road requires opening before any selection is likely to be made. Most of the old selections in the Parish of Dallas that reverted to the Crown have been again selected in smaller areas, and are now under survey. Improvement has been very general on the old selections, most of them being under grass, some are fenced, and have huts erected upon them. There is not much valuable timber, most of it being myrtle, with occasional patches of stringy-bark and a few blackwood trees.

Parishes of Flowerdale and Preolinn.—About 5000 acres of good basaltic land to be met with, most of it in the latter parish. Mostly portions of old selections have been again applied for under smaller areas. Some two miles of road from Flowerdale to Sisters Hills should be opened out to enable selectors to have access to their land, and the branch road passing through Tracey's, King's, and others should be opened to join with the road already opened through Kinch's and M. A. King's. The road along W. Chambers' eastern boundary should be made passable for traffic, to enable supplies of milk to reach the creamery which is situated at the junction of the main road and the Sisters Creek. A road from Flowerdale across the Inglis River to the Calder road would be a great advantage, and would shorten the distance to Wynyard by some three miles, thereby avoiding several very steep hills that are to be met with on the present Flowerdale road—thus bringing the available Crown lands the above-mentioned distance nearer to the township. The Flowerdale road west of the Inglis River should be extended and opened towards the Dipwood Marsh and the selections in that locality, the land being fairly good and suitable for selection most of the way.

Messrs. Cooper, Wilson, & Broomhall can supply every information about the Crown lands suitable for selection. Some small belts of good timber are to be found on the ridge between the Flowerdale and Inglis River, and towards the Dipwood and along the Calder River, but too far removed for immediate use.

Parishes of Quiggin and Calder.—About 1000 acres still available for selection, several selections have been applied for, mostly portions of the old selected blocks that have reverted to the Crown, and some few others, some of the firstnamed have been improved, advantage having been taken of the heavy bush fires to grass the land. The old selections have been re-sown and generally improved. Some few selectors reside on their holdings, and are making comfortable homes for themselves; but the want of attention to the Moore's Plains Road is very much felt in the winter, the road last year being almost impassable, except for pack-horses. Several were engaged in the dairying industry till compelled to abandon it on account of the dreadful state of the road. The Calder Road should be opened and extended through the selected lands to the Crown lands, and on to the Moore's Plains Road, and a branch westerly to junction with the Flowerdale Road across the Calder River. The road to and through the timber reserve, to join the Waratah Road, would open the country, and would materially help to sell the lots lately offered for sale by auction. A few small belts of timber, suitable for milling purposes, are to be found in the latter parish, but too far distant for immediate use.

Parish of Yolla.—About 2500 acres of good basaltic land, at least, unselected, but too far from market or good roads to be immediately selected. Some few lots have been applied for in the vicinity of Henrietta Plains, and fronting on the Waratah Road. Most of the purchased lots on the road have been improved, and a considerable area has been scrubbed this year. On some of the lots that are under grass, huts have been erected and fencing done. The cross-road to the Moore's Plains Road, through Dicker's and Ruffin's selections, from the Waratah Road, requires opening.

Some small belts of good timber are to be found along the valley of the Calder River, and in the vicinity and south of the Plains. A small belt of pine (Celery-top) exists in this parish, but the best of the timber has been removed this last year for milling purposes, heavy bush fires having destroyed most of that remaining.

Parishes of Elliott and Lewis.—All the good land in the Parish of Elliott has been alienated, and the selections very much improved, most of them being under grass and fenced. Those lots purchased in the Parish of Lewis have also made very great strides; nearly all the selections have been settled on, and all of them improved and brought under grass. Dairying is the principal industry during the summer months. The roads have been very much improved during this last year, and, so far as they have been constructed, have proved to be a very great boon. The road along the western bank of the Cam River should have more attention, the hills in many places being steep sidelings. The road connecting with the Waratah Road should be opened to enable the milk-suppliers to go to the nearest creameries. The road through Cowell's and Harrison's selections has been opened by the Public Works Department for more than half the distance.

Some small patches of timber suitable for milling purposes are to be met with along the Cam River, but most of the splitting timber has long since been removed.

Parishes of Oonah and Takoné.—There are three or four thousand acres of good basaltic land suitable for agricultural purposes, but, up to the present time, most of the lots selected are used for grazing purposes, the absence of roads precluding any other way of utilising the results of industry. The St. Mary's River settlement is cut off from the market for the want of a road, for a distance of about five miles, easterly to the 18-mile V.D.L. Co.'s railway. Along the Cam ridge some small belts of good timber are to be found, but too far removed to be of any commercial value at the present time.

Parishes of Stowport and Natoné.—Some 1500 acres of good land remains unselected in the latter parish. Most of the old lots that reverted to the Crown have been again selected, and some few fresh selections surveyed. Improvement has been very general all round. The roads do not seem to be pushed on as quickly as selection seems to justify, although very great improvement has been made in that direction. Agriculture, dairying, cattle-raising, and timber-getting, seem to be the principal employments. The Chasm Creek Road and the road into the Back Settlement want extending and making passable for traffic. The iron mines have come into prominence of late, and quite a number of men are employed in opening up and clearing off the timber and the scrub from the faces of the iron formations. Numerous small belts of stringy-bark timber are to be met with on the ridges, along the Blyth and Emu Rivers, and in the vicinity of the Hampshire Hills.

Survey-District of King Island.—Mr. District-Surveyor M. Flannigan reports as follows :—

During the past year I have surveyed 63 lots, with an area of 7980 acres, exclusive of 50 lots in town of Currie.

Good progress is being made on King Island; the population has increased during the past year from 130 to 160; there is also a large floating population. Clearing has been gone on with largely, also sowing of grass seed, and the end of the present year will see a lot of new country under grass.

About 700 head of fat cattle have been shipped to Emu Bay, and thence, by rail, to Strahan, and, no doubt, before the end of the season there will be 1000 head of "fats" sent away; a few hundred fat sheep have also been shipped. Messrs. Stephenson and Gunn imported 1200 sheep from Eden last year, and are well pleased with the results; and other settlers, I understand, intend trying sheep.

Dairy farming is also receiving attention, and most of the butter finds its way to the West Coast. The climate of the island, being mild, enables the dairy-farmers to continue milking much longer than the farmers on the mainland.

There are still thousands of acres of good land for grazing purposes on the west coast of the island, lightly timbered with ti-tree, which can be cleared without as much labour as it takes on the mainland. Messrs. Stephenson and Gunn clear, on an average, eight acres per day, by means of a bullock team and large roller. A few miles inland some good agricultural land is being opened up. The applicants consider the land equal to some of the good land on North West Coast. On Whistler Point, a lot of 320 acres can be had, nearly the whole of it grassed with mellilot, and for some distance south of Whistler Point, along the coast, the country is clear, and in many places mellilot is growing well, but, being off the main road, the visitors do not see it. All the grass land on the island has been selected, except a few small lots near the Ettrick River, and above lot; but there is a large area of open country still available, but, being hilly, is not looked upon as being thoroughly sound. The disease in stock seems to be slowly disappearing; land that was bad at one time has been found, since being ploughed, to have improved, for cattle can now run longer on it than they could a few years ago; the settlers are finding less difficulty in rearing calves.

Roads.—The main road, owing to the exceptionally wet year, requires some work being done to it in a few places, and some by-roads should be made; the one from Bungaree Camp to West Coast, if constructed, would give access to Whistler Point, and the country around Bungaree and Eel Creek. The road from H. R. D. Pearson's east, through A. Clibborn's 200-acre lot, should also be made as well as the road through W. J. Bain's 320-acres lot, and the road through G. P. Huxley's 200-acre and 116-acre lots. The three last roads have been cleared by the settlers, but require culverts and drains being made in places, and they all lead to good country. By clearing the road through G. P. Huxley's land, about half a mile from the present terminus, access would be obtained to a large area of plains only covered with ferns.

The Marine Board is now using the main road from Currie to Wickham, for carting stores to Wickham. This is a considerable saving to the Board, for the store-boat now only calls at Currie, whereas it had previously to land stores at both places, and owing to Wickham being a bad place for landing in a boat they had to pay extra freights, and have now been enabled to do away with the services of one man, through boat not calling at Wickham. The quarterly stores are a good weight, and, in winter, it will mean that the road will greatly cut up, there being no solid material for road purposes. I would suggest that the Board should give something for maintenance of road.

There is a good quantity of blackwood and gum timber on the island, more particularly on the east coast, but it has been killed by the fires. Up to the present the blackwood is still good, being only slightly worm-eaten; a good living could be made by using it now, but if it is left for a few more years it will, no doubt, be useless. For splitting staves there is plenty of blackwood in close proximity to Currie. I understand there is some figured blackwood towards east coast of island.

The gum, in places, is very good, but a lot has suffered from fires; and some measures should be taken to compel settlers firing, to keep fire within their own land.

On Flinders Island, I surveyed one mineral lot, of 20 acres, and five lots under Crown Lands Acts, for an area of 200 acres. There is a good area of land on this island, which, I believe, would be applied for as second class land if it could be purchased without auction. I have, on several occasions, supplied settlers who have asked for second class application forms, and afterwards they have decided not to take the land, for fear of being run by a neighbour, who, perhaps, would not purchase the land, but make the applicant pay more than its value.

APPENDIX D.

REPORT ON EXPLORING TRACK BETWEEN BIRCH INLET, MACQUARIE HARBOUR, TO PORT DAVEY.

HAVING received final instructions from you in Hobart, on the 17th January, 1900, a return was made to Strahan, where all preliminary arrangements were made by the 20th instant, and a start made in the launch *Ella* for Birch Inlet on Monday, the 22nd January, with stores and all necessary requisites; the members of my party being R. A. C. Thirkell, Chas. Bradley, and Ernest Hazell.

The launch arrived at the head of the inlet at 3.30 P.M., and, after discharging our cargo, left for Strahan at 7.30 P.M. on the same day. Close to our landing-place a temporary camp was pitched, and next day a good permanent main depôt fixed, about two hundred yards away, in the shelter of a Manuka scrub—altitude about 45 feet above the harbour, and north of the track at point of commencement.

On the 24th January the track was started, which for the first mile traverses level button-grass plains; then about 30 chains of timber and scrub had to be cut, through which flows the main branch of the Sorell River, the second-largest stream crossed on the journey. Here a large tree, five feet in diameter, was felled, the best flood-crossing obtained on the whole line of track.

Leaving the timber, the route continues over level plains, skirting the eastern side of the west branch of the Sorell River, until the 4½-mile peg is reached: only one intervening clump of timber, 25 chains through, near the river (commencing at the two-mile peg) had to be cut. From the 4½-mile a small rise is ascended, to a low, open morainal terrace between the two rivers, which the line follows until the top-crossing of the main branch is reached, seven and a half miles out. To the 9-mile peg narrower flats, bounded on the east and west respectively by the foot-hills of the D'Aguilar Range and by the Sorell River, were passed over. From here an ascent is made, first along a spur, then round Bradley's Hill to a splendid natural pass between the southern spurs of Mount Direction and a high morainal plateau.

In the pass, about 20 chains past the 10-mile peg, the line passes over the highest altitude ascended between Birch Inlet and Port Davey, 455 feet above sea-level. Northerly from the track a level ledge or terrace extends along the whole length of the D'Aguilar Range, which may eventually be utilised for a railway route.

From the last-mentioned mileage the line continues down the pass on the east side of a small branch of the Wanderer River, to the 12-mile, where another small branch is crossed; here, a slight ascent, and then a descent to the second-largest stream of the Wanderer River, fringed by 30 chains of timber—distance 13 miles out.

The next 3½ miles the line traverses country composed of low undulating hard quartz gravel hills; at this point, the main branch of the Wanderer River is crossed in open, button-grass country. After going over a low divide a good log spans the first branch of the Mainwaring River, erroneously first charted as the source of the Sprent River—afterwards, as the Wanderer. From here, 18½ miles out, the country is a little more broken to the 20-mile peg. For the next 3½ miles good hard spurs are met with; the main and middle branch of the Mainwaring is passed at 21 miles westerly of Moore's Look-out; at the 23½ miles the flats of the 3rd branch of the Mainwaring commence, and end at the 24-mile peg, fifteen chains of the distance being soft, caused by the overflow of the river in bad rains, but not impassable for foot passengers.

An easy ascent is made to the divide between the Mainwaring and Rocky Rivers over hard country, but the descent to the lastnamed river, 27½ miles out, is a little more broken.

The next six miles to Pass Hill, the country is comparatively hard and travelling easy, with the exception of crossing a swampy creek at 30¾ miles. Cawthorn's track, from Russell's Falls River to the Coast, north of the Rocky River, is intersected at 31 miles 29 chains. From Pass Hill to the 34-mile peg, a down-grade is taken to the lower-lying country, between this point and Port Davey, which ranges in altitude from 100 to 180 feet above sea-level. Between the 34 and 37-mile pegs, three fair-sized tributaries of the Giblin, and a few swampy plains are crossed, over which the track is cut through over a mile of timber and scrub. From the 37-mile to the largest stream met with, the main branch of the Giblin River, 42 miles out, the line follows the foot of a low range of gravel hills rising from 50 to 80 feet above the surrounding country, and in this distance three large tributaries of the Giblin River are passed over, the line passing through bands of timber at each stream.

From the Giblin an easy ascent is made to the top of the low range, which is followed to the base of a high mountain range, erroneously charted as a northern continuation of the De Witt Range, the two being separated by a deep stream $47\frac{1}{2}$ miles out. From this point to Kelly Basin, the country is fairly level and hard, no streams of any size being crossed. The line runs along the De Witt Range, sometimes under the foot-hills, at others twenty-five chains away: it ends at high-water-mark, about the centre of the northern shores of Kelly Basin, Port Davey, 60 miles 37 chains from Birch's Inlet, and was completed, with the exception of a little work on the return journey, on 8th May, 1900.

RIVER CROSSINGS.

All rivers, except the Giblin (main branch), have suitable logs for crossing in flood-time. At the Giblin no trees within a reasonable distance of the track could be found; those felled by the party proved failures for the purpose required. About fifty yards down-stream from the track, a good summer log is available, which, on our return trip, had three feet of water over it; after a three hours' wait the river subsided 18 inches, and a crossing, without danger, was effected. Next morning all the log was uncovered. When flood-logs are some distance from the track, direction-boards have been nailed to posts, indicating their whereabouts, viz., at the second crossing of the Sorell River, at the $7\frac{1}{2}$ mile, the log is half a mile up-stream. The river is easily forded in summer months, and it was only occasionally, to save getting wet, that we used the flood-crossing.

At the main branch of the Mainwaring River (21 miles), a good ford near the line can be utilised in fine weather, but the flood-log is about 30 chains east, in a gorge formed by the north extremity of Moore's Look-out. This crossing was obtained after falling a number of trees nearer the track.

At the Rocky River many trees were fallen before one suitable for the purpose was obtained. A good half-flood log crosses the stream close to the track, the high-level one being two chains lower down.

NATURAL FEATURES OF COUNTRY.

On the chart, depicting the route taken, all rivers passed over, and other natural features, have been considerably altered from the original charting, not by guess-work, but by careful chaining, compass-bearings, and research. All prominent features of the country placed on the chart have been obtained by a systematic-prismatic compass survey from bearings taken from the most notable heights along the general course of the track.

New Names.

Round Hill	Stafford Hills	Pass Hill
Bradley Hill	Knife Ridge	Counsel Range
Thirkell Hill	Dolphin Ridge	Mount Gaffney
Hazell Hill	Mount Jean	Mulcahy River
Frederick Hill	Elliott Range	
Brown Hill	Isolated Hill	

Heights taken by Aneroid Barometer subtended.

	Feet.
Main Dépôt, Birch Inlet	35
First-half Dépôt, $4\frac{1}{2}$ -mile peg	45
Summit of Terrace, 5-mile peg	75
Highest point at Round Hill, 5 miles 75 chains	120
Last Crossing, Sorell River, $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles	95
First-half Dépôt (2nd camp), Sorell River Flood Log, $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles	105
Foot of Bradley Hill, 9-mile peg	175
Sorell and Wanderer River Watershed, $10\frac{1}{2}$ miles	455
First Camp, Wanderer River, 13 miles, Bark Dépôt	250
Station (33), 14 miles 5 chains	335
Spur, North Main Branch Wanderer River, 15 miles 50 chains	340
Main Branch Wanderer River, 16 miles 25 chains	175
Spur, north of Hazell Hill, 16 miles 70 chains	250
Second-half Camp, Mainwaring Dépôt, 20 miles 23 chains	210
Spur between Main and Third Branch Mainwaring River, 23 miles	410
Third Branch Mainwaring River, 23 miles 71 chains	325
Divide, between Mainwaring and Rocky Rivers, 25 miles 18 chains	430
Rocky River, $27\frac{1}{2}$ miles	215
Pass between Mount Jean and Cliffe Range, 32 miles	320
Highest point of spur south of pass, 32 miles 69 chains	370
Foot of spur, low-lying country, 34 miles	100
Third-half Camp, 37 miles	100
Main Branch Giblin River (3rd Camp), 42 miles	100
Highest point low range, 43 miles	180
Fourth-half Camp, Isolated Hill, 48 miles 35 chains	150
Fourth Camp, Saddle De Witt Range, 53 miles 20 chains	150
Saddle, 58 miles 20 chains	150

GEOLOGICAL AND MINERALOGICAL SPECIMENS.

Owing to disagreeable experiences hereinafterwards enumerated, sufficient time was not given for a fair examination in this section, and allow me to suggest that in future explorations shorter lengths of track be given to explorers, so as to allow time for a more-extended search for minerals; for, if only indications are found, prospectors will afterwards follow up and make discoveries which will well recoup the department for the time expended.

The whole line of track extends through a zone of rocks belonging to the Silurian Epoch, composed of sandstones, talcose, and mica slates and schists, which lie in the lower lands and saddles. Most of the higher eminences are quartzite, the exceptions being the D'Aguilar and part of the De Witt Range, which are capped with Devonian conglomerate.

The only other geological epoch to enumerate belongs to the Glacial Period. At the sources of the Sorell, Spero, and some of the northern tributaries of the Wanderer, Rivers, are found extensive and deep deposits of morainal matter, furrowed and cut down into regular canyons by the melting of ancient glaciers and eroding influence of existing watercourses, while on the narrow morainal ridges large erratic boulders rest. Also at Mount Gaffney and parts of the De Witt Range this epoch is noticeable, the shoulders of the spurs being grooved and striated. At the southern end of the D'Aguilar Range, on a branch of the Wanderer River, good samples of galena and pyrites were found in some prospecting workings; also, in this vicinity, most of the creeks are auriferous, but none have proved profitable to work. Near Moore's Look-out numerous quartz reefs traverse the country. They appear destitute of minerals, yet, on the spurs, detached pieces of quartz containing tourmaline were picked up. In the Rocky River country, twenty years ago, I discovered, embedded in the schist rocks, small veins and impregnations of copper and iron pyrites, but, owing to the pressure of other work, no time was available for an extended search. The geological formation of rocks along the De Witt Range give favourable indications for a systematic test by prospectors.

PROVISION DEPÔTS.

Depôts were erected, except in one instance, with tents and flies, the only mode in a wet country, where buildings are not available, of keeping provisions for any length of time fit for use. For successful exploration the transit of baggage should be carried out systematically, or a large amount of time will be wasted; for, in a long journey, the work, at the first start, is both arduous and difficult. My manner of proceeding is to fix a half-stage camp seven miles away; to this loads of provisions, varying from 50 lbs. to 75 lbs. in weight are packed, the packer returning unloaded to the starting-point left in the morning. When all the provisions requisite for the journey are brought up to the half camp, a full-stage camp is erected seven or eight miles further on; to this the packers bring up their bedding and outfit, and carry to this camp from the half one. A depôt is left at each full stage when there are a sufficient number of tents to do so. This system is easier for the packers, as they are only loaded half the way, therefore longer distances can be accomplished; it saves carrying bedding and kit backwards and forwards, and the provisions are kept well up with the party, and sufficient amounts left at each depôt for the return journey.

Stages.—The first half-stage was short, as there was no suitable camping-place, except at the eight-mile, which was too far for a starting stage; however, we used this ground for after-operations.

Main depôt, Birch Inlet.	
1st half-stage, spur, Sorell River.....	4½ miles
Ditto, 8-mile, Sorell River (after camp) ...	8 "
1st stage, Wanderer River (bark depôt)	13 "
2nd half-stage, Mainwaring depôt	20½ "
2nd stage, Rocky River	27½ "
3rd half-stage, depôt, Giblin River tributary...	37 "

From the last depôt we travelled to Port Davey, intending to work back from there, the s.s. *Moonah* having previously landed a stock of provisions for our use at that end of the track, saving a large cost in the heavy overland transit. On reaching the hut where the goods were left, all had disappeared. After a fruitless search, and crossing the mouth of the Davey River to the settlement with Bradley on two pine logs, we had to return to the main depôt, Birch Inlet, after a most annoying trip on pretty short commons. Details were reported to you verbally, and by progress report, so there is no use to enlarge on the matter. After the traverse and chaining were completed to the 3rd half-stage, the track and traverse were carried on simultaneously to Port Davey, and it was found shorter stages were more favourable for speedy work, viz.—

3rd stage, Giblin River	42 miles
4th half-stage, Isolated Hill	48½ "
4th stage, saddle De Witt Range.....	53½ "
5th half-stage, Kelly's Basin.....	60½ "

To the 37-mile depôt is a stage and a half from Port Davey.

MARKING TRACKS.

All trees through timbered country have been blazed fore and aft, and the lines pegged through for the traverse. Plains and open country are marked as hereunder:—

Description of of Pegs.	Average length above ground.	Diameter.	Average distance apart.	How Marked.	Descrip- tion of Marks.	Size of figures.	Cairns.	Description of Wood
1. Line-pegs	3 ft. to 4 ft.	2½ in. to 4 in.	2-50 chs.		(21) 1470	...		Principally <i>Euca- lyptus</i> .
2. Intersection	3 ft. to 4 ft.	3 in. to 4 in.	...	Pencil	XXV.	...		Ditto.
3. Mile-pegs	2 ft. to 2½ ft.	4 in. to 5 in.	...	Cut and pencilled over	M	1½ in. to 2 in.		<i>Eucalyptus</i> , hick- ory, and black- wood.
4. half-mile pegs	2 ft. to 2½ ft.	3 in. to 4 in.	...	Pencilled	25½ MILES	1½ in. to 2 in.	All well stoned in bad driving ground.	Ditto.

My object has been to make the track as short as possible, following the lowest available passes through the country, and no other practical route can be obtained at a less altitude. The only grade up which a horse could not travel is between the 12½ and 13 miles; but this can be obviated by zig-zagging or circling up the spur, or altered, as shown on the plan, by taking a railway grade, starting in at the 11 miles, and ending at the 19 miles. This alteration is from four to five miles longer than the present route, and passes through timbered-sidling country, which requires a properly-graded line to make it of any practical value. This would have taken the best part of the summer to accomplish, besides being, when completed, useless for prospectors to walk along, considering the easy walking and shortness of the present route.

Another alteration, to save soft ground and a flooded river, should start in at the 34-mile peg, and follow the foot-hills of a low range of gravel hills round to the 36½-mile peg, another additional mile in distance. This, also, might be recommended at the first start of the track to the 5-mile, where harder ground for road construction can be obtained.

Other minor alterations, such as rounding gullies or easing grades, can be observed by any bushman with average ability. In many parts pegs were very difficult to obtain, and mileage posts, in some instances, were carried four and five miles. Towards the end of the track the pegs—green *Eucalyptus* saplings—are smaller than the standard size, but are placed at an average distance of two chains. At each end of the track boards, with directions cut into the wood, have been nailed up.

TIMBER.

The timber met with is principally *Eucalyptus*, intermixed with myrtle, blackwood, and hickory, or with *Eucryphia*, celery-top pine, and hickory, all with a sprinkling of bauera scrub. Its limited extent makes it of no commercial value, except, locally, for sleepers or road-making. It is rarely found, except along the banks of the larger streams.

Scrub.—This embraces ti-tree and bauera scrubs, or clumps of gum saplings. The longest patch of timber (50 chains) cut through extended over the first branches of the Giblin River; the most extensive piece of scrub over the third branch of the Mainwaring River, 32 chains.

	M.	O.	L.
Timber cut	1	19	18
Scrub cut	4	57	51
Total amount	6	76	69

SOIL.

No agricultural land was met with during the trip. All hills and spurs are barren, and almost destitute of soil. Some of the plains are soft and swampy; others, hard and gravelly.

GENERAL REMARKS.

It will be seen by the chart furnished that the alternative route has been laid out, the country being better in all respects for track construction. A connection with Piner's Point, which is opposite the old settlement, could be made by following Blackwater Creek to its source; then passing over a low saddle between Castle Hill and the De Witt Range, which is the divide between the watershed of the De Witt and Deep rivers; the line afterwards would follow a tributary of the Giblin River, round Mount Gaffney, to the main branch of the Giblin River at the 42-mile peg. The only difficulty in this route is overcoming a gorge, formed by the last-mentioned stream, about a mile east from our present crossing. A connection, for many reasons, is advisable with the settlement, but, instead of marking the above-mentioned long track, I recommend the short route over the White Horse Plains, round the southern termination of the De Witt Range, which is a quarter of the distance.

The two coast tracks I did not attempt, owing to the loss of our provisions at Port Davey, which caused a month's loss of time in replacing supplies packed from Macquarie Harbour, and in travelling to and from Port Davey. These branches would have been completed comfortably by the time of our return but for this dastardly theft.

On the homeward return three days were spent in determining the junctions of the tributaries of the Mainwaring, Wanderer, and Spero Rivers, which, hitherto, have been charted very incorrectly.

I regret to state that bush depôts are not treated in the same honourable manner as in the early days of the West Coast, for, besides losing all our stores at Port Davey, a lot of petty pilfering was carried on at our main and other depôts. Acts like these are far more criminal than housebreaking, because the lives of men are often dependent on the unprotected stores left behind.

It is with great pleasure I have to inform you that the members of my party worked with right good will, especially Bradley and Hazell, who had the greatest share of the heavy packing. No dangers, difficulties, nor shortness of supplies brought any complaining or bickering to mar the success of the undertaking.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient Servant,

T. B. MOORE, *Explorer.*

E. A. COUNSEL, *Esq., F.R.G.S., Surveyor-General, Hobart.*

REPORT ON EXPLORING TRACK FROM THE RED HILLS TO ELDON BLUFF.

Zeehan, 27th June, 1900.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to report as follows on surveying and cutting a track from Red Hills to Eldon Bluff:—According to instructions received from your office, I commenced the survey on 1st February, 1900.

THE ROUTE.

Commencing on the Lake Selina Silver Mining Company's 80-acre section, No. 1197-93M, the track was taken in a northerly direction along Anthony Creek for about a distance of 1 mile 44 chains through to the mineral section charted in the name of P. P. Quinn, No. 3297-93M (67 acres). At this point the actual survey commenced, leaving the mineral-sections on the south-west, of which only a rough bearing has been taken: the rest of the survey is made with theodolite, giving magnetic bearings. From Quinn's section to the Murchison River, a distance of four and a half ($4\frac{1}{2}$) miles, the track runs in a north-easterly direction. On either side of the river there are precipitous cliffs, ranging up to five hundred feet in height; and this is the only place where a crossing could be made, which was done by felling a tree and placing a hand-rail on it thirty feet above flood level, and about twenty chains from its junction with the Canning River. From the river the track runs in a southerly direction for about three and a half ($3\frac{1}{2}$) miles, when a high table-land is met. An easterly course was then taken, along a fairly level spur, until the Eldon Bluff was reached—a distance of about eight miles—a fairly good grade being obtained. The track ends at two small lakes, which are charted, but not named. As will be seen by chart deposited, a good route has been shown for a pack-track. The reason for deviating south from the Murchison River was the impracticability of crossing the Canning River. Owing to its being too wide to span with a tree, it would be necessary to erect a cage for foot-passengers. If decided, in future, to extend the track, a connection can be made with Innis' track, at Pelion West, or the track can be carried on to connect with the overland route from Lake St. Clair. Keeping on the table-land, a connection can be made with the Lake River district coming off the Western Tier, in the vicinity of Saundridge or Connorville estates.

THE GRADE.

From Lake Selina to the Murchison River a good grade is obtained; from there, for three miles and a half, to the table-land, is the steepest part of the track, the balance of the route chosen being good walking. Through the timbered country the track is well cut out, and trees marked fore and aft. All logs have either been cut out or notched in a convenient manner, to allow travellers to get over them. The button-grass and open country is well staked, making the track easy to follow. The last mile of the track is not very well cut out, as, owing to the wire-like nature of the scrub (a kind of mountain ti-tree), the tools would not stand.

A DEPÔT HUT.

It was found impossible to build a depôt hut at Lake Augusta, owing to the scarcity of splitting-timber, and it would not be advisable to erect a chock-and-log with calico roof, owing to the severe weather which is experienced at this high altitude.

MILE-POSTS.

At every mile on the track, mile-posts, painted white, are placed, with mileage stencilled thereon.

MINING FEATURES.

From Quin's section to the Murchison the country is quartzite and slate, which practically continues to the Eldon Bluff. At about two and a half miles from the Murchison River there is a fairly large hill of micaceous schist. Towards the Eldon Bluff the country changes into sandstone and limestone, evidently a continuation of the Barn Bluff strike of country. About two miles north-east of the Eldon Bluff there is a hill which is simply one mass of fossils. There has been a little prospecting done on a branch of the Canning, running from Lake Augusta. The work done has exposed a foot of arsenical pyrites in a flat, and several of the creeks passed over showed promising indications of alluvial gold, but time would not permit of their being tested. The general features of the country passed through are decidedly in favour of minerals being discovered.

GENERAL.

One great drawback in cutting the track was the severe weather experienced. During the twenty weeks my party were engaged there were not seven consecutive days of fine weather for most of the time, while it rained, accompanied by snow and fogs, for weeks at a time. The fogs were so dense that it was impossible to see three chains ahead. In future, it would greatly facilitate operations in cutting tracks in similar country if a commencement were made in November, so as to finish before the rainy season. The party at first engaged consisted of Marcus Hardwicke, William Johnstone, and myself. During the last seven weeks only one man was employed, Johnstone returning to Zeehan, and it would have occupied too much time if I had returned to Zeehan to replace him; moreover, Hardwicke would have been left by himself.

THE DISTANCE.

From Lake Selina to Eldon Bluff is a distance of twenty miles, with another two miles fifty-four chains (to connect with the Red Hills pack-track), which has been well staked and chained and is fit for horse traffic. All chaining has been done on horizontal measurement, and aneroid heights taken every mile. Aneroid set at Zeehan railway station.

SIGN-BOARDS.

Sign-boards have been erected, painted white, and stencilled, at principal places along the track.

I have the honour to remain,
Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

ROBT. EWART.

E. A. COUNSEL, *Esq.*, *F.R.G.S.*, *Surveyor-General*, *Hobart*.

WEST COAST TRACKS.

THE following Extracts are taken from a Report furnished by Mr. J. L. Moore on the marking of a track from a point on the Linda track, at its intersection with the Franklin River, towards the Gordon River, near Pyramid Island:—

I started from Hobart on the 24th January, with a party of four men, and reached Franklin River on the 29th. My first work was to secure a bridge over the Franklin, by felling a tree across the stream. This was accomplished, but not until six trees had been felled; and there is now a permanent tree-bridge there, and I have also secured permanent tree-bridges over all rivers crossed.

As the weather was exceptionally wet, and the creeks flooded, I was unable to have them tried for gold or minerals, though that portion of country south of Jane River, is, in my opinion, well worth prospecting, and I think it would be advisable for the Government to complete this track through to the Gordon River early next summer, as I have not the slightest doubt that this country will, eventually, be thoroughly prospected, as it is undeniably the best I have been in along the route.

AGRICULTURAL LAND.

There is very little good agricultural land through the route traversed, with the exception of about 300 acres on both sides of the eastern branches of Loddon River, where we found the silver and black wattle growing. On either bank of the Jane River there is very good land, also carrying wattles. I cannot state the area of this last, though I should say there were several miles on each bank, for a width of 5 or 6 chains.

TIMBER.

On the northern side of Calder's pass, there is an extensive area of gum-top stringy bark, and at the $13\frac{1}{2}$ miles are some large peppermint trees. At $14\frac{1}{2}$ miles, west branch Jane River, some very good Huon pines grow, and again at 23 to 27 miles, Huon pine and a few blackwood trees; but the former are rather small; the large trees seem to have died off, there being a number lying dead on the flats and bank of the river. At the 25 miles, I found two logs with initial "B" cut thereon. These must have been hewn much higher up the river, as there is not any trace of trees having been cut on that portion which the track traverses. From the starting-point, the track passes through some small belts of peppermint and white, gum-top stringy-bark, but there are no extensive belts beyond those already mentioned.

GENERAL.

With this Report, I also forward a sketch plan of the geographical features of the country.

In order to accurately locate mountains, hills, rivers, creeks, &c., I took my starting-point from the 32-mile peg from Nive River, on Linda Track, and made as accurate a traverse as I could, and connecting-line, by prismatic compass, to a point above the west branch of Jane River, 10 miles 31 chains. Here I erected a flagstaff, and, taking my bearings to a bare hill, from known trigonometrical mountains, I located this; then, taking the connecting-line to a low, prominent hill on the south end of (charted Surveyors' Range), and so on, I found that the Jane River had been inaccurately charted; and in regard to the plan deposited, I have, to the best of my ability, taken the greatest care possible with every sight I have taken, to accurately locate and traverse it, my prismatic compass, aneroid, and clinometer being in good adjustment throughout. All heights have been checked and rechecked.

The track is well cut out from start to finish. In the scrub the trees are well blazed, fore and aft, right through, and the open country well pegged. In the timbered country, the fallen trees have been well notched to admit of a free passage for any foot-passenger. Mile-posts are erected along the track, right through, with the mileage from Linda Track chiselled in Roman figures in each post.

From $14\frac{1}{2}$ to 16 miles the track is rather steep, as I was obliged to take it on to a rather high plateau, owing to the dense scrub in the lower country; and the descent, also, from $20\frac{1}{2}$ to 22 miles is steep. Along the Jane River it is almost flat, excepting in one or two places.

CONNECTING TRAVERSE $10\frac{1}{2}$ MILES.

The lines are run straight by prismatic compass from intersection to intersection, and accurately chained. In timbered country, the trees are blazed, fore and aft, and the open is well pegged. This rough traverse is not so well cut out as the track, but it is one mile shorter in the first ten miles.

On account of the state of the weather the work has been extremely unsatisfactory, the men and myself being wet through day after day, very little time being lost. It was impossible to push the work ahead any quicker than was done. My party consisted of Messrs. R. Nicholson, Jno. C. Meredith, Percy Wise, and Jno. M. Livingstone.

Livingstone, after 7 weeks' work, was forced to return to Hobart, on account of ill health; Wise, also, was obliged to return, for the same reason, after 12 weeks and two days.

Nicholson and Meredith arrived, with myself, in Hobart, on 22nd May, having been 17 weeks out. Out of a total of 113 days, 58, or slightly more than half the number occupied on the work, were wet.

I have, &c.

JAS. L. A. MOORE.

E. A. COUNSEL, *Esq.*, *F.R.G.S.*, *Surveyor-General, Hobart.*