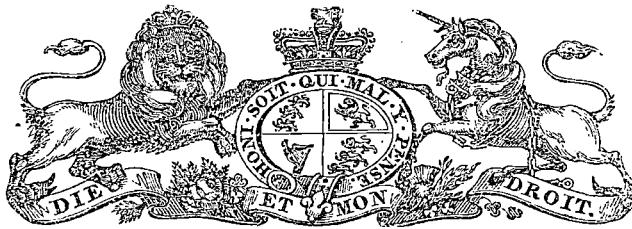


(No 71.)



1900.

---

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

---

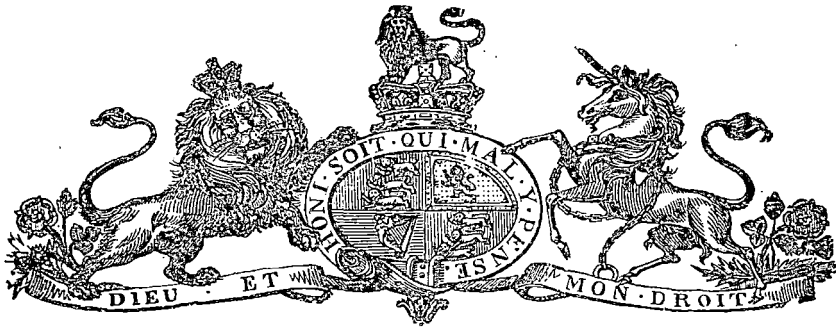
AGENT-GENERAL IN LONDON:

REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1899-1900.

---

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

Cost of printing—£6 1s. 6d.



## REPORT OF THE AGENT-GENERAL FOR TASMANIA IN LONDON FOR THE YEAR 1899-1900.

*Office of the Agent-General for Tasmania,  
Westminster Chambers,  
5, Victoria-street, London, S.W., 17th August, 1900.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to open my Report for the Year ending 30th June, 1900, by joining in the expression of great satisfaction, which finds voice throughout the Empire, that the highest hopes of the people of Australia, the birth of the Commonwealth, has been realised.

It is cause for much congratulation that, amidst the incongruous elements of divided interests, all have, at last, converged to one point, and that, by judicious compromise, Queensland has been induced, unreservedly, to cast in her lot with this rising nation.

Aided and abetted by the Crown in framing a Constitution befitting nobler aspirations and anticipating the important destiny of a great people, Australia will enter upon its new birth with the opening century no longer a divided heptarchical form of Government, but strengthened by the bond of union, and ennobled by nationality. Gifted with great wealth of climate, treasure, and territory, the possibilities of the Commonwealth are boundless. May it rise to that height of importance and usefulness to the coming generations to which her sons aspire.

The closing weeks of the period I am reporting upon were much occupied by me in my duties with co-delegates sent to confer with and advise the Imperial Authorities upon the Commonwealth Bill, some clauses needing to be redrafted, to leave an open door for West Australia to enter as an original State; and upon Clause 74, the "Appeal Clause," upon which issue was joined by the Imperial Government, the Government of Queensland, the Banking and Commercial interests of many of the Federating Colonies. Happily, the wisest counsels prevailed, and the delegates, myself excepted, have returned, taking with them the Bill, and, with the exception of a minor Amendment, nothing but the Bill which was accepted by the people of Australia.

It has been an enigma to me that, while the delegates' instructions were so definite upon the purpose to secure Imperial endorsement of the plebiscites of the Australian people, there was so much vacillation shown in the Colonies from time to time upon the point of Appeal. It had been dealt with effectively by compromises in the Conventions held, and by the Parliaments which reviewed, and the people who accepted, the Bill. The end of all difficulties, however, was reached in a happy solution, found in the following Clause, as amended:—

*Appeal to Queen in Council.*—No appeal shall be permitted to the Queen in Council from a decision of the High Court upon any question howsoever arising as to the limits, *inter se*, of the Constitutional powers of the Commonwealth and those of any State or States, or as to the limits, *inter se*, of the Constitutional powers of any two or more States, unless the High Court shall certify that the question is one which ought to be determined by Her Majesty in Council:

The High Court may so certify if satisfied that, for any special reason, the Certificate should be granted, and thereupon an appeal shall lie to Her Majesty in Council on the question without further leave.

Except as provided in this Section, this Constitution shall not impair any right which the Queen may be pleased to exercise by virtue of Her Royal prerogative to grant special leave of appeal from the High Court to Her Majesty in Council. The Parliament may make laws limiting the matters in which such leave may be asked, but the proposed laws containing any such limitation shall be reserved by the Governor-General for Her Majesty's pleasure.

While I am writing up this Report, I await with much hope, and less patience, the news that West Australia has become an original State.

To the people of Tasmania I again offer my congratulations upon the larger sphere opened to their enterprise.

Enriched with all the bounties of nature, and with water-powers unequalled in any other similarly contracted area of the world's surface, and eminently fitted by climate for a manufacturing entre, it will be lack of enterprise only which will handicap her people in the coming race for progress, and in the immense developments of the coming decade of years.

There is already traceable to the spirit of union begotten by this important step in Australia, recognition by Imperial authorities, which is very desirable; inquiries respecting and concessions of Colonial claims; the better acknowledgment of mutual interests; the grip of the hand of friendship instead of the cold shoulder of indifference. I shall find occasion in this Report to allude to examples of practical utility, the spirit of this new Imperialism which is breathed into the departmental life of Downing-street, the War Office, the British Parliament, and the people.

Amongst the most important examples of this new spirit is the amendment of the Trust Funds Investment Act; the granting to Australians of Commissions in the Imperial Army and Navy; and removal of disabilities to inherit in the United Kingdom by the issue of a marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister (The Colonial Marriage Bill.)

*Trust Funds Investment.*—I had the pleasure, in my Financial Dispatch, No. 379-00, dated 6th instant, to send a copy of the Bill introduced into the House of Lords by the Lord Chancellor to enable trustees to invest in colonial securities. I understand that there is every chance of the Bill going through this Session, and that the Government will actively support it. This would be a fitting conclusion to active representations that have been made by the Colonial Governments to the Imperial Cabinet for many years.

Its far-reaching effects are better seen in the following tables of:—

“Eligible,”  
“Ineligible,” and  
“Doubtful” Stocks.

Condensed into a few words, its provisions are, that Trustees may not invest or buy above par any Stock redeemable within 15 years, nor any Stock at a price exceeding 15 per cent. above par; the result being that all Colonial Stocks having more than 15 years to run can be bought if the premium is under 15 per cent.; and the only ineligible stocks I can at present trace are Natal, West Australia, and New South Wales four per cents.; because, with prolonged currency, they stand 116-117.

Under the provisions of the Bill all Colonial Stocks can be tendered for on flotation at par or under; and, at such a time, the co-operation of Trustees' Capital will be very valuable.

In the ineligible list are included stocks (marked x) which, although not at present, will be so in the course of six months. Stocks also are included as ineligible, of which the Colonial Governments have the option of redemption within 15 years, although that option would not preclude their eligibility if they could be purchased at par or under.

Some provisions of the Colonial Stocks Act will need amendment or adoption by the Colonies, as to which you will be advised later.

#### ELIGIBLE.

Colony.	Percentage.	Amount.	Date of Maturity.	Quotation, 25 July, 1900.	Net Return.
		£			£ s. d.
Canada .....	3 per cent. Reg.	10,052,321	1938	102	2 18 10
Ditto .....	2½ per cent. Ins.	2,000,000	1947	93	2 13 10
Cape of Good Hope .....	4 per cent. Reg.	2,091,552	1917-23	109	3 13 4
Ditto .....	4 per cent. Ins.	3,733,195	1923	111	3 12 1
Ditto .....	3½	5,656,780	1929-49	107	3 5 5
Ditto .....	3	4,357,400	1933-43	96	3 2 6
Natal .....	4	296,181	1927	112	3 11 5
Ditto .....	3	1,000,000	1929-49	98	3 1 2
New South Wales.....	3½	16,500,000	1924	106	3 6 0
Ditto .....	3½	12,826,200	1918	105	3 6 8
Ditto .....	3	5,500,000	1935	101	2 19 4
New Zealand.....	4	29,150,302	1929	112	3 11 4
Ditto .....	3½	6,161,167	1940	106	3 6 0
Ditto .....	3	3,634,005	1945	98	3 1 2
Queensland .....	3½	8,516,734	1921-4-30	103	3 7 11
Ditto .....	3½	1,250,000	1945	107	3 5 5
Ditto .....	3	1,500,000	1922-47	94	3 3 9
South Australia.....	3½ per cent. Reg.	2,517,800	1939	107	3 5 5
Ditto .....	3	1,760,100	1916 or after	94	3 3 9
Ditto .....	3	1,000,000	ditto	69	£25% to be paid
Victoria .....	4 per cent. Ins.	6,000,000	1920	111	3 12 1
Ditto .....	3½	12,000,000	1921-36	104	3 7 3
Ditto .....	3	1,600,000	1929-49	97	3 1 10
Western Australia.....	3	1,000,000	1927	93	3 4 6
Tasmania .....	4	1,000,000	1920-40	111	3 12 1
Ditto .....	3½	3,455,500	ditto	104	3 7 3
Imperial Consuls .....	...	...	...	98	2 16 0

## INELIGIBLE.

Colony.	Percentage.	Amount.	Date of Maturity.	Quotation.
		£		
Canada .....	4 per cent. Reg.	7,783,800	1904-5-08	106
Ditto .....	4     "	4,153,314	1910	107
Ditto .....	3½   "	4,591,400	1909-34	106
Ditto .....	4     "	3,471,600	1910-35	108
Cape .....	4 per cent. Ins.	9,997,566	1916-36	109x
Ditto .....	3½   "	31,714,917	1914-39	104
Queensland .....	4     "	10,856,900	1915-24	112
South Australia.....	4     "	7,773,300	1916-36	110x
Ditto .....	3     "	859,500	1916-26	94x
Victoria .....	4     "	3,409,300	1907	103
Ditto .....	4     "	9,402,900	1908-13-19	109
Ditto .....	4     "	2,107,000	1911-26	108
West Australia .....	4     "	1,876,000	1911-31	107
Ditto .....	3½   "	750,000	1915-35	104
Ditto .....	3     "	3,750,000	1915-35	93
Ditto .....	3     "	1,100,000	1916-36	94

## DOUBTFUL.

Natal .....	4 per cent. Ins.	3,026,444	1937	115-117.
New South Wales.....	4     "	9,686,300	1933	115-117
West Australia .....	4     "	975,350	1934	114-116

*Samoa.*—I have to express my deep regret that the Samoa question has been settled one year too soon for the interests of Australia. Under the Commonwealth I cannot doubt that its voice would have been heeded.

Joint representations were made to the Imperial Government on the necessity for the retention of British authority over the Islands, but the Agreement with the other Powers concerned has settled the question.

*Commission in Imperial Army.*—Representations having been made by the Agents-General for neighbouring Colonies relative to the offer of Cadetships to each of the Colonial Universities, I was enabled by you to advise the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies that you concurred in the action that had been taken, and I was glad to be able to report in my Dispatch No. 64/141/00, dated 16th March last, that the Military Authorities had consented to a temporary renewal of the system giving such Cadetships. In connection with this subject, it is satisfactory to note that more Commissions in the Imperial Army than formerly are to be offered to Officers in the Colonial Forces.

*Deceased Wife's Sister's Bill (Colonial).*—This Bill was presented by the Right Honourable Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal, the High Commissioner for Canada, and passed the House of Lords by a large majority. It received the active support of my colleagues, the Colonial Agents-General, and myself, and no efforts were spared to ensure its passage. It is to be regretted that a Bill with such important social bearings on our Colonies should probably be unable to come before the House of Commons this Session, but there is no fear of important opposition when it has reached that stage, and it is hoped it may be taken up by Ministers next Session, if not during this, and thus settle the vexed questions arising from the incongruous facts that Queen's law in the Colonies on such an important social institution, is not Queen's law in the United Kingdom.

*Pacific Cable.*—I have kept you posted as to the actions on this side in connection with this subject. The action of the Imperial Government caused some disappointment, but certain of the Colonies will undoubtedly bring the matter again to the front before long. In the meantime the scheme of the Eastern Extension, Australasia, and China Telegraph Company for a cable *via* South Africa, touching at Seychelles, Cocos, and Diego Garcia has received considerable favour, and on the fourteenth of April last, in conjunction with the Agents-General for West Australia and South Australia, I signed on your behalf, an agreement with that Company for the laying of a cable between Durban and Australia, and for the reduction of rates between Europe and Australasia. Copies of this Agreement were forwarded to you under cover of my Dispatch No. 236, dated the 27th April last, which discloses your present advantages as signatories of that Agreement. It is unlikely that the Australian Continental Governments, or if so, that the Commonwealth Government, will stand aloof from the interim advantages in tariff this Agreement gives, especially as the very much higher prices of copper and india-rubber will add, it is estimated, one-third to the cost originally calculated for the Pacific cable, and very possibly delay its purpose. The Governments

interested—the Imperial, Canadian, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, and New Zealand—are preparing to advertise for tender for this cable contract.

Possibly copies of the specification may speedily follow this.

*Fremantle as a Port of Call.*—Some correspondence has taken place on the proposed substitution of Fremantle for Albany as a port of call by mail steamer, copies of which you have been supplied with. I have not yet been advised of the views of the Government relative to the proposals of the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies brought under notice by my Dispatch No 57/292/00, dated the 10th May, but from various cables published in the press in this country it would appear that the Government of West Australia is ready to indemnify the other Colonial Governments in the event of the contract-time being exceeded by a call at Fremantle. The right honourable gentleman was recommended that the substitution of that port might be agreed to.

But from various cables published in the press in this country, it appears as if that recommendation has not been received with favour in Australia. I await further instructions: I would point out that any minor delay might well be made up on the voyage, calling at Albany being abandoned.

*Contracts placed for Colonial products.*—The following contracts have been placed by this Department with the Military Authorities for jams for the use of the British forces in South Africa viz.:—Messrs. Jones and Co., Hobart, 200,000 1-lb. tins (plum, greengage, apricot, and gooseberry jams); Messrs. Jones and Co., Hobart, 50,000 1-lb. tins (apricot jam); Messrs. Moore and Co., Hobart, 100,000 1-lb tins (apricot, plum, blackcurrant, and gooseberry jams).

Efforts were also made to place other contracts for oats, potatoes, evaporated fruits, jams, and preserves, without success; and an offer of a Tasmanian firm of coachbuilders or wheelwrights to build transport waggons was also brought under the consideration of the Army Contract Department. I was enabled to send, for the service of this inquirer, a copy of the War Office specification for the building of such waggons.

These supplies, and the important shipments of oats from Tasmania to South Africa, have been a very practical introduction of Tasmanian products to a newer market, from which much may be hoped.

I recommend Messrs. Jones and Co. to make a speciality for this market of tinned apricots, and especially of tinned Gansel's and Bergamot pears. The representatives of those sort of tinned fruits at present marketed here, whether from California or elsewhere, are equal to Tasmanian in appearance, but comparatively tasteless, while the Gansel's Bergamot gathered here fully ripe have aroma, syrup, and flavour far superior to all pears, and the apricots also are alike preferable. Windfall Bergamots might be utilised. I am writing of Jones and Co.'s samples kindly placed at my disposal, and of which products I have heard unbounded, but not unmerited praise wherever they travelled.

The Store prices for sale of these now marketed here from America are—Apricots, 1 lb., 9½d., Pears, 1 lb., 10½d.; Tasmanian will realise better prices.

*Advertising.*—I have no funds at my disposal for such a purpose. I have been unable to accomplish much in this way, but no means have been spared to keep the Colony well before the public. Wherever possible, and that is very frequently, the column of the daily press throughout the United Kingdom are well utilised by me, and information is published at every opportunity. Information now supplied by you to the press by cable is a new departure. I have tried to impress upon the Government the value of such prompt information, and now it is supplied upon a more important scale I believe it will be continued with much benefit.

Your Revenue returns, volume of trade, output of metals, are items of great interest to the public here. Other States are constantly before the public in a stream of such information.

It stirs the life of capital and commerce where, without such prompt information, there would be stagnation.

The fine collection of Tasmanian views selected by me in the Colony has been exhibited at the Crystal Palace and elsewhere, and finally enriches the walls of this office. Exhibited to the best advantage, they excite much admiration.

During the past winter season lantern slides were lent all over the country, being shown principally in large manufacturing, mining, and agricultural centres. Those in use are getting very dilapidated through continual wear, and it is hoped that those which should have been delivered here by Mr. Haviland, some considerable time back, may be sent here without delay, otherwise, the efforts of this Department in this direction must be greatly curtailed. (See A.G., No. 301, 25-500).

*Distributing Information.*—Careful distribution continues of various publications connected with the Colony. Official handbooks, Walch's Almanac, Mining Regulations, Secretary of Mines Reports, Quarterly Mining Reports, Surveyor-General of Lands' Reports, Survey-maps, &c., are all sent out as widely as possible.

The forwarding of Tasmanian publications to the Libraries, Institutions here, &c., has had to be discontinued. It must be recollected that there are close on two thousand such places in this

country, and to send to each, publications, three, and sometimes four times a year, with the present work on hand, is quite beyond the capacity of the present staff. A special list is kept and works, as received, are regularly sent to the people on that list, but publications should be sent out broadcast to be valuable, and also, before the information given therein is out of date.

The services of a junior at 11s. 6d. per week, which enabled the prompt distribution, have by instructions, been discontinued; I repeat my advice that such assistance be re-engaged.

I am awaiting a supply of Crown Lands Guides, the stock having run out. I have had a few copies of an illustrated Tourist Guide sent me by the Union Steamship Company, and which will be very useful. I suggest that a larger supply may be sent from the Colony, together with a quantity of the illustrated guides, which, I understand, are issued by the Tasmanian Tourist Associations.

Walch's Red Book and the Union Steamship Tourists' Guide are by far the most useful for distribution here, and their circulation should not be parsimoniously restricted.

*S.A. Campaign.*—During the last few months the whole interest of the nation has been centred on the war in South Africa, and the world has seen the practical loyalty of the British Colonies in rallying around the flag of the Mother Country, making common cause in the upholding of the honour and prestige of the Empire. It is gratifying to all that, in the spontaneous outburst resulting in the subscription patriotic funds and sending of well-equipped troops, Tasmania has borne her full share nobly, and is highly eulogised.

Reports of the loyal rejoicings in Tasmania—second to none in the world on the various successes to British Arms—have been received here with greatest pleasure, and, in some restricted circles, by a surprise that Tasmania had any common cause with Imperial interests.

On the occasion of the Australian delegates visiting Windsor by command, Her Majesty was graciously pleased personally to express the great pleasure Australia had given to Her Majesty by noble gifts and splendid help of forces in South Africa.

Tasmania and the Australian Colonies have been especially prominent before the British public in particular, and the world in general, through the past year. The event of the century, the realised aspirations of Australian Union, the work of years focussed into one prominence, had been sufficient of itself to make known worldwide the growing importance of Tasmania, and the visits of the Australian delegates on that errand were extended to the great centres of learning, commerce, and manufactures; but of paramount importance in the sense of this paragraph has lived another influence, an unhappy cause, but out of which many of the happiest results may spring. Certainly Tasmania has asserted herself. Her people and progress as a loyal off-shoot, but yet integral part of the Empire, are talked of and bepraised here by tens of millions daily.

All other things and themes are as nothing compared with the glow that lights up the countenances of men as friend meets friend, and the Tasmanian contingent to South Africa is talked of, their prowess and thrilling experiences recounted.

All are proud of Tasmania and of her sons, and of the parents who have given of their children, and are bereft and sorrowing ones, who have lost kindred in a cause which they believe to be righteous. The gallant Cameron and the Tasmanian contingent have been a splendid advertisement of Tasmania and her patriotism.

#### FRUIT SEASON, 1900.

During the past season the public sales have been attended, and notes of the prices realised thereat, and the condition of the fruit generally, reported upon.

Mr. Ely, whose many years of experience has rendered him expert in this matter, having furnished a record of condition and prices of each shipment, and notified the circumstances which affected the sales prejudicially or otherwise, it is unnecessary for me to enter into further detail than will be found in the enclosed tabulated Statement of the prices of the principal varieties.

(*Schedule A*).—The quantity brought to this country this year is in excess of last. I haven't precise figures, but the number was, approximately, 164,000 cases against 150,000 last year.

For the first two or three weeks' arrivals the quality left a lot to be desired—evidently shippers had a difficulty in getting good fruit to fill up the space taken—afterwards, as the season was more advanced, the shipments were up to the average. There is but little to remark on regarding packing. The shippers fully understand the proper methods, and, on the whole, although some are careless in this respect, there was not much cause for complaint. In the picking and grading there is still much left to be desired, and one sometimes wonders whether some of the shippers will ever learn the necessity of careful picking and judicious grading of the fruit. A very large quantity, this year, has been badly spotted, and ought not to have left the Colony, and when some of the Tasmanian varieties are compared with those from Victoria and South Australia, it is readily understood why the latter should be, as is stated, an average of 2s. a case higher than Tasmanian sorts. The comparison is not pleasant. The greater excellence of the Australian fruit must be either due to the fact that much smaller quantities are sent, or that compulsory grading, &c., is having a beneficial effect. Then the question resolves itself into "Would Victorian shippers maintain the degree of excellence without the incentive of 10d. net per bushel bonus?" That question can only be solved in course of time, when the bounty will have ceased, and its accompanying legislative compulsory effect neutralised.

The Commonwealth will solve that question, when all the growers will compete upon one plane, viz.—the quality of their product unaided by bounty. At the same time, it must, in justice to our local fruit-growers, be stated that a very large quantity sent from Tasmania was very good indeed, and for flavour and appearance, would compare favourably with any sent to this country. Where the Australian shippers score is in the picking, grading, and all-round excellence of their shipments as a whole.

There have been no really experimental shipments this season, but three large outside steamers have brought fruit cargoes in the usual cold store. The condition of two of them was fair only, but the *Persic* landed her fruit in excellent condition. In all three shipments there was much poor fruit, but that could be readily understood when it is considered that, for outside vessels, engagements have often to be entered into hurriedly, and good fruit is not always available at short notice.

The White Star Line steamers have shown that they can carry fruit equally as well as any of the mail steamers, and without attempting to draw comparisons as to the methods employed (which are, after all, to a great extent, technical questions for engineers), I must say that the system employed on the *Persic*, judging from this first shipment, should give the most excellent results. Mr. Ely reports that he went all over the holds, and did not see a single wet case.

If, for next season, engagements are entered into with this line for their steamers to call at Hobart for fruit, care must be exercised that deliveries are fitted carefully in with those by the mail steamers as to time of arrival, to obviate two consignments arriving together, and that the voyage should be accelerated. The *Persic* took nine weeks, which is a dangerous duration of voyage for perishable cargo. And such a fiasco as occurred when her cargo was sold ought to be avoided. That week saw the *Omrak*, the *Aberdeen*, and the *Persic* all in at once, and the total number of cases offered for sale was 55,000 (not 45,000, as stated in my preliminary Report.) The result was that prices fell at an alarming rate on a glutted market, and, what is worse, kept down for the rest of the season, and it is very doubtful whether shippers by the *Persic*, *Aberdeen*, *Omrak*, and *Australia* made the smallest average profit. If carefully worked, the advent of outside steamers will have a beneficial effect, especially if they could bring down the freight.

It is not possible to give exact figures of the quantity of fruit taken to the Liverpool market by the s.s. *Persic*, but I am given to understand that it was a very small quantity, something about 300 cases, scarcely sufficient to test the capabilities of that market. London, at that time, could well have been relieved of some thousands of cases.

TASMANIAN APPLES—SEASON 1900.

PRICES.

VARIETIES.	OROYA.		OCEANA.		OPHIR.		BRITANNIA.		ORUBA.		SALAMIS.†		INDIA.		ORMUZ.		VICTORIA.		PERSIC. †		ABERDEEN.†		OMRAH.		AUSTRALIA.		CUZCO.				
	Lowest.	Highest.	Lowest.	Highest.	Lowest.	Highest.	Lowest.	Highest.	Lowest.	Highest.	Lowest.	Highest.	Lowest.	Highest.	Lowest.	Highest.	Lowest.	Highest.	Lowest.	Highest.	Lowest.	Highest.	Lowest.	Highest.	Lowest.	Highest.	Lowest.	Highest.			
New York Pippin.....	s. 12	d. 0 18	s. 0 12	d. 6 14	s. 0 10	d. 6 15	s. 0 13	d. 6 16	s. 0 15	d. 6 13	s. 0 9	d. 6 11	s. 0 10	d. 6 13	s. 0 11	d. 6 15	s. 0 12	d. 6 15	s. 0 9	d. 6 12	s. 0 9	d. 6 11	s. 0 9	d. 6 14	s. 0 9	d. 6 9	s. 0 12	d. 6 12	s. 0 9	d. 6 12	
Scarlet Pearmain .....	12	6 14	6 10	6 13	6	...	...	...	12	0 14	0	8	0 8	6 8	9 11	0 10	6 12	6 11	0 12	0 8	0 10	6 6	0 9	6 9	6 11	0 7	9 9	9 0	9 0	11 0	
Adams' Pearmain.....	13	0 15	0	...	...	11	0 12	0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		
Ribston Pippin .....	12	6 13	6 10	6 12	6 10	6 12	6 10	0 11	6	...	...	7	6 7	9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		
Sturmer Pippin.....	...	...	...	...	10	0 14	0 11	0 13	0 11	0 14	0	...	...	10	0 13	6 10	6 12	6 12	0 14	0 8	6 10	6 7	6 12	0 8	0 13	0 8	3 10	0 9	0 10	6	
Alfriston .....	11	0 13	0 11	0 11	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		
Alexander .....	11	6 13	0 11	6 11	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		
Blenheim Orange.....	13	0 14	0 10	0 10	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		
French Crab .....	...	...	...	...	9	6 11	0 10	0 11	6 10	6 12	6 8	3 10	0 10	0 11	6 10	0 13	0 11	0 12	0 8	3 10	0 7	6 9	6 8	0 10	0 8	6 9	6 8	0 9	3		
Cox's Orange Pippin .....	...	...	...	...	14	0 15	6 12	0 12	6 15	0 15	6	...	...	10	0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		
Scarlet Nonpariel .....	...	...	...	...	...	...	11	6 12	6 11	6 13	0	...	...	8	0 10	0 10	6 14	6 10	6 11	6	...	...	...	...	9	6 11	0 8	0 9	6 9	0 11	0
Other kinds .....	6	3 13	0 9	3 11	6 8	0 12	0 9	0 11	6 8	6 11	6 6	0 9	0 5	6 10	6 10	0 11	6 9	6 11	0 8	0 9	6 5	0 7	9 8	3 11	0 7	6 9	6 7	0 9	6		

† Outside Steamers.

A few lots of selected New York Pippins were sold at 20s. per box, and selected Ribston Pippins as high as 15s. per case at auction.

6

(No. 71.)



*Wool.*—From various causes, the last half of 1899 was remarkable for the persistent increase in prices, partly owing to fashion demanding an increased quantity of fine sorts, and partly because the quantity shipped to this country was short, and, to a great extent, because the stocks of American and of continental manufacturers were low, the demand was extraordinary. Bidding was in all the series of sales, brisk, and competition was of the keenest. Merinos rose 10 p.c. to 15 p.c. during the fifth series, over the prices of the fourth series, and again rose 15 per cent. in the sixth series over those of the fifth, and realised the highest prices since 1872.

For cross-breds and coarse kinds the demand also was great, rising 5 per cent. to  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. during the fifth series; and, again, 15 per cent. to 20 per cent. during the sixth series.

A reaction, however, came during the first half of this year. The first series were dull, the buyers being shy and hesitating; the second series were better, as, also, were the third series; but, from the first, there has been a steady fall, starting with a fall of 5 per cent. to 10 per cent. all round on the December prices. In the second series a fall of 5 per cent. to  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on the first series; in the third series, 5 per cent. on coarse kinds, and 10 per cent. for Merinos on the second series; and, again, a fall of 5 per cent. on coarse wools, and 10 per cent. to 15 per cent. on fine wools in the fourth series on the prices of the third series.

The attendance has been good, and big buyers were there, but the spirited demand seems to have died. The depression is so great, that it is announced that only one more series of auctions will be held this year instead of two, and, perhaps, three.

*Timber.*—No efforts have been spared to forward the interests of this product. I have visited Dover, and seen the use of which our blue gum piles have been made. A very satisfactory report from the contractors was furnished to you under cover of my Dispatch No. 547, dated 7th November. It is satisfactory to note that the contract for such piles is likely to prove the fore-runner of others. Blackwood, too, I understand, is receiving favourable consideration at the hands of our Imperial Military authorities. I regret that the sleepers sent to this country per *Barford* were not good of their kind; and, that they were simply shipped to fill the vessel, is not an excuse that poor timber was landed for sale as sleepers, and the fact that I was not advised of the circumstance, and endeavoured, in good faith, to find a market for it as good and representative timber, placed me in a very false position. Luckily, I was able to withdraw the samples before any harm was done; before they had been sighted by the intending purchaser. I have answered numerous inquiries, and the stringy bark panels supplied by your Railway Department, with Mr. A. O. Green's description and tables giving the name, family, specie, lbs. per cubic foot, and specific gravity of small sample blocks, have proved of good service. I am glad that one of our leading sawmillers is again visiting this country; the personal contact of the sawmiller with the user must be productive of good.

The timber trade here will only be successfully exploited by the presence in person of the vendor with his samples and prices, prepared to take contracts. The first questions asked are for samples and prices, which, as you are aware, have not been furnished to me.

Efforts have been made to float a company to push the trade, but up to the present the promoters have not seen their way to bringing it before the public, and South African troubles, and now Chinese difficulties and a rising money market, have been, and continue, a handicap to all ventures.

*Silver.*—Until the past month, business was very quiet in the Silver market, and the fluctuations have been steady, the highest and lowest for eleven months were  $27\frac{1}{16}d.$  and  $26\frac{1}{2}d.$  respectively. During June, however, there was a brisk demand, partly consequent on rumours of possible buying for India, and the price increased to  $28\frac{9}{16}d.$

The question of silver coinage in Australia can be better dealt with by the Commonwealth Government.

The further consideration has therefore been postponed.

*Tin.*—Tin has been the object of considerable speculation. In July, 1899, it started as low as £118 6s. 3d. per ton, rising to £150 15s. in September. A slight drop occurred in October, but with the tightness of money in November and December, the holders were compelled to realise their stocks, with the result that the price fell to as low as £102 15s. Following in the general improvement in business there was a rally, and in March £152 5s. was reached. There has been a fall, but during the last three months under review the price has been steady, from £136 to £146 10s.

*Copper.*—Copper has been dependent more on general demand, and as a consequence the rise and fall has not been so great. July to December the prices were from £68 to £78 8s. 9d. per ton, and for the first half of this year £69 7s. 6d. to £79 1s. 6d. (in March). The closing price in June was £72 12s. 6d.

*Stink Grass.*—I have been able to bring under your notice specimens and seeds of "Brazilian Stink Grass," which has been used with much success in South America as fodder for cattle.

*Boracic Acid in Produce.*—The question of the use of Boracic Acid in foodstuffs in this country has also received attention. The prosecution of tradesmen under the Adulteration Act for selling produce on which this acid has been used would have a most serious bearing on the Colonial butter trade if it became general, and a determined effort was made by the Local Authorities to

prevent its use. It has not yet been decided what quantity of this preservative can be used without endangering health, and watchfulness of this subject must continue.

*Reporting of Vessels.*—Representations on behalf of Lloyd's have been made to you in my Dispatches Nos. 54 and 368, dated 26th January and 29th June, 1900, respectively, relative to the signalling and reporting of vessels from the lighthouses and signalling-station on the coast of the Colony.

*Coast Survey.*—I regret that I am unable to advise any progress towards the completion, under the Hydrographical Department of the Admiralty, of Surveys of the Tasmanian Coast.

I fear that the initiative must rest with a provision by your Parliament of a moiety of the cost, but I may congratulate the Colony that its financial condition points to an ability to meet all such pressing needs.

*Parcel Postage with France.*—This subject was finally settled; and the Regulations under the Convention, signed by the Under Secretary of State for Posts and Telegraphs and myself on your behalf, were forwarded to you under cover of my Dispatch No. 7/291/00, dated 18th May. The Service came into force on the 1st proximo.

*Strahan Bar.*—I have laid before you a proposal of the North Mount Lyell Company for keeping open and dredging the Strahan Bar at Macquarie Harbour, which, however, was not approved of by the Honourable the Minister of Lands and Works. This subject is still receiving careful attention by experts here; and Mr. Lindon Bates, the Hydraulic Engineer, whose system has been adopted with such marked success in various parts of the world for the removal of similar bars, issued a report on the one at Strahan, which, with a draft of a Private Bill intended to be presented to Parliament, dealing with the matter, was enclosed with my Dispatch, No. 50/121/00, dated 2nd March last.

*Congress.*—Invitations have been received for the Colony to be represented at the following Congresses, viz. :—

International Railway Congress; International Geographical Congress; International Medical Congress on Venereal Diseases; Imperial Agricultural Congress; Congress of Associated Chamber of Commerce of the Empire; International Wine Congress; and the British Congress on Tuberculosis, all of which were duly made known to you; but at none of which, except Congress of Chambers of Commerce, were you desirous for my attendance.

The Congress of Associated Chambers of Commerce of the Empire, I shall consider of sufficient importance to make to you a separate Report upon, under some date in July. Their meetings and resolutions were of great interest.

*Stock Regulations.*—During the year, Mr. Thomas J. Woolf, M.R.C.V.S., the Veterinary Inspector of Stock to the Government in this country, examined and passed 14 sheep, 1 bull, and 2 mares, for shipment to the Colony. Such shipments have now practically ceased. The Regulations forbidding Stock to be landed, when brought *via* Cape Colony, prevent stock-owners from purchasing. As the Rinderpest is rapidly diminishing—and under the old regulations the risk of contagion was reduced to a minimum—it is, I think, of serious moment to the Department of Agriculture whether, in the interests of those in Tasmania who desire to improve the breeding of their stock, the present regulations should not be rescinded.

*Quarantine.*—The new quarantine restrictions imposed in New Zealand, on arrivals touching at an Australian port, were received with consternation by the shipping interests here. It necessitated the New Zealand Mail Steamers leaving out Hobart from their itinerary. Such a course necessarily imposed considerable inconvenience and loss, not only on the Government and shippers, but on every importer in the Colony. Under the circumstances, I had no hesitation in urging you to communicate with the Government of New Zealand, with the object of their removal; and I can assure you that much satisfaction has been expressed here by all concerned, at the success attending those efforts on their behalf.

## FINANCE.

In my Dispatch A.G., No. 41/313/99, 23·6·1899, I pointed out that during 1900 to 1905, inclusive, £250,471 Debentures, and £398,899 Local Inscribed Stock would fall due, the total amount to be redeemed being £649,370, and that unless it was necessary to raise money for the purpose of public works, to be voted by Parliament, it seemed unlikely that Tasmania would be a borrower in this market for many years. No reply to that dispatch having been received, my conclusion is apparently correct. As a result of such abstention, coupled with sound local finance, the credit of no Colony of the British Empire stands higher than that of Tasmania at the present moment.

During the Twelve months under review the following highest and lowest prices of our 3½ per cent. and 4 per cent. stocks, compared with those of New South Wales, will be of interest.

## 3½ PER CENT.

	TASMANIA.		NEW SOUTH WALES.	
	Highest.	Lowest.	Highest.	Lowest.
1899.—				
July.....	108	105	108	106½
August.....	107	106½	108	107
September.....	107	104	107¼	104¼
October.....	105¾	103	107	104
November.....	106	104½	107	104¼
December.....	105	101	105½	101
1900.—				
January.....	105	102¼	107	103
February.....	106	103½	108	104½
March.....	106	104¼	106	104½
April.....	106	104	106	104½
May.....	106	103½	105½	103
June.....	104½	102½	106	103¾

## 4 PER CENT.

	TASMANIA.		NEW SOUTH WALES.	
	Highest.	Lowest.	Highest.	Lowest.
1899.—				
July.....	115	111½	121	116⅝
August.....	113	112¼	118	116¼
September.....	113	112	118	115¼
October.....	113	111⅝	118	115½
November.....	113	111½	118	116⅝
December.....	111	108¼	116	112
1900.—				
January.....	111	108½	117	113¾
February.....	112	110⅝	117	115¾
March.....	113	111⅝	118	116½
April.....	113	112	119	117
May.....	113	112	118	116¼
June.....	111	110	117	115¼

It will be seen from the above that our 3½ per cents have compared very favourably with those of New South Wales, admittedly the best of that class of Australasian securities.

Our 4 per cent. debentures have fluctuated between 110 to 101. The higher prices are quotations for the longer dated loans, but very little business is done on the market in these securities.

In the tables of Inscribed and Registered Stocks it will be seen that the 4 per cent. stocks of New South Wales stand £5 higher than those of Tasmania, and, indeed, they head the list of all Colonial Stocks. It must not be taken from this that the credit of that Colony is consequently higher than that of Tasmania. Although the facts of the extensive Territorial possessions, the consequent magnitude of revenues, and the senior political position of New South Wales would have a considerable influence on a good many investors, I am of opinion that the chief reason of the enhanced value of the said stocks is that they are not redeemable until 1933, whereas the Government of Tasmania have the right of redemption in 1920. In these days of diminishing rates of interest, the very fact of an existing right operating years hence, and which may or may not be exercised, amply explains the discrepancy between the prices of the two stocks under review.

The lower scale of debt *per capita*, comparing Tasmania with Queensland, is noteworthy as bearing out my statement that abstention from borrowing has been an important factor in maintaining the high standard of Tasmanian credit.

The public debt of Queensland may be stated at £71 4s. per head, while that of Tasmania is little in excess of £46 7s.

## FINANCE.

To meet liabilities on account of loans due on the 1st January, 1900, the following deposits were arranged at the London and Westminster Bank, the interest earned being £1597 4s. 2d. :—

Date.	Deposit.	Period.		Number of Days.	Rate.	Interest.	Total Amount of Interest on Deposit.
		From	To				
1899.	£					£ s. d.	£ s. d.
July 1 .....	20,000	July 1, 1899 .....	Oct. 6, 1899 .....	98	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ %	107 7 10	
		Oct. 7, 1899 .....	Dec. 24, 1899 .....	78	3 $\frac{3}{4}$ %	160 5 3	
							267 13 1
July 6 .....	50,000	July 6, 1899 .....	Oct. 6, 1899 .....	92	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ %	252 1 1	
		Oct. 7, 1899 .....	Dec. 24, 1899 .....	78	3 $\frac{3}{4}$ %	400 13 4	
							652 14 5
Aug. 15 .....	50,000	Aug. 15, 1899 .....	Dec. 24, 1899 .....	130	2 $\frac{3}{4}$ %	489 14 5	
							489 14 5
Sept. 28 .....	20,000	Sept. 28, 1899 .....	Dec. 24, 1899 .....	86	2 $\frac{3}{4}$ %	129 11 8	
							129 11 8
Oct. 24 .....	10,000	Oct. 24, 1899 .....	Dec. 24, 1899 .....	60	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ %	57 10 7	
							57 10 7
							£1597 4 2

To meet liabilities on account of loans due on the 1st July, 1900, the following Deposits were arranged at the same bank, the interest earned being £1938 0s. 11d.

Date.	Deposit.	Period.		Number of Days.	Rate.	Interest.	Total Amount of Interest on Deposit.
		From	To				
1899.	£					£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Nov. 21 .....	30,000	Nov. 22, 1899 .....	Mar. 23, 1900 .....	120	4 $\frac{1}{2}$ %	394 10 2	
		Mar. 22, 1900 .....	June 23, 1900 .....	93	3 $\frac{1}{4}$ %	248 8 5	
							642 18 7
Dec. 5 .....	30,000	Dec. 5, 1899 .....	Mar. 23, 1900 .....	107	4 $\frac{1}{2}$ %	373 15 2	
		Mar. 22, 1900 .....	June 23, 1900 .....	93	3 $\frac{1}{4}$ %	248 8 5	
							622 3 7
1900.							
Jan. 9 .....	25,000	Jan. 9, 1900 .....	Jan. 17, 1900 .....	9	4 $\frac{1}{2}$ %	24 13 1	
		Jan. 18, 1900 .....	Jan. 24, 1900 .....	7	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ %	14 7 8	
		Jan. 25, 1900 .....	May 24, 1900 .....	120	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ %	205 9 7	
		May 25, 1900 .....	June 13, 1900 .....	20	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ %	27 7 11	
		June 14, 1900 .....	June 23, 1900 .....	9	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ %	9 4 11	
							281 3 2
March 27 .....	50,000	Mar. 27, 1900 .....	June 23, 1900 .....	88	3 $\frac{1}{4}$ %	391 15 7	
							391 15 7
							£1938 0 11

The Cash Accounts for the year 1st July, 1899, to 30th June, 1900, disclose the following transactions :—

## On Loan Account.

Balance forward and Receipts .....	£	s.	d.
	448,031	19	6
Expenditure .....	301,765	9	7

## On Public Account.

Balance forward and Receipts .....	£	s.	d.
	50,224	1	9
Expenditure .....	45,465	14	4

The Receipts for the Public Account consist of transfers from Government Account (Loans Account), Collections on account of Postal Orders and Her Majesty's Paymaster-General, &c. The Expenditure included, on account of Pensions paid, £560; Defence Department, £8180; Post and Telegraph Department, £2667; the Government Railway Department, £25,006; Hobart Corporation, £4781; and Launceston Corporation, £18.

*Colonial Loans.*—The following issues of Colonial Stock have taken place in London during the year :—

Nova Scotia .....	£	164,000, 3%	Minimum, 95	s.	0
New Zealand Treasury Bills .....	300,000				
West Australia .....	1,000,000, 3%			93	10
South Australia .....	1,000,000, 3%			94	10

This latter is, practically, an interminable loan, being redeemable in 1916, or any time after, at the option of the Colonial Treasuries.

*Tasmanian Issues.*—I am glad to be able to report that there have been several flotations for the purpose of developing the resources of the Colony, viz.—

	£
Great Mount Lyell Copper Company .....	300,000
Mount Lyell Blocks Copper Company.....	300,000
Mount Lyell Copper Estates .....	150,000
Emu Bay Railway 5 per cent. First Mortgage Debentures .....	200,000
Briseis Tin Mines, Limited.....	600,000
Van Dieman's Land Company 4½ per cent. First Mortgage Debentures...	22,500
Ringarooma Tin Mines, Limited .....	50,000

I have rendered every assistance in my power, in information and in other directions, to help forward each project, and I am assured that my endeavours have been of service. At the same time I have been careful not to undertake the slightest responsibility, either on my part or for the Government, and have always made it clear that information which is given is founded on official and authentic reports.

*Management of Loans.*—This matter has been fully reported upon in my Dispatches, Nos 41/448/99, 41/508/99, 41/112/00, and 41/234/00, dated 22nd September, 1899, 20th October, 1899, 23rd February, 1900, and 20th April, 1900, respectively, and I await your instructions. I have shown that the management of our loans can be conducted more economically than at present, but that it has to be seen whether our agreements with the London and Westminster Bank will admit of the taking the work out of their hands. Until the question is pushed to a conclusion it will be impossible to foretell what opposition will be encountered, and I should, if the Government desire the matter to be pressed, be placed in possession of the necessary powers, and enabled to obtain the probably necessary legal advice. Until then nothing can be done.

The offer of the Bank, it will be recollected, to reduce the annual charge to £350 per million per annum, is conditional on it being a final settlement of the matter. I have been able to induce our bankers to forego the standing deposit of £10,000 on our Government account and to allow interest on the daily balance, which step effects a reduction in interest of at least £300 per annum.

*Money Market.*—From 1st July, 1899, to 30th June, 1900, has been one of the worst financial years of recent times. During July, August, and September, everything was most unsettled, owing to the internal troubles in South Africa, with a costly war looming up; the market was practically at a stand-still; thence, to the middle of January, the position was one of the greatest depression. Consols and all stocks fell rapidly, money was tight, and the failures were numerous. At times, for a spell, matters looked brighter, but the comparatively temporary unimportant checks to British arms forced everything down again. Towards the middle of January, when the British forces began to assert themselves, came an improvement, which has steadily grown up to the commencement of June, when the "Boxer" rising in China turned the people's attention there, and again the market fell into despondency. The uncertainty of the fate of the European Legations; conflicting rumours; the fact that the European powers have only just been able to maintain a hold in the country; the massing of troops there by each power; and the apprehension of friction between those armies, have more than counterbalanced any strengthening effect of the probable early termination of hostilities in South Africa.

For the first time for many years Imperial Consols have been quoted below par; in fact, since Christmas they have been quoted very few times above par. The price, twelve months previously, was 110-111.

With such a market, of course, the Bank Rate has undergone numerous changes; on July 16th, 1899, it was raised to 3½ per cent.; September 3rd, to 4½ per cent.; the 5th October, 5 per cent.; on the 30th November, to 6 per cent. In January, when the tension was slackening, money got easier, and on the 11th, the Bank Rate fell to 5 per cent.; on the 18th, to 4½ per cent.; and again on the 25th, to 4 per cent.; on the 24th May, it fell to 3½ per cent.; and on the 14th June, to 3 per cent.; at which it now stands. Bankers' Deposit Rates and Discount House Rates have been about 1 to 1½ below Bank of England Rate.

*Consulting Engineer.*—I am constantly in communication with Mr. J. Meilbek, C.E., the Consulting Engineer to the department, and find ample proof of the value of his services. Colonel Gordon, the Military Inspector of war stores, and adviser, having resigned the position and returned to his duties as Military Commandant of South Australia; that position has not yet been filled up, and I would suggest that it is a matter for early consideration of the various Colonial Governments.

My attention is frequently given to inquiries, personal and by letter, respecting tariffs, taxation, land, and mining laws, and generally concerning the legal enactments of Tasmania which appear to affect interests represented here, and to persons wishing to invest capital or personal energy upon Tasmanian soil, and interviews granted and correspondence consequent thereon, which occupy considerable time and attention, and add to the many reasons which confirm my opinion that the interests of Tasmania are best served by a resident representative in this country.

I have the honour to be,  
Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

P. O. FYSH, *Agent-General.*

*The Hon. the Premier.*

## MEMORANDUM.

*Trustees Investment Bill.*—This Bill has now passed both Houses of Parliament, and received the Royal Assent, with the important amendment of its extension to Scotland.

*Fremantle as a Port of Call.*—A notification has been received from the Postmaster-General, London, that, as the contractors have undertaken to make the change from Albany to Fremantle as a port of call, without any further modification of the existing time-table, he has decided to give effect to the wishes expressed by the Colonial Governments in 1896. The alteration will remain on trial for twelve months, to prove whether it is likely to lead to delay in the delivery of the mails.

*Stock Regulations.*—I am glad to notice in the *Hobart Gazette* a Proclamation issued by His Excellency the Governor, dated the 1st June, revoking the previous Regulations prohibiting the entry into the Colony of live stock supplied to the Colony *via* South Africa. The various shipping companies interested were advised accordingly, and there is no doubt that this relaxation will be taken advantage of by many of our stock-owners.

*Commonwealth.*—The gratifying news of the acceptance of the people of West Australia, by an overwhelming majority, of the Commonwealth Bill, which will enable the Colony to enter the Federal Union as an original State, has just been received here with the greatest satisfaction.

*Pacific Cable.*—Advertisements have appeared in the daily press calling for tenders for the laying of this cable. Copies of the specification and other forms were forwarded to you, under cover of my Dispatch No. 436, dated 10th August, 1900.

*Queensland Loan.*—Since the above Report was written, my opinion is confirmed respecting the relative values of Tasmanian and Queensland Loans, by a flotation on the 9th July, when Tenders for £1,400,000 Queensland 3% Inscribed Stock were opened at the Bank of England, but only amounted to £1,411,100, at prices varying from the minimum of £94 to £96 10s.

Tenders at £94 received about 99% of the amount applied for: the average price was £94 0s 1d. This was a financial failure: as much as 99 per cent., it is stated, fell on the underwriters. Queensland has been a frequent borrower of late; and the influence of the Chinese crisis, and the general want of stability of the money market, could not entirely account for the want of success. On the day the Tenders were opened, the Stock was quoted at 1% discount, which, I understand, was the price of the underwriting. It will be recollected that this is a portion of an authorised issue of £2,725,600 required for Railway and general Public Works.

P. O. FYSH, *Agent-General.*