

(No. 7.)



1877.

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T A S M A N I A.

H O U S E O F A S S E M B L Y.

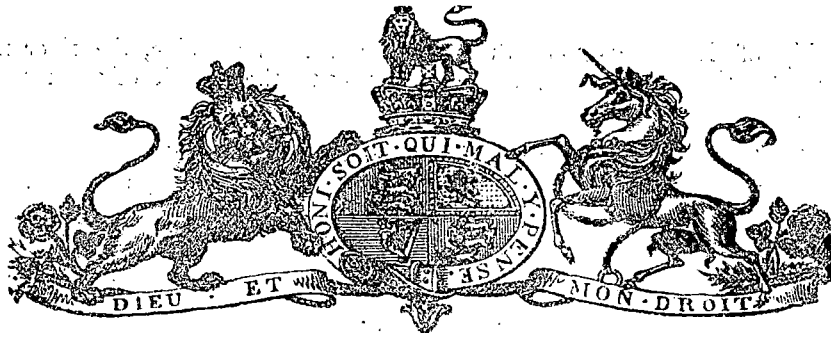
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V A L U A T I O N O F P R O P E R T Y.

R E P O R T O F T H E C O M M I S S I O N E R S.

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Laid upon the Table by the Colonial Secretary, and ordered by the House to be printed, January 26, 1877.



*Hobart Town, January, 1877.*

SIR,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We have the honor to be,  
Sir,

Your obedient Servants,

G. A. KEMP,

FRANCIS BUTLER,

} *Property Valuation*  
} *Commissioners.*

*The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.*