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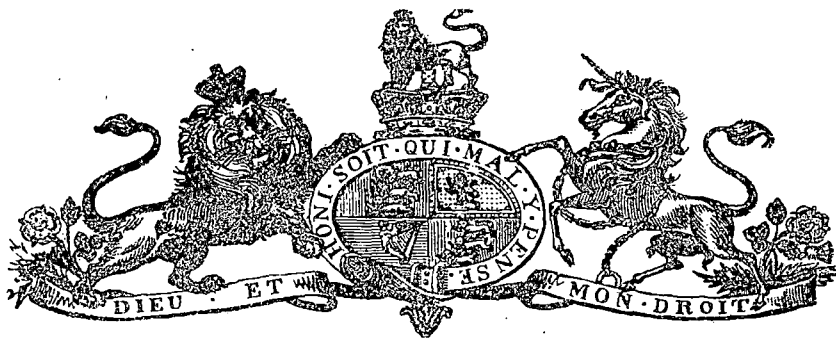
T A S M A N I A.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

G O L D - F I E L D S :

REPORT BY THE COMMISSIONER.

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Moore, and ordered by the Council to be printed,
August 13, 1878.



Launceston, 1st August, 1878.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to report upon the general progress of the Gold Mining industry, and the condition of the Goldfields in this Colony.

Brandy Creek.—The Goldfield which at present attracts most attention is situate at Brandy Creek, on the West Bank of the Tamar. Gold has been known to exist at this place for some years past, but was not discovered in any considerable quantity until towards the close of last year. A quartz reef of great promise was then found, which led to further prospecting in the neighbourhood, and to the discovery of a rich deposit of alluvial gold, which has been worked with great spirit, and to many, considerable advantage. An average population of about 700 men has been employed up to the present time. A considerable township has sprung up, numbering upwards of 200 habitations.

I estimate that not less than £25,000 worth of gold has been procured, and the yield still maintains a fair average.

The lead appears to increase in depth in an easterly direction, and many claims have suspended operations in consequence of the quantity of water. The owners are in some cases preparing for the erection of steam pumps and baling appliances, and I have every reason to believe the deep leads will prove richer than the shallow deposits.

The reef has become the property of the Tasmania Company, who commenced mining operations in a substantial manner, by the expenditure of considerable capital in sinking shafts, making a tunnel, constructing a tramway, and erecting a ten-head battery. Crushing operations were commenced within the last few days, the result of which will not be known for some time. I shall be greatly surprised if the yield does not prove an exceedingly rich one.

Nine Mile Springs.—The New Native Youth claim is the only one at this Goldfield which has yielded profitable returns. The Company has recently completed the erection of a substantial battery of forty head of stampers, in addition to the old one of twenty head, and mining operations are being actively carried on. Several other claims have been prospected with the aid of steam, with indifferent results, and efforts are still being made to develop some of them.

There are 180 men and a total population of about 400 on the Goldfield.

Back Creek.—A few miners continue to procure a little gold from alluvial deposit, but the quantity is insignificant.

Denison.—Two quartz claims are being worked with the aid of steam, but not as yet with any very substantial result, and some others are being prospected, and there is one battery at this Goldfield. Alluvial gold has been found in the direction of Mount Arthur, and a few miners appear to be obtaining a considerable quantity.

Waterhouse.—Another attempt is being made to mine the Pioneer Reef (the first discovered at this place), and satisfactory progress is being made. No stone has yet been raised and crushed by the present proprietary. Another Company has taken up the old Southern Cross ground, and a trial crushing of 11 tons yielded the encouraging return of upwards of three ounces to the ton. The Company is erecting a battery.

Black Boy.—The present condition of this Goldfield is not very encouraging. Some prospecting for reefs is being done, and one battery still continues at work.

Mangana and neighbourhood.—A new reef has recently been discovered at Calder's Gully, which has caused some excitement; its value has not yet been actually tested.

Within the last few months the discovery of gold has been reported to me from various parts of the Colony. On the West Coast, hitherto known as the unsettled districts, it has been found in many directions, principally in alluvial deposit with tin, but not as yet in any quantity. Indications of reefs have been frequently met with, and one prospector's claim of maximum area has been applied for and allowed. A much more systematic and extensive exploration of this comparatively unknown and uninhabited part of the colony may confidently be expected during the ensuing summer.

At the River Inglis, on the North Coast, the discovery of gold in alluvial deposit was reported in January last, and a prospector's claim allowed. Also at the River Cam on the same coast quite recently. The discovery of both an auriferous reef and gold in alluvial deposit was made at Port Cygnet in the south, in May last, and prospectors' claims allotted.

Gold has also been found in the neighbourhood of Mount Roland and the River Mersey, and at Mount Cameron and the upper waters of the Muscle Roe River in the north east.

At none of these places, however, has any considerable effort been made to open up a goldfield; in fact little more has been done at any one of them than ascertaining the existence of the precious metal.

The material improvement in the condition of the Gold Mining industry of the colony is evidenced by the following comparative statement, bearing in mind that all persons residing on a goldfield are required to hold Miners' Rights or Business Licences :—

	1877.	1878.
Number of Miners' Rights issued from 1st January to 30th June	717	1570
Business Licences	15	29

I estimate there are one thousand men, probably more, residing on the goldfields, engaged in gold mining and other pursuits immediately connected therewith.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

BERNARD SHAW, *Commissioner.*

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