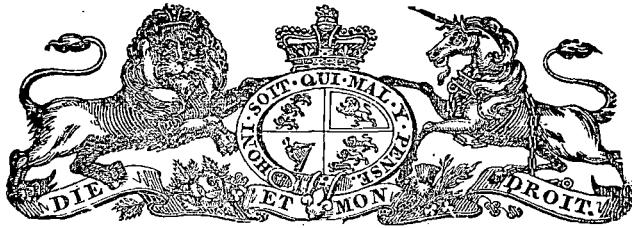


(No. 47.)



1899.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND SURVEYS:

REPORT OF THE SURVEYOR-GENERAL AND SECRETARY
FOR LANDS.

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

Cost of printing—£23 9s.

TASMANIA.

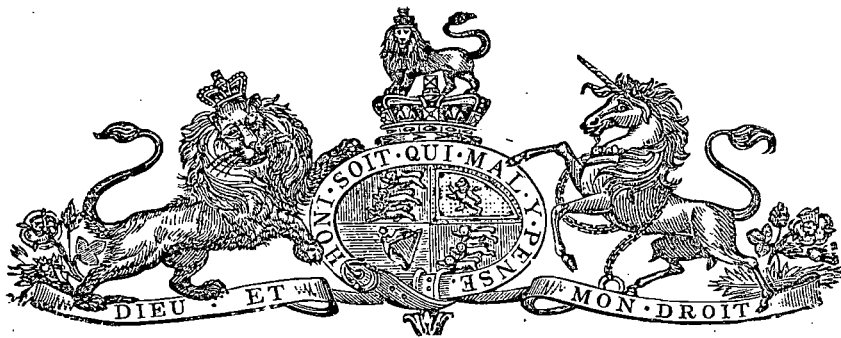
R E P O R T

OF THE

SURVEYOR-GENERAL AND SECRETARY
FOR LANDS

FOR

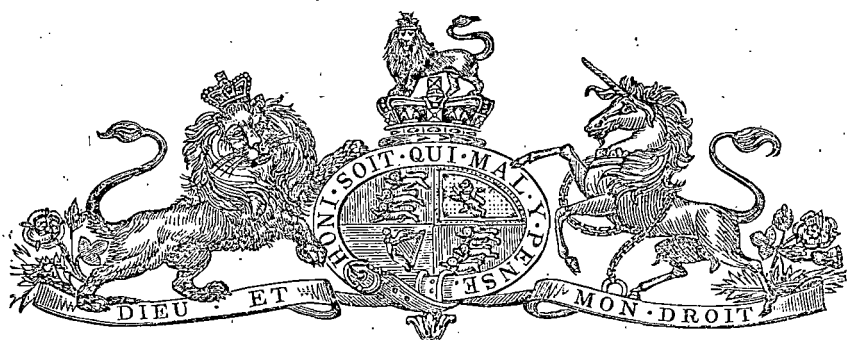
1898-1899.



Tasmania:

JOHN VAIL, GOVERNMENT PRINTER, HOBART.

1899.



Surveyor-General's Office, Department of Lands and Surveys,
Hobart, July 12th, 1899.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to report to you as follows upon the operations of the Department of Lands and Surveys for the twelve months ending June 30th, 1899.

REVENUE.

The total Territorial Revenue collected by the Department of Lands and Surveys during the year ending December 31st, 1898, was £60,205, and the total sum collected during the year ending December 31st, 1897, was £53,533, being an increase of £6672 for the year 1898. The estimate made in April, 1898, of the revenue to be collected for that year was £56,400. The revenue collected during the six months ending June 30th, 1899, is £25,425, and the revenue collected during the corresponding six months of 1898 was £31,932, being a decrease of £6507. The latter sum is more than accounted for by the excess of Survey Fees paid during the first six months of 1897, as also is the difference between the estimate made in April, 1898, and the total sum realised during that year. (*Vide* Appendix A attached, Return No. 1, for particulars of the various sources from which the revenue is derived, and the amount under each heading.)

The following return furnishes a highly satisfactory record of the reduction year by year in the arrears of instalments and Crown land rentals since 1895. When it is realised that the sums referred to with the annual forfeitures, of which the succeeding return gives particulars for the year 1898, involve dealing with and inquiring into every detail in order to judge of the *bonâ fides* of hundreds of cases every year, some idea may be formed of the additional amount of labour thrown upon the small clerical staff of the department since this extra work was taken up under the new land policy introduced in 1893. That it has been possible to accomplish so much is a practical testimony to the industry of its officers.

RETURN showing Arrears of Purchase Money and Rent at
the following dates:—

Date.	Purchase Money in arrear.	Rent in arrear.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
31st December, 1895	48,497 8 4	1369 10 6
31st December, 1896	43,246 7 4	1533 5 0
31st December, 1897	36,591 16 8	2007 10 0
31st December, 1898	33,336 5 10	1760 5 0

*Arrears of Instalments of Purchase Money for Crown Lands
on 31st December, 1898.*

	<u>£33,336</u>
	£
Postponement granted to the amount of	2758
Subdivisions arranged and pending	5324
Leaving a balance unprovided for	25,254
	<u>£33,336</u>

RETURN of Country Lands forfeited in 1898.

County.	No. of Lots.	Area.		
		A.	R.	P.
Buckingham	27	1228	1	20
Cumberland	6	493	1	30
Glamorgan	5	712	1	35
Kent	19	1179	1	29
Lincoln .....	...	...	...	...
Somerset	1	40	0	15
Pembroke	16	1628	2	16
Monmouth	5	295	2	8
Cornwall	12	880	3	23
Devon	23	1595	0	36
Dorset	23	1526	1	35
Flinders	1	319	0	5
Westmorland	6	387	2	22
Lincoln .....	...	...	...	...
Montagu	4	246	3	18
Russell .....	...	...	...	...
Wellington	12	798	0	9
TOTALS	160	11,332	0	21

LAND SELECTION AND SETTLEMENT.

The number of selections made for agricultural settlement under the 14 years' credit system, as provided for in the Crown Lands Act, 1890 (54 Vict. No. 8), during the 12 months ending June 30th, 1899, is 207, covering an area of 11,863 acres, and the number of small settlement lots—50 acres and under—selected under the 3 years' free habitual residence clauses of the Crown Lands Amendment Acts of 1893 and 1894, is 134, comprising an area of 5204 acres. The results obtained during the preceding 12 months ending June 30th, 1898, were as follows:—Selections made under the Act of 1890, 238, covering an area of 14,678 acres; and under the Amendment Acts, 161 lots, covering an area of 5919 acres. The second class lands selected for auction under the Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1895, comprise 3905 acres in 44 allotments, and 4217 acres in 54 lots, during the respective periods referred to. (*Vide* Return No. 2, Appendix A.)

The price realised from the total area—20,071 acres—of country lands sold during the year 1898 is £24,455, being an average price per acre of £1 4s. 5½d. The area sold during the year 1897 was 24,519 acres, and the total sum realised thereon was £30,486, being at the rate of £1 4s. 8½d. per acre. (Return No. 5, Appendix A.)

It will be observed from the foregoing comparisons that, whilst there is a marked increase in the total revenue collected by the Lands Department during the period under review, there is a slight falling off in selection; the latter is affected by a number of influences, in regard to which it is observed that the year commenced badly owing to the prevailing bush fires during the Summer of 1897–8. So desperate were the circumstances that after rebuilding the habitations of the sufferers and supplying them with food and seed, &c., for another crop, it was deemed necessary by the Government to suspend all payments on their selections for a period of two years. In other respects they were granted the free occupation of Crown lands for three years, to the extent of 3822 acres. Such a condition of affairs must necessarily have had a paralysing effect upon selection for a time.

There is, however, a measure of satisfaction in reverting to the salutary effect of the present land policy, which, while it restricts the total area applied for, is an important factor in providing the ultimate independence of the people and the progress of the country. It may not be considered essential to remark at length upon the points raised, but the subject of agricultural settlement is of such paramount importance to the welfare of a country that any observations which tend to throw light upon its advancement or decline would appear to find a fitting place in the year's record.

RETURN of Applications under 31st Section of the Crown Lands Act, 1890, and the Crown Lands Amendment Acts, 1893 and 1894, from 30th June, 1898, to 30th June, 1899.

	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.
	No.	Acres.	No.	Acres.	£ s. d.	No.	Acres.	No.	Acres.	£ s. d.
Buckingham	100	4720	45	1893	239 5 0	77	2503	40	1354	198 5 0
Cornwall	14	649	8	459	58 5 0	9	315	4	150	20 10 0
Cumberland.....	2	50	Nil	Nil	Nil	4	149	1	50	6 5 0
Devon	163	14,241	65	4477	486 0 0	101	4171	45	1913	271 0 0
Dorset	54	3393	27	1458	170 15 0	23	1024	13	575	74 10 0
Glamorgan	4	309	2	239	20 5 0	1	50	1	50	6 5 0
Kent	17	543	5	190	33 0 0	25	842	12	410	61 10 0
Lincoln.....	1	50	1	50	6 5 0	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Monmouth	9	434	4	94	24 10 0	12	378	10	305	46 15 0
Pembroke	25	1521	7	213	32 10 0	44	1375	26	820	122 0 0
Somerset	1	25	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Wellington	114	11,238	51	4708	455 5 0	74	3108	28	1235	161 10 0
Flinders Island..	6	200	2	75	10 5 0	3	55	2	30	8 0 0
King Island.....	88	11,505	59	7280	597 5 0	7	350	4	200	25 0 0
Westmorland	8	874	3	450	31 5 0	5	200	1	50	6 5 0
TOTAL	606	49,752	279	21,586	2164 15 0	385	14,520	187	7142	1007 15 0

RETURN of Applications under Section 49, Crown Lands Act, 1890, from 30th June, 1898, to 30th June, 1899.

MINING AREAS.

	No. of Applications received.	Total Area applied for.	No. of Applications on which Survey Fee has been paid.	Area on which Survey Fee has been paid.	Amount of Survey Fees.
	No.	Acres.	No.	Acres.	£ s. d.
Buckingham	6	165	3	55	12 0 0
Devon	9	263	5	139	24 10 0
Dorset	49	2779	29	1439	180 5 0
Monmouth	2	50	2	50	8 0 0
Montagu	55	996	19	345	91 10 0
Franklin	1	100	Nil	Nil	Nil
Russell	3	175	Nil	Nil	Nil
TOTAL.....	125	4528	58	2028	£316 5 0

*RETURN of Applications under Section 4, Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1895,
from 30th June, 1898, to 30th June, 1899.*

SECOND CLASS LAND.

	No. of Applications received.	Total Area applied for.	No. of Appli- cations on which Survey Fee has been paid.	Area on which Survey Fee has been paid.	Amount of Survey Fees.
	No.	Acres.	No.	Acres.	£ s. d.
Buckingham	9	800	5	620	48 10 0
Cornwall	2	100	1	50	6 5 0
Cumberland	3	100	2	65	12 10 0
Devon	33	2801	13	1121	119 0 0
Dorset	22	1948	14	1243	129 15 0
Glamorgan	1	30	Nil	Nil	Nil
Kent	6	304	4	230	29 15 0
Lincoln	1	150	Nil	Nil	Nil
Monmouth	4	233	4	233	29 15 0
Pembroke	18	1552	5	580	57 15 0
Somerset	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Wellington	11	790	9	820	68 15 0
Westmorland	7	423	5	250	31 5 0
Flinders Island	5	230	5	450	43 15 0
	122	9461	67	5662	£577 0 0

TOWN LANDS.

The total area subdivided and sold as Town Lands during the year 1898 is 558 acres, in 667 allotments, which realised £26,677, being an average price per acre of £47 15s. 9d., as compared with a total area of 592 acres, subdivided into 848 allotments, during the year 1897, and which area realised a total sum of £22,719, being an average price per acre of £38 7s. 6d. (*See Return No. 5, Appendix A.*) These figures show a total increase of £3958, and an increase in the price per acre of £9 8s. 3d. The results shown are the more satisfactory in that the area of land and the number of allotments disposed of are considerably lower than those dealt with during the former year. The improvement noted is due to the continued demand for residence and business sites on the West Coast mining fields. It augurs well for the trust reposed in the mining industry by those immediately associated with its progress.

PASTORAL LEASES.

The total revenue collected from Crown lands leased for pastoral purposes during the year 1898 was £5295, and for the year 1897, £4787 (*Return No. 6, Appendix A.*) The revenue collected during the first six months of 1899 is £3220, as compared with £2723 collected from the same source during the first six months of 1898, thus showing an increase of £508 for the first six months of the current year.

The total area for which leases were issued during the year 1898 was 242,613 acres, and that of the previous year, 258,861 acres (*Return No. 1, Appendix A.*), while the total area held under lease on December 31st, 1898, was 929,985 acres, at an annual rental of £6187 12s. 2d. (*Return No. 4, Appendix A.*)

POSTPONEMENT OF INSTALMENTS.

Sections 5 and 6 of "The Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1894" (58 Vict. No. 13), authorise the Governor in Council to postpone the payment of any land instalment due on a credit purchase for any period not exceeding 5 years upon payment of interest thereon at the rate of £5 per centum per annum. The year's operations under these sections have been fairly satisfactory, the total area upon which postponement was made being 28,583 acres, or 10,549 acres less than the area so dealt with during the preceding 12 months; whilst the amount of interest collected on the postponements is £356 19s. 4d., or £27 9s. 4d. less than that collected for the preceding 12 months.

The following Return gives the result of the 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, 1899.

Month.	Area.		Amount of Purchase Money deferred.		
1898.	A.	R. P.	£	s.	d.
July	2376	2 23	531	17	10
August	6328	2 11	1584	15	10
September	1810	0 31	608	1	3
October	2791	3 20	652	1	6
November	900	3 37	84	5	1
December	3318	2 6	564	1	11
1899.					
January	4443	1 12	1077	18	9
February	859	1 0	113	16	0
March	1152	0 4	387	8	0
April	1384	4 31	260	19	3
May	1682	2 19	372	19	7
June	1534	0 19	305	11	10
TOTAL	28,583	1 13	£6543	16	10

Interest collected for 12 Months ending June, 1899, £356 19s. 4d.

SPECIAL LEGISLATION.

The special legislation contained in Sections 10 and 11 of the Crown Lands Amendment Act of 1894 (58 Vict. No. 13) is still being extended, and necessitates the preparation of a special Enabling Bill for Parliament every year. It was introduced in conjunction with the new Land Policy as a measure of temporary relief to persons who had been induced, under a lax administration of the law, to select more land than they were able to pay for. It was amply justified at that time, but inasmuch as it is now recognised that the law is to be carried out, and every inducement is being held out and every endeavour made to discourage over-selecting, it may be questioned how far it is desirable to extend such a measure. It cannot be denied that the system of subdivisions under the sections quoted above operates as a drag upon the collection of revenue, and is giving selectors an opportunity of picking the "eyes" out of their holdings, and then throwing the poorer portions back on the State.

SUBDIVISIONS.

During the 12 months ending June 30th, 1899, 24 lots were subdivided, involving the preparation of 24 grant-deeds, by which 1396 acres have been converted into freeholds, and 2574 acres have reverted to the Crown as the result of such subdivisions; while there are 21 lots being so dealt with, involving a total area of 2735 acres.

Subdivisions Granted and Dealt With during Twelve Months ending 30th June, 1899.

Subdivisions granted—			Subdivisions being dealt with—		
No. of Lots	24		No. of Lots	21	
Area granted	1396 acres		Area being dealt with	844 acres	
Area reverted to Crown as result of Subdivisions	2574 acres		Area that will revert to Crown when Subdivisions effected	1891 acres	

INSPECTION OF SMALL SELECTIONS.

The following Return shows that out of a total number of 102 lots inspected by the Chief Bailiff of Crown Lands since January last, 23 are being resided upon and improved; that 60 lots are being improved only; while 19 lots are neither being occupied nor improved in any way; and that 17 of the total number have been forfeited to the Crown for non-compliance with the residential and improvement 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.
Buckingham	7	225	2 7	8	278	2 9	3	55	1 11	18	559	1 27	3	55	1 11
Devon	6	246	0 39	11	468	2 37	2	78	1 24	19	793	1 20	2	78	1 24
Dorset	6	221	2 32	7	300	0 10	4	174	0 5	17	695	3 7	2	74	3 22
Kent	2	64	2 7	10	365	3 35	2	72	3 27	14	503	1 29	2	72	3 27
Wellington	2	76	0 9	24	990	1 36	8	360	1 20	34	1426	3 25	8	360	1 20
TOTALS	23	834	0 14	60	2403	3 7	19	741	0 7	102	3978	3 28	17	641	3 24

It is, I think, generally understood that the lots inserted in the foregoing Return are selected under an 18 years' purchase, of which the first 3 are free; the result of the inspections therefore indicates how essential they are in order to prevent good land being uselessly locked up under a pretence of settlement—in fact, it must be abundantly clear to any one acquainted with the subject that success or failure in the administration of the Land Policy of the Colony must be largely dependent upon the constant and systematic inspection of credit selections generally, whether under the ordinary conditions pertaining to selection or the recent Amendment Acts, also of pastoral areas of Crown lands, and now more than ever necessary in connection with the revival in sawmilling and the timber trade.

The necessity for strengthening the Department in the direction I have suggested has been recognised by the Government in appointing Mr. J. C. Penny as Forest Officer and Chief Bailiff of Crown Lands. Mr. Penny was transferred from the Stock to this Department on 16th January last, and since that time he has shown himself to be a capable, painstaking, and reliable officer. A record of the good work already performed by him since his appointment is contained in his Report attached (Appendix B).

PROSECUTIONS UNDER CROWN LANDS ACT.

The number of prosecutions for infringements of the Crown Lands Act and Regulations thereunder during the year 1898 have been unusually large, no less than 51 cases having been reported from various parts of the Colony, principally from the Districts of Scottsdale and Ringarooma, where 17 cases alone of illegal depasturage of stock upon Crown Lands occurred. Briefly summarised, the list is as follows:—Prosecutions for illegal depasturage of stock, 22, in which convictions were secured in 19 cases; illegal cutting of timber, 24 cases were heard, and 19 convictions obtained; prosecutions under Bush Fires Act, 5, with conviction in each case. In addition to the above, several seizures were made of timber unlawfully cut; in most cases the timber was confiscated and sold, the aggregate amount realised on account of such sales being £10 5s. 9d.

The increase in the number of prosecutions for the year deserves special mention, as an indication of the valuable assistance rendered by the Bailiffs of Crown Lands to this Department.

RESUMPTION OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS.

In my Annual Report for the year 1894 reference was made to the subject of resuming private estates by the Crown, with a view to making provision for closer settlement on agricultural lands, under a system of perpetual leasing. Much has been said and written upon the success of the scheme introduced into New Zealand by the repurchase of the "Cheviot Estate" in December, 1892. On March 30th, 1898, 49 estates had been acquired, embracing a total area of 154,623 acres; these lands were yielding interest on the total outlay incurred, at the rate of 4·97 per cent., in addition to which the revenue of the Customs and Railway departments must have been materially increased.

The example set by New Zealand was followed by Queensland in 1896, and up to the present time no fewer than eight estates have been resumed, subdivided, and thrown open for selection; they are reported to comprise a total area of 85,000 acres, out of which 81,000 acres have been disposed of, and are now occupied by 642 farmers. It is observed that an important feature of the new departure from the land policy of Queensland is the introduction of a moderate railway tariff, which has naturally had the effect of expanding traffic and increasing its revenue. Attention is now being turned to the subject in Victoria. Tasmania possesses exceptional advantages for intense cultivation, inasmuch as the inexhaustible water supply of the central Lake plateau, which forms the fountain head of the principal rivers in the island, may be readily made available for irrigating the rich agricultural, pastoral, and horticultural lands of the lower country; it therefore becomes a question for consideration whether the time has not arrived when this hitherto dormant source of wealth should be converted into a revenue-producing asset of the Colony.

SAWMILLING.

The new system, for which provision is made in "The Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1898" (62 Vict. No. 38), gives to every sawmiller a prescriptive right to a maximum timber selection of 5000 acres for any period not exceeding 21 years—smaller areas are obtainable in accordance with the driving power of the mill—at an annual rental of £1 per 100 acres; to which rental is added, for all kinds of *eucalypti*, a royalty of 1s. per 1000 feet, superficial measurement.

The new scheme affords scope for a fresh and growing interest in the timber industry of the Colony. In anticipation of, and since it came into operation on 25th November last year, 61 applications for timber leases have been received at the Lands Office, embracing a total area of 59,135 acres. The applications are principally confined to the County of Kent. Survey fees have already been paid on 19 lots, comprising 25,953 acres. These figures are many times over in excess of any dealt with in the previous history of the Colony.

As little attention was paid in past years towards the encouragement of the timber industry, or in treating it as a marketable product of the State, it will not be a matter for surprise if millers should complain of some of the provisions in the new Regulations. They require payment to be made under an authorised scale of charges for such valuable timber as used to be cut and removed from Crown Lands wholesale (under the guise of intended land purchase), without contributing anything in return to the revenue.

With such slight alterations as may appear necessary or desirable from time to time, and which almost invariably occur in the initiatory stages of such a project, it is believed that the new Regulations afford the means through which the interest of the State may be fairly conserved, and the development of one of its most important industries freely promoted.

Out of the 80 sawmills throughout the country, 35 are situated in the Counties of Buckingham (South), and Kent (known as the Huon District), which embrace some of the best forest country in Tasmania. It is all accessible from the D'Entrecasteaux Channel ports, and has been the resort of sawmillers for half a century. The timber beds, which consist mainly of Blue Gum, Gum-top, and Stringy-bark, extend inland from 5 to 10 miles, and southerly beyond Recherche Bay. The trees attain to a greater height and circumference in these Counties than in other parts of the island. There are also good beds of Myrtle in many places. The same kinds of timber are met with in other Counties, whilst the fine Blackwood logs of the North-West Coast are well known in the markets of Australia. All the sawmills available are now fully occupied; indeed, the local requirements, the demand for Tasmanian timbers in the neighbouring Colonies, and the railway sleepers required for export to South Africa are more than the mills can compass.

*LIST of Sawmill Areas applied for during the Twelve Months ending
30th June, 1899.*

SITUATION.	NO. OF APPLICATIONS.	AREA APPLIED FOR.			
		A.	R.	P.	A. R. P.
County of Buckingham—					
Parish Bagot	1	500	0	0	
„ South Bruni	2	5300	0	0	
					5800 0 0
TOTAL.....	3				
County of Devon—					
Parish Midhurst	1	500	0	0	
					500 0
TOTAL.....	1				
County of Dorset—					
Parish Gould	1	200	0	0	
„ Lisle	1	100	0	0	
					300 0 0
TOTAL.....	2				
County of Kent—					
Parish Blakeney	1	100	0	0	
„ Garrett	7	2057	0	20	
„ Honeywood	17	16,177	3	30	
„ Leithbridge	1	100	0	0	
„ Price	1	5000	0	0	
„ Purves	9	8800	0	0	
„ Thanet	14	18,150	0	0	
					50,385 0 10
TOTAL.....	50				
County of Montagu—					
Gordon River	1	100	0	0	
					100 0 0
TOTAL.....	1				
County of Pembroke—					
Parish Lorainah	1	500	0	0	
„ Taranna	1	350	0	0	
					850 0 0
TOTAL.....	2				
County of Wellington—					
Parish Elliott	1	200	0	0	
„ Emmett	1	1000	0	0	
					1200 0 0
TOTAL.....	2				
GRAND TOTAL.....	61	...			59,135 0 10

LIST of Sawmill Areas applied for during the Twelve Months ending 30th June, 1899, upon which Survey Fees have been paid.

SITUATION.	No. OF APPLICATIONS.	AREA.			
		A.	R.	P.	A. R. P.
County of Buckingham—					
Parish Bugot	1	500	0	0	
„ South Bruni	1	5000	0	0	5500 0 0
TOTAL	2				
County of Devon—					
Parish Midhurst	1	500	0	0	500 0 0
TOTAL	1				
County of Kent—					
Parish Garrett	4	1803	3	0	
„ Honeywood	2	500	0	0	
„ Leithbridge	1	100	0	0	
„ Purves	1	5000	0	0	
„ Thanet	5	11,500	0	0	18,903 3 0
TOTAL	13				
County of Pembroke—					
Parish Lorainah	1	500	0	0	
„ Taranna	1	350	0	0	850 0 0
TOTAL	2				
County of Wellington—					
Parish Elliott	1	200	0	0	200 0 0
TOTAL	1				
GRAND TOTAL	19	...			25,953 3 0

WATTLE-BARKING.

The number of Wattle-bark Licences issued during the stripping season, 1898-9, was 12, and the area operated upon was 15,755 acres, upon which a sum of £58 18s. was added to the revenue. Although the area affected is 1594 acres less than that for which licences were issued during the previous season, and the amount from licence fees £30 more, yet these figures are altogether disproportionate to the quantity and value of wattle-bark stripped annually on Crown lands.

With the direct control over the Bailiffs of Crown Lands, due to the centralisation of the police of the island under one controlling State authority, and the appointment of a Forest Officer, whose much-needed services will be available to exercise direct supervision over all Crown lands, no doubt a check will be put upon their being utilised illegally, whether for wattle-barking or other purposes. It may be reasonably anticipated that the returns for next year will show an improvement in many respects upon those previously published.

Wattle-bark Season, 1898-1899.

Licences Issued.	Area Operated upon.	Amount Realised.
12	15,755 acres.	£58 18s.

NEW REGULATIONS.

Regulations have been published during the 12 months under review prescribing the form upon which a Purchase Grant shall be made out for all lands sold in any mining area, as provided for in Part IV. of "The Crown Lands Act, 1890" (54 Vict. No. 8). Also Sawmill Regulations issued under the authority of "The Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1898"; and an Amendment of Section 8 of such Regulations was published on 20th January, 1899.

By reason of the conditions prescribed in the Sawmill Regulations, it became necessary to amend Clause 3 of the Pine Regulations—pursuant to the authority contained in Section 127 of

54 Vict. No. 8—prescribing the fees chargeable on Pine Licences, and the period at which such licences shall expire in each year. For the same reason as in the preceding case, it became necessary to amend No. 15 of the Regulations under “The Crown Lands Act, 1890,” dated 1st December, 1894, prescribing the fees chargeable thereunder, in order to bring them into line with the former.

SURVEYS.

In my last annual Report attention was directed to the transfer of all surface surveys required by the Department of Mines, and later, of the last remnant of survey work from the Public Works to the Department of Surveys. The new system continues to work smoothly, economically, and well, as may be gathered from the fact that, since the amalgamation of all surveys under one professional head was accomplished, many hundreds of surveys have been effected for the mines, and 80 miles of roads and other surveys have been executed for the Public Works Department, and not a single hitch or trouble has occurred in regard to them, while the surveys are conducted under a more uniformly accurate, economic, and reliable system than ever obtained or was practicable under the ever-present impediments attendant on the exercise of divided authority. In making these remarks, it is just that I should record my appreciation of the generous co-operation of the permanent heads of the Mines and Public Works Departments in bringing the new order of things into practical operation.

As a sequel to the amalgamation of surveys, new and improved regulations have been issued under the authority of the Governor in Council for the guidance and control of surveyors in Tasmania. They provide that all surveys, pursuant to grant applications for a title under the Real Property Act, shall be made under instructions from the Surveyor-General, and otherwise that surveys required for Real Property titles shall be subject to their provisions. Taken as a whole, these regulations cannot fail to exercise a beneficial influence upon the surveys of the Colony.

Something more than at present exists is, however, essential as a foundation upon which to build up a survey system in regard to the accurate location of isolated surveys and groups of surveys, especially in relation to uniformly fixing the position of leases in mining fields. At present the position of lease boundaries is dependent upon chance and the more or less perishable survey-marks made in the timber on the ground (stoning up the corner pegs is often impracticable). This is a matter in which reform is imperative. Timber is scarce in many places and subject to great destruction by bush fires; it will also be consumed in thousands of tons daily in working the mines on the West Coast at no distant date. It is therefore apparent that great risk is being run in relying upon wood marks for reproducing original surveys where large interests are involved between contending lessees.

Particulars of the lots surveyed and the localities in which they are situated are given in a Return hereunder; and Appendix C contains a full report from every District Surveyor in the island, of the progress made in settlement in their respective districts.

RETURN of Number of Instructions issued to Surveyors for the Twelve Months ending 30th June, 1899.

Name.	Survey Department.	Mines Department.	TOTAL.
Combes, H.	33	1	34
Dove, H. P.	35	21	56
Eddie, G. T.	54	67	121
Frodsham, T.	49	—	49
Flannigan, M.	62	—	62
Hall, A. C.	85	17	102
Hardy, W. M.	25	—	25
Hinsby, J. H.	25	—	25
Innes, E. G.	13	7	20
Jones, D.	1	128	129
Clark, T.	33	206	239
Sorell, J. A.	—	6	6
Windsor, F. E.	70	22	92
Wilson, C. S.	37	270	307
Authorised Surveyors	67	155	222
	589	900	1489

*RETURN of Selection and Auction Surveys received during the Twelve Months ending
30th June, 1899.*

Survey District.	Officer in charge of Survey District.	Selection Surveys.		Auction Surveys.		Total.	
		Area in Acres.	No. of Lots.	Area in Acres.	No. of Lots.	Area in Acres.	No. of Lots.
Buckingham	Combes, H.	1181	33	132	4	1313	37
Cumberland	Frodsham, T.	1680	49	491	6	2171	55
Dorset	Eddie, G. T.	598	10	530	5	1128	15
Devon	Hall, A. C.	3282	59	314	7	3596	66
Deloraine	Sorell, J. A.	123	4	—	—	123	4
Franklin	Innes, E. G.	414	9	198	5	612	14
Fingal	Clark, T.	1116	28	108	17	1224	45
Moorina	Dove, H. P.	602	15	384	16	986	31
Mersey	Archer, C.	594	8	49	1	643	9
Montagu	Wilson, C. S.	140	11	825	838	965	849
Oatlands	Hardy, W. M.	474	16	641	5	1115	21
Russell	Jones, D.	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tasman Peninsula	Hinsby, J. H.	1412	38	204	11	1616	49
Wellington	Windsor, F. E.	3093	43	1420	22	4513	65
King Island	Flannigan, M.	9544	87	—	—	9544	87
	Authorised Surveyors ..	455	17	765	125	1220	142
	TOTAL	24,708	427	6061	1062	30,769	1489

*SPECIAL SURVEYS.—Annual Return for Twelve Months ending
30th June, 1899.*

Town of Queenstown (extension), 301 lots ; Town of Rosebery, 300 lots ; Town of Strahan, 61 lots ; Town of Macquarie, 22 lots, surveyed and permanently marked.

Forty-four miles of roads have been surveyed for the Public Works Department in numerous small sections throughout the Colony.

OFFICIAL INSPECTIONS.

In March last I proceeded to Woolnorth by arrangement, and, in company with the manager of the V.D.L. Co., Mr. J. W. Norton-Smith, to inspect the second marked line recently discovered there by Mr. Geo. T. Eddie, at Green Point, and since adopted as the south boundary of the Woolnorth estate.

During my return I travelled through a considerable portion of the Counties of Wellington and Devon, and inspected 20 surveys of comparatively recent date, which I found satisfactory. I also took note of a number of other matters which have since been disposed of.

In May of this year I made an official tour to the West Coast, and while there inspected the subdivision survey of portion of the town reserve of Rosebery, on which a number of business allotments have been sold at fair prices, and a number more have since been applied for. The survey has been well planned and the work well executed. The site for the town is distant from the present settlement, say, an eighth of a mile, and on the opposite side of the Stitt River, it is about a quarter of a mile from where the Tasmanian Copper Company propose to erect their smelters. The inhabitants of the place have taken exception to the position of the town reserve, as they think that it should have included their residences, so that they would then have been able to convert the land into freehold allotments.

I feel every sympathy for these people, who had, however, squatted down on the land without authority before the town was reserved ; but, with the unpleasant experience gained at Queens-town before me, it is apparent that the question of selling lands for residence purposes in near proximity to any West Coast smelting works is one that requires the most careful consideration. It may yet transpire that the Tasmanian Copper Co.'s smelting works will occupy a different position when erected, in which case there may be no objection to complying with the wishes of the intended purchasers.

At Zeehan a number of persons waited upon me on various matters connected with the Government, one of which had reference to an application from the representatives of the Zeehan Electric Light and Power Syndicate for a site upon which to erect their plant. This matter has since been settled. Many improvements are noticeable in the town since I was there 12 months ago, but the one which immeasurably outweighs all others in regard to the welfare of the people

and the development of the district is the Tasmanian Smelting Co.'s ore-reduction works, recently erected under the able management of Mr. Max Haberlein. The site is about $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles from the town, and the plant, which is an extensive one, forms an imposing establishment. Without going into particulars, it is estimated that the total cost of the works when quite complete will be over £40,000, and that when in full swing they will find employment for some 200 persons. The importance of these works in treating the abundant low-grade ores of the West Coast can scarcely be over-estimated as a factor in its development.

At Queenstown and Gormanston I was met with numbers of inquiries having reference to public matters, and inspected the site upon which it has been asked that a town be surveyed at North Lyell. Proceeding to Macquarie Heads, I selected the spot upon which a number of town allotments have been since surveyed for occupation in connection with the construction of the proposed works, as recommended by Mr. Napier Bell, for deepening the harbour bar.

THE WOOLNORTH BOUNDARY.

Another matter of much importance, to which reference has been made in previous Reports, was a dispute of many years' standing between the Government and the Van Diemen's Land Company as to the position of the south boundary of the Woolnorth block of land. The cause of dispute, it will be remembered, was the discrepancy that existed between the written descriptions in the title and the ground marks. Several ineffectual attempts had been made from time to time to decide upon the issue, and finally it became apparent that steps must be taken sooner or later to test the survey on the ground. Accordingly, Mr. G. T. Eddie, District Surveyor, was instructed to proceed to the spot and make a careful survey of the known marked line from the ocean at Green Point on the west to the River Montagu on the east, a measured distance of 12 miles. The country is very rough, and the work was consequently very tedious and laborious. When this survey was nearing completion a second marked line was discovered almost in the position set out in the grant-deed of the block, and it then became necessary to reopen it throughout its entire length, making a total distance measured of 24 miles.

The re-definition and adoption of the second line has put an end to a long-standing dispute in a manner, I believe, satisfactory to the Government and the Van Diemen's Land Company. It was a costly matter, but the outlay was unavoidable. Already the final adjustment of the question has had a decidedly good effect upon fresh selection in the locality, and it has enabled the Department to proceed with a number of applications which have been held in abeyance for years.

DRAFTING ROOM.

The Chief Draftsman reports as follows:—

Twenty-six town plans and one plan of West Coast railways have been drawn during the last twelve months, and 59 town and 40 country plans have been posted up to date.

The 2-chain scale detail map of the City of Hobart, in six sheets, has been completed, and, as anticipated, has proved of great convenience to the office and the public, and is saving a large amount of wear and tear on the original survey plans. This map has also been published on a scale of 4 chains to an inch, which makes it a convenient-sized wall map, being on two sheets only.

The classification of the original or survey plans, both town and country, has now been finished; and though there are about 30,000 plans and diagrams, representing hundreds of thousands of allotments, the system now adopted of record and indexing of those plans and diagrams on the working plans is so complete that the survey plan of any one of these allotments can be found at a moment's notice. This is a matter of the greatest importance.

The survey of mineral sections, and the office examination and charting, &c., of the same, has proceeded most satisfactorily since the conduct of this work was transferred to the Survey Department.

Requests for the survey, proclamation, &c., of 84 new roads have been received during the 12 months under review, and are now in various stages of dealing, 55 having been proclaimed under the Land Vesting Act; 21 old roads have been closed under this Act, and 17 under the 29th section of the Crown Lands Act. Altogether this work, which was the cause of so much friction in the past, is now proceeding most satisfactorily to all the Departments concerned.

The new Regulations for the guidance of surveyors, published on the 24th March last, have been issued to all district and authorised surveyors, and are proving beneficial both to the office and the surveyors.

632 grant-deeds have been prepared in duplicate during the 12 months, being the largest number on record since complete returns have been kept, the highest number previously recorded being 610 in the year 1885.

*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, 1899.*

Plans prepared.	Country and Town plans compiled and drawn	27	
	Ditto ditto posted up to date	99	
			126
Applications dealt with.	Crown Lands Amendment Acts, 1893 and 1894 (selection)	389	
	Crown Lands Act, 1890 (31st Section)	612	
	Ditto (auction and private purchase)	129	
	Ditto (rent).....	437	
	Ditto (selection in mining areas)	127	
	Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1894, 10th Section (reduction of area).....	44	
	Ditto, 1895 (for purchase of second class land)	124	
	Residence Areas Acts, 1891 and 1893 (purchase).....	383	
			2245
Grants prepared.	Grant-deeds prepared in duplicate.....	...	632
Diagrams and Surveys received.	Selections	427	
	Auction and residence areas	1062	
	Real Property Act	7	
	Re-surveys, &c.	123	
	Mineral sections	943	
	Public Works roads.....	67	
			2629
Diagrams and Plans examined.	Computed and examined.....	1586	
	In course of examination	116	
	Unexamined	43	
	Mineral sections examined	884	
			2629
Diagram books and grant schedules.	Diagram books prepared for binding.....	57	
	Grant schedule books ditto.....	2	
			59
Claims for Grants.	Claims for grants under the Real Property Act and through the Supreme Court dealt with .....	...	14
Instructions for Surveys.	Instructions prepared and issued to Surveyors for land surveys	...	589
	Instructions prepared and issued to Surveyors for mineral surveys .....	...	900
Surveyors' accounts.	Surveyors' accounts in triplicate passed for payment .....	...	227
Roads.	Roads described for opening by Proclamation under Land Vesting Act .....	...	55
	Roads described for closing by Proclamation under Sect. 29 Crown Lands Act, 1890.....	...	17
	Ditto, ditto, Land Vesting Act .....	...	21
Descriptions.	Descriptions of allotments furnished to clerical branch for con- tracts for sale of land .....	...	362
Plans of districts.	Road Districts described for Proclamation	3	
	Municipal ditto	1	
	Recreation ditto	1	
			5

BOARD OF EXAMINERS FOR SURVEYORS.

The Secretary to the Board reports as follows:—

The Board of Examiners for Surveyors still continues to exercise its important functions in conducting examinations of candidates for admission to practice surveying in this Colony, and in inquiring into the qualifications and credentials of Surveyors already qualified in the Australian Colonies and New Zealand, but who seek authority to conduct surveys in Tasmania, and in advising upon all matters cognate thereto. In these respects the labours of the Board during the past 12 months have been above the average of previous similar periods. Four meetings have taken place since June of last year. Four Surveyors have been added to the list of those already authorised, three of whom passed the prescribed examination, and a Certificate without examination was conferred upon one other holding a Pass Certificate of Victoria. The number of candidates presented for examination has been four, one of whom failed. The death, in March, 1898, of Richard Hall, Esq., officer in charge of the Survey District of Devon, a member of the first Surveyors' Board appointed in the year 1883, and one of the oldest practising Surveyors in the Colony, afforded the Board an opportunity, much to be regretted, of placing upon record a sense of the high esteem in which Mr. Hall was held by the members of the Board and by the profession generally.

Correspondence upon matters relating to transactions of the various similar Boards throughout Australasia has been exchanged, and relations of the most pleasant nature maintained with those bodies.

GENERAL.

It is fitting that a record should be found in this Report of the deep regret felt throughout this Department at the death of the late Minister of Lands (the Hon. Alfred Thomas Pillinger, of Millbrook), who previous to his decease, which occurred at Hobart on 6th of May, 1898, had faithfully presided over its operations, with a slight interregnum, for a period of 9 years.

CONCLUSION.

The foregoing brief resumé of operations indicates that steady and constant progress has been made during the period under review. There is, however, a large and increasing amount of unrecorded work of various kinds performed by this Department for other offices, and public bodies, which materially adds to the heavy strain already imposed upon the staff, thereby frequently necessitating officers remaining long after office hours to clear up the current work. In all such cases the extra tax upon their energies has been cheerfully undertaken, thus affording the best practical testimony of zeal and loyalty to the Department.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your very obedient Servant,

E. A. COUNSEL,

Surveyor-General and Secretary for Lands.

The Honourable EDWARD T. MILES,
Minister of Lands and Works.

APPENDIX A.

No. 1.

GENERAL RETURN, Crown Lands Branch.

	1889.	1890.	1891.	1892.	1893.	1894.	1895.	1896.	1897.	1898.	1899. First Six Months.
Receipts from all sources ... £	64,823	67,707	67,840	54,536	42,493	34,885	40,496	47,209	53,533	60,205	25,425
Receipts from Deposits and Instalments, 24th and 31st Sections..... £	38,208	37,373	34,117	27,712	26,976	21,262	21,877	21,827	21,335*	21,516*	8573*
Receipts from other Sales of Crown Lands £	11,010	10,074	7947	14,519	5840	5900	6446	8460	14,508	13,501	7373
Rent of Crown Land for Pastoral purposes £	5032	5690	4627	4047	4181	3038	4594	4365	4787	5295	3220
Fees for Timber Licences, Grant-Deeds, &c. £	3637	1983	1927	1873	1127	1613	1017	1269	1904	1560	1001
Survey Fees £	6936	12,587	19,222	6385	4369	3072	6562	11,288	10,999	18,333	5258
Area of Country Lands sold ..ac.	50,566	42,987	30,649	31,204	19,788	20,866	14,316	16,026	24,519	20,071	9990
Area of Town and Suburban Lots sold acres	885	572	412	306	684	277	269	384	502	558	384
Area of Land selected under "Immigration Act" ...acres	1109	217	112	1968	1722	655	558	Nil.	118	Nil.	Nil.
Area of Land leased for Pastoral purposes acres	177,397	93,026	37,234	63,530	63,805	46,002	236,345	241,587	258,861	242,613	117,679
Number of Applications for Selection and Purchase	1783	1924	1305	1385	770	1487	899	1009	2037	1702	1088
Number of Grant Deeds issued	553	530	525	454	555	841	397	432	606	629	285

* 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, 1898, and 30th June, 1899, respectively.

	Twelve Months ending 30th June, 1898.			Twelve Months ending 30th June, 1899.		
	No. of Lots.	Area.		No. of Lots.	Area.	
		A.	R. P.		A.	R. P.
Waste Lands Act, 1870.....	2	105	0 0	—	—	—
Crown Lands Act, 1890.....	238	14,678	1 31	207	11,863	3 2
Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1893 and 1894	161	5919	1 19	134	5204	3 28
Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1895 (Second class land)	54	4217	3 11	44	3905	3 0
TOTALS.....	455	24,920	2 21	385	20,974	1 30

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, 1898, and 30th June, 1899, respectively, with Rental of same.

	Twelve months ending 30th June, 1898.			Twelve months ending 30th June, 1899.		
	No. of Lots.	Area Acres.	Rental.	No. of Lots.	Area Acres.	Rental.
Islands.....	5	225	£ s. d. 25 10 0	2	—	8 0 0
Occupation Licences	240	83,367	345 10 8	192	67,626	234 19 6
Half-yearly Rentals	193	168,824	1091 10 0	214	187,493	962 14 0
TOTALS	438	252,416	1462 10 8	408	255,119	1205 13 6

No. 4.

RETURN showing the Area of Leased Lands in Tasmania, and Amount of Annual Rental of same at 31st December, 1898.

	Area in Acres.	Rental.
		£ s. d.
Leases and Occupation Licences of Pastoral Lands	852,298	5448 14 8
Ditto, Islands	77,687	738 17 6
Total	929,985	6187 12 2

No. 5.

RETURN of Land Sales from 1889 to 1898, 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.
1889.....	723	435	1158	50,566	885	51,451	68,319	14,051	82,370	1 7 2½	15 17 6
1890.....	610	207	817	42,986	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	31,204	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	20,866	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	51,112	1 4 5½	47 15 9

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 1899, respectively.

	£
1889	5032
1890	5690
1891	4627
1892	4047
1893	4181
1894	3038
1895	4594
1896	4365
1897	4787
1898	5295
1899, six months	3220

No. 7.

RETURN showing Area of Country Lands in the various Counties sold from 1889 and 1898 inclusive.

COUNTY.	1889.	1890.	1891.	1892.	1893.	1894.	1895.	1896.	1897.	1898.
	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	3051 1 26	6150 0 2	2752 0 24	2775 2 16	2396 2 27	1697 3 25	3009 3 16	1351 3 16	2696 2 9	3022 1 21
Corwall	3007 2 28	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
Cumberland	745 3 19	1083 2 23	1213 3 15	1942 3 25	1395 2 20	382 1 16	117 3 34	1189 2 22	3084 1 10	726 2 39
Devon	11,560 2 3	9247 2 0	6269 2 39	4732 2 11	3428 3 22	4283 3 36	1973 3 7	1620 3 25	3334 0 26	3024 1 37
Dorset	9794 0 37	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
Flinders	3743 3 2	2412 0 21	35 0 26	669 3 30	1456 1 25	1047 3 19	460 3 24	25 0 38	132 1 9	265 3 5
Franklin	57 2 2						199 2 3			
Glamorgan	743 1 1	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	2121 1 9	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
King Island				1253 3 4	320 0 0	71 3 27	193 3 21	2949 3 34	3707 3 31	2850 2 20
Lincoln	340 2 12	991 1 3	105 2 24		159 2 0	405 3 34		171 2 22	470 1 10	
Mosmouth	1166 2 10	488 3 6	273 1 30	836 0 8	284 3 17	1180 2 10	692 1 24	407 1 8	490 0 18	166 0 19
Montagu	148 0 23	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
Pembroke	3441 1 24	2243 0 12	2676 2 38	1197 1 0	445 3 24	1389 3 33	1353 0 3	840 3 14	2979 2 31	1665 3 37
Rosell										
Somerset	1287 2 24	23 3 16		810 0 27		557 3 3		197 1 8	25 2 30	311 2 4
Wellington	8695 2 20	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
Westmorland	655 0 13	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
TOTAL	50,576 2 13	42,986 3 29	30,648 2 23	31,205 1 1	19,788 2 10	20,768 1 0	14,316 3 16	16,026 2 8	24,518 2 17	20,071 2 6

No. 8.

RETURN of Town Allotments sold during the Years 1897 and 1898.

TOWN.	1897.			1898.		
	Number of Lots.	Area.	Purchase Money.	Number of Lots.	Area.	Purchase Money.
		A. R. P.	£ s. d.		A. R. P.	£ s. d.
Adelaide	1	0 2 0	5 0 0	—	—	—
Apsley	—	—	—	1	10 0 7	20 0 0
Beaconsfield	3	0 2 13	50 0 0	4	2 2 16½	127 6 8
Bransholme	1	0 0 18½	12 0 0	1	0 0 6	8 0 0
Burgess	2	20 0 0	58 6 8	2	28 1 13	48 0 0
Campbell Town	3	2 0 18	60 0 0	—	—	—
Cleveland	2	24 1 14	40 0 0	—	—	—
Dundas	35	11 2 0½	764 0 0	15	14 3 39½	317 6 8
Derby	6	24 3 10½	105 6 8	19	44 3 1	263 16 8
Devonport	2	14 1 36	133 6 8	4	37 3 39	553 6 8
Dallas	—	—	—	1	9 0 38	30 13 4
Frankford	1	47 0 0	72 0 0	—	—	—
Fingal	1	1 1 11	20 0 0	—	—	—
Gormanston	17	3 3 26½	1243 13 4	56	13 2 32½	2456 0 0
George Town	1	4 0 28	24 0 0	—	—	—
Hellyer	1	12 0 3	20 0 0	—	—	—
Hamilton	1	0 3 5	5 0 0	—	—	—
Hadspen	—	—	—	1	3 1 3	33 6 8
Ilfracombe	1	9 3 38	85 6 8	2	2 2 0	53 6 8
Jacobs' Boat Harbour	1	8 0 16	32 0 0	—	—	—
Lefroy	1	0 1 0	10 0 0	—	—	—
Lottah	7	1 1 17½	100 0 0	1	0 0 37	15 0 0
Latrobe	1	0 0 7½	50 0 0	—	—	—
Lynchford	4	1 2 14	100 0 0	—	—	—
Liverpool	1	11 3 2	29 6 8	—	—	—
Lymington	2	12 0 29	40 0 0	—	—	—
Launceston	—	—	—	2	8 3 11	73 6 8
Mathinna	2	0 2 0	55 0 0	—	—	—
Mount Stuart	1	0 1 13	1 0 0	—	—	—
Marlborough	7	52 2 16	94 6 8	1	41 0 5	48 0 0
Macquarie	—	—	—	108	13 2 20½	6549 13 4
New Norfolk	—	—	—	1	25 1 0	45 6 8
New Town	—	—	—	2	0 2 25½	127 13 4
Pagunta	2	15 2 0	40 0 0	1	6 1 0	20 0 0
Patersonia	—	—	—	1	10 0 0	32 0 0
Queenstown	258	59 0 0	8831 6 8	196	36 0 2	10,180 0 0
Ringville	58	21 2 19	2639 6 8	2	0 1 36½	40 3 0
Ross	—	—	—	1	1 0 0	20 6 8
Strahan	19	17 1 10	556 0 0	76	147 2 3½	2450 6 8
Smithton	1	2 0 0	20 0 0	—	—	—
St. Helens	1	7 3 0	7 15 0	—	—	—
Southbridge	1	58 1 16	70 0 0	—	—	—
Somerset	—	—	—	1	0 3 23	5 0 0
Tunnack	1	10 3 24	34 13 4	—	—	—
Tyenna	—	—	—	1	1 0 0	5 0 0
Ulverstone	4	8 3 1	133 6 8	1	13 1 6	40 0 0
Underwood	1	10 0 36	66 13 4	—	—	—
Wivenhoe	4	22 1 11	37 10 0	4	33 3 12	89 6 8
Woodbridge	—	—	—	1	0 1 4	5 0 0
Wynyard	—	—	—	1	6 3 13	25 6 8
Zeehan	393	92 1 27	7073 5 0	160	43 3 33½	2995 0 0
TOTAL	848	592 0 30½	22,719 10 0	667	558 1 28½	26,677 3 4

APPENDIX B.

*Department of Lands and Surveys,
Hobart, 4th July, 1899.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to submit for your information the following Report on the Forests branch of this Department.

I was appointed to my present position on 16th January last, since when much of my time has been occupied in the performance of special duties, principally in the Huon, the north-east, and north-west portions of the island.

Three visits have been made to the Huon and Channel ports, the chief sawmilling centres of the Colony, where there are 25 sawmills now at work, the largest number that has ever been at work at any one time in these localities in the history of the timber trade of the Colony.

The trade is brisk, and all the mills are fully employed supplying local requirements, the demands of the West Coast, and the export trade to South Africa and the adjoining Colonies.

On proceeding to the sources from which the timber supplies were being drawn for the mills, I found that in many cases timber was being obtained from Crown lands for which applications had been lodged with the Department and the survey fees paid, but which had not yet been surveyed, nor any authority given to enter upon the land; and in one or two cases timber was being removed without even an application for a timber area having been made; consequently no rents or fees were being received by the Government. Again, I found, with the exception of a few cases, no fees for tram-road licences were being received. I have already pointed out the localities where millowners should be called upon to take out licences for tram-roads.

The millowners referred to are being called upon to take out licences pending the survey of their sections, and a second surveyor is now at work in the district, assisting in the survey of these areas, so that these matters will shortly be placed on a more satisfactory footing.

The great demand for sleepers for South Africa, and the low price offering, viz, 5s. 3d. per 100 feet superficial (at which price the majority of the millowners refuse to supply), has led to a large number of men working under licence "squaring," i.e., splitting the lengths into billets and adzing square. The rate of pay for this employment is 1s. per sleeper, at which rate an expert axeman can earn the good wage of 10s. per diem.

Unfortunately the waste of timber occasioned by this method of turning out sleepers is very considerable, and a large quantity of *debris* is left lying on the ground.

The Southern Tasmanian Sawmillers' Association, formed some two or three years ago, has ceased to exist. This is very much to be regretted, because the existence of such an association would have greatly benefited the industry itself and sawmillers generally by the advantage to be gained by working in unison, regulating prices, and exercising a control over the timber trade generally.

While carrying out your instructions of March last to visit the timber areas of the Huon, I had an opportunity afforded me of seeing the timber beds from which the supplies of the larger number of the sawmills in the southern portion of the island will in future be drawn. In several places I penetrated through the 60,000-acre timber reserve lying between the back of the township of Franklin and the Esperance River, and extending back to the Hartz Mountain range and Adamson's Peak.

Deducting the many barren patches, poor timber land, and areas destroyed by fire, I estimate that there is at least 30,000 acres of timber land available here for the sawmiller. This area might be considerably augmented by the inclusion of the forests lying south of this timber reserve, and extending as far as South Cape.

In pursuance of instructions received from you in May last, I visited the localities of Eddystone, Boobyalla, Lyndhurst, and Bridport, where considerable tracts of Crown land are leased for grazing purposes. The object of my visit was to ascertain to what extent, if any, the adjoining Crown lands are being run over by the stock of the lessees of Crown land.

My report shows this to be the case to a considerable extent. A lessee takes up blocks here and there and runs over the whole intervening Crown land, thus defrauding the Government, and, moreover, by this action preventing others from taking up land.

It behoves the Department, if possible, to devise some means by which this unsatisfactory state of affairs can be rectified. In attempting to devise such a scheme, one is met at the outset by several difficulties:—1st, these lands not being surveyed, it is difficult to locate the separate blocks; 2nd, the leases are held for 14 years, terminating at various periods; 3rd, the blocks are taken up at intervals here and there; 4th, the absence of natural or artificial boundaries in the majority of cases.

The reports furnished by me of inspections of sections taken up under the Crown Lands Amendment Acts, 1893 and 1894, show a very satisfactory percentage of lots on which improvements have been made in compliance with the terms under which they were selected.

I can, from my own observations, bear testimony to the advantages to be arrived at from the working of these Acts, affording as they do opportunity for *bonâ fide* settlers with limited means

at their disposal to purchase land on easy terms, while the Crown is safeguarded against "dummying" by the forfeiture clauses in cases where the stipulated improvements have not been effected.

In all cases where the improvements have not been of a satisfactory nature, or where nothing has been done on the land, I have recommended the forfeiture of the sections. Up to the present date I have inspected and reported upon 102 of these sections. Although this work may entail the expenditure of much of my time, I cannot but think it essential to the satisfactory working of these Acts and to the interests of the State that it should be regularly performed.

There are in many places some fine belts of sapling timber that have sprung up on land from which the matured trees have years since been removed. These young forests should be preserved for future timber supply. If this class of timber is allowed to be utilised for this purpose, the trees should be cut at not less than three or four feet from the ground. In the course of five or six years they will have grown up from the stumps, and be again available for cutting.

Too much importance cannot be attached to the necessity of taking every precaution to prevent the destruction of the forests by fire. The quantity of valuable timber that has been destroyed in this way, particularly in the summer of 1897-8, is really almost incredible. Both yourself and Mr. Perrin have from time to time, in reports furnished to the Government, drawn attention to the serious losses sustained in this way. Notices calling attention to the provisions of "The Bush Fires Act, 1854," were very generally posted in the early part of the current year. It is, I presume, your intention to continue to do this every year.

In a Report, dated 27th March last, I recommended that the practice of remuneration of Bailiffs of Crown Lands formerly in vogue in the form of a percentage of licence fees collected and the amount realised on the sale of timber, bark, &c., seized and sold, should be reverted to. I would again urge the desirability of adopting this course as an incentive to vigilance on the part of these officers, and as a preventive against the illegal cutting of timber on Crown lands.

I have also in some of my reports pointed out localities where I considered bailiffs might be with advantage appointed in the interests of the Department.

I have, &c.

The Secretary for Lands, Hobart.

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

APPENDIX C.

REPORTS OF DISTRICT SURVEYORS FOR THE YEAR 1898.

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

Surveys effected.—During the past year I have marked out forty allotments, varying in size from ten to two hundred and eighty-four acres, and amounting in the aggregate to one thousand six hundred and forty-nine (1649) acres. In addition to this I have marked out three school sites, and made eight surveys of roads for the Public Works Department, making in all fifty-one surveys.

Roads and Tracks required.—Under this heading I recommend that a good road should be constructed from the end of the present road, called Hall's Track, in the Parish of Longley, through the land at the Sandfly to the Sandfly River, a distance of only about six miles; this would open up a lot of good land, and I am sure that were this done there would soon be a number of selections taken up in that locality. I would also suggest that a good horse track be made from the present settlement at Judd's Creek, Parish of Ranelagh, through to the road at the head of the Plenty River, a distance of only about six or seven miles, and this if done would, I know, open up a lot of first-class and valuable land. A track should also be cut up the Huon River, from Wallis' farm to the Weld River; this, I have before stated, would open up a lot of good land.

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, as also in the Parishes of Throckmorton and Ranelagh, where much larger blocks can be obtained, especially in the Upper Huon District, where I know a large tract of land to exist, the only drawback being the want of good roads. In the Sandfly (Parishes of Longley and Champ) there is also an area of land available for selection within an easy distance of Hobart, and a good road within a few miles.

Progress of Settlement.—During the past year, owing to the heavy fires in January last, a large quantity of land has been laid down with grass, and I can safely say there is more grass at present in the Huon District than there ever was before, and the country looks, generally, better. Most of the settlers who were burnt out have rebuilt their houses, and although some lost a considerable amount of property, the majority of them are better off, owing to having their land cleared by the fire.

Further than what I have mentioned in the above, I do not know of any other improvements in the district.

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

During the past year I have surveyed thirty-two lots, comprising an area of 1406 acres. Included in this amount are three lots of second class land, the area being 392 acres ; the balance, in most cases, has been taken up principally by owners of land increasing their present holdings.

The small area of second class land applied for in my district, I think, clearly indicates that the price of Crown lands is too high. My district contains thousands of acres of inferior land, which will never be applied for at the present price ; but if the price was reduced to five shillings per acre it would be taken up, cleared, and improved, and thus a revenue would be derived from same.

In the Parish of Tyenna settlement is steadily going on, and many improvements have been made during the past year in the shape of clearing, scrubbing, and laying down in grass. Many lots have been recently applied for in this locality, owing to the fact that the Western Railway Line is being surveyed through this district. If this line should ever be constructed it will open up a large area of splendid land in the Florentine Valley. For a full account of this country I beg to refer you to my former reports.

This district, like most other portions of the Colony, has been affected by the bush fires that raged during the early part of the year, Tyenna and Uxbridge suffering most severely, many homesteads and a considerable amount of stock having been burnt in both places. This has, to a certain extent, impeded the progress of settlement.

The portions of the district which contain the largest amount of Crown lands suitable for selection are Florentine, Tyenna, and Uxbridge.

Roads and Tracks required.—A track cut from the end of present selections, in the vicinity of Mount Lloyd, southerly, and a track from Ellendale round Mount Field, in the direction of the Florentine River, would open up country hitherto unknown.

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

Lands suitable for Selection.—Mount Barrow is the only place where there is any quantity of fair land suitable for selection, and until roads are opened up there will not be any taken up to speak of.

Roads and Tracks required.—A track through the District mentioned above is the only one which, I think, would be necessary.

Progress of Settlement.—1084 acres have been selected in 16 lots under the Crown Lands Act, 1890, and Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1893 ; 444 acres, in 3 lots, at auction, under Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1895 ; 2 small town lots ; 5 surveys under the Real Property Act ; 1 re-survey ; 2 Public Works roads ; 51 sections under the Gold Fields Regulations have been leased, many of them being old sections.

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

Surveys.—During the period under review some 54 lots, totalling 2490 acres, have been surveyed for agricultural purposes, and 5 lots, comprising 58 acres, marked off in several of the towns. A re-survey of portion of Town of Alma has also been made.

For lease under the Mineral Lands Act, 39 lots, embracing 2175 acres, have been surveyed.

(The above figures are only approximate, as I have no record of the work done prior to the date when I took charge of the District).

Progress of Settlement.—The progress of settlement shows, generally, a very marked improvement over that of the past few years. This is due in a great measure to the high price of potatoes, which is the staple product of the farmers here. A considerable portion of land has been scrubbed in various parts of the District, but principally at Gunn's Plains, by Messrs. W. & F. Henry ; Wilmot, by Messrs. Winspear and Williams ; and Pine Road, by Mr. T. Verger. The extensive and systematic manner in which these gentlemen are improving land (that has too long been in the hands of speculators) induces others to turn their attention to the rich lands now lying idle on this coast. Owing to the great improvement in prices of all farming products there is a growing demand for good farms, and many properties have changed hands at very satisfactory prices.

Population is increasing steadily, and there are few, if any, empty houses in the different towns.

At Devonport, Ulverstone, and Penguin, a good many buildings are being erected, and of a substantial character, showing that confidence is placed in the future of these centres. During last summer bush fires swept over a large area of country. The farmers and settlers in the back country suffered severely from this disaster, losing crops and fences, and with difficulty saving their homes.

Land available for Selection.—There is now no extent of available good Crown land within a reasonable distance of market.

In the Parishes of Narrawa and Nietta, and around the base of the Black Bluff, there are some patches of good land. To the south-west of Nietta, towards the Leven River, there is a large stretch of splendid land, which will be selected as the demand for land grows. It is possible that good land exists to the west of the Leven River, near Mount Tor ; but this locality is very little known.

Mining.—A considerable amount of attention has been given to this industry.

Development of the "shows" has not been, so far, very satisfactory, although the surface prospects are fairly good. As in other parts, capital and the necessary knowledge for the systematic

working of the mines is required. The old mining fields of Middlesex, Mount Claude, and Dial Range have all been taken up again. At Bellmount the principal mine, Shepherd and Murphy Mining Co., is temporarily idle, pending the completion of the road to enable the company to convey the machinery to the claim. The future prospects of this mine seem very good.

Iron ore is being exported from the Penguin, and, provided the industry pays, there should be a bright future for the locality, as there are immense deposits of this mineral.

Roads and Tracks.—The road to the mining field of Bellmount is now being made, and as a result the good land is being applied for.

A road crossing the Wilmot River, to connect Castra and Narrawa, would be of great importance and convenience to the settlers residing some distance from the coast.

I must endorse the remarks of the late District Surveyor in reference to cutting a track from Nietta south-west to the Leven River, and to continue this track across the river in the direction of Mount Tor, and with a branch to the Pine Road. This would open up a large extent of country at present almost unknown.

A deviation is urgently required of the road leading from Narrawa to Sheffield, on the east side of the River Forth. The settlers are much inconvenienced, owing to the unnecessary steepness of the grade. This could easily be avoided, and I would strongly recommend that this work is carried into effect before any more public money is spent on the road.

In concluding my report, it is a pleasure to state that, so far as this part of the Colony is concerned, the depression and gloomy outlook of the past few years seem to have passed away, and that prosperity and comfort are returning to the farmers and inhabitants generally. Prospects of an excellent harvest are very encouraging, and the season has been most favourable for feed, so much so that the grass is like fields of corn.

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

Since the date of my last report, some thirty lots of Crown lands have been surveyed in the District under my charge, ranging from ten (10) to five hundred (500) acres in area, and with a total area of some two thousand nine hundred acres.

Of this area, some six blocks, with a total area of 2175 acres, have been marked off for timber purposes; three lots, with a total area of 50 acres, have been marked off for gold-mining purposes, and the balance has been surveyed into small sections for agricultural purposes, with areas of from twenty acres downwards.

Some two or three roads have been surveyed for the Public Works Department; one lot of 100 acres was surveyed in connection with a Public Works road, and two or three sub-division surveys of small sections have been made for various owners for the Real Property Act purposes, which I presume will be forwarded to the Lands' Titles Office as required.

Lands available and suitable for selection.—In the County of Kent, and the numerous Parishes into which it is subdivided, there are still large areas of Crown lands of good quality and suitable for selection; but in the Parishes of Thanet, Price, Honeywood, and Leithbridge some sixty thousand acres have been proclaimed a timber area or Forest Reserve, and have been withdrawn from sale, but as the boundaries of this Reserve, as at present marked, include a good many small areas that are not timber-bearing, I presume they will, as settlement extends, be allowed to be selected, and made use of for farming purposes.

In the Parishes of Garrett, Purves, and Blakeney there are some good patches of available land, but unfortunately the great want of roads or tracks of some kind prevents much in the way of selection being done, and the greater portion of these parishes (especially Blakeney and Purves) being rough, broken, and heavily timbered, there is little or no inducement to settlers.

In the County of Buckingham, in the Parishes of Bedford, Pedder, and Bagot, there are no large areas available for selection; what there is is unalienated, generally consisting of inferior second class land, and suitable only for selection by those who have homesteads adjoining. Here and there a few small patches of fair land can be found, but they are now few and far between, and generally very difficult of access.

Upon South Bruni Island there is still a considerable area of good land, generally situated upon the western slopes of the chain of hills which form the watershed or dividing range between the water flowing to the eastern and western shores of the island; but the greater portion of this land carries timber of the best quality, and recently, I believe, a large area has been applied for as a timber area, therefore it is not advisable to push retention to any great extent. This timbered land is generally situate from Little Taylor Bay (portion known as Daniel's Bay), in a south-easterly direction, towards Tasman's Head. North from this point there is not a great deal of timber (excepting that upon the eastern shore leased by Messrs. Gray Brothers), and there are some small areas of very good land still to be obtained in areas of about fifty acres downwards.

These lots should be well suited for fruit-growing, as South Bruni is not so heavily timbered as the mainland, is well watered, has a splendid climate, and has the advantage of being at present free from the pests that are such a source of trouble to fruitgrowers in the settled districts of the mainland. It also has the advantage of being comparatively near a market, and has regular steam communication with the city.

Tracks and Roads required.—As by far the greater portion of this district is still in a state of nature, and a great deal of it covered with a dense coat of scrub of the heaviest description, it is absolutely necessary, before anything much can be expected in the way of extension of settlement, that a few tracks should be cut to give means of access to the more isolated portions of the district,

The County of Kent, which comprises the extreme southern portion of Tasmania, is, with the exception of the scattered settlements extending from the River Huon along the coast line to Recherche Bay, practically unknown, and although it has harbours and facilities for water carriage equal, and often superior, to most of the other portions of the Colony, little or nothing has been done in the way of exploration with a view of opening up the interior. For this purpose a few tracks are urgently required, and I would suggest that the track now being cut from Tyenna to Port Davey should be connected to the Arve Road at Geeveston. This should cross the Arve River north of the Hartz Mountains, cross the Picton and Craycroft Rivers, and, crossing the Arthur Range, connect with the Tyenna track near Spring River. This would open a country that has every indication of being mineral-bearing, and would have the advantage of allowing prospectors in the vicinity of Port Davey to get to civilisation in a comparatively short time, which would be of immense advantage in cases of accident, sickness, or failure of provisions, &c.

Cox Bight should be also connected by a track to the nearest point of civilisation,—I would suggest to Raminea Settlement, Port Esperance; here again the proposed tourists' track to Mount Adamson could be made use of as a portion of the route.

Tin has been found in payable quantities at Cox Bight, and, from personal knowledge and information gathered from reliable sources, I am aware that a considerable area of tin-bearing country exists in this vicinity; but there are no facilities for prospecting, being no regular means of communication by water to either the Bight or Port Davey, the only means of transit being by the regular steamers to the West Coast, which, as they are all large boats, is very expensive, so that prospecting upon the South Coast is practically out of reach of the working miners, who, as a rule, are the men who contribute the most towards opening up a new country. To give some idea of what the expenses of landing a party at Cox Bight are like, some few years since I took my party, of four men, an assistant, and myself, to Cox Bight to make some surveys. We went by steamer and returned the same way, and the fares alone amounted to £22. Since that I know that it has cost a party of three £10 to get dropped in an open boat off the mouth of Port Davey.

At present I hold instructions for two surveys at Cox Bight for mineral purposes, and also a plan and report upon a former survey, the fees for which amount to £26 10s.; but, in the absence of any communication by land, the question arises,—How am I to get there?—and, if I manage to get landed,—How am I to get away again? If there was a track across country, once a person got there and did what he wanted, the getting away again would be a small matter. Only yesterday I had inquiries about this very vicinity (Cox Bight) from a gentleman, a recent arrival in the Colony, and who states he would be willing to take up prospecting areas there, and bring in capital to test them, but the present means of access preclude any possibility of carrying it out. The present high price of tin caused him to make inquiries.

A track from Cox Bight should cross the New River about ten or twelve miles from the coast and pass over the Adamson Range, a little to the north of the Peak. If this were opened it would bring the miners there within a couple of days' walk of civilisation, and would pass through a mineral-bearing country a considerable portion of the distance.

Roads.—I cannot suggest much in the way of new roads for opening up Crown Lands at present, as tracks are what are more urgently required, and I think the present works, and money voted for works proposed by the Public Works Department for the present year, will suffice for the wants of the district in that line.

Rate of Progress.—In the early part of last year the progress of a very considerable portion of this district should be chronicled as backward, for in the months of January and February disastrous fires swept over a very considerable portion of the settled area, spreading destruction and ruin far and wide, and leaving in many cases a blackened waste in the place of a comfortable homestead. For some days the fiery element seemed to completely take possession, and cottages, fences, orchards, sawmills, tramways, bridges, and everything that would burn were swept from its path, and for a time things looked bad enough upon all sides; but our settlers were equal to the occasion, and after the first shock of the blow was over, relief committees were organised, and with assistance from other portions of the Colony, means were found to re-erect cottages, replace fences, barns, &c., and find seed for the coming season, and in a great measure place things upon as good, and in some instances actually a better, footing than they were before the fire. Fortunately for the farmers, the past season has been a splendid one for all early crops, and where in the early part of the year all was black and desolate looking, nature has covered the ground with a coat of grass such as has not been seen for years in the Huon, and cattle of all kinds are fat and looking first-class, in fact the complaint is general that the farmers have not, and cannot, get stock to eat up the grass upon their holdings. As far as I am aware, the outlook for the fruit crop is good, and for the past year I know the return was better than it has been for some years past, especially for what is known as hard fruit, *i.e.*, the good-keeping sorts of apples and pears.

The timber trade, upon which many of the inhabitants of the district depend for a means of livelihood, is in a satisfactory state, and if times are not all that could be wished, still there is a brisk demand; in fact, I think for some kinds of timber the demand exceeds the output. There are several large vessels now in the port of Hobart loading and awaiting cargoes, and others are expected, and as the bulk of their cargoes come from this district, it means a return of hard cash to the various millowners, which is filtered through them to the various employees, and thus places

money in circulation throughout the district. Under the revised timber regulations, large areas have been applied for throughout the district, and I have reason to believe that in the very near future a large amount of foreign capital will be expended in developing what is now a fairly flourishing industry.

Our roads, bridges, &c., under the Public Works Department, are all in a good state of repair, and various new bridges, extensions of roads, &c., have been completed during the past year, and other works are being carried on in a satisfactory manner.

As far as selection for agricultural purposes goes, things have begun to resume their old aspect, for instructions from all parts of the district have come in freely, and at present I have my hands full of survey work, and, from the present outlook, I am likely to have for some time to come; this is a healthy sign, for if farmers have not the money they cannot afford to take up new land. A fair number of selections under the Act for second class land are taking place; up to a few months since little or nothing was known of the provisions of this Act, but I have taken means to have it scattered throughout the settled portions, by leaving a form of application at several of the business places in the centres of population, and the people are now commencing to avail themselves of it. I notice also that steps are being taken to sell larger areas in some of the reserved townships; this is a step in the right direction, because people will often purchase a lot of twenty-five (25) acres where they would not dream of paying two or three survey fees for the same area; several of these town reserves will be sold off in this manner, whereas, if the small lots are insisted upon, they will be likely to lie idle for many years to come.

As a general resumé of the district for the past year: Although there have been heavy losses by fire, still there has been a large amount of gain; in many instances the dense scrub has been swept off for miles, leaving the surface of the land cleaner than it could have been made by the hand of man by years of labour, thus adding materially to the value of that and the surrounding property. New cottages are springing up in all directions. I may say we have no *bonâ fide* unemployed, as men are scarce and very hard to get for any kind of work. So far all kind of produce is plentiful, and is bringing remunerative prices, and the coming apple season promises well for the growers, who, although I believe do not generally expect very heavy crops, can fairly calculate upon paying prices for the various kinds of fruit. All this points to a steady if not a rapid rate of progress, which is very noticeable in many portions of the district, especially in the vicinity of Port Cygnet, where I was agreeably surprised to see the steady progress that had been made during the last year or two.

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

I have received instructions for the following surveys during the past year:—

A.	R.	P.	
689	0	0,	in 75 lots, under Goldfields Regulation Act.
998	0	0,	in 30 lots, Mineral.
472	0	0,	in 11 lots, under provisions C.L. Amendment Act, 1893.
440	0	0,	in 12 lots, under 49th Section of the C.L. Act, 1890.
144	chains,	in	4 lots, dredging claims.
284	0	0,	in 8 lots, under 31st Section of the C.L. Act, 1890.
300	0	0,	in 4 lots, under the C.L. Amendment Act, 1895.
	Roads,	in	5 surveys, for Public Works Department.
50	0	0,	in 1 lot, re-survey.
	Water-right,	in	5 surveys.
1	0	0,	in 4 lots, under Residence Areas Act.
1	0	0,	in 1 lot, cricket reserve at Mathinna.
4	0	0,	in 1 lot, dam site.
			1 tramway.
5	0	0,	in 1 lot, tailings area.
5	0	0,	in 1 lot, under 39th Section of the C.L. Act, 1890.

I now hold instructions for about 26 uncompleted surveys, consisting of mining, agricultural, dredging claims, and water-rights. These are much scattered about the district, and some of them have been delayed owing to the applicants not attending when notice was given to them. These surveys will now be proceeded with as fast as possible.

Lands available for Selection.—About the Settlement of Upper Ringarooma there are some four or five thousand acres of first class land available for selection, and a large portion of this is to the south of the settlement, and is from 7 to 10 miles from the township. This land is well watered, but is very broken, and the hills rather steep. The formation of a large portion of it is basalt, and the balance granite. It is timbered with white gum, myrtles, gum, stringybark, and blackwood, and covered with a dense scrub of ferns, musk, sassafras, dogwood, and vines. There is also a large portion of second class land about this settlement, which would be suitable for grass-growing and stock-fattening. The poorest of this land will, when cleared, produce grass from 2 to 3 feet high. This growth is due to the wet climate and the lofty timber.

Ringarooma is the best locality I know of for any intending selectors to turn their attention to. A young man who could and would work could go on to this land with a small capital and make a living. As an instance, I know one case where a young man started on his surveyed selection with

£5, and now he has a nice home and well stocked. While clearing his land he made big wages from opossum skins caught thereon. The value of these skins is from 1s. to 8s. each, according to quality.

In the vicinity of Mounts Maurice, Barrow, Ben Nevis, Saddleback, and Victoria kangaroo and opossum are numerous, and, as those parts are worthy of a prospector's attention, a hunter could make wages in skins and prospect at the same time.

This season the stock and crops are looking splendid all through the Ringarooma settlement, and I notice many of the selectors are pushing on with the clearing of their lands.

Upper George River.—There is still a fair amount of good and second class land among the steep hills about this settlement available for selection, and most of this is between the North George River and the Weldborough Road, a distance of about 10 miles. A track now passes through a portion of this land, but to open it up a road would have to be made from the North George River to the Weldborough Road. As far as I can see, selectors do not care to turn their attention in this direction, although there is a good road from the settlement to St. Helens. What little there has been applied for during the past year has been by the residents of the settlement, who are improving their lands very slowly. There is a fair cart-road up the South George to the Falls, and from there a foot-track leads to Mathinna, a distance of 14 miles.

St. Marys.—This settlement is steadily advancing. The selectors on all sides are pushing on with the clearing of their lands. There are many patches of good land among the steep hills available for selection in small lots, probably 400 acres in all. There is also a fair amount of second class land on the hills back from the settlement. The output of coal from the Mount Nicholas and Cornwall coal mines for the past year has been large.

Blessington.—There are many patches of good and second class land about this settlement available for selection, and the most of this is between the North Esk and Ford Rivers, extending in the direction of Ben Nevis. There is now a fair road from Launceston to this settlement, a distance of about 30 miles. The selectors about the Ford River are fast improving their land. It is a wet, cold climate, but I notice the stock do well, and the crops are good. Most of the settlers here came from St. Marys, and often use the track over Rose Tier, which is in very bad order from bush fires. If this were a good track it would be a great help to the selectors.

Mining.

Mining has advanced fairly well during the past year, and the number of lots applied for have exceeded that of the previous year.

At Mathinna there is a deal of good prospecting going on, while at Mangana mining is at a standstill. The Salmon Gold Syndicate is doing good work in prospecting their land, which is about six miles from Fingal. Another three months should prove whether this mine is payable or not.

Alberton.—Mining here has taken a change for the better during the past year.

There is now a good road from this township to Ringarooma, a distance of 5 or 6 miles. A telegraph office has been established, and there is an hotel and store on the township. All the mines here are doing good work, and are employing a number of men.

A Mr. John Lowell has started to work the bed of the Dorset River for alluvial gold, and the summer months should prove whether it is a success or not.

Tin.

There is a fair amount of tin-mining going on under miners' rights in the creeks and rivers between Ringarooma and Blue Tier.

At Lottah the Australian and Anchor Tin Mines are still working; but the returns from these mines so far cannot be considered satisfactory.

The shortness of water has been very much against the working of these mines.

There is still a little tin-mining going on, some 4 or 6 miles west of St. Helens.

Among the Scamander Ranges three lots, comprising an area of 160 acres, have been surveyed during the past year, for applicants who have taken up the land for "Wolfram," and the prospects I saw on the land were very good.

Roads.

At Ringarooma a continuation of the Maurice Road is much required, starting from the south-east corner of William Wines' 25 acres, and going in a south-westerly direction up the Ringarooma River to selections already taken up; if this road were made I feel sure a deal more land would be taken up further south.

The road from Ringarooma to Mathinna is in very bad order. The Ringarooma end of this road has been made good for about 7 miles, and to make the balance good the Button-grass Plains portion requires draining and forming, and a better grade being cleared on approaching the Dan's Rivulet Valley.

If this were done it would be of great advantage to the people of Ringarooma and Mathinna. At present the road is very little used owing to its bad state.

Tracks.

The track from the Falls on South George River to Mathinna is in bad order from fallen timber, and the same will apply to the following tracks:—Hogan's Track, from St. Helens to Mathinna;

track from Dan's Rivulet to Alberton; track from Ringarooma to Weldborough; also the track from Ford River over Rose Tier to Mr. Jones' farm; if this track were made good it would assist the selectors at Ford River. There is a fair cart-road from Mr. Jones' farm to Mathinna, a distance of about 6 miles.

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

The selections of agricultural land for the year have been small, owing in a great measure to the low price in tin, and partly to the difficulty of access to the unselected portions of the district. I am glad to say that there is a great improvement in both these matters.

The good land which I spoke of in my last report lying to the west of the Boobyalla road is now being opened up by roads, which I anticipate will be of great value to the district. I have recently been through this good land, which lies to the north of the selections of Shelley, Hardman, and others, and I find that there is a large amount of valuable Crown land running north to the barren lands along the old Scottsdale-Gladstone track, which is very suitable for selection for agricultural purposes, and these new roads through Hardman's and others will open up these lands, and I consider it well worth inspection by any enterprising settlers. To open up these roads thoroughly, in my opinion, will meet the requirements of the district for the coming year. There is a large amount of second class land in the district, and I regret that the fact that land can be purchased at a reduced price is not more widely known. The revival in the tin market should make lands in this district worth taking up, and the butter factory in the centre of these good agricultural lands is another inducement. There have recently been a few selections on these first class lands, and I anticipate an improvement during the coming year.

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

Surveys effected.—During the year 1898 I received 503 instructions for surveys under "The Mining Act," 70 instructions for surveys under the various Land Acts, and the surveys in connection with the Mount Lyell Reserve; and, in addition to these numbers, there were 217 outstanding instructions issued in the latter part of 1897. I am glad to be able to advise you that, with the exception of about fifty (50) instructions, the whole of the abovementioned surveys have been duly carried out, and I am hopeful that those orders now remaining in hand will be completed at an early date.

Progress of Settlement.—The selection of Crown lands for purely agricultural purposes has this year been practically *nil*, due, perhaps, to local capital being applied to the taking up of mineral lands, for which there has been an unparalleled demand. I would again urge the fact that there are special inducements offering for those skilled in agriculture to direct their attention to farming operations on the West Coast, where there is a large and constant demand for produce of all kinds. Although, generally, the West Coast soil is of a poor character, still there are many areas, small no doubt in extent, which will compare favourably with the finest agricultural lands of the Colony, being, moreover, comparatively easy of access, and with the decided advantage of being in close proximity to a ready market, the distance from which is too often found the chief drawback in the farming districts. As an indication of the advance of settlement, it may be remarked that, in order to accommodate the influx of population, the principal towns of the district—Zeehan, Queenstown, Gormanston, and Strahan—have this year been increased by the survey of a large number of building allotments, upon several hundreds of which cottages of various sizes have since been erected.

There is still a strong inquiry for business sites, and some of the more favoured positions have changed hands at prices ranging from £25 to £40 per foot.

New settlements have sprung up in the vicinity of Macquarie (Kelly Basin) and Mount Black (Rosebery), and at both places a number of allotments have been surveyed. In every direction there are signs of renewed confidence in the permanence of the mining industry of the West Coast. Several costly engineering works are in the course of construction.

The North Lyell Mining Company have commenced to build a railroad from deep water at the Town of Macquarie to their copper mine at Mount Lyell—a distance of some thirty miles. The Mount Lyell Mining and Railway Company, Limited, have decided to extend their railway from Teepookana, their present terminus, to the shipping port at Strahan, while the Emu Bay Railway Company has made exceptionally good headway with the construction of their Burnie-Zeehan railroad, and, judging from the rate of progress, this line will be open for traffic to Rosebery by the end of March, and to Zeehan in the beginning of 1900. At Zeehan, smelting works, specially designed to treat low-grade ores, are rapidly approaching completion; and at Queenstown the Mount Lyell Mining and Railway Company have added five more furnaces to their works, making eleven (11) furnaces in all, with a capacity for treating about 1000 tons of ore per diem. There are other works of less magnitude than those just quoted, but which are, however too numerous to particularise in this report; suffice it to say that I consider that I am well within the mark in stating that at least three-quarters of a million sterling of private capital has been embarked in the concerns named and their contingent works.

The value of the year's output of copper and silver ores has considerably exceeded half a million sterling, and it is safe to predict that the 1899 output will exceed this amount.

Trade, too, with the West Coast is on a sounder basis than hitherto, a circumstance which I venture to think fully justifies the proposed expenditure on the removal of the sand-bar at

Macquarie Heads, even allowing that the necessary work may subsequently be found to be more costly than Mr. Napier Bell's estimate indicates.

Mineral Lands.—Approximately, 40,000 acres have been surveyed during the year for mineral purposes, the majority of the applications being located principally in the direction of the Lyell-Murchison mineral belt, from Mount Black in the north to Mount Darwin in the south, although for many reasons indiscriminate pegging of sections is to be deprecated, still one redeeming feature of this extensive "pegging boom" is that several most promising-looking shows have been discovered, which otherwise may have remained hidden for years. These shows are now being vigorously exploited with most satisfactory results. A large scope of mineral country in this district still remains unexplored, and even the better established fields cannot be said to be thoroughly prospected. A considerable area is traversed by formations, which may eventually prove to be mineral-bearing, but which at present, owing to the want of communication, cannot be effectually tested.

Tracks.—It is a matter of considerable importance that the following localities should be connected by tracks with the least possible delay :—

(a) Queenstown to Mount Jukes, *via* Mount Huxley.

(b) Harris Reward (at the King River) to Mount Darwin, with a branch to Flannigan's Flat.

(c) From the Tyndal Huts (Garnsworthy's) to the Red Hills at Mount Murchison.

I have several times urged the necessity of constructing a pack-track to the last-named field, but apparently without success. However, I trust that funds are now available for the purpose, and that the tracks referred to will be put in hand this summer. I beg to recommend that the under-mentioned localities also receive attention as regards pack-tracks :—From a point on the Deep Lead-Rosebery track to follow round the northern spurs of Mount Read, thence on to Mount Murchison; from the Rosebery to the Anthony River, *via* the Black Gap, between Mounts Black and Murchison; from the Mariposa Mine 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 Tyndal.

Exploration Tracks.—I cannot too strongly recommend the exploration of the country lying between Birch Inlet and Port Davey. At the present time this extensive area is practically unknown, but in view of the fact that it lies in the direction of the Lyell-Murchison mineral belt, the chances are greatly in favour of payable ores being found to exist therein. Probably the most effective route for a track would be to the west of the D'Aguilar Range, keeping along the watershed which separates the Gordon River from the coast, and crossing the Junction Range near the source of the Rocky River. This work should of course be undertaken by the Government, and so soon as a track is marked out a thorough geological examination of the country should be made, and a chart of the result issued for the guidance of prospectors. I would urge that no time be lost in commencing this important work, which should be entrusted to someone who has a knowledge of the country.

Other localities deserving of special attention under this heading are :—From a point about six miles from Kelly Basin on the North Lyell Railway to Mount Craycroft, thence to the eastern slopes of the Elliott Range; from a point on the North Lyell Railway easterly to the neighbourhood of the Frenchman's Cap; the country extending from Mount Murchison to the head waters of the Canning River in the proximity of the Eldon Range.

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

Selection.—There has been a continuous demand for small and isolated lots in different parts of the district, but no selection of any great extent—indeed, there is hardly scope, unless for land applied for under the second class Act. I anticipate a greater demand, inasmuch as the season has been an excellent one for the farmers and graziers in the district.

Lakes Dulverton and Tiberias.—The first-mentioned lake has been dry for two whole summers, and thistles, &c., are growing in its bed. I would again suggest that both these lakes (or rather, marshes), be drained at the expense of the State, and the cost added to the price of selection, which, in my estimation, should be limited to, say, fifty acres for each applicant. A crop could have been grown on Lake Dulverton this year. It has been contended that such a measure as I proposed in a former letter would interfere with the water supply further down; but I feel certain, by experience, such would not happen if the land was tilled, and the quality of the water would be improved by percolation.

Roads and Tracks.—There is nothing calling for special attention in this direction. The unemployed gangs seem to have been distributed pretty well everywhere, and have done a great deal of good. While on this subject I may be permitted to mention the receipt of a set of printed questions on roads, being a Parliamentary Paper issued by a Committee of the House. This was answered to the best of my ability, but I scarcely understood the trend of some questions. A Central Road Board, one in the North and one in the South, would no doubt be a benefit. At present hundreds of roads are blocked with gates, and I saw there was a penalty of five pounds for not shutting one painted on the gate. This does not seem right, and would not be tolerated in some districts on a public road. A crossing on the railway line requires reopening in the Parish of Hartington, between the selections of Henry Young and the Gregorys, and the road might be continued with advantage through a small strip of private land to connect with the Jericho Road, a saving of quite five miles.

Unauthorised Occupation of Crown Lands.—There seems to be a good deal less of this, and the splitting and spoiling of valuable timber without licence, thanks, no doubt, to the increased vigilance of the Crown Lands Bailiffs; but the evil still exists.

Destroying and Falsifying of Surveyors' Marks, Pegs, &c.—I venture again to draw your attention to this matter. I have been put to needless worry and loss of money frequently of late through these practices, where lines, I know, were well and truly marked by careful surveyors in the past. I would suggest that printed notices be supplied each surveyor to nail up in the vicinity of each new survey.

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

Lands suitable for Selection.—There is no new discovery of agricultural land to report in this district, consequently the duty again devolves upon me of drawing attention to some of the good basaltic soil on and near the Main Road from Wynyard to Waratah. This road is being improved year by year by the Government, and settlement keeps steadily in front of these improvements; therefore the valley of the Hellyer River will in time be reached, when the land on each side of this road will be utilised for pastoral and agricultural purposes. Some of the land is of excellent quality, and it is surprising that it has lain idle for so long. To the east of the town of Waratah there is also a large extent of basaltic country available, being chiefly Crown land up to the west boundary of the V.D.L. Co.'s Surrey Hills block, which comprises the enormous area of 150,000 acres. The width of the land available here is about two miles, but gradually widening between the V.D.L. Co.'s boundary and the Waratah-Corinna Road as it trends to the west of south, and at three miles south-west of Waratah there would be about 6000 acres of table land, embracing as it does Knole Plain and about half of Netherby Plain; the other half being V.D.L. Co.'s property. It is all capable of growing good grass. A great deal of this land is heavily timbered with sassafras and so-called myrtles—in fact fagus or beech—and partly with a variety of eucalypts or gums, which has proved to be an exceedingly fine timber for general purposes. It is confidently thought that the construction of the railway line from Burnie to Zeehan, and also the joining of this line with Ulverstone, will necessarily cause this land to become useful to graziers, if not to farmers, owing to its proximity to the Zeehan and Dundas mineral fields. The rigorous climate here frequently prevents the ripening of cereals, but root crops invariably grow well, and grass is nearly always green here. The smaller fruits also do well, but the larger kinds, such as apples, pears, plums, &c., do not thrive here at an elevation of 2000 feet above sea level.

The Crown land south and adjoining the south boundary of the V.D.L. Co.'s Surrey Hills block, and through which the Emu Bay Co.'s Railway passes, is open for selection, and contains first-rate patches of soil, besides a large area of second class land suitable for pastoral purposes. This includes the flats of the Cue River, which is 500 feet lower than the table-land before referred to. It is principally heavily timbered, except where it takes in a portion of Hatfield Plain and the open country in the valley of the Cue River. The estimate of this area given in last year's Report was 2000 acres; this is well within the mark.

The immense triangular flat or delta formed by the confluence of the Huskisson River with the Pieman River gives the Government about 1500 acres of capital land to dispose of. If this land had been in the immediate neighbourhood of the Emu Bay Co.'s Railway, there can be no doubt that it would very quickly be applied for.

There are several small areas of rich soil on the banks of the Pieman; one of 200 acres near the joining of the Savage River with the Pieman, about two miles below Corinna. At the mouth of the Pieman, on each side, there is a fair extent of grazing land.

Roads and Tracks.—In dealing with this subject, much that has been said in former Reports must be repeated.

It is satisfactory to know that the Public Works Department are energetically proceeding with the construction of the Waratah-Corinna Road round the Bald Hill, about 18 miles S.W. from Waratah. The difficulties of this hill will soon be a thing of the past, and, instead, there will be a good macadamised road with tolerably easy gradients. The sum of £400 has also been judiciously granted by the Government for the purpose of improving this road between the five and seven miles from Waratah. This part of the road, when originally made in 1891 and 1892, was corduroyed, and as most of the timber used was of a rather perishable nature, the late heavy traffic to and from the Magnet (Tasmanian) mine, has broken it up considerably. This desirable work is now well in hand, a gang of men under Inspector Sloane being at work. The amount of improvement to this road during the last few years leads one to look upon its completion right through to Corinna as being within a measurable period of time. This should certainly help the district forward.

The pack-track to the Mount Stewart Co.'s mine has been improved during the last year. A further sum could be well spent in bettering the grades, and also, as recommended in previous years' Reports, to continue it into the north end of the Meredith Range and towards the south side of the Parson's Hood. This part of the district has frequently been referred to as likely to contain metalliferous ores, and quite recently 320 acres have been taken up for copper. The great drawback to this part is that it is so difficult of access. There is actually no defined track or road to it, or near it, at present, the nearest road being about eight or ten miles away.

The track from the Waratah-Corinna Road to Specimen Reef has been for some time quite impracticable for horse or foot traffic, the last year's fires having blocked it with trees.

No track has yet been started from Bischoff north-westerly to join the track made some years

ago from Wynyard to Specimen Reef. This should certainly open up a mineral country if made, as silver-lead and other ores have been found in this direction, but no systematic prospecting has ever been attempted for want of ingress, as the country is densely wooded and rather rough. The track suggested round May Day Mount and the head waters of the Mackintosh River should be kept in view, as there is a good deal of granite there, and some auriferous ground. Something should be done to Meredith's track to Zeehan from here, in the way of easing the grades, putting in a few culverts, and corduroying the worst places, especially that part of it south of where the Emu Bay Railway crosses it to go round by way of Boco Creek, and the track goes lower down towards the Pieman westerly before it crosses that river. This track has a few promising developments near it, and should be kept in fair order to ensure access to these places; besides, a number of mineral sections have been surveyed on this route, some of which are now being prospected.

THE PROGRESS OF THE DISTRICT.

There has not been much settlement on agricultural or pastoral land during the last twelve months, though many inquiries have been made relative to "The Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1895" (59 Vict. No. 39), which deals so well with the classification of the land, and fixing the value per acre. This Act should be well adapted to this district, but no advantage of it has yet been taken. The Emu Bay Company's Railway is now near the Pieman, and considering the great amount of rain that has fallen, together with the rough country traversed, it must be admitted that excellent progress has been made.

Mining Progress.—This has been very fair during 1898. One hundred and sixty-six sections have been surveyed and otherwise dealt with, representing an area of 11,200 acres. Some of these sections have evidently very good outcrops, which nothing but careful prospecting and exploiting will prove. The old Mount Bischoff Tin Mining Company still continues to pay its monthly dividend of 7s. 6d. per share, and seems to have a large portion of stanniferous ground yet to work. This company has now paid in dividends nearly £1,600,000 in less than a quarter of a century, which is equal to £120 per share; and to do this and pay wages, salaries, construct reservoirs, water-races, sheds, machinery, and carry on exploitation, &c., some £5,000,000 (five million pounds) worth of tin ore (casiterite) must have been won from this unique formation. There are other properties near this parent mine known to contain tin ore in veins, which could be worked profitably if the present price of tin is maintained, and may even now be looked upon as some of the mines of the future. Seven miles south-west from Waratah is situated the Magnet (Tasmania) Mine. Prior to the foundation of the Company it was worked by tributors, who sent away 125 tons of silver-lead ore, averaging 180 ozs. of silver to the ton. The present Company during the last six months have sent away 300 tons of silver-lead ore, of high grade chiefly, averaging 100 ozs. of silver to the ton, and 25 per cent. of lead; and whilst doing this have put in an adit level 400 feet, which gives 250 feet of backs. This is the third drive put in at different levels on this lode, and in each one the lode and formation have been proved in the lower adit, about 12 feet wide, indubitably establishing its value and permanency. The success of this mine will certainly cause those interested in adjoining sections to have them opened up by prospecting and other exploration work. Other mines still in the prospecting stage are working, notably the Rocky River, Lucy Spur, Specimen Reef, Mount Stewart, and Long Plains, at which latter mine good developments have lately taken place. Altogether, it may be said that mining is gradually but steadily improving, the result of better and more thoroughly legitimate work.

River Dredging.—A number of dredging claims have been surveyed at the Whyte River, which indicates a new departure in alluvial mining in Tasmania: it has certainly been successful in New Zealand and America, and may sometime develop into a success here, although the conditions are not identical.

The instructions held are chiefly plans without surveys, and will be finally dealt with at an early date.

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

The following list shows the amount of work done in this district:—

650 acres, in 17 lots, under the Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1893.

140 acres, in 5 lots, under the Crown Lands Act, 1890.

33½ acres, in 1 lot, under Section 10 of the Crown Lands Amendment Act.

Instructions for six lots, under various Acts, have been recalled and issued to Mr. Butler. I have instructions for 125 acres in three lots recently issued, of which I expect to effect surveys this month. Under your instructions I was employed for about 4 months in effecting surveys in the Devon Survey District, of which the following list is a summary:—

386 acres, under The Crown Lands Act, 1890, in 8 lots.

205 acres, under The Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1893, in 6 lots.

1065 acres, under The Mines Act, 1893, in 16 lots.

74½ acres, for Auction purposes in Town Sections, in 8 lots.

30 acres, for Auction purposes in one lot, 1895, in 1 lot.

4 acres, under Special Instruction, No. 5764^c, in 1 lot.

1 acre, School site for Education Department, in 1 lot.

A re-survey of Town of Avoca, under Special Instruction.

Survey of Crescent-street, Ulverstone, Special Instruction.

2 Road surveys for Public Works Department.

It will be noticed that almost all the applications in the Tasman Peninsula Survey District are under '93 Act. This Act seems to suit the Peninsulas best. The '95 Act would be taken more advantage of, but the applicants do not like the lots going to auction. I feel confident that this Act will work more satisfactorily in the future, when most of the better land is secured. There would be plenty of small corners taken under this Act if the minimum area was 15 acres.

The effect of the bush fires on the Peninsulas has been most beneficial; there is hardly one case where the amount of good derived at present does not far exceed the amount of harm done during the fires. Many of the selections are now clear and under immense crops of grass on the western slopes of Mount Arthur, and from there through to the selections of Benjafield and L. A. Kingston, there are some splendid patches of grass sown upon the natural burn—cocksfoot, Italian rye, meadow fescue, fog, English rye, and clovers are all showing equal vigour. The difficulty seems to be to get sufficient stock to keep it under.

Selection.—Owing to the bush fires a good deal of selection has taken place during the year 1898; the country has been so well opened up that the selector can now get about. There have been three or four more lots taken on Forestier Peninsula, and good work done on those already taken up; there are still some nice blocks available here. There have also been a good many selections taken up out towards Cripps Creek; this will eventually be the leading part of the Peninsula. The road mentioned in my last report is badly wanted, and the best grades and direction can be seen more easily since the fires. A good grade and direct route can be got through selected land and that available for selection nearly the whole way out to the Raoul. There is still a fair amount of splitting timber out this way, but at present inaccessible, though the fires have killed an immense quantity of trees.

Timber.—There is still a little splitting done, and a good deal of logging in various parts of the Peninsulas; Risby and Cheverton are both drawing supplies from here. There is still some fair lightwood to be had, some being very nicely figured; also some fine musks.

Roads and Tracks.—There is a considerable improvement in some of the roads, but most of them are going backwards. I am glad to see something is being done on the road from Wedge Bay to Robinson's and others; this road has been in a very bad state for the past ten years. This leads on to the road already mentioned.

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

During the past year 62 agricultural selections, 3583 acres; 4 township allotments, 39½ acres; 3 mineral leases, 100 acres—comprising an area of 3723 acres, with 12 miles 33 chains of road and connection lines, and 3 Public Works road surveys.

The year has been remarkable for the large quantity of rain that fell late in the spring, the abundant quantity of feed, and the scarcity of stock.

The crops promise well, the last rains in December being all that could be required for the potato crops.

The oat, wheat, and pea crops give every appearance of a large yield. The fires that were so destructive last year may be looked upon, to a certain extent, as being to the general community a blessing.

The dairying industry is still in a flourishing condition, and its operations are extending to nearly all parts of the district.

The district is in a much more prosperous condition than it has been for the last three years, the price of meat and produce having been exceptionally high all the season—in fact, prohibitive to many families. The mines on the West Coast, and the railways that are being constructed, are in a large measure responsible for this. The tax on imported cattle and sheep should, I think, be removed altogether, as it is very doubtful if we have enough in the country to supply our wants during the coming year.

One of the most urgent works required is a punt over the Arthur River Ferry, tenders for which I am pleased to see have been accepted. This work should be pushed forward with all possible speed, on account of the mineral field at Whale's Head and other places along the coast that are likely to be developed if greater facilities for obtaining provisions are afforded.

A jetty at Green Point could, I believe, be constructed that would meet all requirements, and one that would not be washed away by the first heavy sea that rolled in, if advantage were taken of those large isolated rocks standing—the first about 60 feet from low water mark, and the other about 3 chains distant from that—to build or construct an open framework jetty above the reach of the heavy seas, and secured by iron rods, &c., to the top of the rocks above-mentioned. The prompt action taken by the Government in supplying seed to those who were unfortunate enough to lose their all last year cannot be too highly extolled.

Parish of Marawah.—Two thousand acres of good agricultural land still available for selection. Some twelve families are now residing on the settlement. The new line of road recently surveyed to the jetty should be formed before the winter comes, to enable the settlers to cart their produce to the shipping port.

Most of the old selections are all under grass, and on some large portions have been brought under cultivation this year, necessitating a greater need for increased facilities for carting and shipping. The feed at that settlement is fully two months earlier than it is further north. The weekly post is a great convenience, but a telephone would be a great boon, and would, I think, pay interest. The cost of construction and maintenance would be trifling, as nearly the whole line would be free from timber, across grassy plains. A public school is urgently required.

The road to the south-east, through the recently-surveyed selections, should be opened and extended as soon as possible. About 1500 acres have been surveyed this year, and some 1100 more applied for.

Parishes of Williams, Mowbray, and Poilenna.—Fully 5000 acres of fairly good basaltic land available for selection, but until roads are constructed into the Crown lands settlement is not likely to be very rapid. Improvement has been very general on the old selections, and settlement on the land is on the increase. A few new selections have been applied for. The main road and bridges from Smithton to Montagu should have proper attention, several places being almost impassible in the winter.

Parishes of Gibson, Ford, and Medwin.—Fully 2000 acres of good agricultural land still available, mostly basaltic. A very great improvement has taken place on the old selections, and numerous lots have been applied for, and settlement on the land is increasing. The Back-line Road should be completed and rendered fit for traffic. The road from Irish Town to meet the South Road is very much required. The residents of Irish Town have no road to Stanley until they reach the Smithton Road.

Parish of Anderson, and south of same.—A very large area of good land available for selection, but the absence of good roads and the distance from the Coast Road render the land almost valueless at the present time. No new selection has been made; grassing and scrubbing and a few buildings are the only improvements made on the old selections.

Parishes of Myalla and Dallas.—About 2000 acres of good basaltic land still available to the south of the Detention River, to which a track requires opening. Most of the old selections have been greatly improved and cultivated. Building and settlement on the land has very much increased this year.

Parishes of Flowerdale and Preolenna.—About 5000 acres good basaltic land is to be found in these parishes. Several small areas have been for portions of old selections, and a few fresh selections have been made. A road from the Flowerdale to the Calder Road, across the Inglis River, would be a very great advantage, and would materially help to promote settlement by bringing the Crown lands some three miles nearer to the market.

The main Flowerdale Road, west of the Inglis River, should be opened and extended towards the Dipwood Range. The opening of the road from the Flowerdale to Sisters' Hill should be completed, all the land fronting on it and in that vicinity having been re-selected. Improvement on the land has been very general, and several have gone in for the dairying industry with very great success.

Parishes of Quiggin and Calder.—At least 2000 acres of good basaltic land open for selection; most of those lots that reverted to the Crown during the time of depression have again been selected, and improvement has been very great, scrubbing, grassing, and several settlers have built houses and reside on their selections. A large number devote their time and attention to the dairying industry. The Calder Road should be extended south to the Moore's Plains and across the Calder River west to its junction with the Flowerdale Road, in order to give access to the Crown lands, Parish of Priolenna, and those lots already surveyed and the new selections.

Parish of Yolla.—About 3200 acres of good basaltic land still remains unselected. The Moore's Plains Road still requires further improvement before next winter, as the traffic on this road is very much on the increase. The road connecting the Waratah Road through Ruffin and Dicker should be opened. Nearly all the old lots have been taken up again, and some of them considerably improved.

Parishes of Elliott and Lewis.—Nearly the whole of the land in the first-named parish has been selected. About 1000 acres of good agricultural land open for selection in the latter parish: several selections have been recently applied for. The road along the western bank of the Cam River requires making and extending southerly; also one of the cross-roads, to meet the Waratah Road, should be opened, to give facilities to those engaged in the dairying industry. The main Cam Road is in great need of improvement, to enable the settlers to take their milk to the creamery. Improvement has been very great on the farms this last year, through whole districts being under grass and cultivated.

Parishes of Oonah and Takone.—Some thousands of acres of good basaltic land, suitable for agricultural pursuits and dairying. Several large selections have been surveyed in the vicinity of St. Mary's Plains. A road is urgently required for those selectors now residing on the settlement, to enable them to transport their produce to the Emu Bay Railway Line at the 18-mile, and to give access to the Crown lands at the back.

Stowport and Natone.—Some 2000 acres of good basaltic land still remains unselected. Some of those lots that reverted to the Crown have again been selected and some fresh lots applied for. Improvement in the way of scrubbing and grassing has been very general all over the district. The Chasm Creek Road requires improving and metalling into the back settlement; also the main road leading to the west wants extending and making passible.

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

During the past year I have surveyed 79 lots, representing an area of 8191 acres, exclusive of 2502 acres for lighthouse and other reserves.

Good progress has been made by selectors during the past twelve months in fencing and ploughing, and next year, from the way the settlers are gathering melilot (*Melilotus officinalis*).

and spear grass seeds, there will be a few more thousand acres under grass. Up to the present date 800 head of fat cattle have been shipped since July last, also 200 sheep; but shipping has been greatly retarded owing to the exceptionally bad weather prevailing at intervals since last August, and at present there are 200 head of fat cattle waiting to be sent away. Most of the stock is finding its way to Strahan.

Dairy farming is also finding favour on the island. Mr. M'Mahon is milking 60 cows, and has a hand-separator, and is well pleased with results. Other settlers are also going in for butter-making, but on a small scale. Nearly the whole of the butter is shipped to Strahan. One settler intends this year to turn his attention to vegetable-growing on a large scale for the Strahan market.

There are some good lots to be had east of Seal River, being clear, and the melilot spreading.

The grassed land around Surprise Bay has been selected, but there is a good area of clear ground to the north and east. This does not appear to improve like most of the land on the island, but might, if ploughed and sown with melilot, give good results. This part of the island is sound. To the north and east of Pear-shape Lagoon the hilly land has been selected as far as Deep Lagoon, but there is a good area of level land timbered with ti-tree to the east of the hilly land, which will no doubt be found to be good grazing country. Between A. Grevis James' 200 acres, and as far north of Badgerbox Creek, the country is improving very fast, and there are some good blocks to be had. At head of Badgerbox Creek there are a few thousand acres, covered only with bracken fern, and from the appearance of the soil will repay any person selecting it. Similar country exists (with exception of a few breaks by way of ti-tree) nearly into Currie Harbour. At the north-east of Currie Township Reserve there is some good land covered with ti-tree; some of this land may be found fit to crop; there is a clay bottom, with a foot or two of surface soil, and this is looked upon as sound country. About two miles east of Currie Township is a belt of clear country of about 2000 acres, most of which is good soil; at present it is covered with fern. All the open country around Porky has been selected; but the timbered land is equally as good as that already held, and there is a large area.

To the east of Devitt's 320 acres there is some good land, being level, and is moist in summer. Previous to the fires last summer this was an almost impenetrable scrub, but a clean burn was made, and Mr. Stephenson, by way of experiment, sowed a few bags of melilot seed, and was so pleased with the growth that he selected 320 acres of it. There are about 400 or 500 acres which was burnt by last fire still open for selection, and a few thousand acres of similar country thickly timbered, but which would burn equally as well as above, there being a great amount of dead ti-tree intermixed with the green.

Between Pass River and F. L. Gunn's 69-acre lot the country has a rough look along the road, but already melilot and spear grass can be seen shooting in many places, although the road has only lately been open. To the south of lots selected by C. N. Gunn, F. L. Gunn, Craw, and Stephenson, there is a strip of 600 or 700 acres of clear land through which the grass is penetrating. To the north of these lots the level land, carrying feed, has been selected. Among the hills a few small lots are to be had. East of Bob Lagoon the land is good, being level and moderately timbered, and would not cost much to clear.

Most of the land thrown open on Wickham Lighthouse Reserve has been selected, but there are one or two lots available south and east of Disappointment Bay.

The roads made by Mr. Tait are greatly appreciated by the settlers, and have been the means of several vehicles being brought to the island. From about one mile north of Pass River to about one mile south of F. L. Gunn's 69 acres there are several places which require being attended to, for in the winter the above places are almost impassible. I believe Mr. Tait has noted the places. During the latter part of last winter the old road in that part of the island had to be used. In the places where the road is bad the land is nearly level, and will no doubt require a fall to be made to take away the water which at present lodges.

The heavy fires last year destroyed most of the timber on the east coast, but I believe has opened up some good land.

Last year Mr. Tait dug a tank for water on W. H. Atkinson's 246 acres, and got a good flow at six feet, and from appearances there are many places on the island where water could be obtained by sinking. This hole, up to the present, has been permanent; the water is a little brackish, but the stock seem to prefer it to the water in adjacent lagoons.

The population has increased to 130, and there is a floating population of about 20.

The climate on the island is very mild during the winter, and with increased shipping facilities would be a good resort for those who are in bad health, and who wish to avoid the cold of the mainland.