

(No. 63.)



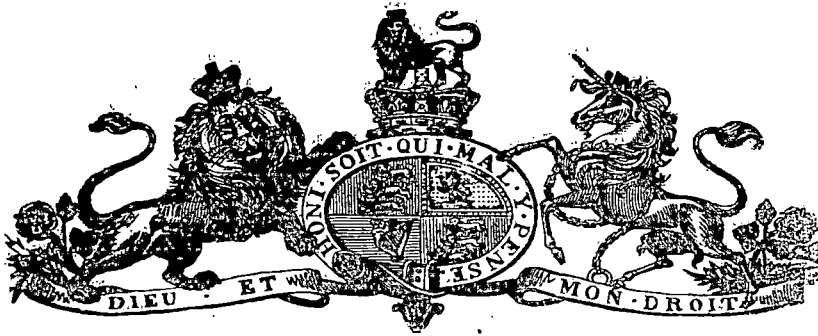
1889.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

DEPUTY SURVEYOR-GENERAL :

REPORT FOR YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 1889.

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



Crown Lands' Office, 20th July, 1889.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to lay before you the following Report upon the Survey Branch of the Crown Lands Department for the year ending 30th June, 1889.

In reviewing the proceedings of the past year the first subject for remark is the important changes that have taken place in this Department, principal amongst which have been the well-earned promotion of Mr. Albert Reid from the position of Chief Draftsman to that of Deputy Commissioner of Crown Lands on 1st January last, and the appointment of Mr. Wentworth M. Hardy as District Surveyor for the District of Oatlands, consequent on the duties of Deputy Surveyor-General, with the inspection and control of surveys, having been placed under my care.

Lands.

It will be seen from the returns of Country lands sold during the past year that there is a considerable falling off in the total area when compared with the four previous years; the figures being as follows:—

1884.	1885.	1886.	1887.	1888.
Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
68,584	52,862	50,609	55,046	35,671

or slightly under the average for the ten preceding years.

In drawing this comparison, it must be borne in mind that the returns for the four years mentioned were abnormally high, being largely swollen by the throwing open of the lands on Tasman's Peninsula and along the Scottsdale Railway line, where selection rapidly ensued, and on account of the large amount of money expended on roads and public works throughout the country, the premier counties of Dorset, Devon, and Wellington yielding an unprecedentedly high average for the term quoted, in which the construction of the road from Table Cape towards Bischoff was an important factor. When these facts, together with the prosperity that obtained in the mining interests of the country, are taken into consideration, there is nothing extraordinary in the satisfactory results.

On the other hand, it might have been supposed that such prosperity would (in the general order of things) be followed by a temporary decrease in the returns, which have been considerably diminished by the protracted droughts that prevailed during 1887 and 1888.

There is, moreover, no cause for anxiety in the figures I have quoted, since the County of Dorset alone is known to contain at least 60,000 acres of unalienated agricultural lands of a superior quality, in such favourable localities as Ringarooma, Scottsdale, Upper Piper, and St. Patrick's River, whilst the aggregate area of good land available for selection in the north-western portion of the Colony may fairly be set down at over half a million of acres. In the Huon district, between the Arve River and Port Esperance, there is also a large block of good agricultural land of many thousands of acres in extent, with a large extent of similar country to the north of the Huon River, in the vicinity of the Russell River, reported upon by Mr. District Surveyor Combes.

What the construction of the Derwent Valley Railway has done to the Russell Falls' country, where 10,000 acres have been recently applied for, may be anticipated in the neighbourhood of the Florentine Valley by extending this railway *viâ* Ellendale to said locality, as suggested by Mr. Frodsham in his last annual report. There is no definite information as to the probable extent of this block of agricultural land, but in referring to it Mr. Frodsham writes: "In the Florentine Valley there is also a considerable extent of splendid land; but this has not yet been selected, as at present it is too far away for selectors, but if the D.V. Railway is extended *viâ* Ellendale, I believe all this land, and thousands of acres in the vicinity of Mount Field East, will soon be taken up."

The want of reliable information as to the approximate area of agricultural lands in the various districts of the Colony, and the best means by which such information may be acquired, is a question to which I have given some attention, and in view of supplying the deficiency I have obtained special reports from many of our District Surveyors on the subject. These reports do not—and it was not expected that they would—afford the information required, inasmuch as I was not in a position to incur the cost which such a work would entail, as in some districts it would take many weeks to accomplish satisfactorily.

What is particularly required in this respect is to explore the country by tracks run by compass bearing from a fixed point, and sufficiently marked in order to be picked up afterwards by intending selectors, and to furnish reports on the nature of and the approximate extent of good land and description of timber, with the barometrical readings, &c., accompanied by a sketch plan and geological specimens of the localities for permanent records of the Department.

This work may be performed by the respective District Surveyors or by an experienced officer chosen from amongst them and specially engaged to travel throughout the principal districts. I am firmly of opinion that the value of the information so obtained would very amply repay the cost of obtaining it; and I think it will be admitted, from a perusal of the District Surveyors' reports herewith submitted, and from those previously received, that the information in the possession of this Office respecting the unalienated lands of the Colony is of an indefinite nature, although the reports for the past year are unusually complete (there being only one exception) and more than the regulations demand. But maintaining as I do that when persons (probably strangers to the Colony) come here for information with a view to selecting land, the Office should be in a position to point out the exact localities in which their requirements may be met and how to get there.

Another great advantage to be derived from this work would be felt in the guidance it would afford to the Government in the construction and extension of roads and railways in the future.

The advisability of throwing open some of the agricultural lands withdrawn from selection in Dorset, Huon, and on the West Coast is a matter I desire to commend to the attention of the Government in the event of the amended Land Act failing to come into operation, provided the same may be effected without interfering with the mining interest. To my knowledge much of this land is of a very superior quality, and would be eagerly selected and settled upon.

Irrigation.

The proposal to irrigate the lower-lying country by the Lake waters is one entitled to earnest consideration, and calculated to give a stimulus to pastoral and agricultural pursuits over large areas of country.

With respect to the surveys that will be required to carry out this undertaking, I venture to suggest that they may be satisfactorily performed by a surveyor such as Mr. George C. Smith, who has a considerable knowledge of the country, and who would probably accomplish such work at less than half the cost the employment of a specialist would involve.

The extensive plans and reports of the late Major Cotton on this subject are still available for information.

Surveys.

The surveys of the Colony are being diligently prosecuted. In Mr. Hall's district the demand for land has rendered it necessary to despatch another surveyor to assist in bringing the work under his control; in consequence of which Mr. Chalmers (who was out of employment) has taken over the unexecuted instructions in a certain portion of the district. Mr. Hall is also largely assisted by his son, Mr. Arthur Hall. Mr. Windsor and Mr. Lord are fully employed in their respective districts. Mr. Hardy has just returned from Flinders' Island, where a number of selections have taken place. He has almost completed the surveys I had commenced, and reports having been much hindered by bad weather.

The number of surveys received for the half year ending the 30th June, 1889, is 342, and that for the previous six months was 746.

Drafting Room.

The vacancies on the staff occasioned by the resignation of Mr. Cundy as Compiling Draftsman in January last, and the resignation of Mr. Edward Ellis, who has discharged the duties of Charting Draftsman with credit to the service and satisfaction to the public for the past six years, has weakened the Drafting department very much, and will impose additional responsibilities upon the energies of those remaining.

Mr. Leventhorpe Hall has advanced (in order) to the position of Chief Draftsman, a position his well known abilities and painstaking habits eminently qualify him to fill, and Mr. E. W. N. Butcher, who has zealously and efficiently performed the duties of Computing Draftsman since 1883, has received well merited promotion to the place vacated by Mr. Ellis, whilst Mr. W. N. Hurst, the Assistant Computer, is at present performing the duties of Computing Draftsman.

In consequence of the above changes, I have been compelled to ask for an additional draftsman thoroughly qualified to undertake the checking of surveyors' plans, compilations, and general drafting, with a junior draftsman to take the place of Mr. Cundy, in order to keep the work of the office from falling into serious arrears. Moreover, since it has been deemed desirable to have the mining surveys checked in this office, the work will be further increased.

The number of surveys examined by the Computing Draftsman for the half year ending June 30, 1889, is 318, and for the previous half year was 715. Number of plans compiled and drawn for the half year ending June 30th, 1889, is 8, and that for the previous six months, 13; the former consists of Launceston (six sheets), Zeehan, Elizabeth Town, Moorina, Springfield, Westmorland, No. 3, and Lincoln, Nos. 1 and 2.

The six sheets of Launceston were drawn after hours, and paid for out of the vote of last year for that purpose. This vote has been discontinued.

Several sets of mounted County sheets are required on which to show the various districts. This cannot be done in office hours, but the lithographer would mount them in his own time for 1s. per sheet if materials were provided. There are 46 County sheets in all, so that each set would cost £2 6s. for the work of mounting.

There are no plans showing the boundaries of the Electoral, Rabbit Trust, Health, Recreation, and School Districts. When any of these are required they have to be worked out from the *Gazette* or from the Acts of Parliament. Mr. R. M. Johnston has a set showing the Registration Districts, which are based upon the Electoral and Municipal Districts.

There are 10 lithographed, and 16 traced County sheets that will eventually have to be compiled and drawn afresh, as photo-lithography from plans already lithographed is very rough, and many of the tracings are falling to pieces.

Ten Parish plans were compiled to a scale of 20 chains to an inch prior to 1887, but this work had to be discontinued, as it was, I believe, found impossible to carry it out with the staff available.

Lithographic Branch.

The Lithographer reports having got through a lot of work for the year, and that his duties have extended to the preparation of lithos of various kinds to almost all the Government Departments. The plant is in good order, and since it was set down some six years ago has only needed an expenditure of £10 for overhauling and cleaning.

The Photo-lithographic establishment continues to be a great convenience, particularly to the departments of Lands, Works, and Mines, while the quality of the work turned out has considerably improved. Some small alterations are required in the arrangement of the rooms, in order to utilise waste space, to provide greater facilities for carrying on the work, and for the better protection of the large glass plates. These alterations could be effected at a very trifling cost.

Examination of Surveyors.

In December last three candidates were examined; one passed and two failed. At the June term this year four candidates presented themselves. One passed creditably; one was required to further qualify himself in field practice, and two failed.

It is gratifying to know that these examinations are bringing this Department under favourable notice in the other colonies, as shown from a letter to hand from the Secretary of the Board of Examiners in Victoria (with other correspondence from the Sydney Survey Club) on the subject of reciprocity respecting them. To meet this view, our Board will shortly be reconstructed under 50 Victoria, No. 11, and the examination raised to a higher standard.

Surveyors' Regulations.

Revised Regulations for the guidance of surveyors are at present in the hands of the Government Printer, the object being to issue them under the authority of the Governor in Council, and to amend certain defects that previous experience has indicated in their operation. This matter has received much consideration during the past few years, and has formed the subject of Parliamentary enquiry, a conference of surveyors, and reports from several officers of the Department, in order to maintain as high a standard of work as possible without raising the scale of survey fees, it being considered that such scale was not commensurate with the large amount of work imposed upon surveyors. The result of the above deliberations has been to improve the position of the surveyors to some extent, without reducing the standard of the work, in which I must acknowledge the co-operation of the Secretary for Mines respecting the mining surveys; but it is becoming more and more apparent that as surveys are required further afield in the outlying rough districts, it will be necessary to more fully recognise the claims put forth by surveyors if a good and efficient system of work is demanded.

Special Survey Service.

After being subjected to many reductions since it was initiated in 1883, this vote has disappeared from the proposed Estimates of Expenditure for the year 1890. I believe the objects aimed at when this service was created were to test the value of a portion of the trigonometrical survey of the Colony, to which the late James Sprent devoted so much labour and ability to introduce secondary triangulation or standard circuit traverses, and to establish base lines in various parishes (so that errors in surveys would be reduced and confined within certain limits), and to generally work up to a much improved system of surveying.

The value of such a system is undoubtedly very great, and particularly so in a new country; but it is of necessity costly, and a work of time. In this instance, seeing that the staff had been reduced to a totally inefficient condition, the Government has, perhaps, acted wisely in dispensing with the service, unless we are prepared to incur greater expenditure, although I regret that an adequate sum has not been provided for examining surveys. It is also a matter for regret that much of the work commenced has been left unfinished and the records incomplete.

The following base lines have, however, been measured in the Parishes of Elliott, Calder, Quiggin, Lewis, and Yolla, County of Wellington:—

Mount Hicks, North and South Line	369·40 chains.
" East Line	303·70 "
" West Line.....	256·35 "
Standard Traverse, Brickmakers' Bay Road, partly completed	704·14 "
Parishes of Lisle, Hurst, and Shaw, County of Dorset:	
East Line	240·00 "
West Line	256·35 "

There is probably information yet to be gathered up through the assistance rendered to this department by the engineers engaged upon the surveys of the respective railway lines of Scottsdale and Apsley (intended as a check upon the railway and selection surveys. Mr. Duffy has kindly offered to supply similar information along the Mount Zeehan line.) A number of Trigonometrical Stations have been rebuilt, and fresh ones erected in various Parishes.

An outline survey of Launceston was commenced by Mr. Stokell, and a base line carefully measured on the Launceston Swamp, from which triangulation was to have been carried on, and the boundaries of the section blocks permanently fixed throughout the city and suburbs by iron pins driven in at all the intersections of the streets. This survey, if completed, would be of the very greatest importance as a means of checking the surveys for the Lands Titles' Office; it has been found necessary in the other colonies and in New Zealand, and the same result will follow here sooner or later. Unfortunately, Mr. Stokell's valuable services were lost to the department by his resigning whilst this undertaking was in course of progress. The field notes have been preserved, and when the opportunity is afforded me I shall endeavour to prepare a plan, if possible, of the survey as far as it was proceeded with, so that the expense already incurred may not be practically thrown away; but such plan will be necessarily very incomplete. I trust at a future time to be able to complete this survey, as it is one essentially beneficial to us, and a safeguard against serious loss to the Insurance Fund in granting Titles under the Real Property Act.

So far, the duties of the officers in this department have been directed to clearing up arrears, that have necessarily accumulated, as well as endeavouring to dispose of the general routine of the office work, and further assistance is very much needed; no time has therefore been available to look into this and other matters.

A re-survey of Formby was partly effected by Mr. Stokell, when he was directed to proceed to Emu Bay, but no plan has been supplied. This will doubtless lead to serious confusion as lots become subdivided, unless the work be completed.

Twenty-seven lots have been checked or re-surveyed, and a number of surveyors' plans have been inspected; the latter course having been adopted, I believe, in lieu of field inspection.

The total amount expended under the special votes is set down at £7904 8s. 1d.

It will be seen from the foregoing remarks that much of the work under this vote is to all intents and purposes in a most imperfect condition as far as this office is concerned; and I beg to suggest to the Government the desirability of endeavouring to procure Mr. Stokell's services to at least complete the town surveys as far as they were proceeded with, and to furnish plans of such surveys to this Department to avoid complications that are otherwise almost certain to ensue.

The question of surveys effected for the Lands Titles' Office is one that requires consideration, as also does the one respecting alterations effected by the Public Works Department in surveyed roads, without this office having been advised that such alterations have been made. This, in many instances, is a source of great trouble to surveyors who are supplied with the information from the original surveys, and when they get on to the ground it is found that the roads are frequently in a very different position. I have no doubt that there are many scores of such alterations that this office knows nothing of.

A proposal will be submitted to you, as early as convenient, for the exploration of the country to the south of the King River, or between that and the Gordon River.

Before concluding this Report, I earnestly desire to direct your attention to the sum that has been lost to the country from rents of Crown lands uncollected; from 1884 to the present time amounting to at least £4000. Apparently most of this loss has occurred from the defective system in use respecting the Crown Land rents.

In laying this Report before you, I venture to hope that the very brief period I have been in office may receive consideration in connection with any shortcomings it may contain.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your very obedient Servant,

E. A. COUNSEL, *Deputy Surveyor-General.*

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.