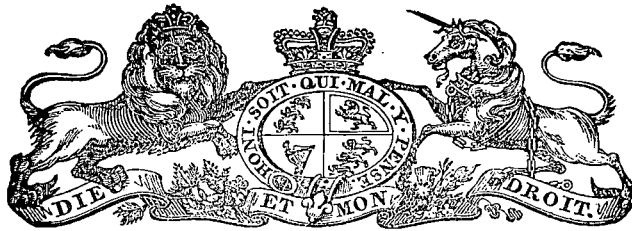


(No. 50.)



1880.

T A S M A N I A .

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

D I S T R I C T S U R V E Y O R ' S R E P O R T S :

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DISTRICT SURVEYORS' REPORTS.

River Forth, April, 1880.

SIR,

As requested by your circular of the 28th November, 1878, I have the honor to forward my second Annual Report on the progress of settlement in my survey district.

Between the Blythe and Penguin a good many lots have been selected and surveyed, and some of them have had improvements made in the way of clearing, but the actual occupation of them does not progress very fast. In many instances this is owing to the want of roads, and frequently the applicants are tenants, and they scrub a portion the first year as a preparation for settlement as soon as they can make arrangements to leave one place to occupy another. It does not seem that twelve months is long enough, in most instances, for selectors to make the necessary preparations to reside upon their lots. The want of access by roads, the excessive quantity of timber to be cleared away before even a hut can be built to reside in with safety, and nothing to sustain life in either man or beast until the land has been cleared and cropped: the time allowed by law does not seem sufficient for this; the consequence is the majority of selectors have, in a measure, to evade the Act by not occupying their selections as stated by it. There are instances where lots have been occupied immediately after selection; but in most cases applicants have to clear and crop a portion of their land before they can permanently reside upon it, as they must have something to keep animals upon; and the time within which they ought to occupy passes by.

Some portion of the Pine Road has been made, but the portion which most affects the Crown land still remains untouched. Most of the Crown land along the Pine Road has been purchased for about eight miles back; but the land suitable for selection is estimated to extend fifteen miles back, or seven miles beyond private property. If the Pine Road were continued and made passable the whole of the good land along it would find early purchasers. There are constant enquiries for land in its vicinity, but the bad state of the road deters applicants from purchasing. A passable road has been made up the Blythe, so that people who purchased land years ago can now manage to get out with a cart; but still the land is purchased about three miles higher up the River than the road goes. One man, Robert Dickers, has occupied his selection at the junction of Adams' Creek and the Blythe for about eight years, and, I understand, he has never had a cart at his place.

In the Parishes of North Motton, Bradworthy, and Castra, selection is progressing rapidly; nearly 2000 acres have been surveyed in Bradworthy lately, without including the land between the Forth and the Wilmot, where 560 have been marked off since my last report. In this locality I have sent in about 40 applications, ranging from 50 up to 320 acres, and have had to make about a dozen journeys to show applicants the country; but although the quality of the soil would suit well enough they find it would be useless to them in its present state, because it is not only absolutely without roads but there is no bridge across the River Wilmot.

Having spent a good deal of time in the latter end of last year examining this Wilmot Country, I am in a position to say that there are about 5000 acres of very first-class land there, well watered, only awaiting the construction of a road and a bridge across the Wilmot to at once find purchasers. Five thousand acres do not by any means represent the quantity that would be sold by the construction of the works referred to, because second class land would sell as soon as the best land was disposed of; and I think I may fairly estimate that 10,000 acres of land would find purchasers in the Wilmot Country as fast as it could be dealt with, if it were made available for traffic.

Passing into Northam and Barrington, where most of the available Crown land has gone into private hands, there are still a few scattered lots being taken up. These two parishes have the advantage of a tramway running through them, presided over by one of the best business and most energetic traders on this coast. The Don firm not only make their own private business arrangements prosperous, but by their fostering care and foresight they have been able to give assistance to those who have settled on the heavily-wooded lands in Barrington, and who would have been left without the means of getting their produce to market only for the Don Tramway.

In Dulverton and Stoodley most of the good land has been disposed of; but as the means of communication get better, and the first selections get cleared, the inferior land finds purchasers by people

wishing to extend their areas. There have been about 1000 acres surveyed recently in "The Nook," upon which very rapid and extensive improvements have been made, notably Mr. Cooper and his family, who have got, probably, 100 acres in crop in less than 18 months, and that composed of the very heaviest forests to be found on this coast.

In Kentishbury and Roland the Crown land has been very rapidly passing into private hands. One Surveyor has been constantly employed in those two parishes for over 18 months, and there are still several hundred acres to survey there now. Between the Mersey and the Rubicon there is still a considerable area of Crown land, but its quality, as far as I am acquainted with it, is inferior. Still occasional selections are made, principally to extend the area of old purchases.

In reference to minerals, this district promises to be productive of many kinds; but, from the want of access by roads and the heavily-timbered and densely-wooded nature of the forests, prospecting is expensive and laborious, combined with the fact that no mining venture has yet turned out very remunerative, seems to have prevented that attention being paid to it that the numerous indications would seem to warrant. In the vicinity of the Blythe iron ore exists almost in mountains; higher up the river the geological formations would seem to indicate the presence of many other minerals besides iron. Near the Penguin there are the "silver mines," out of which, at any rate, several minerals have been obtained. A little to the eastward of these are veins of galena containing silver. Between the Penguin and the Leven copper and other minerals have been found for 20 miles back. Immense deposits of iron exist near the Penguin. Iron abounds in other parts of the district. Gold exists in small quantities up the Forth and Wilmot, and the indications seem to warrant the opinion that gold will yet be found there in paying quantities. At the Don coal mining has been carried on for many years, also lime burning. In the vicinity of the Mersey coal mining has also, at intervals, been in operation, but it does not seem to prosper very well. To the south-east of Kentishbury gold has been found in small quantity. In the vicinity of the Mersey bituminous shale abounds, but whether it contains a sufficient per-centage of oil to make it pay remains to be proved.

The Wilmot Country and Castra are likely to produce the most attraction for purchasers when access is given them by roads and bridges. This district has all the natural advantages, such as good land, good timber, minerals, plenty of harbours for shipping, large rivers of fresh water, the country generally well watered, to render it the most flourishing district in Tasmania. But with all the natural advantages it possesses it cannot advance beyond snail's pace while its internal means of communication are so inferior.

It is quite out of the question for selectors to improve their lots while they remain so isolated, without roads and bridges, that they cannot reach them at a much greater rate than a mile an hour; and while these delays take place in the occupation and improvement of the land the general prosperity of the Colony suffers. People from the other colonies often visit the coast in search of Crown land; but when they see there are no practicable means of getting to it they retire in disappointment, and the Colony suffers by losing them.

I have, &c.

RICHD. HALL, *District Surveyor.*

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works, Hobart Town.

Launceston, 1st May, 1880.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to submit my Annual Report of the Survey District in my charge.

In the 8th paragraph of my last year's Report I stated that I estimated the good unalienated agricultural land in my district at about 41,500 acres; this area has been reduced by purchases made since then. In the same paragraph I put the land of medium quality at 41,000 acres. Subsequent observations and explorations lead me to think the last area considerably understated, and that I might honestly substitute the figures 45,700 acres in lieu thereof.

The price of tin being encouraging, many small lots under the Mineral Lands Act have been taken up, mostly about Ruby Flat and Mount Cameron. A scheme for a good water supply to the latter place is, I believe, in contemplation, which, if carried out, will have the effect of causing a great extent of ground hitherto untouched to be mined for tin, most probably during next summer.

In my previous report I alluded to the presence of gold and tin (then unworked) at Mount Horror; also gold having been discovered on the north-east slope of Mount Barrow; and gold, copper, and tin on Mount Maurice. I have since then visited the two first-named places. At Mount Horror in August last a gold-fields rush set in, and was largely visited by miners from Lisle Diggings, most of whom merely remained on the ground a few hours, and then left in considerable disgust at (to their minds) the want of auriferous indications. Those who at the first followed the original prospectors remained for some months building huts, making dams, constructing sluice-boxes, and cutting water-races; but all have since left the place, although many of them hold to a good opinion of the ground if only properly prospected. One man of a party there told me they took 20 ounces of gold out of their claim, and said although the place might do to fall back upon to procure a living in hard times, they did not think the present find rich enough to induce them to stop there.

Allow me here to rather digress in order to make an observation on the subject of prospecting new country for gold. I have observed that the raw hand or "new chum" will work hard, try anywhere and everything—is led on by hopes which have not met with the disappointments which

have been experienced by older hands, and is the best man (if he knows anything about the *modus operandi* of gold washing) to prospect new ground; while the practised digger is about the worst for the purpose, it being a principle with him to follow up rushes, and only go where gold has already been discovered, and remain only where he finds it is in paying quantities. It is therefore not to be wondered at that the place has been left without being well prospected. At the Mount Barrow find a few remain and receive very little encouragement for doing so, the gold being found in very small quantities in fine threads of quartz leaders, which have not as yet led to the discovery of any defined reef. At the top of Mount Maurice alluvial tin mining is being carried on. The ore is packed on horses to the St. Patrick's River, and carted from thence into Launceston. It is the first tin ore in quantity for the market which has reached Launceston otherwise than by water carriage.

In my last Report I also mentioned the existence of about 3000 acres of good land near to Mount Maurice. Although there is no road to this land, 320 acres have recently been selected. If the suggestions contained in my letter to you of the 14th November last relative to a road to Ringarooma by Mount Maurice were carried out it, would give access to these 3000 acres, open up much more country to settlement, and be a boon to the miners and farmers about Ringarooma. What I advanced in that letter I consider most important matters for consideration.

Of the pastoral lands in my district I know but little, dealings with them not coming within the scope of my duties. They are confined principally to the heathy lands of the north coast; a strip of that kind of country of about 10 miles in width following the coast line. There is much land elsewhere in my district not hitherto reported on, generally looked upon as useless because not fit for agriculture, and usually so devoid of grass that it would not keep a beast to a hundred acres, but which I am satisfied could be so improved by judicious expenditure of capital as to produce grass and give a return by stock; and such lands would be competed for, purchased, and dealt with in that way were the Government inclined to put it up to auction at the lowest upset price allowed by our Waste Lands Act. I could largely induce persons to go in for such under those circumstances: the result would be improvement to the country and increase of revenue from lands now without an inhabitant, and producing absolutely nothing, and likely to do no more for a hundred years to come unless placed in the market at something like its value. I consider that a family settled on country land contributes more to the revenue in a short space of time than the purchase-money of the land they occupy, while at the same time they largely encourage by their example and assistance the expansion of settlement; therefore, I respectfully submit that settlement on our Waste Lands should be fostered and encouraged by every legitimate means; the increase of population and the improvement of the lands, thereby enhancing the value of the adjoining, being of more benefit to the Colony than the £1 per acre, to which it seems the highest importance has been attached. The cheapness of the land in America, with her railroads often driven many miles in advance of settlement, thereby inducing immediate settlement, has been a large means of populating that country. At Scottsdale I have known £3 per acre to have been offered, and refused, for some of the unimproved bush lots of the original survey of that place: this is the effect of the settlement of a population on the neighbouring land, and leads now to lands being selected there at £1 per acre which a few years ago would not have been thought worth having at a gift. It may seem paradoxical, but my idea is, the way to obtain a high price for our crown lands is to charge a low one; i.e., I would deem it advisable to bring largely into the market or auction room, at intervals, the poorer class of lands at a low upset price—not those reserved for selection, but those now passed by unnoticed: the public would soon estimate their value, after a time they would be eagerly competed for, purchase would in most cases lead to improvement, and as the latter, coupled with settlement, advanced, the market value of the remaining lands would advance. Some of these poorer lands are certainly not paradisiacal in appearance, especially after a recent bush fire, but they might be turned in time, if not into arcadian beauty, at least into pleasant looking hill and valley pasture lands, and conduce largely towards sustaining a population. At present they are only a blank in the way of settlement and give no return.

I am happy to be able to say considerable progress is being made in settlement in my district, many new arrivals and others taking up residence at Scottsdale. The new road recently opened from Branhholm to Moorina, although only cleared of timber, and not fit for the traffic of even a horseman, has led to seven selections being made there, in all to the extent of 1420 acres; and five out of those seven selectors have already commenced operations on the land, covering many acres in extent, and either taken or preparing to take their families there to reside.

I respectfully beg to be allowed to mention the generally expressed approval of the public works in the shape of roads and bridges which have been carried out in my district: although there is much yet which, in the winter time especially, exhibits itself plainly as requiring something to be done to allow traffic without damage to goods, loss of life, or limb, yet the works carried out are a benefit to the district, which can be seen, felt, and appreciated; unfortunately there are pieces left between the well made portions which almost stop traffic altogether in the winter season. It is devoutly hoped progress in this particular will not stop at what has been done.

Independent of sales by auction, private sales after having been submitted to auction, and sales of previously surveyed lots, all of which I have no record, I reckon that since my last report, as near as I can ascertain the operations of the Lands Department, there have been either taken up or applied for in my district 67 mineral lots, amounting to 1560½ acres, and 77 agricultural lots, representing an area of 7336¼ acres.

I have, &c.

JOHN R. HURST, *District Surveyor.*

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works, Hobart Town.

DISTRICT OF WELLINGTON, RUSSELL, AND PART OF DEVON.

Wynyard, May, 1880.

SIR,

THE two principal industries of my District are agriculture and mining, and in furnishing you with a Progress Report my remarks will be chiefly directed to those two pursuits. Some few years ago the export of timber—sawn, split, and in the log—formed a large item of the value of productions; but, at present, very little timber of any description is exported. Beyond supplying the demands of local purchasers scarcely any cargoes of timber leave here for intercolonial ports, and the extinction of this once flourishing trade has had a depressing effect upon the population.

In agriculture the past year has been a very unfortunate one for farmers, and the loss of crops, low prices, &c., has had a corresponding effect upon the demand for the crown lands. A practice has sprung up in this district of roughly clearing land and sowing it with cocksfoot grass for seed purposes. The prices obtained for the seed were very good for some time, consequently the area of land under such crop was largely increased, and this year the supply is greatly in excess of the demand,—heavy loss to the farmers thus resulting. In one respect this is not to be regretted, for the high prices and easy culture of the seed had introduced a most slovenly system of farming. The great aim seemed to be to get as much land as possible, knock down the scrub, burn it off, and then sow the seed amongst a confused network of logs, stumps, and heads of fallen trees. This goes on year by year, no attempt being made to clean up the fallen *debris* and logs,—the farms presenting a most unsightly appearance. This year the crops were visited by great flocks of parrots, then by millions of caterpillars, resulting in immense loss of grain. In some instances these pests made a clean sweep of all the grain, leaving nothing but straw to mark their ravages.

The harvest of 1880 will not improve matters, indeed the prospects of farming in this district have never been so bad for the last seven years.

It has been the fashion here to rely too much upon one crop; very few go in for a system of all round farming. In this respect the inhabitants round Emu Bay and Table Cape are principally in fault. In the vicinity of Circular Head and the Montagu there is a much better system, and one seldom sees there the neglected farms so common to the vicinity of Emu Bay and Table Cape.

Circular Head and the Montagu still keep up their reputation for good potatoes, and growers seem to make a good profit; but about Table Cape the crop for 1879 was very small and very inferior. This year, 1880, the crop is larger but the quality is still below the mark.

During the year 1879 a large expenditure of government money was going on under "The Public Works Construction Act," and most of the young men preferred working for wages to tilling the land. This was all very well as long as it lasted, but it was merely a system of "spoon feeding," and now men find they must turn to farming again or go to the mines for work. Now that farmers are beginning to feel the benefit of the improved roads lately constructed, we may reasonably expect a revival of the farming interest.

To notice in detail the progress of settlement in my District, I will commence with the Montagu. No new land has been taken up during 1879, though several applications have been granted for the present year. The area of available land fit for agriculture near the present settlement is small, probably not more than a couple of hundred acres in scattered patches. In 1878 I surveyed some lots at the New Tier, about three miles eastward of the present settlement, but, as I expected, the land has not turned out as good as the applicants believed it to be: the soil is light and sandy with a slate bottom. About two hundred acres have since been applied for in that locality, and if the land turns out to be fit for crops, a settlement will soon follow. The new roads and wharf will be of great assistance to the settlers, but further expenditure is urgently required. On the old farms satisfactory progress is being made; almost every acre of land is cultivated, and the farmers seem to be doing well.

At Duck River there is no progress to report, no new sections were taken up in 1879. The depression in the timber trade affects this place very much, as the export of blackwood in the log was a great help to the settlers. The construction of the Irish Town Road employed most of the labouring hands during the year.

No new settlement has taken place on the Government lands near Circular Head, and although there is plenty of good land at the end of the South Road there is no demand for it, the young men having nearly all left the district. The old farms continue to be well cultivated, and are undoubtedly better farmed than any others in the district. This is especially the case at Black River, perhaps the best farmed settlement in Wellington.

At Detention River substantial progress has been made. The completion of the Main Road from Table Cape to Circular Head has opened up some first-class land, and it is being rapidly secured. Over 1000 acres have been taken up, and next year we may expect to see a large opening made in the forest. There is plenty of good land in the vicinity, and it is likely to be in demand. Unfortunately, the amount of money expended upon the Main Road was not sufficient to construct the portion passing through the forest between Wilson's Creek and the Bare Hills, consequently that portion of the road is impassable in winter. Another £1000 is urgently required, and unless it is expended the usefulness of the road already constructed is very much reduced. Any expenditure of money in the vicinity of Detention River would prove reproductive and lead to further settlement.

In the vicinity of Jacobs' Boat Harbour a few new farms have been opened up, but the first-class land in that vicinity is nearly all sold; new settlers have to go to the Main Road west of Lipscombe's block.

At the Flowerdale settlement continues to steadily increase, and there is now a large opening, the cleared farms extending from the Boat Harbour right across the Flowerdale district. The new metal road to the bridge and the cleared road beyond have immensely assisted the settlers. There is yet a large area of good land south of the present holdings, and probably during the next year it will be taken up. A further expenditure of £2000 would be a very reproductive work.

About Wynyard and Mount Hicks there has not been much progress made, and at the Cam the demand for land is very small. There is plenty of fair land, but new roads are urgently required.

In the County of Devon, Parish of Stowport, on the west side of the Blythe, the settlement is rapidly increasing, and farms are being cleared as fast as they are taken up. The land is very good, and there is plenty of it. An extension of the present road is very much required.

There is one matter I think should be pointed out, and that is the practice of giving location orders to people arriving from England and India, and not compelling them to improve the land. Several large blocks have been disposed of in this way, and as nothing has been done to them they positively retard settlement, especially where they front on Main Roads. No heavily timbered lands, in my opinion, should be disposed of without a stipulation as to settlement.

Minerals.—Steady progress continues to be made in the mining industry of this District. No new discoveries of any importance have been made, but the old-established companies are making great progress.

At Mount Bischoff the M.B.T. Co. holds the pride of place, and continues to pay handsome dividends. At the close of the year the prospects of the mine looked better than ever. The Company is erecting a fine crushing plant of 40 stampers; but from the immense quantity of stone accumulating I expect to see them increase to 100 stampers. Improved dressing appliances have been introduced, and more are contemplated, including a boring machine to be worked by compressed air. The yield of tin for 1879 was over 2500 tons, and this year it is probable the quantity will be increased. Since the formation of the Company 8200 tons of tin ore have been obtained, and over £100,000 paid in dividends.

The North Bischoff Valley Company had just made a start at the end of the year. They have a first-class crushing and dressing plant, similar in principle to the one at the M.B.T.M. Co. They have since amalgamated with the Wheal Bischoff Company.

The Wheal Bischoff and West Bischoff have been engaged in prospecting their ground and testing their lodes. The reports of their Mining Managers are hopeful, but as yet no fair opinion can be given of the value of the properties.

A large lode of Argentiferous Galena has been discovered on the north side of the Waratah, and it is probable that this year will witness an energetic effort to open it up.

A little prospecting has been done at Hampshire Hills, but no encouraging results were obtained.

On the V. D. L. Co's land the silver mine, which was opened last year, is now closed, the Company considering that the prospects are not sufficiently good to warrant a large outlay.

At Mount Ramsay nothing is being done, the holders of sections there will neither work them nor let others have them. Considering that these sections have been held for five years, it seems time the labour clauses were enforced. An attempt was made to float a company but failed, the promoters as usual monopolising more than half of the shares. It is a pity to see this promising property lying idle, as other people would soon take it up; and at present prospecting in that direction is quite stopped.

The excitement of the year was the gold discoveries at the Pieman River, and at one time it seemed as if a good alluvial diggings had been discovered. Unfortunately the ground is very patchy and a good spot is soon worked out. At the close of the year the number of diggers began to decrease rapidly, and at the present time there are not more than thirty at work.

Several tracks have been cut, one from Mount Bischoff, which has been much appreciated. It is now very badly impeded with fallen timber and requires to be cleared out again. I would advise that a sum of £100 be expended upon it. Another track from Circular Head was decided upon by Government, and has since been completed, but the depression on the diggings prevents any use being made of the route, and probably in another twelve months it will be blocked up with fallen timber. It is probable that small patches of good alluvial diggings will be found, but no large extent; there are no deep grounds except small patches on the banks of large rivers. Several parties are looking for reefs, but none have yet been found.

Gold appears to be widely distributed over the north west of Tasmania, but as yet no auriferous reef has ever been discovered; the probability is that some will be found, particularly near the granite and vicinity of Hellyer River; but my observations lead me to the conclusion that the scaly gold is derived from the quartz occurring with mica schists and from the decomposition of iron pyrites. I have never yet seen a reef similar to those found about the Tamar district and Fingal.

Very little work has been done at Mount Heemskirk, although prospects there are very good indeed. I still hold to my opinion that Mount Heemskirk will eventually turn out a great tin-mining centre. The veins there are very numerous and ought to be thoroughly well examined. There are hopes of this being done as Victorian capitalists have taken over one of the lodes. If one turns out a success plenty of others will follow suit. If such properties as the Cumberland Co. and Montagu Co. existed at Mount Bischoff they would be developed very speedily. Unfortunately the West Coast has got a bad name, and although tin lodes can be discovered without any difficulty, there is not sufficient capital, confidence, and energy to put their value to a practical test. From what I have seen I am confident that both on the East and West Coasts tin-mining in lodes will be a permanent profitable industry.

In conclusion, I may sum up that although no great advancement has taken place during 1879 yet there has been a steady improvement; and in spite of the great drawbacks of bad crops, losses by vermin and fires, the prospects of the district are good. In agriculture we are through the worst of our troubles, and the general revival of trade will make the future look brighter. In mining we are making good progress, and prospects are very hopeful indeed.

I have, &c.

CHAS. P. SPRENT.

To the Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

5th May, 1880.

I HAVE the honor to submit for the approval of the Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works the following Report of the progress of settlement in the District of Dorset.

The remarks I made in my first Report of 1879 have been fully confirmed by the number of applications which have been received by the Department, many of which have been marked off.

The whole of the land lying between Chester's, on the line of road from Launceston to Bridport, and originally laid out by Mr. Surveyor Hall, has been selected on both sides of that road; some few have since been withdrawn, whilst other lots, for which applications have been made, are likely to be excluded, from the fact that they will encroach on the land reserved for mining purposes. The area surveyed on this line of road, and extending south from Chester's, is about three thousand acres (3000 acres).

In that part of the District known as the Lower Piper several lots have been surveyed amounting to six hundred acres, and several instructions are in hand.

Vicinity of Nine Mile Springs.—The land in this part is of an inferior character, but from its proximity to an important Gold-field it is attracting attention. Three hundred and twenty acres have been surveyed recently, and several small lots have been applied for.

Vicinity of Turner's Marsh, and extending easterly towards Hall's Road.—Over twenty-five lots, averaging one hundred acres each, have been surveyed, in round numbers two thousand five hundred acres, making in all six thousand five hundred acres of agricultural land.

A line of road from the Nine Mile Springs to the mouth of the Currie River, a distance of six and a half miles, has been surveyed.

Gold Fields.—The oldest established field, viz., the Nine Mile Spring, continues to keep up good returns, but entirely from quartz crushing; alluvial mining has long been discontinued.

Thirteen ten-acre lots have been marked off under application for lease, and six lots under Miners' Rights, Dam-sites, &c.

Back Creek.—A few miners are employed on the alluvial, a narrow run discovered some time since. Prospecting for the reef on the Sir John Franklin is continued.

Lisle, the most important of alluvial fields, has fallen off, the present number residing here amounting to six hundred.

Golconda.—This reefing district is progressing, six ten-acre lots have been surveyed, and others' instructions continue to come in. This country is easily worked, comparatively small returns will pay.

Roads.—From Falkiner's into Lisle the new road is very much cut up. The Track over Mount Arthur is becoming bad, and will be impassable during winter, so many are packing rations from the Piper.

In conclusion permit me to say that, in my opinion, there is every reason to be satisfied with the progress of settlement during the last twelve months.

I have, &c.

JOHN W. BROWN.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

Stone Buildings, 10th May, 1880.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to forward you my annual Report upon the crown lands in my district.

The portion known as the Lake District, owing to the climate, is used principally for pastoral purposes.

Several large blocks have been purchased during the past year under the 31st Section of "The Waste Lands Act," and a large area leased.

A considerable quantity of first-class pastoral land, the greater part being open marsh land surrounded by good grassy banks, extending from Lake St. Clair to King William Mount and along the Derwent, still remains unoccupied.

It is my opinion that very little more land will be now purchased in the Lake District until the upset price is reduced, as there is no comparison between the rental and the price charged for purchase.

Agricultural Areas.

The greater portion of the agricultural areas of my district being in private hands the portions of the crown land left are as a rule of inferior quality.

The areas at which crown land is available for selection under the 24th Section of "The Waste Lands Act" are in the vicinity of the Den Hill, Dromedary, Jones' River, Platform Bluff, Florentine, Parish of Uxbridge known as Native Tier, and vicinity of Mount Lloyd.

The greater part of the land in the vicinity of the Den Hill, Dromedary, Jones' River, and Platform Bluff, is of inferior quality, small portions of from 15 to 50 acres in scattered localities being fit for cultivation.

At the Florentine there is a large quantity of first-class land on both sides of the river, the road lately opened up to the Gordon Bend passing through it.

No selections have been taken up here owing to the distance from any market, but if at any time the railway which the inhabitants of the Bothwell and Hamilton Districts are desirous of obtaining should be undertaken I believe all the available land will be selected.

Splendid limestone exists in the vicinity of this river.

Parish of Uxbridge.

All the best crown land near the new road has been purchased, the remaining land not having any road into it has not been selected, in fact no selections have been made in this vicinity during the past year.

Vicinity of Mount Lloyd.

This land is situated to the west of a range of hills running in a south-westerly direction, the highest point of which is known as Mount Lloyd, and is about 10 miles from New Norfolk.

I estimate that there are at least 10,000 acres of crown land in this locality, about three or four thousand of which is first-class agricultural land, comparatively level, covered with a thick dogwood, pear tree, musk, and fern scrub; but unlike most of the best crown lands of the Colony it is lightly timbered, on an average not having more than five or six large trees to an acre.

I have spent some time in exploring this land and in cutting a track at my own expense into it from the present cart track.

Three selectors have taken up lots and are now occupying them, many more would have followed but are deterred from the want of roads.

The road leading to this locality ends near Mr. Davis' farm, about two miles distant from the land; and, with the exception of the track cut by myself, no means of access is available for intending selectors. The cart track from the Dry Creek to Mr. Davis' farm rises about 1000 feet in a mile: this road could be greatly improved by keeping round the hill.

If a cart track was cut into the land from the present road, and the road to the Dry Creek improved, I believe that the land would soon all be taken up, and from its nearness to market, being only ten miles from New Norfolk, the place would soon become a flourishing settlement.

Less land has been taken up for agricultural purposes during the past year than in any other time since my occupation of the district.

No minerals have been discovered in the district.

I have, &c.

THOMAS FRODSHAM, JUN.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

SOUTH BUCKINGHAM.

Huon Road, 10th May, 1880.

SIR,

THE result of my survey work for the year 1879 has been the setting out of 65 lots of Crown land, amounting in the aggregate to 3295½ acres, with three township lots with an area of 30¾ acres.

Many of the above lots were taken up by the children or other relatives of old settlers, and consequently became absorbed into their former holdings, rather than forming separate establishments. There have been very few new settlements formed during the year.

The process of clearing goes on but slowly on these selections, and consists chiefly of small patches suitable for fruit gardens, and in burning off the scrub and sowing with grass seed the best parts for grazing cattle. There is very little done in growing either grain or potatoes beyond the amount required for local requirements.

The mineral interest in this District appears to have completely collapsed, as of the many companies formed for working the coal deposits not one seems to have succeeded in their efforts to produce payable results.

The continued scarcity and high price of labour, consequent on the development of the Tin Mines, renders it impossible for settlers to employ men except at an actual loss, in fact many of the able-bodied settlers themselves go off to the mines for the greater part of the year, bringing back with them the cash to pay off the annual instalments on their lands.

I remain, &c.

JAMES COOMBES.

*The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.**15th May, 1880.*

SIR,

SINCE my progress report of this District on April 25th, 1879, I have the honor to forward the following statement with regard to selections of agricultural areas, varying from 15 to 320 acres, in the several localities indicated in that report, together with reserves of Coppington and Parrattah, the latter embracing a considerable number of agricultural sections.

I am not in a position to state with accuracy the progress made by the selectors under the 24th Section of the Waste Lands Act. My opinion is that little has been done on many of the recent selections, and neither can it be expected, as there has been scarcely time for active operations; in many instances, however, work to some extent has been commenced. During the year I find about sixty agricultural sections have been surveyed, but it must be borne in mind many of these lots have been selected by persons holding adjoining lands for the purpose of increasing their areas, consequently these selections cannot be looked upon in a progressive point by the settlement of separate or independent families.

Several allotments at Coppington have passed to private hands, but whether any improvements have been made I am not in a position to state. The extensive reserve of agricultural areas and town allotments at Parrattah, adjoining the Oatlands Railway Station, up to the present time have scarcely met with the sale anticipated, but I have no doubt in the course of time the greater portion will pass to private hands and improvements made, there being a vast amount of traffic along the Tunnack Road and trade at the Railway Station from various parts of the District.

I may observe a considerable amount of grain, &c. has been produced this year at East Bluff, but from the low state of the market and bad roads the settlers feel but little inclined to cart their grain to market, stating it will not pay them to do so, notwithstanding the heavy yields, in many cases equal to 50 or more bushels of English barley to the acre, with oats and potatoes in equal proportion. It appears, however, wheat has been subject to rust, and not equal to other crops in consequence. Many of the occupiers are now turning their attention to English grasses, either for seed or depasturing stock.

In conclusion, I am of opinion the District throughout has progressed at a fair ratio for the last few years.

I have, &c.

THOMAS WEDGE, *District Surveyor.**The Hon. the Minister of Lands, Hobart Town.*

HASTINGS, HUON DISTRICT.

24th May, 1880.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to forward for your information the following Report upon the progress of settlement, &c. within my Survey District:—

Progress of Settlement.—In my last report (1879) I took occasion to allude to the depressed state of the timber trade as retarding to a considerable extent the settlement of the waste lands of this district. Since the date of that report the trade in split timber seems, instead of improving, to have almost entirely

ceased, the prices offered for palings, &c. being (with a very limited demand even at such prices) in most cases insufficient to cover cost of production. This state of things, although, of course, depressing as regards the present industrial resources of the district, promises to eventuate in a further development of its "agricultural" capabilities, it being a noteworthy fact that the demand for land suitable for agricultural settlement has been, during the past twelve months, and is now steadily increasing. In the vicinity of Franklin alone there have been more selections (and, I believe, without exception for *bonâ fide* settlement) during the last few months than for many previous years. Attention is also being directed to the good land known to exist in the vicinity of the Arve River, westward of Franklin, some few selections having been made also in that locality. Land is also being taken up in small selections, 15 to 25 acres, by settlers at Southport and Port Esperance, particularly by employées, &c. of the various saw-mills.

Gold.—In my last report I referred to "recent discoveries at Port Cygnet." Gold has since been found in fairly paying quantity in this locality, some few miners being at work and doing, it is believed, well; but so far as at present known, the extent of payable ground is very limited. The discovery is, however, of importance to the district, as placing beyond doubt the fact of the existence in it of "payable deposits" of the metal, thereby affording more encouragement to prospecting, the result of which will probably be other and more important discoveries.

Tin.—None has yet been reported as found.

Coal.—The company referred to in my last report as projecting the construction of a locomotive line to work extensive deposits at Gardiner's Bay, have abandoned the work and, I believe, thrown up the land leased. The same or a similar seam of coal is, however, being worked (upon a less pretentious scale than projected by the defunct company) by Messrs. Hill & Fitzpatrick, who have erected a jetty near Green Point for the purpose of shipment, and who express themselves as sanguine of success in their venture. The coal at South Brunni is still being worked, and finds a ready sale in Hobart Town for domestic use. The difficulty of shipment, however, is an obstacle to increased supply.

Quantity and Quality of Land, &c.—In my last report I felt obliged to refer to an absence of demand for land for purpose of settlement, in the face of which it would not be expedient to do much in the way of giving access to bad lands by formation of roads. This absence of demand has ceased to exist, and the time is, I believe, at hand when, in order to keep pace with the increase of settlement, it will become necessary to provide means of access to some of the known tracts of good land selected at a distance from present settlement,—such as that at the Arve River, to which I have previously referred.

The recent action of the Legislature in taking over construction and maintenance of main lines of roads should result in the improvement of the secondary roads by expenditure on them of local rates. It is, however, to be feared that this result will not follow, and that a majority of ratepayers, directly interested only in the "main roads" already provided for, will successfully oppose local taxation in the future, so that the Road Trusts will become simply Road Boards for expenditure of the main roads maintenance money provided by law. I should be inclined to suggest as a remedy for so suicidal a policy in the country districts that the Government subsidy should be made as heretofore, contingent upon the imposition of a local rate, and such local rate should be at least 6*d.* in the pound.

I have, &c.

G. INNES, *District Surveyor.*

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

Deloraine, 31st May, 1880.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to report that settlement on the lands in my survey district is proceeding steadily. A number of selections have been made in the West Tamar part, Beaconsfield affording a home market for produce; and in many instances, I do not doubt, means to purchase land have been derived either from actual mining or the employment connected with it.

Some of these selections are as usual additions to present holdings; some made by young men of the district, who naturally wish to settle as near as possible to their families and friends. In some instances there are new selectors on comparatively new tracts of country. The principal one of these is in the Parish of Winkleigh, near the head of the Franklin Rivulet down its valley, and in a north-westerly direction, where there are some 10,000 acres of agricultural land, decreasing from a level of 900 feet above sea level. (The bridge at Deloraine is 750 feet in altitude). A new line of road connecting this country with Beaconsfield (distant 12 miles) has been marked, starting from the Green's Creek Road, crossing the Franklin through part of the 10,000 acres referred to, crossing the Anderson's Creek Range into and through the farms on the north side, and joining the Beaconsfield Road at the back of Cabbage Tree Hill.

A township would be advantageously placed at the junction of the Green's Creek and new line of road as recommended, and I have no doubt that when this new line and some branch lines are opened that the township will be a success.

In the Chudleigh part of the district land is being taken up much the same as at the West Tamar.

A new line of road has been marked south of the Van Diemen's Land Company's road from the Sassafras Creek to the Mersey, which will pass through some 3000 or 4000 acres of agricultural land; the principal drawback being want of running water, there being no stream on it. No additional selections have been made hereabouts, and I presume there will be none till some progress is made with the contemplated road.

No more land has been taken up over the Mersey, as I anticipated in my last Report.

Settlement gradually advancing in the Parish of Parkham.

Some 2000 acres of land in maximum areas of 320 acres each have been selected on the branches of the Meander River above Cheshunt. There is a large tract of country in this locality, of medium quality, sandy, and of tolerably even surface, at a height above sea level of 1200 feet and upwards. The soil is very patchy; and until the surveys which are now in hand are completed it is impossible to form an estimate of the quantity adapted for settlement.

I have, &c.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

H. PERCY SORELL.

Fingal, 1st June, 1880.

SIR,

THERE has been no great progress in agricultural settlement in this district since my last Report.

The area of accessible land fit for cultivation is small, but much of that is being gradually occupied and improved.

On the George River several lots have been applied for, and those previously taken up are being improved principally by being cleared and laid down in grass. The owners have not yet, in most instances, gone to live on the land as they are otherwise employed, and wish to have their places in such a condition as to offer a fair chance of a living before they leave their present occupations, which enable them to pay the cost of clearing. In ten years I believe a thriving population will be settled here.

The land will probably be used for fattening stock and dairy farming, purposes for which it is well fitted.

Round St. Mary's land continues to be taken up and improved, and when the new road to the coast is finished more will be available. I fear, however, that the area of really good land in this neighbourhood is small.

There is little to report on lots taken up in other parts of the district. In most cases the occupiers depend more for a living on working for others than on their holdings; which, however, give them a home and occupation when their labour is not in demand. The improvements are generally small.

I am, &c.

GEORGE C. SMITH, *Surveyor.*

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

NOTE.—I think it possible that as alluvial tin mining becomes less profitable those now engaged in that employment might take up land for cultivation in the mining district. Unfortunately most of the tin country (the whole of the Blue Tier for instance) is worthless for cultivation or pasture, but near Thomas's Plain there is much good and average land, some of which would be taken up now were it open for selection.

The principal objection to throwing it open, in my opinion, is not that any loss of revenue would follow but that difficulties would arise in connection with roads and water-races. It is quite impossible for any surveyor now to decide where ground should be reserved for these purposes in future, and when the land is once alienated, even on the credit system, it becomes difficult to take any of it away from the purchaser without exorbitant compensation being demanded and great expense incurred. I think, therefore, it would be well to have a system of letting land for so many years, with a right of purchase to the lessee at the end of the term, during the continuance of which the Mining Commissioner should have the same powers over the land let as over land leased under "The Mineral Lands Act."

G. C. SMITH, *Surveyor.*

Moorina, 16th June, 1880.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to forward you my Annual Report upon the advancement of settlement within the survey district under my charge.

Gould's Country is still the only portion of my district in which any attempt has been made towards reclaiming the land for agricultural purposes; and during the last twelve months 19 lots, making an aggregate area of 735 acres, has been taken up in that locality under the provisions of the 24th Section of "The Waste Lands Act," and one lot of 15 acres on the Wyniford River near its mouth.

There has been no discovery of any note of mineral bearing land, with the exception of that on the Mussel Roe River at its source, where 17 lots have been taken on lease for tin mining.

Land in other parts has also been taken up for mining purposes; but those lots, generally speaking, are merely portions of abandoned claims, either overlooked by the original holders or forfeited as not payable.

I have, &c.

E. GLOUCESTER WALPOLE, *District Surveyor.*

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.