

(No. 48.)



1897.

SESSION II.

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PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

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DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND SURVEYS:

REPORT OF SURVEYOR-GENERAL AND SECRETARY FOR  
LANDS FOR 1896.

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

Cost of printing—£21.



Department of Lands and Surveys,  
Surveyor-General's Office, Hobart, 10th July, 1897.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to furnish you with the following Report on the Department of Lands and Surveys for the twelve months ending June 30, 1897.

REVENUE.

The estimate of revenue made by me in June, 1896, for that year, was £42,150; and the total sum collected by the Lands Department was £47,209,—showing an increase over the estimate of £5059—the largest return since 1892—and an increase over the sum realised during 1895 of £6694. The sum estimated to be collected during 1897 was £48,250, and the sum collected during the six months ending June 30th last was £23,411—showing an increase of £817 as compared with the first half of the year 1896. Although the latter figures would appear to indicate that the revenue is practically stationary, it will be seen on reference to Table 1, Appendix A., at the end of this Report, that the figures for 1896 were unduly swollen by an abnormal increase in Survey fees, and that there is a solid and satisfactory increase in the total sum realised from the other sources. As pointed out in last year's Report, in making the above comparisons it must be borne in mind that up to the present time the revenue is not deriving any advantage from the land selected during the last 3½ years under the deferred payment system, as provided for in The Crown Lands Amendment Acts of 1893 and 1894. The total number of lots selected under these Acts since the former came into operation is 589—representing an area of 23,073 acres.

As the total Territorial Revenue is made up of the sums collected by the Departments of Lands and Mines, it is not always apparent from the Consolidated Returns published whence the increase or deficiency proceeds. The following tabulated statement shows, that after deducting the sum collected on account of Survey fees and repayments separately between the Departments of Lands and Mines from the total amounts realised during the years 1895 and 1896, of the total net increase of £11,422 for the latter year, the Lands Department is credited with £6511 :—

TERRITORIAL REVENUE, 1895.

<i>Lands.</i>	£	<i>Mines.</i>	£
Survey Fees.....	1986	Survey Fees .....	4576
Other Receipts .....	38,529	Other Receipts .....	14,839
Total.....	40,515	Total.....	19,415
Deduct repayments...	189	Deduct repayments...	1644
Revenue 1895.....	<u>£40,326</u>	Revenue 1895.....	<u>£17,771</u>

TERRITORIAL REVENUE, 1896.

<i>Lands.</i>	£	<i>Mines.</i>	£
Survey Fees.....	3335	Survey Fees .....	7972
Other Receipts.....	43,874	Other Receipts.....	17,659
Total.....	47,209	Total.....	25,631
Deduct repayments...	372	Deduct repayments...	2949
Revenue 1896.....	<u>£46,837</u>	Revenue 1896.....	<u>£22,682</u>

Net increase for 1896 above previous year :—

	£	
Lands.....	1193	Survey Fees.
	5318	Other Receipts.
	<u>£6511</u>	
Mines .....	4911	Survey Fees and other Receipts.
Total .....	<u>£11,422</u>	

Return No. 1, which forms part of Appendix A. attached to this Report, gives the details of the Territorial Revenue derived from all sources during the year 1896 as compared with those of the previous nine years.

LANDS.

The number of lots applied for and upon which the Survey Fees have been paid during the 12 months ending June 30th last, under The Crown Lands Amendment Acts, 1893 and 1894, is 148, comprising an area of 5719 acres, and the number applied for under the 31st Section of the Crown Lands Act, 1890, is 189, comprising 13,985 acres, as compared with 112 lots, comprising an area of 3690 acres, and 109 lots, comprising 9112 acres respectively, during the preceding 12 months. The figures are exclusive of 49 lots, comprising an area of 4765 acres, of second class land applied for under the Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1895, at 10s. per acre. When the whole of the facts are taken into consideration, it will be apparent that the returns from the Lands Department are of a satisfactory character. The steady and continued increase in the number of small selections under the principal Act is a sound and reliable indication of the progress in actual settlement on the agricultural Crown Lands throughout the country. There can be no doubt that at the present time there is more land being selected for *bonâ fide* settlement than has obtained for the last twenty years, notwithstanding that the lands available are more remote from market, and that less public money is being expended in the construction of roads, bridges, and jetties, &c., than at any time during that period.

The number of applications dealt with, the areas applied for, and the fees for surveys deposited by the applicants, under the provisions of the several Land Acts in force, are contained in the ensuing tables for each County in the Island :—

RETURN of Applications under 31st Section of the Crown Lands Act, 1890, and the Crown Lands Amendment Acts, 1893 and 1894, from 30th June, 1896, to 30th June, 1897.

	Crown Lands Act, 1890, (31st Section).					Crown-Lands Amendment Acts, 1893 and 1894.				
	No. of Appli- cations received.	Total Area applied for.	No. of Applications on which Survey Fee paid.	Area on which Survey Fee paid.	Amount of Survey Fees paid by Applicants.	No. of Appli- cations received.	Total Area applied for.	No. of Applications on which Survey Fee paid.	Area on which Survey Fee paid.	Amount of Survey Fees paid by Applicants.
	No.	Acres.	No.	Acres.	£ s. d.	No.	Acres.	No.	Acres.	£ s. d.
Buckingham .....	50	3833	24	1070	145 5 0	81	2640	25	924	131 17 6
Cornwall .....	16	550	11	425	59 5 0	16	558	7	184	28 10 0
Cumberland.....	15	1891	11	1881	123 0 0	6	212	5	187	26 15 0
Devon .....	74	4749	35	2112	237 5 0	68	2668	22	945	124 0 0
Dorset .....	39	1977	20	1185	144 0 0	30	1209	16	635	86 10 0
Glamorgan .....	2	190	1	140	12 10 0	5	225	1	50	6 5 0
Kent.....	21	1250	8	275	41 5 0	22	910	9	375	49 10 0
Lincoln.....	...	...	...	...	...	3	75	3	75	10 5 0
Monmouth .....	12	887	5	265	33 15 0	9	400	2	75	10 5 0
Pembroke .....	32	3128	15	738	84 10 0	36	1149	18	589	78 8 0
Somerset .....	2	150	1	50	6 5 0	3	150	2	100	12 10 0
Wellington .....	51	4494	32	2999	293 15 0	66	2641	28	1150	154 15 0
Flinders Island..	3	285	1	20	4 0 0	2	55	2	55	10 5 0
King Island.....	39	5160	24	2775	231 5 0	11	525	5	250	31 5 0
Westmorland....	2	100	1	50	6 5 0	8	350	3	125	16 10 0
TOTAL .....	358	28,654	189	13,985	1422 5 0	366	13,767	148	5719	777 10 6

RETURN of Applications under Section 49 Crown Lands Act, 1890.

MINING AREAS.

	No. of Applications received.	Total Area applied for.	No. of Appli- cations on which Survey Fee has been paid.	Area on which Survey Fee paid.	Amount of Survey Fee.
	No.	Acres.	No.	Acres.	£ s. d.
Buckingham .....	2	150	1	50	6 5 0
Cornwall .....	2	35	—	—	—
Devon .....	11	331	4	81	18 5 0
Dorset .....	18	1302	5	150	22 5 0
Monmouth .....	2	40	2	40	8 0 0
Montagu .....	50	981	22	459	101 15 0
TOTAL .....	85	2839	34	780	156 10 0

RETURN of Applications under Section 4 Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1895.  
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 paid.	Amount of Survey Fee.
	No.	Acres.	No.	Acres.	£ s. d.
Buckingham .....	6	400	3	200	23 10 0
Cornwall .....	5	350	3	200	23 10 0
Cumberland .....	26	2162	15	1234	134 15 0
Devon .....	19	926	7	380	48 10 0
Dorset .....	5	365	4	285	34 10 0
Glamorgan .....	1	100	1	100	11 0 0
Kent .....	1	30	—	—	—
Monmouth .....	2	115	1	50	6 5 0
Pembroke.....	15	1699	8	1411	100 5 0
Wellington .....	4	378	2	95	12 10 0
Westmorland.....	6	859	5	810	59 10 0
TOTAL .....	90	7384	49	4765	454 5 0

ADMINISTRATION OF LANDS ACTS.

Some idea of the enormous amount of extra work entailed upon this Department in the administration of the Crown Lands' Acts since the Lands and Survey Departments were amalgamated in 1894, as compared with previous years, may be gathered from the fact that for the first time in the history of the Colony systematic arrangements were instituted for dealing with accumulated arrears of instalments on credit and leased lands. These arrangements were necessarily provided for by special legislation, which gave to any *bonâ fide* selector the option of having his instalments postponed for any period not exceeding five years, or of claiming a grant-deed for the portion paid for. The extra facilities which such special legislation afforded to persons in arrears with their instalments for evading the conditions of their contracts were very freely availed of, the more so in that it was introduced during one of the most severe periods of depression the colony has ever experienced. Some such legislation was unquestionably essential in the circumstances, as, had the conditions of contract been insisted upon, the results would have been disastrous to hundreds of deserving settlers. It has, however, thrown the Land system of the Colony into disorder, nullified revenue estimates, and has increased the work of the Department by at least fifty per cent. Notwithstanding these facts, it will be seen from the following Return that the vigorous and persistent efforts made by this Department to keep down arrears has resulted in the total sum being lower at May 31st last than at any previous time during the periods noted, with one exception :—

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

Date.	Purchase Money in arrear.	Rent in arrear.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
30th June, 1894 .....	47,686 2 11	5650 5 10
31st December, 1894 .....	36,079 16 0	1590 10 0
31st December, 1895 .....	48,497 8 4	1369 10 6
31st December, 1896 .....	43,246 7 4	1533 5 0
31st May, 1897.....	41,373 18 5	1862 12 0

The very large reduction in the arrears of purchase money between June 30th, 1894, and December 31st of that year, is due to the first heavy Default Sale held in the interim, while the corresponding increase of such arrears at 31st December, 1895, is the result of the very large number of purchasers who availed themselves of the privileges of postponing their instalments, under the amended Act.

POSTPONEMENT OF INSTALMENTS.

The provisions of Sections 5 and 6 of the Crown Lands Amendment Act of 1894, by which the payment of instalments may be postponed (wherein it is shown that the applicant is temporarily unable to meet his liabilities) at £5 per cent. interest for any period not exceeding five years, has been availed of freely. It is a useful and good measure in itself, but it is difficult to administer fairly, and with an inadequate (though competent) staff of Bailiffs of Crown Lands it is impossible to prevent the liberality which the enactment affords being imposed upon in some instances. The

interest collected during the year on account of postponement of instalments is £496 9s. 5d., as compared with £708 10s. 3d. for the preceding twelve months. The following Returns show the areas of the selections, and the amounts of purchase money upon which interest has been charged for postponement during the past two years.

*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, 1897, and for the previous Twelve Months.*

	1895.						1896.					
	Area.			Amount.			Area.			Amount.		
	A.	R.	P.	£	s.	d.	A.	R.	P.	£	s.	d.
July .....	7023	1	25	1025	4	0	8612	3	30	1991	11	6
August.....	8387	3	13	1766	7	1	7740	2	21	1164	11	1
September .....	11,496	1	30	3001	4	5	3413	1	36	823	2	11
October .....	5155	0	17	1025	9	4	1932	0	26	274	3	1
November .....	5386	2	27	766	17	5	7782	3	38	955	8	3
December .....	8586	2	27	479	15	7	3213	1	26	859	7	8
	1896.						1897.					
January .....	1763	0	3	261	6	9	3034	1	14	1580	6	5
February .....	2217	3	27	329	19	9	2836	0	13			
March .....	2418	3	23	439	14	7	1894	3	16			
April.....	12,170	2	34	1866	0	1	1914	0	25			
May .....	5172	1	24	1066	17	4	1112	0	9			
June .....	3270	1	37	1148	18	8	3384	2	1			
TOTALS.....	73,049	2	7	£13,177	15	0	46,871	2	25	£7648 10 11		
Interest collected during the above periods .....	...			£708 10 3			...			£496 9 5		

#### SUB-DIVISIONS.

*Sub-divisions under Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1894, for Twelve Months ending 30th June, 1897.*

Sub-divisions granted—			Sub-divisions being dealt with—		
No. of Lots.....	66		No. of Lots.....	44	
Area thereof.....	4585 acres		Area thereof.....	1970 acres	
Area reverted to Crown as result of Sub-divisions.....	7391 acres		Area that will revert to Crown when Sub-divisions effected	3589 acres	

It will be seen from this Return that the total area for which Crown Grants have been issued under the Special Enabling Act of 1895 is 4585 acres, in 66 Lots, and that 7391 acres have thereby reverted to the Crown, and that there are 44 like Sub-divisions in hand, comprising an area of 1970 acres.

#### DEFAULT SALES.

A default sale was held in October last at the principal centres of population. The list of lots first advertised as liable to be forfeited was a large one, but it was very considerably reduced in the interim, and resulted in only six lots being disposed of on the day of sale—viz., four country and two town lots. A default sale is now in course of preparation to take place in October next. The list includes all lands selected and all allotments purchased at auction, upon which arrears of purchase money are owing, and for which arrangements for payment or postponement have not been made.

#### PASTORAL LEASES.

The area of Crown Lands for which pastoral leases have been issued during the year 1896 is 241,587 acres, and for the six months ending June 30th last, 121,000 acres, as compared with 236,345 acres during 1895, and 147,837 acres, during the first six months of 1896. The total rentals received during the year 1895 was £4594, and for the year 1896, £4365. The average for the first six months of this year shows a marked improvement. The total area held under pastoral lease and occupation licences throughout Tasmania on June 30th, 1897, was 786,407 acres, at an annual rental of £5260 6s. 6d. Special attention has been directed to improvement in pastoral leases year after year, and to the necessity for providing a systematic inspection over all Crown Lands, in conjunction with the timber-cutting and wattle-barking industries; but I am still dependent upon the ordinary District Bailiffs of Crown Lands for such inspections. Although they are entitled to well merited commendation for the valuable

and frequently gratuitous services rendered to the Lands Department, yet their other and major duties as Police officers render it absolutely impossible for them to give that prompt and complete attention to the requirements of the Department which the urgency of cases frequently demands. Thus it is that the efforts made by this Office are largely neutralised through the absence of more outside assistance, and, consequently, much Crown Land is depastured and much timber cut, and wattles illegally stripped every year, without the Treasury being benefited to the extent of one penny.

The policy under which the marked improvement both in agricultural settlement and pastoral occupation which has annually taken place since the administration of the Lands Acts was entrusted to me has been one of moderation. In the former the object primarily aimed at has been to secure *bonâ fide* residence on the land, mainly by insistence of improvements being made, and in the latter to lease at reasonable rentals, but to insist on their payment.

WATTLE BARK.  
*Season, October 1st, 1896, to February 28th, 1897.*

No. of Licences issued.	Area operated upon.	Fees received.
15	14,118 acres.	£64 3s.

The wattle-barking industry is, as the above return indicates, languishing for want of proper supervision and attention. No one who has any reasonable acquaintance with the quality and extent of the wattle-bark throughout the Island will be prepared to accept the figures given as fairly representing the value of the industry to the State; and yet year after year a similar return is presented, whilst it is known that hundreds of tons of this valuable bark are illegally stripped on Crown land and placed upon the market. The best beds of Black Wattle to be found on Crown lands are, as a rule, in comparatively small areas, and in the heart of Municipalities, so that special inspection in the first two instances is a proportionately costly matter, and in the latter case impracticable under present arrangements. It is very difficult, and often costly, to insure getting a conviction against a person for unlawful bark-stripping unless he can be caught in the act, and in the absence of a special officer to undertake the duty there is little chance of this being done. The bark is stripped on Crown land one day and removed on to freehold property close by the next, where wattles have also been barked about the same time.

SAW-MILLING AREAS.

A long-felt want for fostering the saw-milling industry of the country by securing to an individual or corporate body the exclusive right to the timber on any particular area, was provided in the Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1896. Although there have only been 13 saw-milling applications dealt with during the 12 months, comprising an aggregate area of 4416 acres, the system is working well, and it may be fairly anticipated that it will be more freely availed of as the advantages which it affords become better known to the public. But, as I have already pointed out in the earlier part of this Report in reference to the pastoral lands and the wattle-barking industry, better facilities for inspection and supervision over the unoccupied Crown Lands are much needed. As our saw-mills are at present well employed, and the timber industry generally is in a very progressive condition, the time appears to be specially opportune for directing the attention of the Government to the necessity for conserving the interests of mill-owners—and for protecting a valuable asset of the State—by making judicious reservations of all valuable timbered lands from agricultural selection. More than this, the subject is much too important to be dealt with in the space available in this Report. Great attention is being given to it in Western Australia, where a large revenue is derived from the timber industry.

*Saw-milling Areas applied for during Twelve Months ending 30th June, 1897.*

District.	No. of Applications.	Area applied for.
Bruni Island .....	3	1500
Port Esperance.....	5	1866
Geeveston.....	1	100
Port Cygnet.....	1	500
Huon.....	2	250
Mathinna .....	1	200
	13	4416 acres.

PROSECUTIONS UNDER CROWN LANDS ACT.

During the twelve months ending 30th June, 1897, twenty cases of infringement of Regulations have been reported by Crown Lands Bailiffs in various parts of the Colony, principally for splitting and removing timber, stripping wattle-bark, and cutting firewood upon Crown Lands without

licences. In nearly every case a substantial fine was imposed with costs, and in some cases with imprisonment in default. An important seizure was made at Lisle in November last year, when 53 blackwood logs were confiscated as having been cut without licence on Crown Lands in that locality. The offenders were each fined, and the timber sold for the sum of £40. Another seizure of some importance was made during the month of June of this year, near Somerset, Cam River. The offender in this case was also fined, and the timber (posts and rails) sold by tender for £9 14s.

#### REGULATIONS.

During the twelve months ending 30th June, 1897, Regulations as under have been drafted and approved by the Governor in Council:—

Prescribing Survey Fees for Saw-milling Areas, approved 31. 7. 96.

Prescribing Scale of Fees and Charges payable at Lands Office for plans, searches, transfers, applications, &c., approved 21. 8. 96.

Revised Regulations for Stripping Wattle Bark upon Crown Lands, approved by Governor in Council, and brought into operation on 1st September, 1896.

For Depasturage of Stock upon Crown Lands in or about any town or settlement, approved 17. 12. 96.

Prescribing form of Notice of intention to forfeit Land, as provided by Section 71 of Crown Lands Act, 1890, approved 17. 12. 96.

All of which Regulations have been laid on Tables of both Houses of Parliament.

#### CORRESPONDENCE.

New subjects registered, for twelve months ending 30th June, 1897, were 4416; in addition to which many hundreds of letters dealing with previous applications for postponement of arrears, payment of interest, sub-divisions, and cognate matters have been dealt with.

#### SURVEYS.

The most important matter that has occurred since the date of my last annual Report in connection with the survey system of the Colony was the transferring of all surface surveys required by the Mines Department to the control of the Surveyor-General, as provided for in "The Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1894," (58 Vict. No. 13), in common with other surveys. As soon as it was finally decided to give practical effect to the provisions of the Act in relation to Mineral Surveys, the necessary arrangements were carried out without any hitch and without cause for friction with, or complaint from, the Department of Mines. The survey plans are now received at this office, in duplicate, from the various District Surveyors, and, after being examined and checked, one copy is certified to as being correct and transmitted to the Secretary for Mines to be acted upon. The other copy is filed with the Field Notes as a permanent record of the Survey Department of the Colony. Had this important step been taken years ago much unnecessary trouble, expense, and friction between two Departments of the Public Service which could have worked in harmony, might have been obviated.

Something more, however, is needed to place these and other surveys upon a better basis. Especially is this the case on the West Coast silver-fields, where, owing to the exceedingly broken nature of the country, the errors inseparable from the loose survey system prevailing for years past (when applicants were actually permitted to employ their own surveyor to survey a Crown Lease area) have multiplied, and will yet have to be dealt with. It is true that the surface surveys required under "The Mining Act" are for leases only, and that the Mines Department has therefore urged that there was no necessity for the high standard of accuracy in such surveys which is essential in surveys for sale purposes, and further, that the covenants of mining leases throw the onus of maintaining the corner-posts upon the lessee. Such contention, if admitted, would make the accurate preservation of the primary boundary marks of the section actually dependent for all time upon the care and integrity of the lessee, whose interest it might be, perhaps, to the extent of many thousands of pounds, to alter a boundary line even one foot beyond the area actually measured to him by the surveyor. In the case of land disposed of for agricultural purposes at the ordinary upset price of £1 per acre, the value of as much as half a chain in width, "cribbed" along the entire length of a rectangular block of 80 acres, would amount to the small sum of £1 6s. 3d.

A better exemplification of the necessity for accurate surveys in addition to the covenants inserted in a mining lease could scarcely be found than that afforded by the celebrated suit brought by the Silver Queen P. A. against the Montana Mining Company in 1895, and mentioned in my last Report. The claim was for £17,000, exclusive of the legal costs, which must have been considerable, no fewer than six surveyors being professionally engaged in the case. The covenants of the lease were (as I have always maintained they would be in such circumstances) practically set aside, for, although a compromise was arrived at, it was based exclusively upon the survey measurements as denoted by the marks on the ground. Nor does it appear reasonable that such disputes would be otherwise determined at law when the survey marks, which are of a perishable nature, have been effaced.

The rectification of errors due to faulty mineral surveys (which are naturally more prevalent on the West Coast than elsewhere) is becoming a matter for the serious consideration of the Government. Discrepancies are, under the present system, now more frequently discovered than formerly, and, as a consequence, re-surveys are necessitated. This latter fact is brought under public notice in relation to the "Plan and Report" system, under which an applicant may obtain a lease of a previously surveyed area on payment of one-half year's rent and a fee of £2 2s. In such cases where an error is partially exposed by adjoining surveys or otherwise, the original plan is necessarily discarded and a re-survey is essential, the cost of which the applicant is, by Mining Regulations, called upon to deposit.

This is the explanation of complaints that have been made through the Press and in Parliament, and the Survey Department has been blamed for what are really efforts to remedy defects that occurred before the mining surveys were placed under its control.

It is understood that all surveys for Public Works purposes will shortly be placed under the control of the Surveyor-General, as already provided by the Crown Lands' Amendment Act of 1894. This will remove a fruitful cause of friction and confusion of the past.

SPECIAL SURVEY WORK.

There are no means at present available for accurately checking the measured connections between the various batches or groups of surveys which have been commenced from time to time upon separate and ever variable magnetic meridians. As a consequence, when the groups close up on the ground it is found that the boundaries are not coincident, nor do they coincide with the office compilations. In some cases there is apparently spare ground, and in others the sections appear to overlap to a considerable extent. This is a matter that may be wholly due to a faulty and uncertain system, and may exist no matter what extent of accuracy may have been exercised over each particular group of surveys. It has been long since demonstrated that these discrepancies can only be eliminated and effectually guarded against by a proper system of triangulation, which may be carried on in conjunction with what are known as standard circuit traverses, such as have been adopted with highly satisfactory results in New Zealand; but in either case the cost would be considerable. And, in view of the large proportion of the agricultural lands of the Island that have been already alienated, and in the present condition of the revenue, any proposal to introduce this very valuable system—more especially is it important in a new country—would not be likely to meet with favour. It must, I fear, be postponed for a more opportune season.

Apart from the introduction of the complete survey system referred to in the preceding paragraph, some better facilities than now exist are very much needed for "stiffening" the sectional surveys in different localities by minor or local triangulation. This is particularly applicable to the condition of affairs on the West Coast, where the physical difficulties of the country render accuracy in surveys a tedious, and, in some instances, a costly matter to the surveyor. It would be essential that the carrying out of this work should be entrusted to a specially qualified officer whose services would be utilised for checking and investigating discrepancies as they may occur in the ordinary work of the District Surveyors.

SPECIAL SURVEYS—Annual Return for Twelve Months ending 30th June, 1897.

Town of Queenstown (extension), 212 lots surveyed and permanently marked.  
Twenty miles of road surveyed for Public Works Department in numerous small sections throughout the Colony.

RETURN of Number of Instructions issued to Surveyors for the Twelve Months ending 30th June, 1897.

Name.	Survey Department.	Mines Department.	TOTAL.
Chalmers, H. J.....	19	—	19
Combes, H.....	34	—	34
Eddie, G. T.....	58	45	103
Frodsham, T.....	70	—	70
Hall, R.....	57	34	91
Hardy, W. M.....	39	—	39
Innes, E. G.....	24	2	26
Jones, D.....	—	57	57
Clark, T.....	43	133	176
Sorell, J. A.....	37	71	108
Windsor, F. E.....	64	4	68
Wilson, C. S.....	57	426	483
Authorised Surveyors.....	66	61	127
	568	833	1401



*RETURN of Selection and Auction Surveys received during the Twelve months ending  
30th June, 1897.*

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. ....	1269	41	55	2	1324	43
Cumberland .....	Frodsham, T. ....	2563	28	2007	26	4570	54
Dorset .....	Eddie, G. T. ....	994	26	382	10	1376	36
Devon .....	Hall, R. ....	1103	23	52	2	1155	25
Deloraine .....	Sorell, J. A. ....	513	17	942	16	1455	33
Franklin .....	Innes, E. G. ....	757	23	90	4	847	27
Fingal .....	Clark, T. ....	1419	40	200	4	1619	44
Moorina .....	Walpole, E. G. ....	265	10	24	2	289	12
Mersey .....	Chalmers, H. J. ....	149	5	100	1	249	6
Montagu .....	Wilson, C. S. ....	670	28	41	212	711	240
Oatlands .....	Hardy, W. M. ....	676	20	1815	10	2491	30
Russell .....	Jones, D. ....	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tasman's Peninsula ...	Hinsby, J. H. ....	448	15	169	3	617	18
Wellington .....	Windsor, F. E. ....	2284	35	50	1	2334	36
King Island .....	—	3254	27	—	—	3254	27
TOTAL .....		16,364	338	5927	293	22,291	631

#### INSPECTIONS.

I have officially visited five Survey Districts, viz., Devon, Wellington, Dorset, Moorina, and Cumberland, and inspected 32 section surveys on the ground, without, however, being in a position to check the accuracy of the work. These inspections were, with two exceptions, fairly satisfactory, the lines being generally well cut out, and the marking good. Some of the work was excellently performed. In addition to the above I made a trip to the West Coast, where I attended to a number of matters affecting the Lands and Surveys, and observed a number of mineral survey lines in various places, together with the town surveys of Queenstown, and Dundas. The latter were well marked, and especially in regard to Queenstown, much trouble taken and judgment exercised by the District Surveyor in laying out the town to the best advantage. It was quite impossible to conduct anything like a systematic inspection of the mineral surveys with the limited time at my disposal. A special report of my trip was furnished to the Honourable Minister of Lands on my return to office.

Such inspections as I am in a position to make are quite inadequate to the requirements of a contract system of surveying such as obtains in this colony. At least one officer directly connected with this Department should be constantly employed in the field upon inspections and re-surveys.

I have paid special visits of inspection to the Launceston Branch Office at intervals during the last 12 months, and I am pleased to report that the work of that office is being satisfactorily conducted under the officer in charge (Mr. L. R. Sams).

#### REPORTS OF DISTRICT SURVEYORS.

The Reports of the officers in charge of the various Survey Districts are given *in extenso* in Appendix B. attached to this Report.

#### DRAFTING ROOM.

The Chief Draftsman reports as follows:—Four town plans, one county plan, and two mineral plans have been compiled in the Drafting Room during the last twelve months; and 49 town plans and 54 county plans have been posted up to date. This is indicative of a very brisk demand for plans, showing, as it does, a very large increase over any previous year: the figures were 10 town and 29 county plans, posted up to date for the year ending 30th June, 1896, or only about one-third of the number for the last twelve months.

The third sheet of the two-chain scale plan of the City of Hobart has been completed; but I am afraid that it will be some time before another can even be commenced, owing to the rapid increase of work in this branch.

A Tourist Map, showing the principal routes in South-east Tasmania, and within about 30 miles of Hobart, has been compiled, and will shortly be ready for publication.

The examination of mineral surveys was commenced by this branch in September, 1896, and since that time 743 have been examined, charted, &c., making, with the agricultural and town surveys, a total of 1527. This is a large amount of work for the number of officers employed upon it, and reflects credit upon them for the satisfactory and expeditious manner in which it has been performed.

549 grant deeds have been prepared in duplicate, as against 391 during the previous twelve months, and, judging from the rapid manner in which the notices of payment are coming to me at present, the next twelve months promises to have a still larger record.

*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, 1897.*

Plans prepared.	Country and Town plans compiled and drawn .....	7	
	Ditto ditto posted up to date .....	103	110
Applications dealt with.	Crown Lands Amendment Acts, 1893 and 1894, (selection) ...	355	
	Crown Lands Act, 1890, (31st Section) ....	361	
	Ditto, (auction and private purchase) .....	245	
	Ditto, (rent).....	390	
	Ditto, (selection in mining areas) .....	89	
	Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1894, 10th Section, (reduction of area).....	92	
	Ditto, 1895, (for purchase of second-class land) .....	89	
	Residence Areas Acts, 1891 and 1893, purchase).....	189	1810
Grants prepared.	Grant deeds prepared in duplicate.....	...	549
Diagrams and Surveys received.	Selections .....	405	
	Auction and residence areas .....	292	
	Real Property Act .....	16	
	Roads, re-surveys, &c. ....	128	
	Mineral sections from 1st September, 1896 .....	784	1625
Diagrams and Plans examined.	Computed and examined.....	784	
	In course of examination .....	57	
	Unexamined .....	0	
	Mineral sections examined since September, 1896 .....	784	1625
Road Surveys recorded.	Plan of road surveys received from Public Works Department and recorded on original plans .....	...	31
Diagram books and grant schedules.	Diagram books prepared for binding.....	18	
	Grant schedule books ditto.....	26	44
	Claims for grants under the Real Property Act and through the Supreme Court dealt with .....	...	18
Instructions for Surveys.	Instructions prepared and issued to Surveyors .....	...	568
Surveyors' accounts.	Surveyors' accounts in triplicate passed for payment .....	...	220
Closed roads.	Roads described for closing by Proclamation .....	...	13
Descriptions.	Descriptions of allotments furnished to clerical branch for contracts for sale of land .....	...	315
Plans of districts.	Plans of Districts prepared for Boundaries Board of Advice ..	...	6
	Road Districts described for Proclamation .....	6	
	Fruit ditto.....	4	
	Recreation ditto .....	2	
	Towns proclaimed .....	1	13

#### ROADS.

The Road System of the Colony is and has been for years in a very unsatisfactory condition. Apart from the provisions contained in "The Land Vesting Act," 58 Vict. No. 17, for the introduction of which measure I fought so persistently for years, and which has proved so beneficial to the Country and the Department, the broad fact still remains that there are scores of by-roads that have been altered and new roads instituted by the Public Works Department and by the Road Trusts throughout the Island of which this Department or the Public Works Department has no record. Some means are absolutely essential for placing this matter upon a better footing. No Road Trust or other body should be permitted to make any alteration, or deviation, or new road through any property without the proper record thereof being placed upon the District Plans. This question has been referred to by me on many previous occasions.

## EXPLORATION TRACKS.

The only work undertaken under instructions from this department in the way of Exploration Tracks was the route between Tyenna and the Gould's Landing on the Gordon. It was carried on during the winter months in deference to the importunities of the Tasmanian and West Coast Railway League. The trip was essentially a very rough one, and occupied two and a half months. Mr. E. G. Innes, District Surveyor, was in charge of the expedition, with Mr. Nicholls as first assistant. Mr. Innes' report on the country was of an unfavourable nature, there being very little good land met with, or good timber in any quantity either; some promising mineral land was travelled over. A direct route between the points named is stated to be impracticable, but a fair track line, though somewhat circuitous, is reported upon passing Lake Pedder and winding round the southern end of the Frankland Range. The full report which gives details of the expedition has been already published. Track-cutting generally is a work which is of the greatest importance in the development of the country.

## BOARD OF EXAMINERS FOR SURVEYORS.

The Secretary to the Board of Examiners for Surveyors supplies the following:—

"The operations of the Board during the twelve months ending 30th June, 1897, include the holding of three meetings during the months of August, 1896, and March, 1897, for the transaction of routine business, and an examination for surveyors at the Lands Office in March last. Two candidates were examined, one of whom only was granted a 'pass,' and, subsequently, authorised by the Governor in Council to effect surveys in Tasmania. A certificate without examination was granted to a gentleman holding satisfactory credentials, and a 'pass' certificate from an Australian colony, and having become resident in Tasmania his authorisation was duly approved."

## THE INSTITUTION OF SURVEYORS.

The Institution of Surveyors, which was organised in 1892, became incorporated in 1894. The memorandum of articles of association having been approved by the Governor in Council, the registration of the Institution was duly carried into effect. On 8th January, 1894, the Institution issued the first number of a quarterly journal. It is a very creditable publication, and is doing good work as an authoritative medium through which professional matters can be freely and scientifically discussed, thus bringing members of the profession more in touch with each other and with the outside world on subjects of common interest, and so promote their mutual welfare. The introduction of a Surveyors' Bill to Parliament having for its object the fixing of the status of surveyors in Tasmania and other matters, has been looked forward to with keen interest by the Council of the Institution for some time past.

## GENERAL.

*Marine Board.*—The Hobart Marine Board being desirous of obtaining a title to the numerous lands reserved to that body throughout Tasmania and its dependencies, waited on the Hon. Minister of Lands with a view to having such lands vested in their control. The request was favourably entertained.

*Maria Island.*—Following the discussion which took place in Parliament last Session, Maria Island was thrown open for selection under "The Crown Lands Act, 1890," on 6th November, 1896. Seven applications for lots have been made since that date, comprising an area of 290 acres. Of the remaining portion still belonging to the Crown 4000 acres are held under pastoral occupation.

*The V.D.L. Co.'s Woolnorth Block.*—The matter of dispute between the Van Diemen's Land Company and the Government over the south boundary of the Woolnorth Block is still unsettled, and a number of applications to purchase Crown lands are in consequence held in abeyance.

## DEPARTMENTAL.

In reference to the officers of this Department, it is my privilege to again testify to the zeal and efficiency which they have displayed in the discharge of their duties. The enormous amount of work that has been performed has taxed the Staff to the fullest extent, and in the Lands Branch could only be accomplished by resorting to much overtime work, which latter service was cheerfully rendered without fee or reward. I trust that some provision will be made to meet such cases in the future, so that, where overtime work is absolutely essential in the public interest, officers engaged upon it will receive adequate remuneration for their services.

I have to regret the death of the late Mr. George Campbell Smith, which occurred on the 30th of August, 1896. Mr. Smith was a native of Tasmania, and was appointed to the charge of the Cumberland District thirty years ago, and was transferred to the District of Fingal in 1871. He was an able and painstaking surveyor, and maintained the entire confidence of

the public and the Government throughout a long professional career. Through Mr. Smith's decease the Survey Department has lost one of its most valued and respected officers. The vacancy on the staff has been filled up by the appointment thereto of Mr. Thos. Clark, who previously occupied the position of Assistant Surveyor for the district. Mr. Clark possesses the full confidence of the department, and is giving every satisfaction in the discharge of his official duties. Mr. Osmond J. Roper, who has for many years held the position of Chief Draftsman in the Department of Mines, was transferred to the Lands Department on the 12th November, 1896, in connection with the transfer of all surveys under the Mining Act to the latter. The change has necessarily reduced this officer's status, without affording him any advantage in point of salary. He is an efficient draftsman, and deserving of promotion.

#### CONCLUSION.

In concluding this Report, I desire to record a sense of the co-operation extended to me by my brother officials with whom I have been brought into contact in official matters. Especially do I feel indebted to the Government Printer (Mr. Grahame) for willing endeavours at all times to further the interests of this Department.

I have the honour to be,  
Sir,

Your very obedient Servant,

E. A. COUNSEL, *F.R.G.S.*,  
*Surveyor-General and Secretary for Lands.*

*The Honourable the Minister of Lands.*

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APPENDIX A.

No. 1.

GENERAL RETURN, Crown Lands Branch.

	1887.	1888.	1889.	1890.	1891.	1892.	1893.	1894.	1895.	1896.	1897. First Six Months.
Receipts from all sources £	61,331	70,645	64,823	67,707	67,840	54,536	42,493	34,885	40,496	47,209	23,411
Receipts from Deposits and Instalments, 24th and 31st Sections .....£	31,346	35,406	38,208	37,373	34,117	27,712	26,976	21,262	21,877	21,827	10,062
Receipts from other Sales of Crown Lands .....£	16,080	13,754	11,010	10,074	7947	14,519	5840	5900	6446	8460	6738
Rent of Crown Land for Pastoral purposes.....£	5019	4746	5032	5690	4627	4047	4181	3038	4594	4365	2429
Fees for Timber Licences, Grant Deeds, &c. ....£	1117	3077	3637	1983	1927	1873	1127	1613	1017	1269	929
Survey Fees ..... £	7769	13,662	6936	12,587	19,222	6385	4369	3072	6562	11,288	3253
Area of Country Lands sold ..... acres	55,046	35,671	50,566	42,987	30,648	31,204	19,788	20,866	14,316	16,026	8489
Area of Town and Sub-urban Lands sold... acres	478	706	885	572	412	306	684	277	269	384	274
Area of Land selected under "Immigration Act"...ac.	3913	1227	1109	217	112	1968	1722	655	558	Nil.	118
Area of New Leases for Pastoral purposes....acres	69,484	82,669	177,397	93,026	37,234	63,530	63,805	46,002	236,345	241,587	121,000
Number of Applications for Selection and Purchase...	1514	1632	1783	1924	1305	1385	770	1487	899	1209	745
Number of Grant Deeds issued .....	549	573	553	530	525	454	555	341	397	432	302

No. 2.

RETURN showing the Number of Lots and Area of Land selected under "The Waste Lands Act, 1870," "The Crown Lands Act, 1890," and "The Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1893," and "The Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1895," during the Twelve Months ending 30th June, 1896, and 30th June, 1897.

	Twelve Months ending 30th June, 1896.			Twelve Months ending 30th June, 1897.		
	No. of Lots.	Area.		No. of Lots.	Area.	
		A.	R. P.		A.	R. P.
Waste Lands Act, 1870.....	5	314	1 27	5	222	3 0
Crown Lands Act, 1890.....	137	7263	1 36	177	8370	3 19
Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1893 .....	180	6746	3 3	100	3499	2 31
Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1895 .....	—	—	—	46	4272	2 3
TOTALS.....	322	14,324	2 26	328	16,365	3 13

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, 1896, and 30th June, 1897, respectively, with Rental of same.

	Twelve months ending 30th June, 1896.			Twelve months ending 30th June, 1897.		
	No of Lots.	Area Acres.	Rental.	No. of Lots.	Area Acres.	Rental.
			£ s. d.			£ s. d.
Islands.....	3	8750	44 0 0	3	220	7 0 0
Occupation Licences .....	185	65,277	340 8 4	187	75,675	316 11 10
Half-yearly Rentals .....	179	222,353	1435 19 0	154	145,293	803 0 0
TOTALS .....	367	296,380	1820 7 4	344	221,188	1126 11 10

No. 4.

RETURN showing the Area of Leased Lands in Tasmania, and Amount of Annual Rental of same at 30th June, 1897.

	Area in Acres.	Rental.		
		£	s.	d.
Leases, Pastoral Lands .....	637,468	3911	1	6
Ditto, Islands .....	99,367	834	16	0
Occupation Licences and Yearly Rentals.....	49,572	514	9	0
Total .....	786,407	5260	6	6

No. 5.

LAND SALES.—DECENNIAL RETURN.

YEAR.	NUMBER OF LOTS.			AREA OF LAND SOLD.			AMOUNT FOR WHICH SOLD.			AVERAGE PRICE PER ACRE.	
	Country.	Town and Suburban.	TOTAL.	Country.	Town and Suburban Lots.	TOTAL.	Country.	Town and Suburban Lots.	TOTAL.	Of Country Lots.	Of Town and Suburban Lots.
				acres.	acres.	acres.	£	£	£	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1887.....	631	100	731	55,046	478	55,524	72,850	3120	75,970	1 6 5¼	6 10 6
1888.....	483	192	675	35,671	706	36,377	47,782	5794	53,576	1 6 9¼	8 4 1½
1889.....	723	435	1158	50,566	885	51,451	68,319	14,051	82,370	1 7 2¼	15 17 6
1890.....	610	207	817	42,987	572	43,559	57,176	8454	65,630	1 6 7	14 15 7
1891.....	451	89	540	30,648	412	31,060	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 6¼	60 17 9¼
1893.....	328	70	398	19,788	684	20,472	26,452	3502	29,954	1 6 8¼	5 2 4½
1894.....	445	188	633	20,866	277	21,143	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 11¼	19 6 1
1896.....	325	226	551	16,026	384	16,410	20,997	8227	29,224	1 6 2¼	21 9 6½

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 1897, respectively.

	£
1887 .....	5018
1888 .....	4746
1889 .....	5032
1890 .....	5690
1891 .....	4627
1892 .....	4047
1893 .....	4181
1894 .....	3038
1895 .....	4594
1896 .....	4365
1897, six months .....	2429

## APPENDIX B.

REPORTS of the District Surveyors on the amount of Survey Work performed by them during the year 1896, and the principal matters that have occurred in, and general requirements of, their respective Districts.

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

The area of surveys executed was 965 acres, in 20 lots.

With regard to selection I think this District shows a slight improvement over last year, and things seem to be generally on a sounder footing than hitherto. Many of the selectors are finding out their selections are too large, and taking advantage of Section 10 of "The Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1894." This Act works very well in this District, as a selector often takes up a block of land, and finds out, only by experience that without capital half of it is as much as he can keep in order, as in this class of country, even when it is under cultivation, the old dry trees keep on falling and have to be removed; and they are finding out that small areas well kept are better than larger areas running wild; then again, the resumed portion often has sufficient done upon it to induce another selector to locate there. The disadvantages of this Act are only in the surveys, as in almost every case one has to make a complete surround survey in order to obtain a satisfactory close, the old work being mostly needle work, and very irregular, owing to the very varied local attractions.

With regard to "The Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1895," (under the classification clause), there have been several lots taken under this Act, and I expect there will be a good many more, especially as those blocks now held become more improved, and, as the land is very patchy, it should prove a great boon to the selectors.

*Land available for selection*.—There are still a good many small patches scattered over the Peninsulas. The portion at the head of Cripps' Creek before reported upon has contributed three more selections, and there still remains a nice block on towards the Cape Raoul ridge, as well as some small areas round those already secured. A few small lots are being taken round Mount Communication, and there are still a few worth taking up. There are a good many scattered lots out towards Fortescue Bay, but they are mostly inaccessible at present.

On Forestier's there has been more land selected, and there are still some nice patches left, easily accessible from the present road through the Peninsula.

*Minerals*.—Nothing of any importance has been reported.

*Timber*.—There is still a good deal of paling leaving Wedge Bay and Carnarvon; and also a lot of lightwood in fitches. There is a fine body of milling timber round the head of Flinders Creek on Forestier's Peninsula, also some nice patches out towards Fortescue Bay.

I do not think there is anything further worth mentioning, except, perhaps, a suggestion with regard to marking, if I may be permitted, that is, that all triangles should, where possible, be put in within three feet of the ground; this allows the selector to fall above the marks, whereas in most of the old blocks the trees on line have been fallen for purposes of fencing, and nearly all are fallen below the marks, in many cases totally obliterating the line.

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

In presenting my Annual Report for the year 1896 on the Survey District of Buckingham, I have the honour to state that everything has been going on about the same as in previous years, and there is nothing of any importance to report.

*Surveys effected*.—The number of allotments marked out for agricultural settlement during the past year amounted to forty, varying in size from fifteen acres to one hundred and eighty, and comprising one thousand five hundred and thirty-two (1532) acres; nearly the whole of these lots have been taken up by small settlers to make homes on.

*Lands available for selection*.—The portion of my District having the most good land is the Upper Huon and on Judd's Creek, Parish of Ranelagh. If there was a road made into this land I have no doubt a lot of it would be taken up. Even a good horse-track to the land would be a good thing; as it is, there being no way of getting there, people never even go to look at it. In the Parishes of Kingborough and Throckmorton there is still good land to be found, but hard to get at, and this, again, prevents people from taking it up.

*Road requirements*.—Under this heading I have the honour to again recommend the cutting of a track from Wallis's farm on the Upper Huon into the country watered by the Denison River, where there is a lot of good land which would soon become settled were this done.

Survey District of *Cumberland*.—Mr. Thomas Frodsham, District Surveyor, reports as follows for the year 1896:—

During the past year I have surveyed about thirty-seven lots, amounting to an area of about 3400 acres. About half this amount has been selected by three families in the Lake District for

pastoral purposes, and many of the other surveys have been subdivisions of existing areas; a number of other lots have been applied for and surveyed under "The Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1895."

*Lands suitable for Selection.*—The largest areas of Crown lands suitable for selection are to be found, in my district, in the Parish of Uxbridge, Russell's Falls, and Florentine Valley; as you have numerous reports from me upon these localities, it will be needless for me to recapitulate them.

A steady progress has been made in the Russell's Falls Valley during the past year by those who have already selected, the country being gradually cleared and improved, and the lots that have been abandoned by speculators are now being taken up and improved by *bonâ fide* selectors. Mr. Robert Marriott, the early pioneer of this district, is always willing to point out land and give full information to persons desirous of selecting in that locality.

*Roads and Tracks.*—In my former reports I have indicated the tracks that I considered necessary to open up the country, and I may add that any money spent upon this work in my district in the past has, as a rule, been a reproductive one; and I regret that many suggestions made by me in former reports *re* cutting tracks into Crown lands have not been acted upon, as intending selectors will not take up new country without tracks.

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

*Lands suitable for Selection.*—I do not know of any good land within reasonable access of rail or road. No further selections have been made to the south-east of Mount Barrow, no doubt owing partly to the want of a road or track to open it up.

*Roads and Tracks required.*—As I have previously reported, a track might well be cut from Messrs. Whittle's land, near Mount Barrow, on to Camden Plains.

*Remarks.*—I have been surprised at the small number of selections under "The Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1895," second-class land at 10s. per acre. I think it may be due partly to ignorance of the existence of the Act, and also, I know in cases within my knowledge, to an uncertainty as to the class of the land. Applicants would purchase at 10s., but they look upon it that if the land is put up at over 10s. and not purchased that they lose their survey fee.

*Progress of Settlement.*—During the year I have surveyed the following lots:—

- 641 acres, in 14 lots, under 31st Section Crown Lands Act, 1890.
- 272 acres, in 7 lots, under Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1893.
- 718 acres, in 8 lots, under Section 10 Crown Lands Amendment Act.
- 231 acres, in 4 lots, under Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1895.
- 26a. 1r. 5p., in 4 lots, at auction.
- 362 acres, in 41 lots, under Gold Fields Regulation Act.
- 80 acres, in 1 lot, mineral.
- 806 acres, in 2 lots, timber licences.
- 1½ miles tramway.
- 1 road deviation for Public Works Department.
- 1 city lot.
- 190a. 2r. 29p., in 3 lots, re-surveys.

Survey District of *Devon*.—Mr. Richard Hall, District Surveyor, reports as follows:—

I have the honour to report in reference to progress made in my survey district for the past year. Some 65 lots in connection with the Mines Branch have been dealt with, including lots reported upon. These include gold, iron, silver, lead, and coal. Gold at Stormount, Claude, and Five-mile Rise; coal at Dulverton; iron at the Penguin, and silver and lead at Mount Claude and the Penguin. There was considerable excitement at Five-mile Rise during the winter over what they termed the Glynn Prospecting Association. This find was in large masses of conglomerate, both above and below the surface, and contained fine gold all through it, and in some places quite rich, as I witnessed myself. The Caledonian Mine, near Middlesex, has again commenced operations. Considerable quantities of gold have been obtained about the Five-mile Rise and down the Forth to Mount Claude; but these mines seem to have been worked in a very fitful manner; whether it is that there is not knowledge and capital enough expended in the search for the precious metal or not I cannot tell, but the prospects seem to warrant something better than has been done yet, and I think it only a question of time when there will be permanent and paying mines in the district above referred to. The Neptune Mine, at the Penguin, has been in active operations during some part of the year, but it has shut down again now. Many of the iron mines in the vicinity of the Penguin have been taken up again, and great things were expected from them, but up to this time nothing has come of it. Bell Mount has still a few searching for gold and other minerals, and one company is prospecting a large gold formation. The miners do not seem to be able to drop across the source of the gold at Bell Mount, although several thousand ounces have been won since its discovery, and mostly coarse gold, in some instances over 20 oz. in weight, but from whence it came no one seems to know. The bismuth and tin in this locality are not being sought after much, although they are not entirely neglected. In agricultural land, applications have not been many. Some 18 lots have been surveyed, amounting to something over one thousand acres. The lots have been very much scattered over the district, the largest area being in the Wilmot



district, and they have generally formed portions of forfeited lots. I do not think there has been over the average of clearing and improvements effected during the last year, only in a few instances. One resident in the Wilmot country has scrubbed 200 acres, and such things have been done in other parts, but a good deal of the land scrubbed in former years has been allowed to grow up again.

*Survey District of Deloraine.*—Mr. John A. Sorell, District Surveyor, reports as follows for the year 1896:—

During the twelve months under review I received instructions for surveys of seven agricultural lots and two town allotments, covering a total area of 318 acres, which was applied for under "The Crown Lands Act, 1890;" a few town allotments at Beaconsfield, applied for under the Residence Areas Acts, 1891-93; three lots, comprising an area of 150 acres, which will be disposed of under "The Crown Lands Amendment Act of 1893;" four lots, comprising an area of 208 acres, to be dealt with under "The Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1894;" and five lots, aggregating 534 acres, which were applied for under "The Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1895;" also, during the same period, sixty instructions for mining surveys on the Beaconsfield and Salisbury goldfields were dealt with. These figures do not afford scope for lengthy comment, but it will be observed that the largest area disposed of under one Act is that which has been applied for under "The Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1895." For the year 1897 it seems safe to predict that the disparity in numbers in regard to the total areas which will be selected under the different Acts for promoting the sale of our waste lands will be even more in favour of the Amendment Act of 1895 (second-class lands), since it is only reasonable to assume that it will be more widely known this year amongst those farmers and residents in the bush who are most likely to be interested in its operations. It is, perhaps, to be regretted that this Act is open, from a selector's point of view, to the somewhat serious objection that it involves intending purchasers in the trouble and expense of attending sales by auction.

*Lands suitable for Selection.*—The unalienated lands in the Deloraine District are generally of a very second-rate description. A few isolated patches of first-class soil might be found, but there are no large tracts of land within the district which would be advisable for the Government to open to selectors by the cutting of tracks or construction of roads, so that under the head of "Tracks and Roads" there is very little to be said. The Deloraine Improvement Committee has opened a cart track from the Deloraine District into the Lake Country through some good bush land which, though limited in extent, may be the means of inducing selection of Crown lands in the vicinity of the track.

*Roads.*—In regard to the roads in the Deloraine District, it is to be regretted that the routes followed are, in some cases, extremely improper ones, and that faulty construction and careless maintenance are sometimes apparent. The judicious expenditure of a few hundreds of pounds in the laying out of certain roads in my District would not only have saved some thousands in the cost of construction, but would have enhanced the value of the Crown estate through which these roads have been reserved.

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

Since taking charge of the Fingal Survey District, on the 15th September last to the end of the year, the following surveys have been effected:—

Agricultural, 6 lots, 326 acres.
Gold, 45 lots, 440 acres.
Plans and Reports—Gold, 5 lots, 50 acres.
"          Mineral, 26 lots, 828 acres.
"          "          7 lots, 220 acres.
Roads, 2467 links.
4 Water-rights.
1 Tramway, and
8572 links connection.

*Upper Ringarooma.*—16 miles from Scottsdale, by good road: is a flourishing agricultural settlement of some thousands of acres, much of which has been cultivated. There are still many patches of good Crown land about this Settlement available for selection, probably 5000 acres, most of which is on the Ringarooma River, some Seven miles south of the Settlement. It is heavily timbered with white gum, stringy-bark, and blackwood, and covered with a dense scrub. At present there is no made road within five miles of this land.

During the past year little or no settlement has taken place about the Ringarooma Settlement. Three agricultural selections were surveyed, comprising an area of 125 acres, 50 acres of which is near *Camp Hotel*, and has been settled on; also one lot of 80 acres was surveyed under the 10th Section of "The Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1894. There is one lot of 95 acres under the same Act, and one selection of 25 acres, that have been applied for but not surveyed.

*Alberton.*—Five miles from Upper Ringarooma, by a good road. During the past year 45 gold sections have been surveyed here, comprising an area of 314 acres. A deal of prospecting is now being done on and about this land.

On the west side of Dorset River, at Alberton, there is some fair agricultural land, but very steep, probably 500 acres. timbered with gum, stringy-bark, myrtle, and blackwood, and covered with a dense scrub. Formation, slate and granite.

*Weldborough*, 26 miles from St. Helen's, by good road. Alluvial tin-mining is being carried on here, most of which is under Miners' Rights. The country is tin-bearing more or less extending from Dorset and Ringarooma Rivers to Lottah and Blue Tier.

A large portion of this land is fair soil, and could be brought under cultivation: timbered with myrtle, blackwood, and a few gums, formation being granite, and basalt.

*Lottah*, 17 miles from St. Helen's, by good road. Lode tin-mining is being proceeded with here, by the Anchor and Australian Tin Mining Companies; races and tramways are being constructed, and machinery erected.

Most of the land is very steep, fair soil of granite formation, and could be brought under cultivation; timbered with gum, myrtle, and stringy-bark.

*Gould's Country*, 13 miles by good road from St. Helen's. Farming is carried on here; the land is very steep, poor, and sandy, and is more suitable for pasture. The land continues poor to Goshen.

*Upper George's River*, 18 miles by good road from St. Helen's. There are a few patches of good Crown land about this settlement available for selection, extending from the Weldborough road to North George River. A small portion of this land is basalt, and balance granite formation, timbered with gum, myrtle, and stringy-bark, and covered with a dense scrub.

*St. Helen's*.—A little tin-mining is still being carried on some four miles west of this township.

The land from Goshen to St. Helen's is little or no good for cultivation, being barren granite-hills and button-grass marshes, timbered with ironbark, peppermint, and gum. This land is tin-bearing, more or less. The same remarks will apply to the land between St. Helen's and the crossing of Hogan's Track, on north branch of Scamander River. From St. Helen's along the coast to Scamander Bridge, the land is also very poor, granite formation, and timbered with iron-bark, peppermint, and gum. A number of mineral surveys have been made during the past year, extending from hotel at Scamander Bridge for some distance along the range on north side of river; and at Upper Scamander a number of lots have been surveyed for gold, and prospecting is being carried on at both places with fair prospects.

*St. Mary's*, 46 miles from Conara, by good road and railway.

This township and settlement is steadily advancing. Most of the good land has been selected, but there are a few patches of good soil among the rocky hills available for selection, probably 500 acres.

A few selections were surveyed about this settlement during the past year, and there are still four small selections to be surveyed.

A gold reef has been discovered on St. Patrick's Rivulet, some two miles east of the township. I cannot say that I like the look of the stone taken from this reef, as it contains more slate than quartz. Two sections, of 20 acres each, have been applied for on this reef as reward claims, and a small amount of prospecting is being done in the locality.

Some few miles north-west of St. Mary's is the Mount Nicholas Range, where coal-mining is being carried on by the Cornwall and Mount Nicholas Coal Mining Companies, the output being large.

*Fingal*, 33 miles from Conara, by railway and good road. This is a large farming district, and there is little or no good Crown land within some miles of the township.

*Mathinna*, 16 miles from Fingal, by good road. This is a large mining town, and is steadily advancing. The Golden Gate G. M. Company's mine is being worked profitably. There are many other mines here doing good work, with every prospect of success.

The town is very badly watered for domestic purposes. During summer months water has to be carted from the South Esk River, one mile distant.

A large area of land is held under lease for gold-mining purposes about this town (Mathinna). There is very little Crown land in the locality fit for cultivation, being barren slate ranges, timbered with iron-bark, peppermint, gum, and stringy-bark.

There are small patches of agricultural Crown land along South Esk River, and Dan and Tyne Rivulets, probably 500 acres in all. There is also a portion of rough pasture land in same locality of about 600 acres.

On Dan's Rivulet, from 6 to 8 miles north of Mathinna, a good number of gold sections have been surveyed during the past year, but very little prospecting is being done on them.

*Mangana*, 5 miles from Fingal, by good road. A large number of gold sections have been surveyed here during the past year, and a deal of prospecting is now being done on the barren slate ranges that surround this township, timbered with iron-bark, gum, peppermint, and stringy-bark.

There is very little Crown land fit for cultivation about this township (Mangana). Lying to the west of the township is about 500 acres of rough pasture land. The township is now making a slight advance, and is connected to Fingal by telephone.

*Avoca* is a small township on South Esk River, 16 miles by railway and good road from Conara. This is a large farming and pastoral district, extending from Fingal to Conara. The Crown land between Avoca and Ben Lomond consists of granite hills and ti-tree marshes, containing very little soil suitable for cultivation. There are some few thousand acres here fit for rough pasture.

At the south end of Ben Lomond tin-mining has been carried on for some years, a few tin sections being surveyed here during the past year. This land is very heavily timbered with gum, peppermint, and stringy-bark. Along the west side of Ben Lomond, among the steep hills extending north to Blessington, may be found a few patches of Crown land fit for cultivation, also a large portion fit for rough pasture, the formation being granite, slate, and greenstone, timbered with gum, peppermint, and stringy-bark. At Blessington, on north side of Ford River, a few selections have been settled on. The soil here is fairly good. There is still a fair amount of good Crown land available for selection, extending from Ford River towards Ben Nevis, probably 1000 acres, timbered with gum, peppermint, and stringy-bark, the soil being of granite and slate formations. Between Ben Nevis and head of Ringarooma River are patches of good land, of granite formation, timbered with white gum, stringy-bark, and blackwood. I am afraid the climate here is too cold for cultivation. Ringarooma Settlement is the best locality I know of for intending selectors to turn their attention.

*Roads.*—Main road from Scottsdale Railway Station to Ringarooma, 16 miles, is in splendid order. This road continues to Alberton, five miles from Ringarooma. There are also many cross roads in this settlement, and all in good order; one leads south through the settlement, and another east up New River Settlement. A road has been made from Ringarooma to Mathinna, but owing to the bad state of it across the Button-grass Plains, there is very little cart traffic on it. From Mathinna to Fingal is a splendid road, 16 miles. There are also many cross roads about Mathinna and Fingal, all of which are in fair order. From Conara to St. Mary's, *via* Avoca and Fingal, is a splendid road, 46 miles. From St. Mary's to St. Helen's is a good coach road, 24 miles. From St. Helen's to Weldborough, 26 miles, *via* Gould's Country and Lottah, is a good coach road. This road continues to Ringarooma, *via* Moorina, Derby, and Branhholm. There is a good road from Gould's Country to Upper George's River settlement, six miles; also, a good road continues four miles above the settlement to Falls on South George's River. There is a very good road from St. Mary's to Picaninni Point, and from there to Swansea is a rough cart road. There is also a good road from Avoca to Swansea, and from Avoca to Ben Lomond is a fair cart road, but very steep. From Fingal to Mangana is a splendid road, five miles. From Blessington (Ford River) is a very fair road to Launceston. With the exception of the road from Mathinna to Ringarooma, I may say that the roads through the whole district are in fair order.

*Tracks.*—From Scottsdale to Blessington there is a bridle track *via* Camden Plains. There is also a bridle track from Blessington to Mathinna over Rose Tier. From Mathinna to Mangana there is a bridle track; also, a bridle track from Mathinna to Alberton. There is also a bridle track from Mathinna to St. Helen's *via* Upper Scamander, and from Mathinna there is a new track cut to Falls on South George River, fourteen miles. From G. D. Brown's, on North George River, to Weldborough road is a good bridle track. From Weldborough there is a good bridle track leading to Ringarooma *via* Cascade River. All the above tracks are in fair order.

*King Island.*—Mr. M. Flannigan, Surveyor, reports:—

I have completed 27 surveys of an aggregate area of 3300 acres.

During the past year the population has increased from 80 to 113. Four hundred and fifteen fat cattle were shipped, chiefly to Launceston, some to Devonport, and a few shipments to Strahan, and it is intended to send more to the latter port during the coming season, and it may be safely said that the success of the island for cattle-grazing has been assured. Mr. Stephenson is experimenting with sheep, having taken over 200, and intends, if the country is found suitable, going in on a large scale; he is also improving the low-lying land by ploughing and sowing white and red clover.

About fifteen head of cattle died last year, the greater number of these around Boggy Creek, where they were allowed to run unrestricted on the tare during the autumn, it being the only green feed at that time. Messrs. M'Mahon and James have now permanently settled on the island, and are making good progress with fencing to have the stock under control. Mr. M'Mahon has taken his wife and family over, and intends going in for dairy farming in conjunction with grazing, and expects to have about five hundred cattle there at the end of the year.

Most of the selections have been fenced, and on some houses have been built. A jetty is in course of construction, and roads are being formed by the District Inspector, which will lessen the inconveniences of the settlers, and will be the means of opening up some country between Porky Creek and Bungaree Creek which may be found fit for agriculture. Surprise Bay has been beaconed since the steamships *Star* and *Amy* have been in, and the captains speak highly of the place for shipping purposes.

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

*Land suitable for Selection.*—There is not much land available in the District distinctly arable in character excepting that situate on Maria Island, and even there the extent is limited in proportion to the area of the island; still there appears to me sufficient to provide some very comfortable farms, more especially if worked in conjunction with the excellent pasturage that is also available for selection. I am very glad that the Government decided to throw the island open for selection by *bonâ fide* farmers. On the mainland there is not much arable land available; what there is is not sufficient in area to provide more than a home for a working man, and is being gradually absorbed by local residents.

*Second-class Land.*—Owing to the Act passed last year there have been a good many surveys effected under this clause, and I anticipate a great many more, inasmuch as there are many thousands of acres of good sound pastoral country, excellent for either sheep or cattle, from Swanston northwards towards Toom's Lake, and down the Little Swanport River there appears to be a large scope of country of this nature that is really valuable land, the great drawback being that it is infested with tigers. One or two sheep farmers, however, seem to be able to deal with the pest successfully, and I fail to see why others cannot do so. The same sort of land is available elsewhere, for instance, near Table Mountain, The Sandspit, and on Maria Island.

*Roads and Tracks required.*—Under this heading nothing calls particularly for comment, unless it is the road from Stonehenge to Swanston, which is falling into decay. It is an excellent road, but the culverts require attention at once, and the winter rains have destroyed the formation in places. Beyond Swanston, towards Little Swanport, is a bush track, used for a generation back. I hope to see some very steep grades altered on this by deviation, seeing that selection is taking place in the vicinity.

The road Buckland to Nugent, that I recommended some years ago, has been very much improved by the unemployed, but there is a considerable section still left in its natural state. This also applies to the track between Nugent and Kellevie.

*Resident Selectors.*—No doubt you will be very pleased to hear that nearly all the selectors under the 31st Section of "The Crown Lands Act, 1890," are, I find, in actual possession of their several lots surveyed during the past year, and have in many instances several acres of growing crops and cleared ground, besides comfortable homes. Notably, this is the case with the selections in the late coal mine reserve near Colebrook.

*Unoccupied Crown Lands.*—I had the honour to draw your attention to a practice at one time indulged in, of renting a small lot of Crown lands and running stock over thousands of acres adjacent, for which, of course, no rent was obtained. The several Crown Lands' bailiffs would seem to have altered this state of things in a great measure; but fires are of frequent occurrence every summer. Selectors are sometimes in the habit of applying for, say 50 acres, and paying their shilling, and informing all and sundry that survey fee has been paid, and start clearing the ground. In Parish of Hartington there are one or two applications in the same name. These have been on the plan some time, and twice I have received intimation by a neighbour that the applicant wanted his land surveyed. Of course there are no instructions, and the land is in the meantime being worked.

*Preservation of Survey Marks.*—In a letter lately I had occasion to suggest that printed notices be nailed up by the police and others, drawing attention to the penalty provided in the event of any one being caught destroying survey marks or removing corner pegs. Whenever I surveyed a lot I have always requested the applicant to respect the marks, and to preserve the corner pegs in position; but the neighbours do not always exercise the same regard, and idle or mischievous young men will frequently delight to show how nearly they can imitate the original marks on neighbouring trees, thus paving the way for endless trouble in the future.

*Survey District of Mersey.*—Mr. H. J. Chalmers, District Surveyor, reports as follows:—

I have the honour to forward to you my Annual Report for the year 1896, and in doing so I regret to have to inform you that so little has been done during the year. Land of a suitable description for agricultural purposes is only to be found in patches in remote and out-of-the-way places such as along the Forth River and Gad's Hill, too far from market to induce settlement. All that is available anywhere near has long since been acquired, and only that of a second class nature can be had at rare intervals, and is only valuable in connection with adjoining selections.

*Tracks, &c.*—I have long since advocated opening up the coal discoveries and mineral country at and around Mounts Pelion and Barn Bluff *via* Mole Creek and Chudleigh. Some years since the "Chudleigh and Mole Creek Prospecting Association" cut and marked out a track to this locality, which led to the country being explored, and shorter and more suitable tracks were discovered, shortening the distance by many miles and avoiding the steep and dangerous sideling around Mount Pelion West. The old track now in existence had at that time a twofold object, viz., to aid the railway survey being carried on, and to facilitate prospecting operations of the Company, thus it was made much longer than is now desirable. I understand the track now being surveyed follows generally the one formerly used. The country as a rule is open and comparatively level, and favourable for track making.

*Progress of Settlement.*—Settlement has not progressed during the last year or so, but every sign points to an improvement in this direction. Crops and prices during this and part of last year were much better and have a hopeful look for the present, which probably will lead to an improvement during the coming year.

I have surveyed 7 sections for the year, with a total area of 450 acres; five of these were subdivisions of former selections. Such a result points to the fact that the District is too poor to afford a living for the Surveyor in charge, and for some years I have depended upon excessive work in other Districts, or whatever the Department has been able to give me.

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

*Selection Areas.*—During the year little public attention has been given to the selection of Agricultural Areas, due in a measure, no doubt, to local capital being diverted into the more

fascinating channels of mining speculation. Several sections, however, have been taken up and surveyed fronting the North-East Dundas Tramway, and also a few small areas adjacent to the Town boundary of Zeehan, these principally for market garden purposes.

*Town Areas—Zeehan.*—This Town is making rapid strides, and building is the order of the day. Property is increasing in value, and there is a constant demand for residence sites. I regret to state that I have grave suspicions that there is a large percentage of the population in illegal occupation. Zeehan being more settled than the other West Coast Towns, the people have an excellent opportunity of evading the main conditions of occupation by failing to take out the annual Residence Licence. To remedy this evil, if it actually exists, it would be desirable to make it either compulsory for the occupiers to purchase their holdings, or that an annual inspection of Residence Licences be authorised. I have already recommended that more lots should be surveyed for building sites.

*Queenstown.*—Town matters are progressing most favourably, and at present there are scores of buildings in the course of erection. Property is daily advancing in value. My suggestion that the Residence Areas in this Town be laid out in eighth ( $\frac{1}{8}$ ) acre lots or thereabouts has met with your approval. Queenstown is rather cramped to get the usual  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre lots, and moreover for ordinary purposes the smaller area is generally large enough, and in some degree prevents the trafficking that usually obtains in the larger areas. I think Queenstown in particular will benefit by this departure.

The probable population is variously estimated; but I think there will be, in the near future, some 3000 inhabitants located in the town.

The Mount Lyell Mining and Railway Company's reducing works and flux quarries, which are in the immediate neighbourhood, will give employment to at least 800 workmen.

*North Dundas.*—Following the mining development at North Dundas, a Settlement has sprung up in the vicinity of the Curtin and Davis group of mines. The present site, which is now known as Ringville, is well adapted for town purposes; but as it is of the utmost importance that the mines should not be hampered in their initial stages, I have refrained, in the interest of the Government, from definitely advising you to set apart an area for a Town Reserve at Ringville.

The Curtin and Davis Company, I am informed, is obtaining the opinion of experts in the choice of smelting and other mining sites; and, when this matter is finally determined, the best available position for a town can be selected without interfering with mining operations.

*Mining Fields.*—During the past year 720 instructions for surveys for mining purposes were issued to me,—the applications being principally confined to the Lyell-Read mineral zone.

Several new and valuable discoveries have been made; and, viewing the developments of the past twelve months in several of the West Coast mines which have been labouring under exceptional difficulties—notably the Mount Lyell Mining and Railway Company—I confidently look forward to the year 1897 being the commencement of a most successful era in silver and copper mining in Tasmania.

There are several mining properties on the West Coast lying practically dormant, and but waiting the energy and capital of investors like those who are leading the Mount Lyell Mining and Railway Company to such a successful issue; and it is earnestly to be hoped, for the welfare of mining generally, that the downright pluck displayed by this Company will act as an impetus to legitimate mining, and as an aperient to locked-up capital.

*Tracks.*—I cannot too strongly urge the necessity of opening up the West Coast mineral lands by pack-tracks, and, where not practicable, by prospecting tracks. It is well known that, as regards the West Coast, this means of communication is an item of revenue, and it cannot be denied that the Government tracks to Mount Read, North Dundas, and to Mount Black have paid for construction many times over in rents and fees alone for mineral lands. When it became known that the Government were making a pack-track from Mount Read to Mount Tyndall, prospectors immediately got into that neighbourhood, and resulted in new discoveries and in several thousand acres being taken up under lease. The following localities deserve special attention in this direction:—The country lying between the Rosebery (Mount Black) and the Red Hills (south of Mount Murchison), also between the Rosebery and the Murchison River, the southern spurs of Mount Dundas *via* the Mariposa mine. The above-mentioned localities are practically virgin country, but, viewing the possibilities of each from a geological standpoint, I would certainly advise an early expenditure of public money in order to establish communication sufficient for prospectors to get into the places named with some little degree of comfort.

*Mining Surveys.*—In my last annual report I had the honour to draw your attention to several matters appertaining to the conduct of mining surveys, which were then practically under the supervision of the Mines Department. Concordantly with these particular surveys, it is now with feelings of pleasure that I, as a surveyor, hail the desirable change that has taken place during the past year, which places these surveys under your entire control as the Surveyor-General of the Colony. I also gratefully beg to acknowledge the courtesy, assistance, and advice extended at all times to me whilst connected with the Mines Department by Mr. Belstead, Secretary for Mines, and for these reasons the severance is, in a sense, regretful to me. I take this opportunity of once again strongly advocating that some better means be devised than that which now obtains for "bracing up" the West Coast surveys in particular. I trust that next Session Parliament will authorise a trigonometrical survey, if not for the whole of Tasmania, at any rate for the Survey District of Montagu.

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

*Land suitable for Selection, &c.*—Near the Main Road from Wynyard to Waratah, as cleared by the Government and partly formed, some good agricultural land exists, and although several people have made enquiries about this land, no applications so far have been made. When this road has been further improved by macadamising it, this land will no doubt be sought after, as the products can then be taken to a market. The bridge over the Hellyer River on this route is in a fair state of repair, and quite fit to carry heavily loaded vehicles. That excellent Act, "The Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1895," (59 Vict. No. 39), providing for classifying and fixing the value of different quantities of Crown land, it was generally thought, would have been largely availed of, but up to the present this is not the case in this District. The suspension of work at the West Bischoff, Stanhope, and North Valley Tin Mines, besides the outside mines in the vicinity of Heazlewood has had the effect of depreciating the value of all landed property, but there are undoubted signs that a revival in mining will shortly take place in this locality, when land for growing and other purposes will again be in demand. In proof of this, 23 lots under the Mining Act, giving an area in round numbers of 1200 acres, have been newly surveyed during the last year; and 34 lots under the same Act, giving 1400 acres, have been taken upon old surveys. From the Magnet Mine—on the Range of that name—50 tons of silver ore, giving an average yield of 186 ounces to the ton, and a net return to the tributors of about £20 per ton, has been brought in during the last year on the Waratah-Heazlewood Road. This return speaks for itself, and indicates, that with proper development, there are payable deposits near us outside of the great Bischoff Mine. No selection for agricultural or other purposes has taken place on the large area of basaltic land fronting on the Waratah-Heazlewood Road, and which stretches from the Town boundary of Waratah two miles southerly along that road, and out and beyond Knole Plain easterly. The land at or near the junction of the Huskinson River with the Pieman—some 1500 acres—will not be taken up until it has been made accessible by means of a road or railway. It certainly is not far from the proposed Van Diemen's Land Line as surveyed from the Burnie-Waratah Railway to Zeehan. About two hundred acres of good agricultural soil can be found on the banks of the Savage River near where it joins the Pieman, about two miles below Corinna. It is sometimes subject to floods.

*Roads and Tracks.*—During the last twelve months the road from Waratah to Corinna has been greatly improved by the Government, but much still remains to be done to make it a good highway. A cart has been brought up from Corinna towards Waratah on this road for 12 miles, and another cart has been taken out from here 16 miles towards Corinna, thus leaving only 12 miles to improve to enable a cart to be taken right through to Corinna from Waratah. Of course the 12 miles not practicable for a cart at present is quite so for pack-horses and cattle. The necessity of a track being made from the Waratah-Heazlewood Road into the north end of the Meredith Range must be reiterated, as it would be the means of opening up a likely piece of mineral-bearing country. Also the track north-west from Bischoff to join the track made from Wynyard across the Arthur River to Specimen Reef would no doubt repay for making; and another track to be recommended is the one from the Hatfield Plains, near the south boundary of the V.D.L. Co.'s Surrey Hills Block, southerly down the valley of the Mackintosh River through country known to possess metalliferous deposits.

*Progress of Settlement.*—Settlement has practically been at a standstill in this District for the last year, except so far as the mines are concerned. In this direction it continues to extend, notably at the Rio Tinto Mine, some 24 miles south-west from Waratah, and at the Rocky River, nine miles south of Corinna.

*Surveys.*—I have the honour to inform you that the 16 instructions that I hold will be disposed of during the next four months. Some of the sections are very much scattered, and it is a difficult matter to sometimes get the ground pointed out to you. Three of the above 16 sections have been surveyed, and the plans will shortly be sent in.

A method adopted by some prospectors now, is to peg out their land, or mark it, and apply for it, and, if it does not come up to expectations, withdraw it directly they receive notice to survey.

There are a number of Water Rights that I hold, that have no existence on the ground, that will be returned to you to deal with.

Survey District of *Wellington*.—Fred. E. Windsor, District Surveyor, reports as follows :—

During the year 30 agricultural selections have been surveyed, comprising an area of 1680 acres, together with 3 miles of roads and connection lines; also 3 township allotments, 7 Public Works road surveys of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles, and the Wynyard Deepwater Port. No mineral surveys have been made during the year.

In the early part of the season good prices were ruling for farm produce, and most of the farmers sold at fairly remunerative rates.

The butter factory and creameries, together with the bacon factory, may still be considered the mainstay of the district, and several of the neighbouring colonies are constantly supplied with butter and bacon.

The great drawback to selection and grass-growing is the want of good roads into the lands at the back, and, as they cannot be procured at once, the best thing to do for the welfare of the district would be to throw open for selection the timber reserves, that are of no value for timber and

contain some really first-class land that is within easy reach of the market, about three miles, and I feel sure that at least 1500 acres would be selected in the vicinity of Wynyard, and the whole of the 450-acre reserve at South Road, Parish of Ford.

Selection has not been very extensive this past year, but promises to improve, and on a sounder footing.

The introduction of the 10th Section of "The Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1894," has been a great boon to the many selectors who were unable to pay their instalments, thus enabling them to secure a grant of land for the amount of money paid.

The really urgent works that require attention, and which have been previously referred to, are:—The construction of a jetty at Green Point, Parish of Marrawah, and the re-marking of the south boundary of the Woolnorth Block as far as the Montagu River, before those marks which have already been found near the coast get destroyed; and a new punt at the Arthur River Ferry, the fares of which should be reduced. The Back Line road along the V.D.L. Co.'s Circular Head Block should be opened and constructed. The road to connect the Upper Irish Town Settlement and the South Road should be opened.

The district generally is in a more wholesome condition, and business much sounder. The fat cattle, pigs, poultry, eggs, and bacon not required for local consumption find a ready market on the West Coast, their principal supply being drawn from this district. The late rains were very welcome, but they came too late for some of the early crops. The bush fires that were raging all over the district in December, before the rains came, did an immense amount of damage to the crops, grasses, and fences, burning some of the settlers and others out of house and home, as well as destroying some cattle and pigs.

*Parish of Marrawah.*—About 4000 acres of first-class land still available for selection, and in order to encourage settlement some attention to the requirements of the present settlers should be shown. A good jetty is urgently needed to enable them to ship produce. Cattle raising is extensively carried on, Zeehan being the market. Several more selections have been recently applied for in this parish.

*Parishes of Williams, Mowbray, and Poilenna.*—Fully 5000 acres of very fair agricultural land still available for selection, but in order to open up the country and encourage selection roads to the back lands should be opened. A few selections have been applied for in the first two parishes.

*Parishes of Gibson and Melwin.*—At least 3000 acres still remain open for selection, and some first-class agricultural land is to be met with. Owing to the recent depression a large number of selections have reverted to the Crown, but out of these some smaller areas have been selected and improved. The present easy terms will, no doubt, help materially in the settlement of these lands, but roads into the back country are urgently needed. Several selections have been recently applied for, and very great improvement made on the old ones.

*Parish of Anderson and to the south.*—A very extensive area of good agricultural land still remains to be selected, but the distance from the Coast Road and the very unfinished state of the old road renders the land almost valueless at the present time. A few of the old selections have been scrubbed and grassed.

*Parishes of Dallas and Myalla.*—About 2000 acres of good land still available for selection in these two parishes, but selection will be very slow until roads are opened into the back country. Several of the old selected lots have reverted to the Crown, but several of them have been re-selected in smaller areas.

*Parishes of Flowerdale and Preolenna.*—About 5000 acres of good land still available for selection in these parishes. Nearly all the large recently surveyed lots have reverted to the Crown, but most of these, I feel sure, will be again selected in smaller areas, owing to the very easy terms now granted to selectors. The principal roads that require opening are as follows:—From Flowerdale to Calder, across the Inglis River; the Main Flowerdale Road, west of the River Inglis, has been opened for some three miles, but requires extending towards the Dipwood Range; and the road from the Flowerdale Road to the Sisters Hills. This latter road has been opened at both ends, and only about three miles remain to be opened to complete what would be a most useful road, and would give access to the recently selected lands. Improvements on the old selections have been very general.

*Parishes of Quiggin and Calder.*—About 3000 acres, including those selections that have reverted to the Crown, of good agricultural land still available for selection. Some few lots have been recently surveyed, and improvements have been, generally speaking, extensive. The Calder Road requires extending to the Moore's Plains (south) and across the Calder River (west), to give a more direct outlet to those lots that have been selected and improved, and also to the good Crown land in the Parish of Preolenna. No new selection has taken place, but old lots considerably improved, grassed, and fenced.

*Parish of Yolla.*—About 4000 acres good agricultural land still open for selection. The Moore's Plains Road requires to be further extended. The branch road through Ruffin and Roberts' lots should be opened to connect with the Waratah Road. A few selections have reverted to the Crown, but these will be again selected.

*Parishes of Lewis and Elliott.*—A small area of good land only remains for selection. Some few lots have reverted to the Crown and most of them have been re-selected and scrubbed. The road along the western bank of the River Cam requires opening and extending south. Improvements have been generally extensive.



*Parishes of Oonah and Takoné.*—These two Parishes are too far back from the coast to receive much attention at the present time. A large area of good agricultural land is still open for selection. No new lots have been applied for, and the old ones have either reverted to the Crown or are in a state of nature. Some first-class land is to be found near the Cam and St. Mary's Rivers, and a few lots have recently been selected on the west branch of the St. Mary's River.

*Parishes of Stowport and Natoné.*—About 2400 acres of good land still available for selection. Some few lots have reverted to the Crown. The road to the east of the Chasm Creek will have to be extended before the land is likely to be selected. Great progress has been made in improving those lots still held, and the District generally may be said to be doing well.

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

In forwarding my annual report I am unable to give the number and area of lots surveyed in my district for the year 1896, owing to my having been absent upon other work in another portion of the Colony the greater portion of the year.

*Lands available for Selection.*—In the County of Kent, and the numerous parishes forming that division of the district under my charge, there are still large areas of land suitable for agriculture, the greater portion of which is heavily timbered, and, I am sorry to say, generally locked up, owing to want of roads or other means of access. The available land near the various roads throughout the district having been mostly selected, and in most instances settled upon, fresh selection will not take place to any extent until the land is opened up by means of roads, &c. This is notably the case in the Parishes of Leithbridge, Honeywood, Price, and Thanet. In the County of Buckingham, Parishes of Bedford, Pedder, and Bagot there is very little good land available for selection, what there is being generally second-class land, and only useful to the holders of the surrounding lots. Upon South Bruny Island there is still a good area of fine land, but as the greater portion of it is carrying timber of a valuable description, it is not desirable to push selection until such time as the timber has been removed for market purposes.

*Roads and Tracks required.*—Extensions of the following roads are required to facilitate settlement:—

In the Parish of Leithbridge an extension of the road up the valley of the River Huon; also of the road known as the New Road, Franklin.

Parish of Honeywood, an extension of the road known as Nimmo's Road to Crown lands; also an extension of the Scott's Rivulet Road towards the River Arve, and also the road known as the Arve Road.

In the Parish of Price, an extension of the Kermadie Valley road to Crown lands beyond the selections of Messrs. Geeves and others.

Parish of Thanet, an extension of the road through the selections of the Messrs. Clennett to the Crown land in the vicinity of the main branch of the Dover Rivulet.

A road is also required, to commence near the bridge over the River Esperance at Raminea, and going in a westerly direction up the valley of the Esperance, to open the Crown lands in that vicinity.

*Tracks.*—A track is urgently required to connect Port Esperance with the south-west coast of Tasmania, in the vicinity of Port Davey, with a short branch to Cox's Bight. There are known mineral fields in the vicinity of Cox's Bight where a limited number of miners have been obtaining tin for some years past, and the country in the vicinity of Port Davey and the Arthur Range has every indication of being mineral-bearing. If a track were cut good enough for foot traffic connecting Port Davey with Cox's Bight and Port Esperance, it would open up a tract of country at present almost unknown, and give prospectors and others a means of reaching civilization when their supplies began to fail, or in the case of accident or sickness in a party.

At the present time if a party is landed from a steamer or sailing craft upon the coast in the vicinity of the places mentioned, they have to either take the chance of a passing craft seeing them when they want to return, or make their way overland either towards Macquarie Harbour or down the Huon Valley by way of the Picton track. A track from the head of Bathurst Harbour, the east arm of Port Davey, to Port Esperance, would be a much nearer means of reaching civilization than either of the routes mentioned. This track could also be made use of to reach Adamson's Peak for transit purposes, as it would of necessity pass over the Adamson Range in the vicinity of the Peak, and all that would be wanted would be a short branch to reach the top of the mountain.

*Rate of Progress.*—Like the greater portion of Tasmania, I am afraid there is very little progress to chronicle in the Huon district during the past year; the low rates ruling for fruit, one of the staple industries, has made things very bad for the growers in general. The timber trade, which in the earlier portion of the year was apparently improving, had again fallen off towards the end, consequently the rate of wages had to be reduced, and the output was limited.

As these two articles are the principal products of the district, when there is a depression in the trade all hands suffer, and it will account for the very low rate of progress that has been made during the time these depressions last.