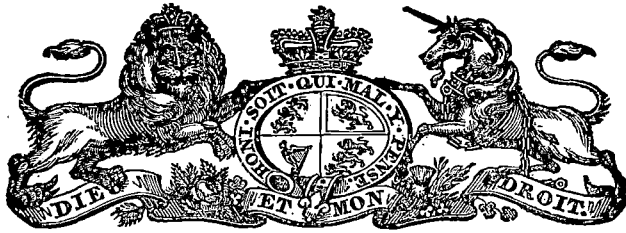


(No. 31.)



1877.

SESSION III.

TASMANIA.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

VALUATION OF PROPERTY:

REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS.

Laid upon the Table by the Minister of Lands and Works, and ordered by the House to be printed, July 31, 1877.



Hobart Town, June, 1877.

SIR,

WE have the honor to report that we have inspected the properties in the Districts of Selby and George Town, and have prepared Valuation Rolls for the same, which we append hereto.*

The District of Selby is an extensive and scattered one, comprising within its boundaries the suburbs of Launceston, and the outlying country districts of Scottsdale and Ringarooma, Piper's River, and the West Tamar.

The suburbs of Launceston contain many substantial and handsome residences, surrounded with gardens, orchards, and meadow lands, interspersed with small farms of English grass and agricultural lands, which, independently of their natural fertility, are valuable from their proximity to the city.

Patterson Plains, which includes the village of St. Leonards, in the valley of the North Esk, with its handsome residences, shops, and cottages, contains well-cultivated meadow and arable lands, and is a small but valuable portion of the district.

The properties near the confines of the districts of Evandale and Longford, and along the banks of the Tamar, used for both sheep feeding and agriculture, are valuable for the richness of the soil, proximity to the city, and good roads.

Pattersonia, about twelve miles from Launceston, is a poor extent of country, stony and hilly, with little land fit for cultivation: there are one or two farms bounding the road of a better description, cleared of timber and laid down with English grass. Myrtle Bank, about eight miles beyond Pattersonia, is a small block of rich heavily timbered scrub land, the greater part of the cleared land in which is laid down with English grass.

The road to Launceston is rough, stony, and hilly; but, being the most direct road from Launceston to the tin-mining country in the vicinity of the Upper Ringarooma, the traffic is now considerable.

The Upper Piper is a large settlement of small farms. It has some fine land within its boundaries, and some cultivation is carried on; but the keeping of small dairy farms and fattening a few cattle seem to be the principal means of support of the occupiers of the farms in this locality. The road to Launceston is very bad, stony, and hilly, making the carriage of grain difficult and expensive.

Scottsdale, situated on the road from Bridport to the Upper Ringarooma, is a block of rich red soil of some extent, but like all soil of this description it is heavily timbered. There are many good cottages, and a good deal of land cleared, the principal part of which is now laid down with English grass in consequence of the teams belonging to the small holders of land being engaged in carting tin and stores between the mines and Bridport. The road from Scottsdale to the Upper Ringarooma passes through barren forest and wet button-grass marshes, almost valueless for any purpose. Approaching the river you again meet with the red soil and dense forest. There appears to be a considerable extent of rich land in the vicinity of the river.

Where the land has been even partially cleared English grasses flourish most luxuriantly, milch cows are kept, and cattle fattened for the market. In consequence of the tin mines rendering labour expensive, and absorbing the attention of the settlers, but few improvements are being made.

Selby may be considered a well-watered district—the North and South Esk, the Ringarooma, Piper's and St. Patrick's Rivers, Distillery Creek, and numerous small streams running through it. There is, as usual, a large extent of barren country within its boundaries, the hills generally being steep, stony, and poor.

* These Rolls with others will be printed in a separate volume.

The District of George Town, extending from twenty miles beyond Launceston to the coast, and along the coast to Cape Portland, the north-eastern point of the Island, is the most barren we have visited, consisting principally of extensive flats of sandy soil with hillocks of quartz covered with a scanty growth of stunted bushes and heath, interspersed with gum and other trees of small size, the hills away from the coast being rough and poor. In some parts inland the timber is larger, but in no part do you meet with those giants of the forest which are so abundant on the North West Coast. The land on each side of the Tamar, from the boundaries of Selby to George Town and Kelso, is generally of a poor description, a very small portion being fit for cultivation. It supports a limited number of sheep and cattle, which roam over a large extent of country to obtain a scanty subsistence. There are some good properties on the banks of the river, and some orchards; but little attention is paid to them, and the produce is, in consequence, of little value.

The extensive works of the Tasmanian Charcoal Iron Company at Lempriere, on the West Arm near Ilfracombe, afford employment to a large number of workmen. A large amount of capital has been expended in the erection of the necessary plant and buildings for reducing the ore, a railway and engine for bringing the ore from the mines, a jetty, managers' and overseers' residences, numerous cottages for the workmen, and coke furnaces.

The works of the Tamar Hematite Iron Company near the head of the Middle Arm are not now in operation. The buildings and plant are upon a much smaller scale than those of the Tasmanian Charcoal Iron Company, but a large expenditure has been incurred in the erection of buildings and construction of a tramway to bring the ore from the mines to the works.

The country thence to Kelso is of the poorest description, soil unfit for cultivation, stunted timber, and coarse grass, with occasional belts of tea tree, and wet sandy flats.

The Nine Mile Springs, about eleven miles from George Town, is a very busy little township, called into existence by the numerous gold-mining claims worked in it and the immediate neighbourhood, and the quartz-crushing machines at work and being erected. The country around is barren, of little use for any purpose but mining.

The only other gold-field now worked in the district is the Leura, on private property at the Piper's River. This mine has the advantage of a large supply of water, obtained from the river for the purpose of crushing and washing. A tramway conveys the stone from the mine to the crushing mill.

The Australasian Slate Quarries, about eighteen miles from George Town and adjoining the abandoned gold diggings at the Back Creek, are now opened out, and a manager's house and stores erected. A tramway of about three miles to the shipping place has been constructed, and a breakwater is in course of construction to facilitate the shipment of slates.

The land between George Town and the Lower Piper is of the poorest description, with low stunted scrub and quartz occasionally showing. On and near the banks of the river it is of a better description, but very limited in extent. There is some cultivation, but the greater part of the cleared land is sown down with English grasses to feed dairy cows or to fatten cattle. Thence to Bridport the land is of the poor description general throughout the district.

Bridport is a small township consisting of an inn and a few cottages on a barren sandy spot. The Rivers Brid and Great Forester joining here form a harbour for small craft, only to be entered at high water.

This township is the shipping place for the produce of the farms at Scottsdale and Upper Ringarooma, and for the tin mines in and near the latter country.

The land around and extending to Cape Portland is generally poor, with extensive sandy flats and occasional sand hills, swamps here and there, with belts of tea tree scrub and small rises covered with quartz pebbles; a large and very wet marsh on the northern side of the Great Forester River, a limited quantity of better land around the Waterhouse Station, and a large marsh on the eastern bank of the Ringarooma River, being the principal exceptions.

There are some spots where grass is to be seen, but these are not frequent. A few thousand sheep and two or three hundred head of cattle roam over this extensive country and manage to exist upon the scanty herbage it produces.

The gold diggings at Waterhouse, with the ruins of numerous houses and the Government buildings, are in this portion of the district, about midway between Bridport and Ringarooma.

At the mouth of the Ringarooma is the township of the same name newly established, at present consisting of two inns and a few stores and cottages.

The Ringarooma river is the shipping place for the tin obtained at Mount Cameron and the district around. The harbour can only be entered at high water, and the channel from the bar to the jetties at the township is narrow and tortuous.

The successful working of the mines can alone keep this district in a prosperous condition, nearly all the flour and other necessaries of life being imported into the district, and a very limited portion of the land being capable of sufficient improvement to fit it for growing grain or fattening stock.

These districts being the last on which we have to report, we have the honor, in accordance with your request, to append a sketch of the principles on which we have made our valuations of the properties in the different districts, these principles having received the sanction of the gentlemen who were associated with us in the districts of Glenorchy, Fingal, and Hamilton.

As respects properties which are held under rental, we have, as a general rule, held that the rent paid to the landlord was good evidence of the rental value of the property, unless some special circumstances had in any degree altered that since the commencement of the tenancy, or some special information had indicated that the rent paid was either more or less than the present rental value of the property.

In valuing agricultural lands we have given due consideration to the surrounding circumstances, such as the distance from market or place of shipment, and the condition of the roads over which the produce had to be carted, as well as the general quality of the soil.

In estimating the value of orchards, hop grounds, and gardens, we have applied the same principles, assisted by the recorded values of other properties under rental but otherwise similarly situated.

Land laid down to English grasses we have valued according to its situation and quality of soil, whether flat meadow land by the side of a stream or hilly land away from water: we have also taken note of the distance from market, and the facility of getting thereto fat stock and dairy produce.

In valuing sheep and cattle runs we have taken into consideration the goodness of the pastures, whether open downs, thickly or lightly timbered. The number of stock per one thousand acres the land would probably carry has also been taken into account. Extensive but poor and rough runs we have not considered so valuable in comparison to their carrying capacity as the better class of grazing lands.

In all cases we have been guided by the number of stock actually depastured on the property, together with the distance from market or place of shipment and facility of conveying the produce.

In estimating the value of machinery for mills, quartz crushing, &c., we have obtained all the information we were able as to their cost and the quantity of manufactured material they were able to produce, and valued them accordingly.

In all cases we have been materially assisted by the recorded values of properties under rental but otherwise similarly situated.

In valuing the lands in the districts through which the Main Line Railway passes, although we have taken into consideration the increased facility of sending their produce to market, we have taken no account of the probable increased value given to those lands which, being now used as sheep runs only, may through the increased facilities become more valuable for agricultural purposes.

The total value of the properties of Selby (excluding the mineral leases), as shown by the Roll forwarded herewith, is	£	s.	d.
	24,110	16	0
The total value, as shown by the Valuation Roll of 1876, excluding properties belonging to the crown, is.....	18,583	0	0
Increase	£5527	16	0
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The total value of the properties in the District of George Town (excluding mineral leases and properties connected therewith), as shown by the Roll forwarded herewith, is.....	7768	0	0
The total value, as shown by the Valuation Roll of 1876, excluding properties belonging to the crown, is.....	5397	0	0
Increase	£2371	0	0
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The value of lands leased for mineral purposes in the District of Selby is £5070. 5 0

The value of lands leased for mineral purposes, and properties connected therewith, in the District of George Town, is..... £1675 5 0

But as new leases are being constantly granted, these amounts are subject to a continual addition.

The boundaries of the District of Selby having been lately altered, and now including some portion of what was formerly in Fingal, it is necessary to add that, although the whole of the lands in the District of Selby held under mining leases are included, the Roll sent herewith does not include those private properties which were formerly in the District of Fingal.

We have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servants,

G. A. KEMP, } *Property Valuation*
FRANCIS BUTLER, } *Commissioners.*

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.