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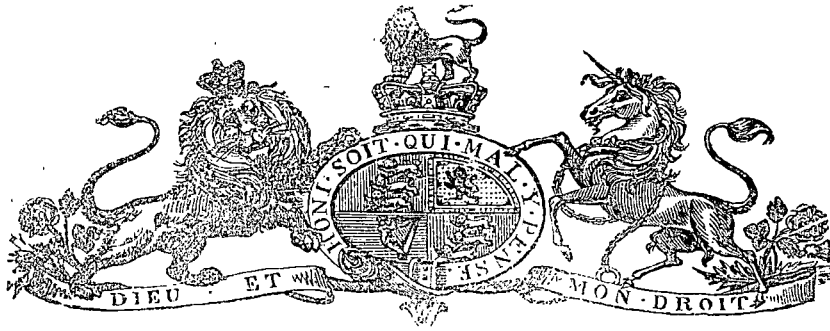
1881.

T A S M A N I A .

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

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

Laid upon the Table by the Minister of Lands, and ordered by the House to be printed, July 19, 1881.



DISTRICT SURVEYORS' REPORTS.

Carnarvon, 15th April, 1881.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to report for your information the progress this district has made during the last 12 months, since the land was thrown open for selection on Tasman's Peninsula. There have been 37 selections made, 21 of them for 50 acres, 4 under 30 acres, the remainder from 100 acres to 315 acres, making a total of 2784 acres. Nearly all the selectors have done something to their land, and a good number of them are located on their lots. The population has increased to upwards of 250. Only for the depressed state of the agricultural interest I have no doubt but we would have more settlers in this district. There is one drawback to the place, and that is the state the bridges are in. A great number of them are down altogether, and the others are mere traps for cattle to fall through. A sum of £1800 would put up good strong serviceable bridges: the roads would do for years to come as they are if the bridges were only put up, as most of the produce will only be carted to the water for shipment. There is a large block of land about four miles square. I have surveyed lots on the east, north, and west of it. The lots surveyed on the north are two miles into it, that is from the Cascades and Newman's Bottom. Nearly all the lots are purchased, and a great number purchased on the east side all up by Long Bay. There is neither road nor track into it: it is almost an impenetrable scrub and heavily timbered, but most of it good land. If there was a track cut about nine feet wide from the old saw-mill at the Cascades in a southerly direction for about five miles, and another track of the same width from Newman's Bottom in a southerly direction for about five miles, they would open up a fine tract of good land, the greater part of which would soon be taken up.

Many persons have declined taking up land behind those already surveyed, for the reason that they have no access, and justly argue that to make a road would exhaust their means and leave them incapable of improving the land when they had acquired it.

There has been no application for land on Forester's Peninsula. There is very little good land on it. Unless some minerals are discovered, I think it will remain as it is for some time to come.

I have, &c.

ARCHD. BLACKWOOD, *District Surveyor.*

To the Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

Stone Buildings, 20th April, 1881.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to forward my Annual Report upon the progress of settlement of the Crown lands in my district.

The settlement upon the Crown lands has slightly increased during the past year. The lots have, as a general rule, been taken up by working men anxious to make homes for themselves.

About ten lots have been selected on the land opened up by me in the vicinity of Mount Lloyd, and I have had at least a dozen more applications for land, principally by immigrants intending to settle; but in most cases they have been deterred from taking the land on account of the bad road to the locality.

I believe if even a passable cart track was made from the Dry Creek to this land that an area of from three to four thousand acres of good land would soon be taken up.

The present track ascends a hill to Mr. Davis's farm, with a rise of about 1000 feet in one mile. Beyond this, with the exception of a pack track cut by myself, and a rough cart track since cut by Mr. Beattie to his land, no other road exists.

In the Parish of Uxbridge, in the locality known as the Native Tier, I estimate that there is about three thousand acres of good land, in patches of from 50 to 200 acres, to the south west of the present lots. Very few allotments have been taken up here on account of the want of a road; in fact, I have marked off lots of an inferior quality near the new road for settlers who prefer taking up inferior ground near a road rather than go back a short distance to good land where no road exists.

At Monto's Marsh most of the good land has been selected, but small lots of from 50 to 100 acres of good land are yet to be obtained.

In the vicinity of the Florentine River a large area of first-class land exists, heavily timbered with gum, and covered with a thick pear tree, musk, and fern scrub; but the distance from any market has prevented anyone from settling upon it.

I have marked off a few lots near the Den Hill, but they have been of an inferior quality. No extent of good Crown land remains in this locality.

At the Platform Bluff there is a small extent of good land, varying in size from 15 to 50 acres. No selections have been marked off here during the past year.

In the vicinity of the Dromedary most of the good land has been taken; the remainder being very poor, rough, hilly ground. I have marked off one lot in this locality during the past year, but the greater part of it was land of very inferior quality.

Gold-bearing reefs have been discovered in my district, on the west side of the Derwent, between the Navarre and Guelph Rivers. From the specimens shown me (before the land was applied for) by the original prospectors, Messrs. Orr and Ellis, I should imagine them to be very rich.

I have, &c.

THOMAS FRODSHAM, JUN.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

5, Davey-street, Hobart, 25th April, 1881.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to report as follows upon the District recently placed under my charge.

The survey of Crown Lagoon, adjoining the Lemont Estate, my first work under the present appointment, was completed on the 17th December, 1880; and on the 14th February last I had completed all the instructions to hand, with the exception of a 40 acre lot applied for by Mr. W. Hodgson, in the vicinity of Prosser's River. During the carrying out of your instructions I travelled over portions of the Counties of Monmouth, Glamorgan, Somerset, and Pembroke.

Starting from Oatlands, I travelled over a good road as far as Lemont, the property of Mr. C. Headlam; thence it gradually got rougher for the next nine miles, where it terminates at Mr. Richard Goldsmith's property. I marked the road line on about a quarter of a mile farther to and through a small lot of land which I surveyed for Mr. Richard Harrison.

On the 20th of January I started for the northern branch of the Macquarie River, distant about twelve miles, following the circuitous foot track. The country through here is hilly, rocky, and in most cases a thick growth of scrub in the hollows and small flats; still it is capable of carrying strong sheep, and may be considered third-class pastoral land. The greater portion of the lot surveyed for Colonel Lethbridge at the Macquarie River, known as "The Colonel's Marsh," is good, rich, agricultural land.

After returning to Goldsmith's farm I came back to Lemont, and on through the Eastern Marshes across Stonehenge Estate, the property of Mr. Sidney Page, to the Bluff River, where Messrs. John, Herbert, and Julian Page have made selections. The country in this locality is of a much better quality and more level than that in the vicinity of Tooms' Lake, and therefore more suited to pastoral occupation; and in many places the land is favourable for agriculture.

Having completed the survey of the Messrs. Pages' blocks of land, I came round past Hobbs' Bluff into the Parish of Whitefoord, marking off two sections of heavily timbered dogwood and musk land of good agricultural description on the way. The former lot of 100 acres is situate about six miles from Stonehenge, in the direction of Hobbs' Bluff; the latter, a lot of fifty acres

applied for by John Housego, in the Parish of Whitefoord, is not far distant from land purchased by Mr. P. C. Wagner, where there is quite a nucleus of a settlement formed, which settlement I believe will be much extended during the next year, as there is some extent of first-class land round the bottom of the Bluff; and if a few miles of road were made from P. C. Wagner's property, extending round the south-east portion of the Bluff, I am of opinion that much of this land would meet with ready selection. I regret to state that, in consequence of my provisions being short at the time of my visit, I was unable to give this locality a thorough inspection with a view to ascertaining the extent of the good land, as this forms a matter of considerable importance. Referring to roads, I may mention that if a good road were made from Jericho to Tunnack, about four miles, a further extension of the same in a direct line for about six miles would reach this settlement.

Leaving Mr. Wagner's I came round on to the Eastern Marshes road, and down through Tunnack to Mr. Thomas Iles' Estate on the White Kangaroo Rivulet, and surveyed two lots of 15 acres each, and an 18 and a 15 acre lot, for Messrs. Quinn, Brogan, and Wroe respectively.

The settlement of Tunnack is a very thriving one, and is gradually increasing, judging from appearances. The road from Tunnack down to the White Kangaroo Rivulet is very steep in places, and in many places blocked up with fallen timber, so much so that at times we had some difficulty in getting the pack-horse safely along.

I trust my report, which report must necessarily be a brief one in consequence of my recent appointment and being previously unacquainted with the various localities of the district, may meet your approval.

I have, &c.

E. A. COUNSEL, *District Surveyor.*

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

Huon Road, 25th April, 1881.

SIR,

I HAVE to report there has been but a very limited extent of new settlement in South Buckingham during the year 1880.

During that period there were only 40 lots of ordinary Crown land, amounting in the aggregate to 2319 acres, and three township lots, of an area of 22 acres, marked out by me in the whole district. The greater number of these lots were taken up by old settlers as an addition to their former selections, and a few were under immigration certificates. Why such a restricted area was selected may be accounted for in various ways,—from the large extent of old settlements occupying the frontage lots and those of easy access, and the consequent increased distance of the available lands from any outlet to market, as also from the extremely low prices of timber, fruit, and all sorts of agricultural produce, which, if grown, would not pay for the carriage out.

There are many of the small settlers about this district who leave their holdings in the charge of their wives and children and go off to the gold or tin mines in the northern parts of the Colony for the greater part of the year, having found out that they can earn much higher wages working at the mines than they can by working on their own clearings; and it is chiefly in this way that they are enabled to meet their yearly instalments to the Government.

The lots taken up in this district under lease for mineral purposes (for working the coal mines) appear to have got into the hands of mere speculators rather than practical miners, or they would have been more fully developed than they are at present.

I have, &c.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

JAMES COMBES.

Franklin, Huon, 9th May, 1881.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to submit for your information my usual Annual Report upon the Survey District under my charge.

Progress of Settlement.—Notwithstanding the promise of improvement in this respect mentioned in my report of last year, I find that, upon the whole, the demand for agricultural selections has, during the past twelve months, hardly come up to the usual average. No doubt this is in some measure owing to the low prices which have been ruling for all descriptions of agricultural produce, and to the entire absence of any "local" market for the same, such as would be

caused by the vicinity of a population engaged in mining or any other non-agricultural pursuits; this view of the case being sustained by the fact that of late the chief selections of land for cultivation have been made in the vicinity of the large timber establishments, such as, particularly, the saw-mills, &c. of Messrs. Facy, Hay, & Co., at Hastings, Southport, a locality which, until within the last few years, had not a single resident, but which now contains a very considerable population, giving evidence, by numerous selections of small lots, of its being a permanent settlement.

Timber Trade.—This important industry, which, in the almost total absence of mining, may be considered the support of the Huon District, has shown during the past year but little sign of improvement, neither demand nor prices for timber (sawn or split) being either satisfactory or encouraging.

Fruit growing.—The prices obtainable for “small fruits” (for preserving) have also ruled too low of late to offer much encouragement for any extension of this industry. Some of the larger growers are even destroying raspberry canes, &c. as unprofitable, substituting apples, pears, and plums, which continue to realise fair paying prices, and for the growth of which the climate of the Huon is particularly suited, the codlin moth being, I believe, up to the present time, unknown.

Mining.—Gold is still being obtained, but very limited as regards extent of country payable. At Lymington, Port Cygnè, auriferous quartz reefs are believed to exist in the vicinity, and some parties are now engaged in searching for them, but I have not yet heard of anything beyond “encouraging indications” being found. Gold in small quantity has recently been found in the Weld River, a tributary of the Huon, also in some of the tributaries of the Lune, Southport, leading from Adamson’s Peak; but in neither case has anything of a payable character yet resulted from the discovery, which however will, it is to be hoped, lead to the examination of the large extent of unknown country in the vicinity of each locality, in which, owing to its nature and formation, minerals may reasonably be expected to be found.

Tin.—Small quantities of this mineral have been said to have been found near Southport. There are favourable indications, but I have not myself seen a single specimen of this ore which has been obtained in the district. Judging, however, from the indications, I should imagine that a search in the vicinity of Adamson’s Peak, as also in the ranges between D’Entrecasteaux Channel and the Huon (which are of granitic or porphyritic formation) would be likely to be satisfactory to explorers.

Coal.—There is no doubt that both coal and iron abound, particularly in the southern part of the district, which presents the somewhat unusual feature of the close juxtaposition of the carboniferous and auriferous formations, payable gold being found at Lymington but a very short distance from the coal measures (in which there are several workable seams) prevailing on the opposite side of the bay. It was one of these seams, distant five or six miles from the water, which was proposed to be worked by the Gardner’s Bay Coal Co., who have, I believe, abandoned the undertaking. I have recently visited the workings of Messrs. Hill and Fitzpatrick at the same place (but nearer the water), and cannot but admire the persevering enterprise of these gentlemen, who have followed up, under somewhat discouraging circumstances, the indications observed, which have led them at last to a seam of considerable thickness (about 4 feet), and apparently of very good quality, which I should imagine can be profitably mined so soon as necessary works for facilitating the delivery of the coal at the water are completed. They have also opened a second seam at a lower level, the coal in which is said to be of still better quality, but which will be more costly in working, being only some 2 feet in thickness. At Southport (vicinity of River Lune) I have found extensive deposits of lignite or brown coal, which are not, however, of any present value for working, owing to the very limited local demand for such kind of fuel and the abundance of anthracite coal. The discovery is, at the same time, of some importance, looking far ahead to the future of Tasmania, when no doubt the combination of iron and fuel to be found in this locality will prove of value. It is also a somewhat significant fact that the same mineral (lignite) is extensively found in the vicinity of Ballarat, Victoria, in, as I am informed, a somewhat similar country, such deposits of lignite having been passed through in the deep sinking which there proved so successful. I may further observe that, although the “color” of gold has been found, no true “bottom” has yet been reached by any of the parties prospecting in this neighbourhood (Southport). Iron pyrites (generally looked upon as an indication of the presence of other minerals) are here to be found in great abundance, both in the massive form and in that of “infiltration” or “encrustation,” some of the rock formations being highly charged with it. The argillaceous iron ore, or clay ironstone, is also found.

Quantity and quality of land, &c.—I am unable to add anything to previous reports on this subject, nor can I conscientiously recommend at present any extensive scheme of road-making into the back lands, being still of opinion, as regards this district particularly, that more successful results may be expected from a progressive improvement of existing means of inter-communication to the benefit of those settlers already established, than from any attempt to force occupation and settlement by means of speculative road-making. I can, however, report very favourably as regards the operation of the 28th Section of “The Waste Lands Act, 1870,” as I have observed that many very

useful works have been, and are being, carried out under its provisions. I would, at the same time, suggest an amendment which in my opinion would increase its usefulness,—viz., by enlarging the powers of the Governor in Council so that the provision (as regards a general rule, no doubt a good one,) by which ten lots must be selected before any money can be expended, may in certain special cases be dispensed with. This would meet such a case as that of the land at the Arve, as well as many others in which a small expenditure is desirable, and would probably be reproductive.

In closing this report—already extended beyond ordinary limits—I would again urge upon the Hon. the Minister of Lands the desirability of facilitating by the opening of exploring tracks, the examination for minerals of the large extent of country, of which comparatively nothing is known, lying between the Huon River and Port Davey. The little we do know of this part of the Colony and its formation warrants the supposition that valuable discoveries of minerals would result from such examination. The important effects that such discoveries would have, as regards the trade and prospects of the southern part of the Colony, are too obvious to be overlooked. I would particularly suggest the opening of a track from Southport to Bathurst Harbour, with another leading off it to connect with that recently cleared in the valley of the Huon. I would further suggest an examination of the Port Cygnet, Southport, and Huon Valley localities by the gentleman appointed by Government to report upon the mineral resources of the Colony; as, although such examination can, of course, be only of a cursory nature, and confined to the opened country, much valuable information may still be obtained for the guidance and encouragement of future prospectors.

I have, &c.

G. INNES, *District Surveyor.*

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

River Forth, 11th March, 1881.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to forward my Annual Report of the Crown land in my District.

Between the Blythe and Penguin (Parishes of Stowport and Ashwater) about 800 acres have been marked off since my last Report. On several of these lots clearing operations have been commenced. An impetus has been given to these localities through the improvements made in the roads. The Crown land has been disposed of for over eight miles along the Pine road, and then for about two miles in a westerly direction. Some of these lots are only medium land or second class, but such quality of land is preferred, with means of access, to the good land lying farther back with no road. The good land is estimated to extend 15 miles back, and I have had many enquiries about it, but applicants find it will not do to go into the heaviest forests without reasonable means of access.

In North Motton several sections have been surveyed, and more applications have gone in for land in this Parish.

Over 1200 acres have been recently marked off in Castra. Occupation extends back 16 miles from Ulverstone in this locality, but improvements are rather slow, owing, probably, to the bad state of the Plank Road at most seasons of the year.

Only a few lots have been taken in Bradworthy since my last report. A good many improvements have been made in this Parish within these last two years.

Between the Wilmot and the Forth above 1000 acres have been applied for; but it is doubtful if all the lots will be taken up owing to their inaccessibility for want of roads and bridges. Two lots of 80 acres each have been surveyed there for copper mining. These lots are being prospected at the present time, and if the result is successful it will add much to the prosperity of the Forth.

In the Parishes of Barrington, Kentisbury, and Dulverton a few scattered lots have been taken, but most of the good land in this part of the district has been selected; what remains lies back, and isolated for want of roads and bridges.

Selection has been progressing very generally hitherto over my district, and even the inferior land and barren soil have been purchased where good permanent roads have been made; but, from the low price of agricultural produce and inferior crops, selections will diminish unless better road accommodation is provided for the good lands lying beyond present settlement.

In the Parish of Forrabury, fronting on the Mersey, 320 acres have been surveyed under application for lease for mining Tasmanite. I understand it is to be put to many useful domestic purposes. Many rumours of mineral discoveries get abroad as having been found in this District,

but nothing of any consequence has come to my knowledge as yet. There seems every probability of this district producing many useful minerals, but the superior attractions of other localities have drawn attention from this for the present.

I have, &c.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

RICHD. HALL.

COUNTIES OF WELLINGTON, RUSSELL, AND PART OF DEVON.

Table Cape, 24th March, 1881.

SIR,

WHEN I furnished my Report for 1879 I was in hopes that the prospects for the year 1880 were bright and hopeful. Unfortunately these hopes have not been realised, the year 1880 having been marked with greater depression and misfortune than I have noticed since I took charge of this district. The agricultural and pastoral interests have suffered severely; the timber trade has not revived; and were it not for the enormous increase of the mining industry the population of the North-West Coast would have been considerably lessened.

Generally when agricultural produce has been low the price of stock has been a fair one; but during the past year meat in quantity has been imported from Victoria, and I have even seen butter from New South Wales retailed at the mines. To give an idea of the great falling off in the produce returns, I may state that the foreign exports of Circular Head alone show a decrease on 1879 of £10,000.

This depression in the agricultural and pastoral interest has of course affected the demand for the Crown lands, and will continue to do so for at least another year. Certainly, the prospects of 1881 are better, and prices are improving.

But perhaps the most serious check to the sale of Crown lands was the rejection of the Branch Roads Construction Bill. Settlers have been promised a "step-by-step" policy of public works; and having obtained an instalment in the shape of main roads and a few cross roads, it was hoped that the roads leading back from the Coast would be put in decent order. Numbers of intending settlers were waiting to see the direction the cross roads were to take, and the news of the rejection of the Bill was a great disappointment. One instance I may bring forward to show the effect of the rejection of this Bill. The Flowerdale is, or rather was, one of the most rapidly extending portions of this district: since the Government opened out the road every acre within reach of the road has been taken up and settled upon. Numbers of intending settlers were waiting for the extension of the road, but one and all withdrew as soon as they heard the road was not to be made at present, and, as a consequence, not one solitary lot of land was surveyed in that district during 1880. On the other hand, since the construction of the road from Table Cape to Detention upwards of 1000 acres of Crown lands have been taken up and settled upon, besides a large area of land formerly held by private owners and now distributed amongst small farmers. I hope this is not trespassing into the domain of politics, but I mention it to urge more forcibly the necessity for the construction of branch roads. And whilst on this subject, although it does not properly come within the province of the District Surveyor, I may be allowed to bear my testimony to the benefit this district has derived from the Roads Maintenance Act. Any one travelling the main roads must see the great improvements effected by the Boards; and the only regret must be that such a measure was not introduced when the main roads were first commenced on this coast.

During the past year there has been an increased demand for blackwood, and the improvement in the roads has enabled settlers to go into the business with profit: but whilst every one must admit that the pioneers of settlement have the best right to make a profit out of the timber, still some restrictions should be introduced to prevent the reckless destruction of valuable timber now going on round about us. At the present rate blackwood will soon be cleared away from the vicinity of the settled districts. The cartage of these immense logs is very trying to the new roads, where the metalling is so narrow that the wheels run always in the same ruts.

It is useless to notice in detail the extent of Crown land surveyed during the year: the lots taken up are merely a few small ones scattered over the whole district. The only new opening that has been made is on the main road between Jacob's Boat Harbour and Detention River, where some half a dozen small lots have been scrubbed this summer.

There are large areas of excellent land at the back of Emu Bay, Cam, Table Cape, Detention River, Brickmaker's Bay, and Duck River; but they are likely to remain untouched for years to come unless some mineral discoveries should infuse new life into the district.

The settlers on this coast are now anxiously hoping that a road will be made to Mount Bischoff, so that their teams may find employment in carting down the ores, and their produce find a ready

market inside the Colony. Such a road would create a large demand for Crown lands, and give an immense impetus to the district.

Mines and Minerals.

Turning from the depressed state of the agricultural interests, it is cheering to see the rapidly increasing mining industry, and to reflect that a large non-producing population of miners are likely to help the farmers out of their troubles.

Although no new discoveries of importance have been made during 1880, a great advance has taken place on the part of the established mines, and the industry has been placed upon a firm and lasting basis.

Lode mining for tin is now well established, and experience shows that a low per-centage of ore can be made to pay where the appliances are suitable and water-power obtainable.

That the quantity of tin ore obtained in Western Tasmania will shortly be largely increased is apparent to any one who knows the country; for, besides the well known riches of Mt. Bischoff, the mines in the vicinity of Mt. Heemskirk are gradually emerging from the obscurity of doubt which has enshrouded them since my first discoveries in that quarter. Although I have never wavered in my opinion of the future richness of the Mt. Heemskirk Tin Mines, it is cheering to see public confidence is returning to those fields. One thing only is to be regretted,—much of the trade which might have been retained in Tasmania will now go to Victoria in return for the capital now being introduced.

Gold.—During the past year a few men have been employed working for gold at the Pieman, and in the vicinity of the Cam and Table Cape. At the latter places the workings are confined to shallow creeks and gullies; those who stick to it manage to make good wages. A discovery of some interest was reported to me, but I have not had time to verify it. Granite bottom is said to exist some eight miles back from here, and a few nuggets of tin have been brought in. No granite was supposed to exist nearer than Hampshire Hills.

At the Pieman a few men have returned, tempted by the prospect of being able to obtain provisions; but the results obtained are not very encouraging, and unless some new discoveries are soon made the place will be deserted. The attractions elsewhere are too good to be neglected for the chance of semi-starvation at the Pieman.

Tin.—At Mount Bischoff the various mines continue to be steadily developed, and fresh discoveries of importance are constantly being made. The West Bischoff Mine is now being pushed ahead, and probably in 1882 it will commence to turn out tin for market.

The North Valley Company is working steadily at lode mining with a moderate return, whilst several new companies are getting ready for work with good chances of success.

The Stanhope Company continues prospecting for lodes, and the Manager has hopes that his efforts will soon be crowned with success. The Don Company is improving in appearance, and keeps up a steady yield.

The Mount Bischoff Company has had a very successful year, having paid away £72,000 in dividends, and cleared off the cost of expensive machinery and water privileges. The Company now possesses a powerful crushing plant and dressing appliances of the most approved construction. Amongst the novelties introduced are a series of Munday's buddles, which give great satisfaction, saving large quantities of fine tin. At the mine a fine boring machine has been erected, and is now ready for work. It is a German machine, worked by compressed air, and it is expected to make rapid progress in getting through the extremely hard ground in the main adit. At the mine there is very little change to report: the yield of 250 tons a month is steadily kept up, rich ground is continually coming into view, and the future prosperity of the mine is pretty well assured.

The township of Waratah is rapidly increasing in extent and importance. The V.D.L. Co.'s tramroad is now being constructed into the township. The streets are being formed and cleared, and buildings of a substantial class are erected.

On the West Coast, in the vicinity of Mount Heemskirk, the prospects of tin mining are once more encouraging. Fresh discoveries have awakened fresh interest, and people are now ready to acknowledge that there is a good future in store for Mt. Heemskirk. Numerous tin veins have been discovered, and energetic efforts are being made to start mining on an extensive scale. As yet, no mine has been opened out sufficiently to enable the public to judge whether the veins are good at a depth, and, as long detailed accounts of the prospects of the place have appeared in the daily press, there is no occasion for me to go into the details afresh.

At Mt. Ramsay a fresh attempt is being made to discover payable tin. Large nuggets are

found in the wash, but as yet no lodes have been discovered. At the Bismuth mine matters are in the same state as I last reported : nothing is being done.

In connection with this subject, I would suggest that provision be made to keep open tracks cut for exploration purposes. It is very little use cutting them if they are allowed to get blocked up. Such tracks as those leading from Mt. Bischoff to Mt. Ramsay, from Bischoff to Heemskirk, from Circular Head to the Pieman, and from Table Cape to the Hellyer, are important means of communication, all of them liable to be blocked up by fallen trees. They could be kept open for a small sum ; say £200 a year would keep open all the tracks I have mentioned.

I was in hopes that the country south of Macquarie Harbour and the Gordon would have received a thorough examination this season. From letters I have noticed from time to time in the *Mercury*, I have little doubt but that tin, at any rate, will be found in that district. Several letters mention the occurrence of granite in various localities, and in my opinion those places should be carefully examined. Almost everywhere the granite occurs north of the Gordon tin has been found, especially where chlorite, schorl, and iron accompany porphyry dykes. I also notice that small finds of gold are reported. On this side of the Island very little notice is taken of such occurrences, for gold is found almost everywhere in the micaceous schists and adjacent drifts. It would be interesting if specimens of granite and schists could be procured for comparison with those from better known localities.

I have, &c.

CHAS. P. SPRENT, *District Surveyor.*

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

Deloraine, 21st April, 1881.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to report that, taking into consideration the bad season and very low prices ruling for all descriptions of farm produce, the settlement in my district is progressing steadily.

The greater portion of the selections have been made in the West Tamar portion of the district, owing to the impetus given to that part by the mining population at Beaconsfield.

Want of roads, combined with low prices, render farming anything but attractive ; and a great number of small farmers, such as comprise the usual body of selectors, are taking to mining pursuits.

Unless more than ordinary assistance is rendered to selectors by making roads into the crown lands, there will be a great falling off in the number of selections made.

Turning to the Gold Mines at the West Tamar, there is a very marked improvement. There is more *bonâ fide* mining, though, of course, a number of speculative leases continue to be taken up. Before the end of the year there is every reason to expect that the Tasmania will not be the only dividend-paying mine. A very great number of leases have been taken up recently ; and if the labour clauses of the Act are carried out there will be a large increase of consumers, and these will create a corresponding body of producers in the district.

I have, &c.

H. PERCY SORELL, *District Surveyor.*

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

Fingal, 30th April, 1881.

SIR,

I HAVE little to report in reference to agricultural settlement in this district during the past year.

At the Upper George several families have occupied their selections since a fairly good road has been made, and a few additional lots have been taken up.

In the neighbourhood of St. Mary's a good many lots have been selected, principally by the relatives of those already holding ground there, and the improvement of the land steadily progresses. These settlements about St. Mary's are fairly prosperous, and this in spite of the fact that on an average not half the area of each lot selected can be said to be of any value.

There has not been any selection calling for notice in any other part of the district. The only large tract of land fit for cultivation is round Thomas's Plains, where, in addition to the want of roads, the difficulty arises of devising a plan for allowing the purchase of lots by selectors without inter-

fering with the free development of the tin-mining industry. It would be well, however, to encourage, if possible, the gradual introduction of cultivation while the large population engaged in mining affords a local market for farm produce.

I have, &c.

GEORGE C. SMITH, *Surveyor.*

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

Launceston, 30th April, 1881.

SIR,

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

Selection and settlement under the 24th Section of "The Waste Lands Act" continue to advance satisfactorily, notwithstanding that contemplated public works have not been carried out. In my last Annual Report I had the pleasure of stating that "the new road from Branzholm to Moorina, although only cleared of timber and not fit for the traffic of even a horseman, has led to seven selections being made there,—in all to the extent of of 1420 acres,—and five out of these seven selectors have already commenced operations on the land, covering many acres in extent, and either taking, or preparing to take, their families there to reside." Out of these there are now three families settled on those selections fronting on this road, and which road forms the only outlet of these particular families. They took up their positions in expectancy of the road being made fit for traffic: the result will be that when the winter rains set in these people and their farm produce will be boxed in, on account of the boggy nature of this line of road, which has not had any more done to it towards making it available for traffic.

Surveys of over 6000 acres of agricultural land since my last Annual Report having taken place, of course reduces my estimate in that report setting down the good unalienated agricultural land at about 41,500 acres, and 45,700 acres for that of medium quality.

Areas under "The Mineral Lands Act" continue to be applied for, principally about Mount Cameron and along the tributaries and banks of the Ringarooma River up as far as the Dorset River. I have been engaged privately to run levels for bringing a water-race from the head waters of the Mussel Roe River to the tin workings on the north bank of the Ringarooma River opposite Mount Cameron, which is intended to supply the want of water so long felt in that part for dressing tin ore. This race will pass over, and could be used for, some miles of tin country which has never been applied for from the fact of it being without water, and which now unfortunately cannot be taken up in consequence of that part being reserved from the operations of "The Mineral Leases Act."

In my Annual Report of 1879 I stated that the stanniferous country around Mount Cameron appeared to be backed up by auriferous country. Lately a line of different geological formation from the usual tin-bearing ground which runs through the midst of the tin workings at that place has been discovered to be rich in gold-bearing quartz reefs; and a similar discovery has been made about seven miles to the north of the same, in the vicinity of the Great Mussel Roe River: in fact, the whole of the north coast line of my district, extending from Bridport to Cape Naturaliste, which is some three miles to the eastward of the estuary of the Great Mussel Roe River (being a distance in all of 43 miles in a direct line), exhibits auriferous indications. These discoveries of gold have caused an excited interest to be taken in the place, and a large area of land to be applied for under the Gold Fields' Regulations. Twenty-five gold mining companies have been formed to work that number of sections, and what in mining parlance is termed "floated," at a nominal value of £368,000. As most of the shares have sold freely, and rapidly changed hands at advanced prices, a very large amount of hard cash must have circulated amongst the speculators in mining investments, and an impetus has been given to trade generally. The share issue and sales of the Royal Tasman Company at Mount Cameron represented the actual value of that claim a short time since at no less than £85,000, with an additional liability of £20,000 more accepted by the shareholders.

The Town of Gladstone, at Mount Cameron, has been marked off, and some allotments on it also. At the recent Crown lands sale the latter brought out some spirited competition, the bidding reaching as high as at the rate of £496 per acre. When it is considered that a short time ago this land would not have been deemed worth purchasing at five shillings per acre, the prices realised for Gladstone allotments show a great faith in the adjacent gold fields. Competition at the same lands sale also extended to lots some twelve miles away from Gladstone, *i.e.*, pastoral lands at the Boobyalla River and allotments on the Town of Ringarooma, when a leasehold at the former, put up at the annual rental of £20, reached as high as £61; and at the latter place, from an upset purchase price of £6 the auctioneer's hammer went down to a *bonâ fide* bidder at £95, nearly 1500 per cent. over the upset price: and yet your Department has asked me to make surveys (which always take ready cash out of my pocket to pay for labour and meet other incidental expenses) on this township speculatively for credit, receiving payment for survey work as the lots sold,—a proposition I would readily assent to if my remuneration were to be in the form of a good per-centage on the prices realised.

Notwithstanding the active mining industry starting at Mount Cameron, there never has been a show (to unaided vision) of stone there equal to that of Waterhouse in the old times, when they did not have to crush stone in a mortar to find the gold; and I am glad to see a spirit of revival of that place setting in, at which the first gold mining claim was surveyed on the 31st of May, 1869, nearly a dozen years ago. In my capacity of Deputy Gold Commissioner at that time and place, I frequently expressed in my reports to the Government an opinion that, although I had great confidence in the place, the Waterhouse Gold Field would not for years be developed under the style of regulations existing at that time; and time has proved the correctness of the opinion expressed, as there have been several starts and collapses of companies there, and consequent desertion of the field. The first crushing of stone from Waterhouse consisted of some 16 cwt., which left the mine estimated at one ton, but which was reduced on its arrival in Launceston by being exhibited in sacks in a store, and many persons being allowed to pick out, for carrying away, the richest specimens. The residue was crushed by a Chilian mill, at Fulton's Foundry in Melbourne, and gave a result of over 30 ozs. per ton of quartz of a rather poor gold—poor from the presence of silver in alloy with the gold—but I do not recollect the actual assay; however, a very satisfactory return as compared with papers from the very successful "Port Phillip and Colonial Gold Mining Companies" at Clunes, in the Colony of Victoria, published in the same year. But the result of operations conducted four years before, in a mine which dated its discovery from 1851: possessed one of the most perfect machinery plants in Victoria; mined at that time at a depth of 460 feet; had 26,000 feet of drives and cross-cuts; had in use 2500 feet of surface single line tramways; employed powerful engines in doing the pumping, drawing, lifting for, and crushing of over 1100 tons of quartz per week,—which gave for the whole year ending September, 1865, from 54,413 tons of quartz, the, in comparison, very poor return of 7 dwts. 13 grs. per ton. Note, the above-mentioned 26,000 feet of drives, &c. represent nearly five miles in length of underground works. This company is considered one of the successes of gold-mining companies in Victoria; yet as against its 7 dwts. 13 grs. per ton some of the stone from Mount Cameron assays very largely, and has crushed in Victorian batteries over 30 ozs. to the ton in the quartz sent over to that colony for trial crushings.

The first machinery erected at Waterhouse was started on the 4th April, 1870. The result of its crushing returns was not satisfactory, and the machinery was removed from its first site and placed on the mine; on which occasion the finding of little roughly made implements, which might be utilised for private retorts, created in some minds a suspicion that the amalgam had been tampered with. The result of the crushings of the machinery on its new site was again unsatisfactory, and the plant was sold and removed; but on the ground over which the mercury boxes had stood amalgam could be scraped up, (I saw several pounds weight in one man's possession thus obtained), proving that loss of gold had been sustained by leakage of the charged mercury. Subsequently another plant was erected on the same claim, and a main shaft sunk, but the reef had pinched where opened out on; the result of operations again unsatisfactory, and the plant again sold and removed. A roasting furnace, Chilian mill, driving power, and effective pumping gear were erected on another claim at Waterhouse, and a well timbered shaft sunk thereon to a depth of 80 feet; but the shareholders got tired of the expense when they had attained this depth of shaft, and sold the plant without attempting to open out to cut the reef. Machinery was also erected on the Southern Cross Claim, but also gave an unsatisfactory return, and the work was stopped for a considerable time: however, it has again been started in other hands, and according to an account I saw in a newspaper a small trial crushing of about 20 tons of stone gave a return of 56 ozs. of very good gold.

The following survey work (of which plans have been drawn) has been effected in my district since my last Annual Report; viz.—over 30 miles of Water Races, 73 Tin Sections, 87 Gold Fields Sections, 157 Town Lots, 2 Townships, and 61 Agricultural Lots, comprising 6031 acres, besides many other surveys of roads, connections, &c. There is much other work in hand the plans of which have not yet been drawn.

On the whole I think my Survey District is steadily improving; but as some of its principal road lines bear very heavy tin and goods traffic, the absence of the operations of the Public Works Department during the last summer will be very seriously felt this winter.

I have, &c.

JOHN R. HURST, *District Surveyor.*

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

Launceston, 30th April, 1881.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to submit my Annual Report of the progress of settlement in the District of Dorset.

Mining.—In the localities known as Lefroy, Back Creek, and Golconda, mining has favourably progressed, and 600 acres have been surveyed under the Gold Fields Regulations. At the Lisle,

however, there has been considerable depression, and the population has decreased. I would suggest the advisability of withdrawing from the operation of these regulations the land in the vicinity of this township and extending to Scottsdale.

Agricultural and Pastoral.—The progress of the district in the selection of pastoral and agricultural sections is extremely satisfactory. Along Hall's road a considerable amount of land has been taken up, and there yet remains to the east and west of the road, and north of the Third River, a large extent of good country unalienated. In the vicinity of the above road, Turner's Marsh, and the Upper Piper, nearly 7000 acres of agricultural land have been surveyed; and in the outlying districts, with Lower Piper, Bridport, and the sea coast, over 2000 acres; and by the Scottsdale road 640 acres of pastoral land.

Roads.—The indifferent state of the roads goes far to prevent more rapid settlement in the district; and it is with pleasure that I note the work of improvement being actively carried out on the road to Pattersonia. Similar operations throughout the district would cause most beneficial results; although even now, I believe, that the census returns will show a larger increase in population than is generally anticipated.

I have, &c.

JOHN W. BROWN, *District Surveyor, Dorset.*

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

Leslie, 9th May, 1881.

SIR,

In making my third Annual Report of the progress of the District in my charge, I cannot but regret that it should be of so insignificant a nature; the only noticeable feature in the year being that of the discovery of auriferous country on the Mussel Roe River.

The amount of land taken up for agricultural purposes during the year has only been 240 acres, in five lots, on the Ransom River.

I may state that the attention of intending settlers is being drawn to a tract of first-class land, which I had the honor to mention in my first Report as being situated on the heads of the Mussel Roe River, and some lots have been applied for in that locality. This block of land, though of first-class quality and considerable extent, has hitherto been almost unknown, though its distance from the sea coast is but about 15 miles, the reason being the want of means of access by roads or even tracks. To remedy this, I would humbly beg leave to suggest that an exploration track be cut from the top of the Blue Tier, from whence it (the land in question) could be reached in a very short distance, and at a very inconsiderable cost; or a track could be marked in from the sea-board at the Bay of Fires through the open country.

The amount of land taken up for tin mining purposes has been very inconsiderable, being merely seven lots, aggregating 200 acres, most of which has been previously held under lease and abandoned.

I have, &c.

E. GLOUCESTER WALPOLE.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

Deloraine, 27th June, 1881.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to forward to you my Report on the district to which I have been recently appointed, my knowledge of the agricultural and mineral land will therefore be somewhat limited.

There has during the last 12 months been a steady demand for land in that portion of my district situated south of Kentishbury, consequent upon the survey and clearance of roads leading from the main road from Latrobe to Kentishbury, and from the latter township itself, also from a road surveyed from Dynan's Ford, on the River Mersey, to the Minnow Gold Fields, and sections taken up in that locality: this latter road, although only surveyed and marked, has been freely used by travellers and others from Deloraine and elsewhere, and also by the mining community. A bridge across the Mersey River at Dynan's Ford, in connection with this road, is urgently required. The old bridge lower down the river, built by the Mersey and Deloraine Tramway Company, and used for so many years by the settlers, is now in a dilapidated condition and dangerous in the extreme to cross, hence the urgent necessity for a bridge at Dynan's Ford.

In the northern part of my district and to the south of Kentishbury there are still from two to three thousand acres of first-class land, in sections varying from 50 to 320 acres each, with roads

surveyed and recently cleared leading to Kentishbury and Latrobe. This land is covered with thick undergrowth and forest of musk and dogwood scrubs, and in some cases belts of blackwood intermingled with blue, swamp, and stringy-bark gum trees, large silver wattle trees also grow on this land: it is well watered in the driest season. In the western portion of the district, at a distance of about two miles south of Mount Claude, seven applications have been lodged to purchase in blocks of 320 acres each, making an aggregate area of 2240 acres. I have visited the locality and surveyed nearly all the land applied for, and find that the applications embrace a portion of country known as Oliver's New Country, composed of the richest description of black soil, with small plains estimated at from 50 to 100 acres each covered with long tussock grass. It is a pity that some check is not placed on the system of selecting isolated areas with a view to monopolise a large extent of country to the exclusion of the *bona fide* settler.

There is still a large quantity of first-class land unapplied for. If a bridge, as suggested by persons interested some two years ago, was erected over the River Mersey, and a good horse track cleared and formed, with an ultimate intention of converting it into a road, leading from the Van Diemen's Land Company's road, branching off midway between Chudleigh and the River Mersey, crossing through "Oliver's New Country," it would be the means of opening up a large and extensive tract of first-class land, as well as large untried mineral deposits. Others prefer a road by way of Kentishbury.

I have recently crossed "Oliver's New Country" to the Emu Plains in a southerly direction, and find the same kind of land extends for a distance of three or four miles. There is then a narrow strip of barren button-grass land, covered with loose quartz and palfrey reefs for about two miles, and from this latter point towards the lakes the land is again of first-class quality. A road from Chudleigh along the Mersey River *via* the western bluff of the "Great Western Tiers" would open up a splendid tract of country, both agricultural and mineral.

Mineral.

Through the middle of this district there is a range of mountains known as Gog and Magog, Roland, Van Dyke, and Claude, running westerly: along the northern slopes of these mountains mineral finds have been made. On the slopes of Gog and Magog Ranges quartz reefs are cropping out, alluvial gold in small quantities being found in the immediate vicinity, and gold, in some instances, in the reefs.

Along Mount Roland gold has been found in the vicinity of the Minnow River, and 10 or 12 claims for quartz reefs have been granted with good and encouraging prospects in the alluvial workings. Strong indications of copper, lead, and silver also occur, and recently much attention has been given to the discovery of the latter mineral. Along the western base of Mount Roland and also along the northern side of Mount Claude numerous discoveries have been made of silver and lead, and on the south side near the western point of Mount Claude a rich lode of silver in conjunction with lead has been recently discovered. This lode is 14 feet wide, and is estimated to yield by assay 75 ounces of silver to the ton and 40 per cent. of lead. The lode is running in a north-easterly direction; and it is the opinion of many practical miners that it is the same as that traced on the northern slopes, covering a distance of $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 miles, running through two large mountains. Applications for mining areas have been forwarded to the Survey Office.

Gold has also been discovered in this locality and applications for leases applied for.

In conclusion, I desire to draw your attention to the fact that if tracks were cut and cleared in various parts of this district it would do much towards opening up the country and assist prospectors to develop its mineral resources.

I have, &c.

HENRY J. CHALMERS, *District Surveyor*...

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.