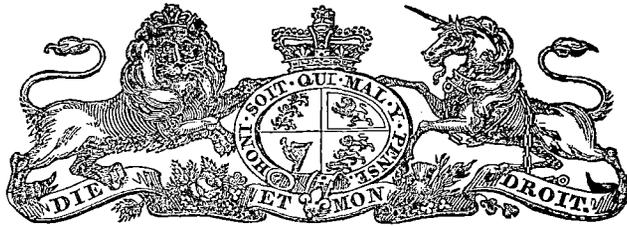


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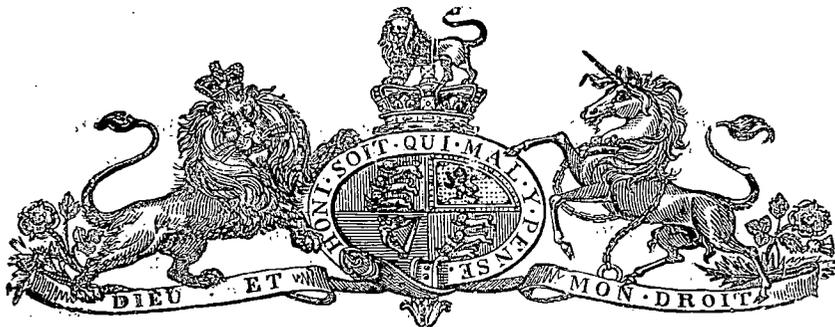
1878.

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, May 16, 1879.



*DISTRICT SURVEYORS' Reports as to the Progress of Settlement on Land
within the boundaries of their respective Survey Districts.*

Stone Buildings, 2nd April, 1879.

SIR,

In reply to your circular of the 29th November last I have the honor to forward you the following Report:—

The district under my charge is naturally divided into two sections, the one suitable for pastoral purposes, which is known as the Lake District, and the other, from its climatic influences, adapted to agriculture.

The greater portion of the second division of the district being in private hands, many sections of the small area left have been taken up in scattered blocks by small selectors in lots varying from 25 to 100 acres each, and the progress of settlement has increased within the last few years.

With reference to the "quantity, quality, and suitability of land for settlement," I beg to say that the area is very circumscribed, the quality being a fair average of medium good land, but no portion at present has been discovered indicating mineral deposits.

The largest area of Crown lands suitable for selection is in the County of Buckingham, Parish of Uxbridge. About 40 blocks have been taken up in this vicinity, amounting in all to about 3000 acres, the sections varying from 15 to 320 acres.

I have, &c.

THOMAS FRODSHAM, JUN.

The Honorable the Minister of Lands and Works.

Stone Buildings, 4th April, 1879.

SIR,

WITH the view of further developing the district under my charge I have been engaged for some time exploring the land in the Parish of Uxbridge, a tracing of which I enclose.

I started from Ransley's land, as shown on the tracing, in a S.W. direction, and for the first mile passed through first-class land covered with a dense pear tree, musk, and fern scrub, and heavily timbered with swamp gum. Leaving this the land changed, and we passed through a thick bauera scrub, stringy bark, sassafras, and celery-top pine, for a distance of 15 chains. We then came into better country covered with myrtle, sassafras, and celery-top pine, the land having a gentle slope in the direction of our course, and crossed a creek in a northerly direction.

Leaving the creek referred to we ascended a rise into a thick bauera scrub, the country being level, and seeming to extend for some distance.

After passing through this we ascended a stony rise, and came upon a marsh covered with cutting-grass and tea tree, pursuing our course a distance of about three miles over first-class land. I altered our course northerly to cut direct through the centre of the block, and found the land equally good. I estimate at least 3000 acres of first-class land in this vicinity.

The road which is now being opened by the Department extends to the point marked "A." I have surveyed the road through the adjoining blocks, and I beg respectfully to suggest that a cart track be cut into the land described, believing that it would all soon be taken up.

I have, &c.

THOMAS FRODSHAM, JUN.

The Honorable the Minister of Lands and Works.

River Forth, 7th April, 1879.

SIR,

In reply to your circular of the 28th of November, 1878, requesting a Report of the progress made with regard to settlement in this district, and also as to the quality of the remaining Crown land, I have now the honor to submit the following observations:—

Commencing with that portion of the district between the River Blythe and Penguin Creek: most of the best land—and that most conveniently situated—was taken up under the 19th Section of “The Waste Lands Act, 1863,” and as there was no resident clause imposed by that Act there are still several thousand acres in a state of nature; but behind these lots settlement is extending very rapidly to about eight miles up the Blythe and Pine Roads. There are preparations going on for a great many new homesteads in this locality.

Between the Penguin and the Leven very little has been done in the way of new settlement; nor is it likely that much will ever be effected beyond the land already purchased, on account of the unsuitability of the land for agricultural purposes. Much of the remaining portion of the land in this locality is occupied by the Dial Range, composed of steep, broken, rocky mountains, with barren spurs running down in places to the Leven and Penguin Creek. The Dial Range is, without doubt, a mineral-bearing country,—copper and lead, with indications of minerals, have been found at intervals for twenty miles back.

I estimate between three and four thousand acres of good land between the Blythe and Penguin Creek remaining for selection. The good land extends about 15 miles along the Pine Road; but there is a belt of inferior land from the eighth mile to the eleventh. After passing the fifteenth mile the granite country begins, which stretches away beyond House Top Mountain. It is generally of a very worthless description as applied to cultivation, but is, without doubt, metalliferous.

Between the Leven and the Forth most of the best land has been selected, which lies in the vicinity of the coast, or until the north boundary of Castra is reached. The land taken under the present Act is being rapidly occupied for about eight miles along the West Castra Road. Along what is known as the Plank Road some of the lots are occupied 16 miles back from Ulverstone: but out of all the land set apart for Indian immigrants, only two lots, amounting to 640 acres, have been occupied, out of about 8000 acres selected. Since Castra has been thrown open for general selection several small lots have been taken up and occupied. There still remains in Castra and to the south of it some 16,000 acres of good agricultural land, according to Mr. Dooley’s plan. To the south of this good land the ascent to the Black Bluff begins. This mountain range seems to divide the agricultural from the mineral and grazing land, as the country to the south of the Black Bluff seems to be in its general character rough grazing land, indicating minerals, and interspersed with patches of basaltic soil and myrtle forests. It is probable that portions of the country here referred to would be suitable for agricultural purposes were it not for its elevated situation. It seems most of the back country attains an altitude exceeding 2000 feet above the sea; and it is also very liable to summer frosts, which destroy potatoes and all tender vegetables.

The land along the Kindred Plains Road is occupied for about eight miles, beyond which there is but little Crown land suitable for settlement. Between the Forth and Wilmot Rivers there is still a large tract of available Crown land; it is difficult to estimate it correctly, but I believe there must be 5000 acres of first-class land. Before I left there I measured for two miles over level first-class land in one direction, and it still continued good: it contains several streams of water. As far as my observations went, and from what I could learn from people who had been there, the good land must extend five or six miles beyond the first selections made in that locality.

Between the Don and the Forth much of the land has been occupied for many years. Including the Parishes of Northam and Barrington, most of the suitable land has been selected, and a large percentage of it occupied. To the east of the Don there is a flourishing settlement called The Nook; nearly all the lots are occupied, and many of these have made great progress in clearing. They have a flour and saw mill, a place of public worship, and are erecting a school-house. To the east of The Nook is another settlement called the New Bed; but many of the lots being selected under previous Acts, which did not insist upon residence, some of them remain without improvement or occupation. East of the New Bed and to the east of the road to Kentish is another settlement called Sunnyside, at which a large amount of selection and settlement has taken place within these last few years.

Between the Mersey and the Rubicon a good many lots have been surveyed, but they have principally been taken because they adjoin the property of the applicant, or because they had good access to market. The soil on most of these lots is of an inferior description, and they are too much scattered to particularise.

The greater portion of the land in Kentish Plains is occupied, and it is the most flourishing settlement in this district. It has been extending in a south-westerly direction very much lately; but it is probable that the land suitable for cultivation is almost exhausted in that locality. About

3000 acres of land have lately been selected to the south east of Kentish; but the country soon gets into barren ridges and mountain ranges, so that an agricultural settlement in that direction will not be very extensive. Gold has been found there in small quantities, and would appear to extend in a westerly direction from the Minno for many miles; but the country generally is of such a hilly, broken, and inhospitable nature that it is almost impossible to prospect it.

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

I have, &c.

RICHD. HALL.

Launceston, 18th April, 1879.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to submit for the approval of the Honorable the Minister of Lands and Works the following Report as to the settlement of the agricultural Crown Lands in my district:—

The settlement in the vicinity of Mount Arthur, and known as the Upper Piper River, has made the most progress; over two thousand acres have been surveyed, and I now hold instructions for small lots in that neighbourhood,—in fact since the roads have been formed, and a probability of further improvement, any lands lying near main roads are quickly selected and improved.

I have no hesitation in saying that as soon as the lands recently withdrawn from sale are again available many thousands of acres lying between Hall's track and Scottsdale, and partly surrounding Mount Arthur on north and east sides, will be settled upon. Many applications have been received to be approved of at some future time when the lands now withdrawn from sale are again open for selection.

The settlement of Turner's Marsh has extended itself north and over the Third River, and will soon connect with the recently surveyed lots on Hall's track to Bowood.

More than one thousand acres have been measured in this vicinity, but the lots are more scattered, the marsh having been granted a great many years ago, but the least improvement in the roads causes a demand for inferior lands when conveniently situated.

A few lots have been secured in the Parish of Saltwood and in vicinity of Forester's River, but the state of the tracks is quite sufficient to prevent selection.

Surveys under Gold Fields Regulations have not been numerous, the Regulations being of such a character as to allow the miners to hold lands without survey if they prefer; notwithstanding the large influx of miners to the Lisle Gold Field, only about twenty registered claims have been applied for.

On the whole the district has very much improved, more men are profitably employed than at any other time during my charge; and when the lands are thrown open for selection, provided the proper time is not neglected, many men now following mining will settle in the district.

I have, &c.

JOHN W. BROWN, *District Surveyor.*

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

Launceston, 19th April, 1879.

SIR,

As requested by Circular of the 28th November last, I have the honor to make the following Report on my survey district:—

A large population, chiefly engaged in agriculture, occupy the settlements of Patersonia, Myrtle Bank, Scottsdale, and Ringarooma, while at the Waterhouse Gold-field two companies are actively engaged in mining for reef-gold; and a large population, principally tin-mining, spread over the districts of Mount Cameron, along the defile of the Ringarooma River and its tributaries, up to the agricultural settlement, and also over the part known as Ruby Flat and its vicinity. Of the aggregate of the above population it is impossible for me at this juncture to form anything like an approximate estimate.

There is a good wide field at Waterhouse and its vicinity open to quartz-reefing which I think likely to take considerable time to develop; there are also good indications of alluvial auriferous ground extending from Waterhouse over a distance of thirty miles to the foot of Mount Maurice, at which place (top of Mount Maurice) gold, copper, and tin have all been discovered; but in the lower tract of country alluded to no metals, that I am aware of, have been discovered as yet. I may add, the same tertiary formation, with occasional out-crops of granite, extends also from Waterhouse to Bridport, in the vicinity of which place small quantities of gold have from time to time been found.

The stanniferous country around Mount Cameron forms a considerably broad belt, and appears to be backed up by auriferous country. It extends to the north and south sides of Mount Horror, near which both tin and gold have been discovered, but there are, I believe, no present workings at that place. Gold has also recently been found on the north-east spurs of Mount Barrow, and I am of opinion that this auriferous country extends from St. Patrick's River (where gold has also been obtained) to the North Esk River, with occasional tracts of good agricultural land. There are, I know, several grassy plains and some good land under scrub. This line of country is very little known, and is entirely without road or track through it. I am of opinion that a track opened up from near Whisloca to Scott's 800 acres on the St. Patrick's and Camden Rivers would result in the settlement of much of that line of country.

Much of the tin country around Mount Cameron is at present untouched, but should labour become cheaper, and the present Home price for tin keep steady, I have no doubt mining for tin ore will be more extensively carried on there; and, although stream tin deposits are comparatively soon worked out, tin lodes are likely to be discovered which will give permanency to the industry.

The principal portions of unalienated generally good agricultural land in my district occur, 1st,—From the northern side of Mount Barrow to the southern portion of the Scottsdale settlement, which I estimate to be about 15,000 acres; and 2nd,—From the southern side of Mount Horror, extending south-easterly towards Moorina, and southerly towards Branxholm, about 23,500 acres; to which add the country occupied by the Billycock Tier and its spurs, extending on to Mount Maurice, of which I think there are about 35,000 acres of generally medium quality which will eventually be taken up; and about 3000 acres of first-class land not included but occurring within this area. These agricultural lands are all densely wooded, and (with the exception of where the Ringarooma road crosses the Billycock) entirely without roads. At present pioneer settlers cannot be got for them, as no one chooses to isolate himself in the backwoods, men naturally preferring to go where they have good roads to go upon. If roads were made from the central parts of these good lands to their natural outlets, and only a few settlers be induced thereby to go in, others would soon follow, and the nucleus of a settlement at each would thus be formed, which would continually expand itself and augment our population and wealth.

I respectfully beg to refer you to the plans accompanying this report; although imperfect, they are the best I could procure, and I have endeavoured to delineate on them, by colours and writing, the portions referred to. Unfortunately I have no plan showing the country occupied by the Billycock Tier.

I estimate the extensive tracts and smaller spots of generally good unalienated agricultural land in my district to be about 41,500 acres; the medium quality, in all parts, at 41,000 acres; the auriferous-looking country in which leads or patches of alluvial or quartz reefs are likely to be discovered, at 56,500 acres; and the generally tin-bearing country at about 48,500 acres.

The following is a Summary of the Crown Estate in my district to which importance may be attached as likely to give revenue independent of pastoral rents, timber licences, and other sources; viz.—

Generally good agricultural land.....	41,500 acres
Medium quality ditto.....	41,000 "
Country containing auriferous indications.....	56,500 "
Generally tin-ore country.....	48,500 "
TOTAL.....	<u>187,500</u> "

Having had to use an old lithograph showing the Mount Cameron country, two lots (one on the Great Muscle Roe River; and the other adjoining Charmouth) happen to have been previously coloured pink, but which is not intended for this report.

I have, &c.

JOHN R. HURST, *District Surveyor.*

*The Honorable the Minister of Lands and Works,
Hobart Town.*

Fingal, 21st April, 1879.

SIR,

In accordance with your instructions I send a Report as to agricultural settlement in this district during 1878.

The principal centre of settlement is St. Mary's, in the vicinity of which place I last year marked off eleven lots from one hundred acres to fifteen acres in area applied for under the 24th section.

These lots are occupied, and on nearly all improvements are being carried on. The land in its original state is valueless, being heavily timbered and densely covered with scrub.

In spite of there being a large proportion of rocky and worthless land on most of their lots, the small farmers who have purchased Crown land about St. Mary's are prospering. The majority are Germans, and are frugal and industrious. The land is principally used for dairy farming. In the rest of the district (with the exception of the new settlement on George's River) the lots are scattered, and have been taken up to establish a home, the occupiers in most instances depending more on their work for others (at fencing, &c.) than on the land for a living.

Such is the case near Irish Town (in my portion of the district), at the Scamander, at Four Mile Creek, and about George's Bay. The land is, however, gradually improved, and is in some instances looked to for a living. Six lots, all of small area, were marked off last year under the 24th section in these localities.

Near Goshen three lots were surveyed which have not yet been occupied by residents.

On George's River I last year marked off two lots, on both of which improvements have been made and residences built.

There is in this neighbourhood a tract of good land of which about two thousand acres have been taken up for settlement in lots varying in extent from three hundred and twenty acres to fifty acres. There are now about six occupiers on the land, and improvements have been begun on nearly all the lots, about twenty in number. At present the settlers are at a great disadvantage in having to pack their rations from Gould's Country—a distance, on the average, of about six miles. As soon as a road is made I believe all those who have taken up ground, or some members of their families, will establish their homes on the land, of which none, so far as I know, has been taken to hold as a speculation.

This will, in my opinion, become a thriving settlement; and although most of the valuable land on the North and South George is included in the surveyed lots, there are, I believe, considerable areas at no great distance which, after the road is made to Gould's Country, will be gradually taken up.

The land is much the best that I have marked off under the 24th section in this district.

There are few large blocks of agricultural land in this district within reach of roads.

Most of the land is better suited for pastoral purposes, although in several localities I have little doubt ultimately a good deal of land will be taken up for cultivation. About Thomas's Plain, for instance, there is a large extent of good land which some day may become of value, but at present the want of a road to it renders it worthless.

I have, &c.

GEORGE C. SMITH, *Surveyor*.

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

Krushka's Bridge, Moorina, 24th April, 1879.

SIR,

IN making my first annual report upon the crown lands within the boundaries of my Survey District I have the honor to draw your attention to the very meagre means at my disposal in obtaining the information you require, as I have not had an opportunity during the short time since I have been appointed to thoroughly examine it.

With regard to settlement. The only portions of my district that any progress has been made towards settlement are in the neighbourhood of Gould's Country, Muscle Roe River, Cape Portland, and Ringarooma Port. In the former place, viz., Gould's Country, there is a small quantity of land taken up for agricultural purposes, about 500 acres, which is settled upon and partly reclaimed.

The coast line from Muscle Roe River round to Ringarooma River, including Cape Portland, has been taken up for pastoral purposes; the only improvements on these lands being merely those necessary for the carrying on of those pursuits.

With regard to the unalienated portions, there is an area of about 5000 acres of good agricultural land on the George and Groom Rivers, and upon the Muscle Roe River, near its source, there is a block of land of about 15,000 acres of rich agricultural land of similar character to the land in Upper Ringarooma and Scottsdale and very suitable for agricultural settlement. The rest of my district, with the exception of isolated spots of small extent, is composed of barren heathy plains and scrubby hills, totally unfit for settlement.

The stanniferous deposits are contained within an area of about 6000 acres stretching along the north bank of Blue River and the north side of the Blue Tier, with a few isolated patches upon the east bank of the Ringarooma River.

I have, &c.

E. GLOUCESTER WALPOLE, *District Surveyor.*

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

Fonthill, near Oatlands, 25th April, 1879.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to forward, according to instructions, the following report upon the progress settlement of agricultural selections during the last few years in the survey district to which I have been appointed. I may refer in the first place to the settlement of the "Ragged Tier," "Carlton Scrub," and neighbourhood. But little agricultural produce had been sent to market from these places before about 1859 or 60; since that time great improvements on the various selections have taken place, and at the present time nearly all the selectors have, to a certain extent, brought their properties under cultivation, producing annually a great amount of cereals and root crops; and considering the character of the country (dense scrubs and heavily timbered), too much praise cannot be given to those persons occupying and devoting their time and energy in cultivating these localities. I may also state, that several selections have been made on "Forestier's Peninsula," considerable progress in agriculture having taken place, and a large amount of produce now annually shipped to market.

The neighbourhood of "Tunnack" or Bluff (Mt. Ponsonby) has now become an extensive agricultural district, and continues to greatly improve. The eastern side of the Bluff attracts considerable attention and bids fair to surpass the western side (Tunnack), many selections having been recently taken up and cultivation to a considerable extent actively progressing, and in the course of a few years a large amount of grain, &c. will be produced. I am much mistaken if this part of that neighbourhood does not prove the most favoured side. It would be of course invidious on my part to name personally any selector in these agricultural settlements, I can only observe, nearly all have done their best to bring their holdings into a forward state of improvement; and I may say few only of the selectors have failed in fulfilling the conditions of the 24th Section of "The Waste Lands Act." The northern and eastern portion of the district has also improved but not to the same extent in agricultural pursuits, being confined more to the coast line and being occupied in grazing, for which purpose it appears more adapted. I am at present unable to point out any extensive area of vacant lands of equal value to the more southern portion of the district.

With regard to mineral deposits, I am not aware of any up to the present time having been discovered, unless the coal deposits at Jerusalem (the old Government Works) and at York Plains be taken into consideration, the latter situate on private property,—both, however, being in active operation. Taking all things into consideration, and with regard to labour, the fact of so many men having turned their attention to mining pursuits on the northern side of the Island, I am of opinion the district has progressed more favourably than could have been expected during the last few years; and upon the whole, I consider the progress made in the agricultural portions of the district to be of a very satisfactory character with a decided tendency to progression, particularly so among the native youths rapidly advancing to manhood and entering upon agricultural pursuits apart from "Paterfamilias" on their own account, and under heavy difficulties on dense and heavily timbered selections taken up by them.

I have, &c.

THOMAS WEDGE, *District Surveyor.*

The Hon. the Minister of Lands, Hobart Town.

Franklin, Huon, 25th April, 1879.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to submit for your information the following report of the progress of settlement, &c. within the Survey District under my charge, which comprises the County of Kent, part of Buckingham, and also South Bruni Island:—

Progress of Settlement.—On account of the heavy cost of clearing, &c., and of the rough nature of the country, the progress of agricultural settlement in this District is always slow, but for the past year (1878) it has, I believe, been rather under the average, which may be partly accounted for by the depressed state of the timber trade, which has induced many to leave, and partly from the attractions offered in other parts of the Colony by recent mineral discoveries.

Of the lots selected under the 24th Section of the Waste Lands Act a considerable proportion are taken up only for the timber they produce—the preparing of which for the market has hitherto afforded employment to a large industrial population, while the making of roads, &c. requisite to bring out the timber has tended indirectly but most materially to the increase of permanent settlement. Some few of these lots are abandoned by the first selectors, but, as a rule, are afterwards again selected for settlement, so that although individual cases of such may no doubt occur, I am unable on the whole to report any serious loss or damage to the public estate consequent upon such selection of lands for timber purposes.

Mining (Gold or Tin).—No mineral discoveries of any importance have yet been made in the Huon District, although during the past year the existence of gold—in alluvial and reefs—in the vicinity of Port Cygnet has again attracted attention, and efforts have been made to develop the deposits—so far, however, I understand, with but scant success. No discoveries of tin have as yet been reported.

Coal.—In the matter of coal mining some little activity has been recently shown—the closing of the Port Arthur mines having probably stimulated enterprise in this direction,—and a considerable area of land has been applied for to lease under the regulations for the working of this mineral, much of which has since been abandoned (at Port Cygnet and at South Cape Bay, near Recherche); but one company, who hold leases in vicinity of Gardener's Bay, have opened out a workable seam of good quality anthracite coal, and have had a line of tramway (proposed as a steam locomotive line) surveyed from their mine to the water at Green Point, Port Cygnet, for the construction of which they are about to call for tenders, and will probably soon be in active operation. A mine of the same kind of coal situate at Adventure Bay, South Bruny Island, is also being worked to a limited extent.

Quantity and Quality of Land suitable for Settlement, &c.—It is practically impossible with regard to a District like the Huon, of which the larger portion of unalienated lands consist of dense, almost impenetrable, forests and undergrowth, to give anything like a reliable estimate, either of the quantity of such land suitable for settlement or of its quality as such. It will, therefore, suffice to point out that in the vicinity of the various settlements large tracts of good land are known to exist which require only the construction of roads, in addition to a demand for such land, to render them available for the permanent settlement of a large population. I cannot, however, see my way clear at present to suggest, as reproductive works, any outlay in this direction, viz., of opening new land; but should rather advise improvement in the facilities of communication for those already located as a surer means of securing a steady increase of settlement than any attempt to prematurely force it.

It would, however, in my opinion, be highly desirable to open tracks to facilitate prospectors for minerals in the southern and western portions of the District, there being fair grounds to anticipate that some valuable discoveries would result.

I have, &c.

G. INNES, *District Surveyor.*

The Honorable the Minister of Lands and Works.

REPORT on Settlement in the District of South Buckingham, for the year ending 30th April, 1879.

DURING the past year there have been eighty-two (82) selections marked out, comprising an aggregate area of 3249 acres.

A small number of the above are lots claimed under Immigration Certificates, the remainder being taken up under the credit clauses of "The Waste Lands Act."

Not a tenth part of these lots are settled on by parties who devote their whole time in clearing and growing produce for market as a means of subsistence, but they are generally used as a sort of depôt for the wife and children whilst the husband goes off to more lucrative employment either at the tin mines, or at splitting on the crown lands, or working for weekly wages for some of the older settlers in the neighbourhood.

Thus, owing to the mining and other interests paying such a high rate of wages, nearly the whole of the able-bodied men are abstracted from their usual agricultural pursuits, and consequently the process of clearing their land must necessarily be much retarded, and in many cases cease altogether; and although a great many of our working men do invest a portion of their savings in the purchase of crown land, they do not clear or improve their selections to any extent.

Taking the whole District through, I do not think there is one quarter the amount grown either of grain or potatoes there was from ten to fifteen years ago—the settlers seem to give their whole attention to the growing of fruit, (which course cannot possibly succeed beyond a limited quantity), scarcely any of them cultivating more vegetables than sufficient for their own use.

I am of opinion that as long as the present anomalous state of things continue, namely, the price of labour to be so far beyond the value of the articles raised by such labour, more especially in agricultural matters, just so long will clearing land and agricultural pursuits generally cease to be entered into to any extent in Tasmania.

JAMES COOMBES, *Government District Surveyor.*

19th April, 1879.

Table Cape, 6th March, 1879.

SIR,

I HAVE taken the liberty in the following lines to draw your attention to the advisability of further exploring Western Tasmania.

It is now some four years since I first urged the Government to open up the Western Country by means of rough foot tracks, and by rough examination of the leading geological features.

Previous explorations under Mr. Gould and others had not resulted in any satisfactory finds, and the public were naturally averse to speculating in such an unpromising locality. But the discovery of tin at Mount Bischoff threw a new light upon the character of our mineral resources, and upon the mode of occurrence of valuable minerals. Therefore I induced the Government to let me try and trace out the run of granite from Mount Bischoff in a southerly direction, and I was successful so far as to trace out the line of granite until it ran into the sea near Mount Heemskirk; I brought back specimens of tin and gold, and my reports led others to follow with the result that valuable discoveries of minerals have been made all through the country I examined. This first expedition cost the Government exactly £200.

Next year under your own instructions I examined the country south of Circular Head, my object being to determine how far the granite extended westerly, and to find out what indications of minerals were to be found in that locality. That expedition cost £400, and as its results we now have the discoveries of gold at the Donaldson and Castray Rivers. Prospectors are now thronging those previously desert places, and the amount paid in fees, rents, &c. has doubly repaid the cost incurred in examining the country. Prospectors do not care to go into unknown parts and spend many weeks looking for ground to prospect on, but once show them good indications and they will endure the greatest hardships in their search for minerals.

All the country north of the Gordon is now accessible to prospectors, and its leading features are generally known. Private enterprise, assisted by Government help in the shape of tracks, will soon open up that locality and bring its hidden treasures to light; and although new chums may give gloomy accounts of their hardships and the poverty of the place, I have but little doubt but that in a few years time there will be many profitable mines in the vicinity of Mount Heemskirk and the Meredith Range.

But strange to say very little attention has been directed to the country south of the Gordon River, and between the Huon River and the South-west Coast. There is a large extent of country in that vicinity almost unknown, and no one seems to care about prospecting it; the reason is that no one knows where to go to look for minerals, so little being known of the rocks of the district.

If it could be once established that primary or crystalline rocks occur there, and that porphyry and schorlaceous granites are to be found, then one might predict the presence of gold and tin.

Wherever the granite occurs in Western Tasmania in connection with tourmaline and slates, tin has always been found; and wherever soft schists, talcose or micaceous, have been found, gold in small quantities has always accompanied them.

I have never been able to find out for a certainty whether granite occurs in South-western Tasmania, but I imagine it does, and prospectors ought to endeavour to find its whereabouts.

A small sum of money, say £500, would be sufficient to send out a party of good men to go through the country, prospect it, and report upon its leading features. Provisions could be conveyed from the Huon, and depôts established at Port Davey and Birch's Inlet, Macquarie Harbour. If traces of tin and gold were found prospectors would then soon open up the country.

It is a bad plan to set these exploring parties to cut *good* tracks. Their time is thus wasted; and the tracks, being cut at haphazard, are seldom worth much afterwards. What is wanted is to discover country worth opening up, by tracks cut by subsequent parties. An exploring party should cut and mark a *rough* track, and go over as much ground as possible.

That minerals exist in the south west of Tasmania few can doubt. Copper, gold, titanium, coal, have all been brought from different localities; and competent explorers have always spoken well of the prospects of the ground they have passed over.

Mr. Hull informed me that Major Cotton always spoke of the vicinity of Lake Tiberias as very promising; and I believe Mr. Gould and Mr. J. R. Scott spoke well of the country they had passed over.

I trust that the Government will vote a small sum for this purpose, and that next summer the work will be undertaken. I am quite certain that the public would be glad to hear of any attempt in that direction. Trusting that you will pardon the length of these remarks,

I have, &c.

CHAS. P. SPRENT, *District Surveyor.*

The Hon. C. O'REILLY,
Minister of Lands and Works, Hobart Town.

Table Cape, 10th March, 879.

SIR,

IN obedience to a Circular of 28th November, 1878, I do myself the honor to furnish the following Report in answer to the questions contained in that Circular:—

During the last three months I have made a complete tour of my district, and have made myself fully acquainted with its capabilities, progress, and requirements, and I can the more readily bear witness to the substantial progress of this portion of the Colony.

The quantity of Crown lands taken up for agricultural purposes is not large, and the reason for it is not hard to find. The high rate of wages at the neighbouring tin mines has attracted there most of the young men of the district, and the recent excitement over the prospects of the West Coast has induced many to go out prospecting. This result is not to be regretted, for although the sale of Crown lands for agricultural purposes suffers thereby, yet the Colony gains in the end. For many of these men, who a few years ago were earning but a poor and precarious living on their farms, have, by mixing amongst the shrewder and more intelligent miners, gained most useful knowledge, and opened their eyes to the fact that valuable minerals are to be found round about them, and that those so long-neglected deserts are well worthy of careful examination. Hence it is that the settlers of these districts are gradually changing their character; instead of sticking to the farm as formerly many of them work at the mines, or go prospecting for themselves, or for co-operative parties, and although some few of them apply their earnings to the purchase of land, yet the majority prefer the more bustling and exciting life at the mines. Therefore it is not strange that, although the agricultural interest makes slow, but steady, progress in this district, the mining interest is extending far more rapidly.

The most westerly of the agricultural settlements in my district is the Montagu. This small settlement is one of the most flourishing in Tasmania; the extraordinary richness of the soil, and its proximity to water carriage, give the settlers great advantages. The land already taken up is nearly all under cultivation; and grows very large crops. Eighteen tons of potatoes to the acre is not an unusual crop on the best paddocks, whilst the feed for stock is the best I have ever seen.

Unfortunately, the extent of the settlement is not large, and very little good land remains unsold in the immediate neighbourhood of the farms. Swampy and heathy plains surround the settlement.

Last time I was in the vicinity I surveyed four lots in a new situation, on a tier to the east of the present farms, and if these lots turn out as good as the selectors imagine them to be there will be a large area of Crown land opened out for settlement, for as far as I could see similar land extended back for many miles. The public works now being constructed in this vicinity will be of great assistance to the settlers, and will enable them to ship the valuable timber that abounds in the neighbouring tiers.

A further sum of £1000 expended on roads in the Montagu would be an immense assistance to an industrious hard-working people.

The next settlement to the east is the Duck River, and here I am sorry to say there is not much progress to report. No Crown Lands have been taken up during the past year, and I do not see much progress amongst the old farms. The export of blackwood in the log is one of the principal industries. Now that the Irish Town road is being constructed under the Public Works scheme Duck River may be expected to revive a bit. There is plenty of good land in the tiers between Duck River and the Montagu, and more in the forest to the south towards the Arthur River.

No fresh settlements have been made in the vicinity of Circular Head, and the Van Diemen's Land Company do not encourage the settlement of their lands; consequently the old glories of that once populous district are now rapidly passing away, and the place becoming more of a pastoral district. There are plenty of good patches of Crown Land south of the Company's boundary, but they do not appear to attract anybody's attention, but now that the south road is being constructed it is probable that these lands will find purchasers.

In the vicinity of Detention River no new settlements have been made, but the old ones make steady progress. Mr. Dallas' farm is a picture of neatness, and is a standing monument to his industry and skill,—I wish there were more like him,—his is the best kept bush farm I have seen in the country. There is a large extent of good Crown Land in the vicinity of Detention River, and as soon as the main road between Table Cape and Circular Head is completed I expect to see these lands go off readily; the road passes through some first-class land. I believe there is quite 5000 acres of good land available for settlement in the vicinity of Detention.

Between the Flowerdale and Inglis River there has been a good demand for the Crown Lands, and in a few years time the Flowerdale will become an important district. Many fresh clearings have been made and many more will be made next summer. A macadamised road is now being made as far as the bridge over the Flowerdale River, and the road is likely to be extended further with the moneys due under the Waste Lands Act. There is plenty of unoccupied Crown Lands for intending settlers, and the demand for them is steady. I cannot say what extent of good land remains, but I believe it extends in patches for many miles south. If the Government would expend another £1000 on this district the sale of the lands would be very much increased.

Very little fresh settlement has taken place in the vicinity of Wynyard, Mount Hicks, and the Cam, the good land now remaining is all further back than the settlers care to go, and until the country becomes opened up by roads, we cannot expect much sale for the crown lands in that vicinity.

Between the Emu River and the Blythe River there is a large extent of very good land. Considerable progress has been made in the settlement at Chasm Creek, and most of the lands purchased there have been opened up. The good land is in patches, divided by hills of quartz gravel. There is abundance of valuable timber, gum, blackwood, and celery-topped pine. Iron ore abounds in immense deposits. A few days ago I came from Adam's Creek on the Blythe to the farms on Chasm Creek, and passed through some excellent land on the west side of the Blythe—I should imagine quite 4000 acres; and I have no doubt that much of this land will be taken up during the next few years. Here again, however, the want of roads prevents settlement.

Of the crown lands in unoccupied parts of my district I can only speak in general terms. On the high ground forming the divide between the northern rivers and the Arthur there are thousands of acres of dense myrtle forest, with here and there patches of gum forest.

Selectors as a rule have a dislike to lands upon which the myrtle grows very thick; but in my experience I have seen these lands turn out as well as any others, provided the rock is basaltic. If in course of time the population extends far back, I have no doubt these forests would be cleared and the land would grow good feed for cattle, even supposing the climate prevented the growth of wheat.

In the vicinity of Mount Bischoff there are thousands of acres of these Myrtle forests, and it is probable that settlement will take place as the mining interests extend.

In the Western Country there are few large tracts of land fit for agriculture; small pieces are to be found on the banks of the Pieman and in the vicinity of the Henty River, but it is not probable that any of these lands will be taken up for agricultural purposes until the mining population becomes larger and more settled.

It is impossible for me to give the extent of agricultural lands in my district, as there are large areas unknown to me except from hearsay, and the country is so little settled that the nature of the bush is but little known.

The mineral lands in my district are both extensive and important, and are increasing rapidly in their influence upon the Colony.

The immense mineral wealth of Mount Bischoff is only yet at the commencement of its development, and promises soon to attain to grand proportions. The quantity of tin turned out by the Mount Bischoff Company during the past year, amounting to 2160 tons, is, I believe, the largest ever yielded by any one mine in the world in the same time. Other companies are doing well, and new discoveries are constantly being made, all of which promise permanent prosperity to Mount Bischoff. Mining operations are carried on in a scientific and skilful manner. Machinery and appliances of the most approved description have been introduced, and further improvements are contemplated. Altogether the Mount Bischoff tin mines are such that the Colony may well be proud of them, and may point to them as evidences of enterprise, patience, and toil rewarded.

In the vicinity of Hampshire Hills much prospecting has been done, and the prospects in some localities are very good; but as yet no certainty of success has been attained. Indications of the existence of lodes have been met with, but the lodes themselves are as yet undiscovered.

On the West Coast, in the vicinity of Mount Heemskirk, the excitement of prospecting has been very great, and the opinions expressed have differed as widely as is possible. The first prospectors gave such good accounts of the prospects of the place that a rush took place during the winter months, and a reaction speedily set in. This summer accounts are once more encouraging, and those who are most capable of judging agree that a good future awaits the mines. Numerous lodes have been discovered both in the slate and in the granite. Some of these appear to be really good, and if they continue in depth will constitute good permanent mines. Much harm has been done by persons writing disparaging reports to the newspapers, persons who seem to forget that time and patience are necessary to the development of most mines, and who, deceived by the easily obtained stream tin of the East Coast, did not take the trouble to study the peculiarity of the tin deposits on the West Coast.

On the Donaldson and Castray Rivers discoveries of gold have been made, and prospectors are examining the ground. As yet little is known of the value and extent of the find, and too much impatience is being manifested. Tracks are sorely needed to enable prospectors to get about. Efforts are now being made to collect sufficient funds to get a pack-horse track cut from Mount Bischoff; and until that is done prospectors cannot do much work.

In all directions prospectors are examining the country, and in many instances promising indications have been met with. Any likely-looking country soon attracts miners. So much activity has never previously been displayed, and it is to be hoped that substantial results will follow.

Besides tin and gold, discoveries have been made of copper, lead, zinc, antimony, osmiridium, silver, bismuth.

Altogether the mineral prospects of this portion of the Colony are highly satisfactory, and likely to lead to the increased welfare of its inhabitants.

I have, &c.

CHAS. P. SPRENT, *District Surveyor.*

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

Deloraine, 15th May, 1879.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to report that the settlement in my Survey District is spreading rapidly in every direction where there is any Crown land available.

In the Chudleigh District, including Mole Creek, the greater portion of the Crown land available for agriculture has been selected. The inferior land, however, is now being eagerly taken up. This arises from a great number of the old landed proprietors, who, having their original farms cleared, are turning their attention to stock, and consequently require an extended area.

At Circular Ponds, also in the Chudleigh District, a number of selections have been made; and, when a road is made, I am of opinion that a very much larger area will be taken up. Here also I think a Township could be reserved with advantage; but I have already had the honor to explain to you personally my views.

Should a bridge be erected across the Mersey, some 4000 or 5000 acres will be taken,—the difficulty of crossing the Mersey being the great drawback. Here also the road can be very much improved; and I have no doubt that the present precipitous track over the summit of Gad's Hill can be avoided, and a bullock-dray road obtained instead.

This portion, however, I do not think will pay to cultivate, otherwise than for dairy and fattening stock.

There is some very good land across the Forth, but it is not likely to be required until the Gad's Hill country is exhausted.

In the Parish of Parkham a very large number of selections have been made; and as the road progresses towards Dry's New Country, so will settlement follow. Already one or two have settled beyond Weber's; and there must be some 6000 or 7000 acres of good land available.

I beg to draw your attention to the fact that the road laid out by me has had the effect of selling every acre in its vicinity. Of course the road has been made by the Government; but it surely is not too much to say that similar causes will produce similar results, and that in every case extending roads extends settlement. In this case there is far better land than much that has been selected beyond the end of the present formed road.

There is no doubt also that the Mersey railroad, when completed, will have the effect of selling every acre in its vicinity.

Towards the Liffey and Blackwood Creek settlement is also progressing; but it calls for no special comment.

In the vicinity of Deloraine land that no one would have thought of selecting two years ago is being taken; but the supply here is limited.

The West Tamar land as a rule is bad, but still a few lots are being selected.

I have, &c.

H. PERCY SORELL, *District Surveyor.*

The Hon. the Surveyor-General.