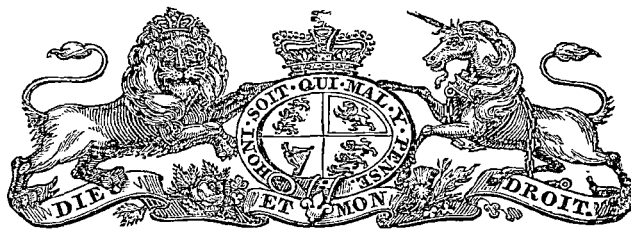


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SESSION II.

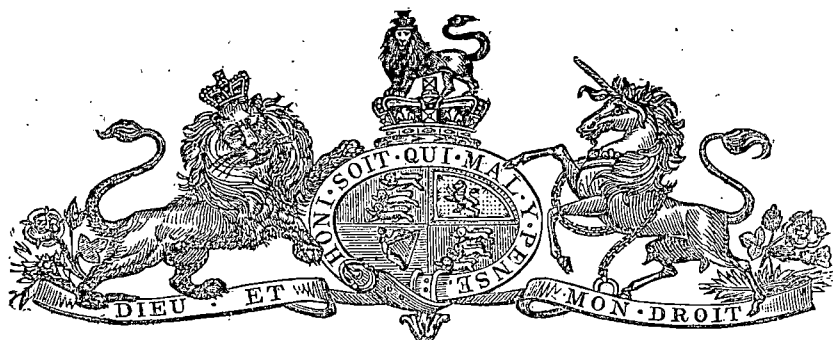
PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

VILLAGE SETTLEMENT:

FIRST REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE.

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

Cost of printing—£1.



*Village Settlement Rooms, Barrack Square,
11th August, 1896.*

SIR,

In accordance with the terms of Clause 23 of the Village Settlement Rules, I now make the following Report to you on the progress made on the Settlement since its inauguration in October, 1894, to the present time.

Owing to delays in finding suitable available land and completing arrangements with the Government, the Settlement was so late in starting that little could be done the first year in the way of producing beyond that required for the settlers' use.

The site having been chosen, the Manager (Mr. G. Albury) with three settlers proceeded to Southport, followed three days later by five other settlers and their families, in charge of the President and Secretary.

Until the tents were set up the settlers were accommodated in tents kindly lent by Mr. Graves, of Southport, who, with Mr. John Hay, in many ways assisted the Committee.

There was no building of any kind on the Settlement land, which was so densely timbered that there was not a place to pitch the tents upon, and consequently a camping-ground was chosen about half a mile distant, on the main road from Hastings to Southport, where it was afterwards found necessary to erect temporary huts in consequence of the severity of the weather, the wind blowing the tents completely down, some into shreds and others right away.

By the end of November timber had been split, and the temporary huts and a store erected; four more families having arrived and three having left in the interim.

The first block of land scrubbed was burnt off, several acres cleared, and about 2 tons of potatoes put in before the end of January; and some 23 acres were scrubbed on each side of the old slab road, partially cleared and planted with potatoes, turnips, onions, and other vegetables, and grass sown on some of the scrubbed land. Unfortunately this main lot of scrub was prematurely burnt by one of the great bush fires then prevalent, which also consumed the first cottage erected on the Settlement. This bad burn-off, which would in any case have been a serious matter, was in this instance aggravated on account of the great number of large gum-trees which had to be felled in preparation for building the permanent cottages.

Thirteen 25-acre allotments were then laid off by the surveyor, and the work of clearing building sites began, so that each settler could be placed on his own allotment. For the reasons stated above the clearing was very difficult and tedious. Eleven cottages, each with two rooms and loft (one burnt in bush fire), and a manager's house of three rooms, store and loft and verandah, were built of split and sawn timber, the former being of uniform design, 28 feet by 12 feet inside measurement; two-roomed skillions have since been added where the settlers have large families; and sheds, fowl-houses, pig-sties, and a dairy built.

On April 10th, 1895, a petition signed by ten settlers was received, asking permission to draw for their different allotments. Up to this time co-operation had been essential, under the deed of association: it had, however, been carried on with very discouraging results, and on April 27th the allotments were balloted for, and since that time every settler has mainly worked upon his own holding.

It became at once apparent that the change from co-operation (which seemed to be the cause of failure in many of the settlements in the other Colonies) to individual effort would prove decidedly beneficial, the settlers at once taking a cheerful interest in their work, to which they were also becoming more accustomed. After the alteration in the system had been entered upon the manager applied to be taken on as a settler, but it being insisted upon that he should ballot for his holding as the other settlers had done, he became discontented and tendered his resignation as manager, which was accepted. From March, 1894, the manager's duties were much lightened by Mr. Rothwell, one of the settlers, keeping the books, store accounts, attending to the mail-bags, &c. The latter also conducted a school, authorised by the then Minister of Education, until dissension among the settlers caused it to be temporarily closed. It is now re-opened, and conducted by the present manager.

As the management had not been productive of satisfactory results, and a suitable manager was not obtainable at the time, the experiment of doing without one during the ensuing six months was tried, but with indifferent success; it was therefore decided to revert to the former arrangement, and accordingly another manager was appointed on June 1st last, from whose report to the Committee the following information is taken:—There are 20½ acres of land under cultivation, and

16 scrubbed. Potatoes and onions will form the principal marketable produce, but late green peas could probably be grown well, and would be very profitable; a small amount should be realized from vegetables other than potatoes and onions. Great care is being taken in the setting of raspberry-canes and strawberry-plants, but much fruit cannot be expected from them the first year, whilst no fruit can be expected from the apple-trees planted last year. The Kentish cherry-trees give promise of early return, and there will probably be a few currants and gooseberries for market. If the season is a favourable one, he estimates the probable profit of each settler from the produce of his holding (after deducting that required for the food of the families and stock) at about £12, and believes that if each settler is provided with a cow, that with the money earned from road-making there ought to be no difficulty in the maintenance of the families in excellent order. The increase of stock that may reasonably be expected is not included in possible profits.

It would be wearisome to go into every detail in connection with the initiation of and carrying-on of the settlement up to the present time; but referring generally to the subject, twenty-four settlers with their families, numbering in all one hundred and fourteen (114) souls, have been assisted to a home on the land; of these, four settlers were dismissed, eight left (five of the eight subsequently applied to be allowed to return, but, with one exception, this was refused, as they had proved themselves to be unsuitable or unworthy). Nineteen adults and twenty-nine children remain, total forty-eight; the majority of these (32) joined the Settlement in the first six months of its existence.

The total amount of money at the disposal of the Committee has been £1042 (£442 raised by the Committee, and £600 voted by Parliament), with the result that an average of say (50) fifty persons have been supported for one year and ten months at an average cost per head of £8 9s. 2d., or about £4 12s. 3d. each per year, as well as having (as stated above) assisted them to a permanent home on the land.

It will be admitted that the difficulties to be overcome have been great, not the least of which was the discontent among the settlers before co-operation was abandoned; and, again, owing to the fact that many of them were quite unaccustomed to the kind of work required from them, and others, again, were unwilling to learn; but the Settlement has permanently benefited those who were in need of assistance, many of whom, through their inability to obtain employment, would have been thrown upon the resources of the Government and Benevolent Society: this has been proved in the case of returned settlers. In the results now laid before you, the Committee feel that their efforts have not been unavailing, but that they are justified in making application to you for a further subsidy to carry on the Settlement in the interim between the present time and the early months of next year, and also for an item for the extension of the Settlement, in furtherance of which the Committee are prepared to give their services gratuitously in the future as in the past.

The thanks of the Committee are due to Messrs. H. Bisdee, Briggs, Moore, Coleman, and others who have assisted the Settlement with gifts and advice.

The appended Balance Sheet shows the position of the Settlement.

I am,

Sir,

Yours faithfully,

EMILY DOBSON,

President Village Settlement Committee.

To the Honorable the Minister of Lands.

BALANCE SHEET.

DR.	£	s.	d.	CR.	£	s.	d.
Amount raised by Committee	442	12	4½	Survey Fees and Land.....	36	18	1½
Subsidy from Government	600	0	0	Manager's Salary	64	10	0
				Freight, Transport, Travelling Expenses	68	2	5
				Printing, Advertising, Stationery,			
				Telegrams, Stamps, Sundries	30	0	0¾
				Cartage and Fodder.....	35	8	2
				Tents, Temporary Huts, Cottages,			
				Furniture, School Requisites	119	6	2
				Food, Tobacco, Clothing, Soap, Light..	423	0	8¾
				Caretakers, Storekeeper, Cleaning,			
				Work	11	0	0
				Lodges, Fees, Medicine	18	18	1
				Tools, Blacksmith's Forge, &c.,			
				Samson Stove.....	66	0	0
				Stock, Seeds	39	4	6
				Cash in hand	0	3	2½
				Balance in Banks as per Pass Books...	130	0	11
	<u>£1042</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>4½</u>		<u>£1042</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>4½</u>