

A SHORT HISTORY OF LAND SETTLEMENT IN TASMANIA

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W. N. HURST



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M. H. Pimblett, Government Printer.

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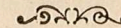


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ALL students of the history of Tasmania know that Governor King, in Sydney, upon hearing that a French expedition was lingering suspiciously about Van Diemen's Land and the adjacent islands, decided to forestall them, and in fear of losing British territory despatched, in 1803, a small band of military officers, soldiers, prisoners, and settlers to take possession of and settle upon this island.

King decided to despatch two parties, one to the Derwent, commanded by Lieutenant John Bowen of the Royal Navy, and one to Port Dalrymple under Lieutenant-Colonel John Paterson. Bowen arrived at the Derwent about the middle of September, 1803, with a considerable number of livestock, a party of convicts, and two settlers; he established his party at East Risdon, and as it was early spring the country looked green and beautiful, and there was an abundance of water.

Bowen's settlement was not a success owing to circumstances beyond his control, the prisoners turned out to be a villainous lot, fresh water was scarce during midsummer, and the quantity of good land was small in area.

The East Risdon site was abandoned, and Bowen and all his band had left this island for Sydney by August, 1804; when the centenary of the arrival of the British was celebrated in the year 1903, a monument was erected at East Risdon to Bowen's memory, and is still in a good state of preservation.

Bowen surrendered his command to Lieut.-Colonel David Collins, who was entrusted by His Majesty's Government to form a settlement at Port Philip.

Collins did not consider that he could make a success of the proposed settlement at Port Phillip, and obtained Governor King's permission to remove his whole party of 440 persons to the Derwent, where they arrived safely in February, 1804.

Collins brought eight settlers with him, and Surveyor Meehan, who came with Bowen, surveyed farms of 100 acres for these settlers at New Town Bay on the Derwent, where a good rivulet of fresh water supplied the farmers with this very necessary commodity.

Now, Governor Collins was not empowered by his commission to actually grant Crown land, but the Governor-General in Sydney had the greatest confidence in Collins, and invariably approved of the Lieutenant-Governor's recommendation in regard to land grants.

In addition to the settlers, the military and civil officers attached to Collin's staff clamoured for grants as liberal as the public servants of New South Wales. Governor-General King encouraged these applications, and Collins, who thought such areas as 500 acres for the mineralogist attached by the English Government too large, gave way, and practically every member of his (Collins') staff was liberally treated, and received grant deeds of very valuable Crown land close to Collins' headquarters. In this way large portions of the Queen's Domain in Hobart were given to favoured individuals. These areas were resumed by the Crown ultimately. The chaplain received 30 acres on the water's edge, extending from Princes Wharf to Battery Point.

The form of grant deed included a drag-net clause, by which the Crown reserved the right to resume any portion of the granted area that might in future be required for roads.

The grantees, also, were required to pay a small quit rent of 2s. 6d. per year in the case of Collins' settlers, but this rent was proportionately greater as the areas granted grew larger.

When this island was flooded with immigrants in the reigns of Governors Sorell and Arthur, there were two other rather onerous conditions imposed upon grantees; one was that each grant was to be gradually improved, and the other was that no transfer would be recognised during the first five years of its currency.

An attempt was also made by the Crown to obtain from grantees food and clothing for prisoners in exchange for their labour, but this condition fairly broke down, as at times the Crown ran short of prisoners.

Governor Collins' ambition was to encourage his settlers to grow sufficient meat and corn for his establishment, but he found it an uphill fight. The year 1807 was a year of famine, and many of his able-bodied men had to be induced to go into the bush and kill the wild game to keep away starvation.

Collins started a government farm, using the area now known as Cornelian Bay Cemetery; he lent stock to his settlers, and paid them a good price for their produce; his whole policy was one of frugality and caution. Unfortunately his sudden death in 1810 at the age of 54 years, when his miscellaneous band on the Derwent numbered about 1000 persons, prevented him from living to see the fruits of his moderate and reasonable policy.

I feel that the present generation owe a debt of gratitude to Collins; he was not enriched personally

by the gift of any Crown grant of land, but with all his care bad mistakes were made; they must now, however, be regarded philosophically, they might have been much worse. The gifts of land to public servants of that day were a calamity to future generations. Nearly every early governor in this island fell into this error, and never was a decree more needed than that of Lord Ripon in 1831, when, as Secretary of State he stopped the wholesale gifts of Crown land to the favourites of colonial governors. After that decree was received not one acre of rural land in this island was given away; these governors were either trained in the army or navy, and obedience to superior officers was observed loyally.

After Governor King had got Lieutenant-Governor Collins well established at the Derwent, he received instructions from England to despatch Lieutenant-Colonel Paterson, in charge of a party, to form a settlement at Port Dalrymple, and thus to govern the northern portion of this island.

Lieutenant-Colonel Paterson was the next highest official to the Governor-General in Sydney, and was Lieutenant-Governor of all Australia, therefore he reigned quite independently of Collins at the Derwent; the 42nd degree of south latitude was the boundary between them.

Paterson, in addition to being a soldier, was an ardent botanist; he arrived on the banks of the River Tamar, with his party of 184 persons and a considerable amount of livestock, in November, 1804.

Paterson fixed a site for a town on the west arm of the Tamar, and called it York Town; this site, however, was soon abandoned, and George Town was chosen for headquarters.

By January, 1805, Paterson had evidently made a fairly thorough exploration of the Tamar Valley, for on the eighth of that month he wrote to Governor-

General King that, above the junction of the North and South Esk Rivers, he was confident that any number of settlers may be provided with lots, from 100 to 500 acres each, of ground fit for cultivation as well as pasture.

Paterson added as a postscript to his letter "I have found my friend Riley of infinite use to me, and I hope when the distribution of farms takes place to be able to mark his out in the most advantageous spot."

How well the public servants supported each other 130 years ago!

On 2nd April, 1805, Paterson received 612 cows from Bengal, and this shipment turned out to be a wonderful help to the new settlement; they formed the nucleus of the herds in north Tasmania. These cattle cost the English Government £15,350.

In 1806 Paterson received 200 sheep from Macarthur's flock in New South Wales; 300 were shipped, but 100 were lost on the voyage.

On the 4th April, 1805, five settlers from Norfolk Island arrived at the Tamar, and were granted small areas of land.

Paterson was enthusiastic about the whole area he had explored, being suitable for a fairly large settlement, and suggested that the English Government should send an expedition direct to Port Dalrymple.

Governor-General Bligh, who took over control of Australia on 8th August, 1806, was deposed on 29th January, 1808. This led to Paterson leaving north Tasmania in December of that year to control the Government of Australia until the English Government appointed a successor to Bligh.

Governor-General Bligh does not appear to have signed one land grant in favour of a settler in Van Diemen's Land, but there is a letter on record from Paterson to the Secretary of State in England, that,

while Paterson and his wife were on a visit to Sydney, Bligh promised Mrs. Paterson a grant of 1000 acres at Port Dalrymple. It comes, therefore, as a surprise that the first grant deed was made out in the name of Elizabeth Paterson for 2000 acres on the North Esk River. This grant is signed by Joseph Foveaux as the Lieutenant-Governor commanding in and over His Majesty's territory in New South Wales and its dependencies, and is dated 31st December, 1808.

The magnitude of this grant to the wife of the Lieutenant-Governor is most surprising, and shows how well the soldiers of the New South Wales Corps looked after each other.

When Governor Macquarie, in 1810, declared all the gifts made during the inter-regnum caused by Bligh's deposition null and void, Paterson must have passed a few anxious moments, because not only the grant to his wife was a nullity, but also the 18 grants which Paterson himself signed in 1809 in favour of his settlers at Port Dalrymple.

Macquarie issued new grant deeds, dated 1st January, 1810, the day he took over the reins of government; in this way Paterson was relieved of all anxiety.

By the end of 1810 about 10,000 acres of land had been granted by the Governor-Generals in Sydney to settlers in Van Diemen's Land.

At the date of Macquarie's first visit to this island in 1811 the total population did not exceed 1500 persons.

In 1805 the English Government decided to require the inhabitants of Norfolk Island to remove, with their goods and livestock, to this State. At first the settlers were coaxed by the offer of larger areas in this island than they had at Norfolk Island; ultimately sterner measures had to be used, and, by the end of 1808, 554 persons were landed on this island. This necessitated the issue of 356 separate grant deeds.

New Norfolk, Sandy Bay, Sorell, and Clarence Plains in the south, and Norfolk Plains, near Longford, in the north, were the localities chosen for these settlers.

These grants were at first small, seldom exceeding 40 acres, but some of the settlers who had prospered on Norfolk Island were given much larger areas.

The Government was most liberal to these settlers, and advanced them stock and stores for a considerable time after their arrival.

After the death of Governor Collins and the promotion of Governor Paterson of Port Dalrymple to Sydney to act as Governor-General until the arrival of Governor-General Macquarie in 1810, military officers carried on the government until Lieutenant-Governor Thomas Davey arrived on 4th February, 1813.

Governor Collins recognised Paterson as his superior officer in 1809, but in 1812 the whole island was again placed under the control of the administration at Hobart Town; the commandants at both ends of this island were content to merely carry on, and recommended very few settlers for land grants.

Bushrangers, during this period, began to rob and plunder right and left, and, what with them and the aborigines, who were at first friendly, but soon became the bitter enemies of the white men, the settlers had a hard struggle to live, and the Government hardly knew what to do to protect both their officers and other freemen from the depredations of these two classes of enemies.

In 1813 the ports were opened for general commerce, mercantile houses were established, the whale fishery yielded profitable results, and a lucrative trade in seal skins was established.

In 1815 1770 bushels of wheat were exported to Sydney, and in 1816 13,135 bushels. Flour mills were erected, and the use of the plough became general and took the place of the primitive hoe in agriculture.

Though Davey cannot be regarded as a successful Governor, this island during his reign prospered, and on his retirement in April, 1817, had a population of 3114, of whom 566 resided at the northern end of the island.

Colonel William Sorell succeeded Davey. He arrived on 8th April, 1817, the population at the Derwent being then about 1000 persons. Governor Davey remained as a settler, and was given 3000 acres near Richmond, but he was not a success as a farmer and returned to England, where he died in 1823.

Sorell commenced an active campaign against bush-rangers with a great deal of success; he also did all he could to encourage immigration by persons with capital.

These new settlers were men of intelligence and character, and their influence soon began to be felt as the country got settled by this class of immigrant. Each settler received on his arrival a grant of land in proportion to the amount of capital he brought with him, the maximum area being 2560 acres free of all charges but a small quit rent.

During the reign of Sorell, and up to the year 1831 in Governor Arthur's reign, the finest parts of Tasmania were alienated. The grantees spread themselves over the open grassy plains of the interior and became pastoralists.

Many of the best pastoral districts in this State are still devoted to sheep and cattle farming, and are not highly improved. The country is fairly open and does not grow up again with scrub as it does in those dis-

tricts subject to a heavy rainfall. In this midland country droughts are unknown, and the climate is healthy for both man and stock.

Towards the end of Sorell's reign books on the fertility of this island began to be published in England. George W. Evans, Deputy-Surveyor, wrote on this subject, and there were several other books written; all gave the island a good name. It was this literature that probably caused a company, called the Van Diemen's Land Company, to be formed in England with a view to promoting an ambitious form of settlement in this island.

After much negotiating the English Government granted the company a charter in 1825, somewhat on the lines of the chartered companies that first colonised the American colonies.

The first intention of the company was to select 250,000 acres in one block in the extreme north-west of the island, but on the country being thoroughly explored the Government ultimately allowed the company to take their grant in six separate blocks.

The Government was most generous, but the company had an uphill fight; they despatched several ships, from England to Circular Head direct, laden with free immigrants and valuable stock. The losses sustained by the company during the first few years were very heavy; many of the sheep they brought out perished on the high country round Hampshire Hills, but the island benefited by the introduction of pure-bred stock. Ultimately the company began to prosper, and still owns much of the original area granted under the charter of 1825.

In the year 1819 the British Government sent Commissioner J. T. Bigge to Van Diemen's Land to take evidence, report upon, and make recommendations, if necessary, for the better government of New South Wales and its dependencies. In the course of his duties

he called upon Deputy-Surveyor George William Evans to explain the procedure of allotting land grants in this island—

Question: "How long have you held the situation of Deputy-Surveyor?"

Answer: "About 15 years."

Question: "What is the course observed by you when applications are made for grants in the country?"

Answer: "A person desirous of obtaining a grant of land here applies to the Governor-in-Chief through the Lieutenant-Governor. A particular time of the year (the month of June, or as nearly as may be to it) is set apart for this purpose by the Commander-in-Chief. On these applications the Governor-in-Chief makes a list of the names of persons to whom he orders that the land should be granted and the quantity they are to have. Which is signed by him and transmitted through his secretary to the Lieutenant-Governor, who either hands over the original or a copy of it, with directions that I should proceed to mark off the quantities of land when at leisure in the situations that the persons may have chosen, provided their choice will not interfere with any government arrangement. When the quantities are measured and marked off, I make out the descriptions and boundaries, which I forward to the Surveyor-General at headquarters. From him they are sent to the Governor, who directs grants to be made out in pursuance of the description."

Question: "Are the grants sent down from Sydney to this place, or do they remain until application is made for them and the fees paid?"

Answer: "The grants that were sent down in 1817 bore date September, 1813. Since that time about 160 grants of land have remained at Sydney, and are there now."

Question: "Are many applications made to you by the persons who have obtained land and have not obtained grants?"

Answer: "Almost daily."

Question: "I suppose that, when the land is measured and marked off, the people immediately repair to it and cultivate it?"

Answer: "They do, and if I have not time always to go, they will begin to cultivate upon my promise to measure it."

Question: "Do not instances occur of these lands so occupied being sold or transferred or taken in execution before the grants arrive?"

Answer: "Yes; such instances do occur, but it is at the risk of the party purchasing, for it is a well-known condition in all grants that the land shall not be sold, transferred, or alienated until after the term of five years."

Question: "Does that term run, or is it supposed to run, from the period of occupation of the land or from the date of grant?"

Answer: "From the date of grant."

Question: "Do you think the defect of title, in cases where the grant is delayed, affects the value of lands or increases the difficulty of obtaining security upon them?"

Answer: "It does not. In such cases they usually bind themselves in a penalty of double the amount secured to make over the grant when it arrives."

Question: "Is the occupation of land permitted by the Lieutenant-Governor before the list containing the names and quantities of land ordered is returned by the Governor-in-Chief?"

Answer: "Yes; to persons of good character, and for whom he is desirous of obtaining land; he does not allow a larger extent of land to be occupied in this way than from 30 to 50 acres."

Question: "Now, in case a settler arrives here from England with his family, with an order from the Colonial Office for a considerable quantity of land, is he under the necessity of personally repairing to Sydney to obtain it, and must he remain here unoccupied till the grantor's order for the grant arrives from the Commander-in-Chief?"

Answer: "No; on delivering his letter to the Lieutenant-Governor, such a person would be allowed to go into the country to examine the different situations or to come to me to see what were to be disposed of. In case he fixed on any situation, the Lieutenant-Governor would exercise his discretion in allowing the settler to fix himself on such land as he had selected, after conferring with me."

Question: "Do you know whether the Lieutenant-Governor institutes any inquiry on the spot as to the pecuniary means of settlers applying for grants of land before they obtain them?"

Answer: "In one instance I know he did. I cannot say what he does in others."

This terminates the questions on rural land grants.

In the year 1822 a merchant of Hobart Town purchased 12 bales of wool at fourpence per pound.

This was the total export for the colony that year; it was sold in London at sevenpence per pound. In 1823 about 1100 bales were exported.

Agriculture was progressing; in 1821 there were 14,940 acres of land under cultivation.

Governor-General Macquarie visited Van Diemen's Land a second time in 1821. At the time of his visit in 1811 the population was about 1500, and in 1821 was 7400. There were 35,000 head of cattle, 170,000 sheep, 550 horses, and 5000 swine, and the community was prosperous. Hobart Town had a population of 2700 persons.

In the year 1820 the sum of £20,000 was received from Sydney for wheat exported to that port.

The following order by Governor-General Macquarie, dated from Sydney on 8th May, 1819, caused consternation among prospective settlers:—

"The applications for land made to the Governor at the prescribed time in June last having been so numerous as to surpass very far what he expected, and consequently requiring his most serious consideration previous to his giving a final answer on the respective claims of the applicants. Furthermore, there being much difficulty in accommodating those whose claims to such indulgences may be admitted owing to the present very great scarcity of disposable Crown lands, and many of those persons who were then promised grants of land not having yet had them measured, owing to the scarcity alluded to, His Excellency feels himself compelled to give this public notice that no application for either land or cattle will be received by him in the ensuing month of June in the year 1820. In consequence of this unavoidable determination on the part of His Excellency, the magistrates were required to withhold their signatures of recommendation from all applications for land or cattle during the current year."

The question has often been asked if the early governors were imposed upon by persons who applied for and were successful enough to obtain grants of land—Well! it is said open confession is good for the soul, and this is what Governor Macquarie said in a despatch to Lieutenant-Governor Sorell on 13th October, 1820—

"I fear I have been imposed upon by persons who were traders and not real settlers, sending in fictitious values of their property. I have determined in future to force applicants to make affidavits."

In this despatch he directed the Lieutenant-Governor to be more economical in the areas granted.

The last grant deed signed by Governor Macquarie for a grant in this State was one of 1 acre and 18 perches at Launceston in favour of Thomas Archer.

It is the general opinion that Macquarie, an estimable character in many ways, was susceptible to flattery, and that he most lavishly bestowed gifts of land on those of his staff, and even to settlers, during his march through this State in the year 1821.

The expansion of agriculture brought in its train the necessity of roads. Lieutenant-Governor Sorell therefore called to his aid the officers of the Royal Engineers, who were stationed on the island with him, and about the year 1817 began the construction of what is now the main road from Hobart to Launceston.

Major Thomas Bell was most active as an Engineer of Roads, and, with the cheap labour of the times, good, well-graded roads were constructed between the various groups of settlement. Gradually New Norfolk, Richmond, and Kingston were connected by road with Hobart Town, and in the north Launceston was similarly connected with Westbury. Major Bell was rewarded with a grant of 800 acres of land on the Jordan River in the year 1821.

An analysis of the grants and the grantees issued during 1821 can lead the student to but one conclusion, and that is, if the public servants received small salaries, they certainly received large grants of land. Macquarie dealt out his favours with a truly regal hand, but take it all for all, the public servant was not a successful farmer. Of course, there were a few notable exceptions, but the property of most of them quickly passed into the hands of the competent commercial men of the period who were carrying on various kinds of business ventures in Hobart Town and Launceston.

Macquarie gave place as Governor-General to Sir Thomas Brisbane on 1st December, 1821.

The first quit rents began to be due about the year 1815, and Governor Arthur calculated that, if every settler liable paid his rent, the Government would receive an annual sum of £13,000. The land owners were very reluctant to pay this rent, and Governor Arthur decided that no quit rents should be demanded from persons who obtained their grants prior to the year 1825.

With great difficulty a portion of the amount due was annually collected, and some grants were cancelled for non-payment. Ultimately an Act was passed in the forties to abolish quit rents.

In addition to the free settlers, the emancipists had to live somewhere, and so they were given small grants in Sorell's reign in close proximity to the settlements, and this policy used up a considerable area of the Crown estate. This policy was, however, mostly confined to small town lots.

Sorell handed over the position of Lieutenant-Governor to Sir George Arthur on 12th May, 1824. He at once let it be understood that he required all settlers to comply honourably with the conditions laid down in their grants. He instructed Deputy-Surveyor G. W. Evans not to issue a number of grant deeds which had arrived from Sydney until investigations were completed in each case to ascertain whether the grantees were complying with their contracts. When he found Evans had disobeyed his instructions, the Deputy-Surveyor was at once dismissed from his office.

In December, 1825, Van Diemen's Land was proclaimed an independent colony, separate from New South Wales in the management of internal affairs. After that date all grant deeds were signed personally by the Governor residing in this State.

In 1827 Governor Arthur created the office for registering deeds relating to the conveyances of land from one subject to another. This was a great help to land owners.

In the same year he divided this island into police districts, to each of which was appointed a stipendiary magistrate, a police clerk, and the necessary staff; law and order were thus being gradually created.

In 1828 49,424 acres of land had been alienated from the Crown; 34,000 acres were under cultivation. There were 84,476 cattle, 2034 horses, and 553,698 sheep in the colony, which, in that year, exported £22,072 worth of wool. Twenty-four flour mills were at work, and the population was about 18,000 persons.

Prior to 1828 the Imperial Government supplied all the money required for civil, military, and prison purposes; in this year a change was made, and the colony was required to find the money for what was called the civil branch of the Government.

The revenue from land sales, which started in this year, helped the civil revenue. The money received from the sale and rental of land at that date was about £2418, which gradually increased as more land was sold and less granted.

The establishment of the Derwent Bank at Hobart Town and the Cornwall Bank at Launceston at this date offered facilities to the settlers in monetary transactions which were generally and freely availed of. The ease with which money was borrowed soon brought about a depression.

The English Government, about this date, exhibited indecision in regard to the disposal of Crown land. Various plans were adopted, and after a short trial abandoned.

In 1828 persons immigrating to the colony were given 640 acres of land for every £500 they brought out with them.

Officers of the army and navy were encouraged to become settlers, and substantial grants were given to this class of immigrant.

In 1828 the first auction sales of Crown land took place. In two years about 70,000 acres were sold for £20,000, the purchasers being mostly large landholders.

It was fortunate for this State that in this great rush for free land, the great value of the chocolate soils in the north-west and north-east of the island escaped the attention of the landseekers; it was, of course, heavily timbered, and this put them against such areas. Settlers were after quick returns, and they sensed that clearing such timbered country would be a slow business.

The Secretary of State and the Governor were in the habit of conferring grants at will upon no fixed principle.

Then, finally, it was determined by the Crown Law authorities that all grants issued prior to 1830 were bad in consequence of a defect in the form of deed; the early Governors having issued the grants in their own name instead of in the name of His Majesty the King.

The difficulty was overcome by the Government agreeing to issue a good, valid grant to all those who would yield up their existing title, and this promise is honoured to the present day.

About the year 1832 the aborigines were pacified, and this removed a feeling of terror from those who lived in remote country districts.

In 1838 the population was 45,764, against 18,128 in 1828. Three hundred and ten thousand acres of Crown land had been sold in the last ten years.

There were 100,000 acres under cultivation, and there were over a million sheep in the colony, though large numbers were being exported to Victoria.

Wool worth £172,000 and whale oil worth £137,000 were exported during the year.

I have confined myself up to the present to settlement in the country districts of this island. It seems necessary to say a few words about the grants of land in the Cities of Hobart and Launceston.

I feel I cannot do better than to quote evidence given before Commissioner Bigge in 1820 by Deputy-Surveyor G. W. Evans.

Question: "By whom was Hobart Town laid out?"

Answer: "By Mr. Meehan and myself, in 1812, after receiving instructions from Governor Macquarie."

Question: "What is the breadth of the streets?"

Answer: "Sixty feet, except Macquarie-street, which is 66 feet."

The Commissioner: "I observe a great many more brick and wood houses built than are described in your map as held under leases or grants. Upon what tenure are they held, and have they been granted?"

Answer:: Upon a verbal permission only to build given by the several Lieutenant-Governors. Numbers of them are about to apply for leases. The majority of these persons consider that the permission to build and occupy is equal to a grant or lease."

Question: "What course is it intended that the town should in future take in extending it?"

Answer: "To the north-west and to the south-west."

Question: "Is there plenty of land in the immediate neighbourhood of the town not granted available for the location of convicts when they apply?"

Answer: "There is a sufficiency for two or three thousand blocks."

In Launceston it was found necessary to provide allotments for all and sundry, and this became an urgent necessity. The Commandant at Port Dalrymple gave offence to Governor Sorell by taking on himself the power of locating town lots, and there

is a despatch from Sorell, dated 30.5.1820, objecting to Cimitiere doing this work and requiring him to refer all applications to headquarters.

The fact of the matter was that the Lieutenant-Governors in the early days considered the locating of town lots a small matter and took upon themselves the right to act promptly without troubling headquarters, even after the decree of Lord Ripon in 1831. Governors in this island granted town lots on their own responsibility. They made regulations requiring the lots to be built upon under penalty of forfeiture, and generally did their best to promote orderly settlement.

Up to the end of the year 1836, 1,198,910 acres had been alienated as free grants, and 267,084 acres had been sold.

The revenue received from the sales amounted to £130,000 for the same period.

The island was, in 1835, divided into counties and parishes, and considerable areas were reserved for church, cemetery, and glebe purposes.

About the year 1830 Governor Arthur tackled the question of laying out bye-roads through the settled districts. He published in the "Gazette" his proposed routes, and, after a certain period had elapsed for objectors to express their views, considered the various routes, and confirmed or altered them as the case warranted. The width of the strip of land resumed was 46 feet wide.

These road proclamations of Governor Arthur have proved very valuable to future generations, and are always respected by the legal profession.

Governor Arthur retired in favour of Sir John Franklin in the year 1836. He did a great deal of good work as Governor of this island, and left a fairly prosperous colony behind him when he left its shores.

Sir John Franklin, shortly after he arrived, began to open up and develop the Crown land on the banks of the Huon River. For many years this part of the island could only be approached by water. Groups of settlers, therefore, clustered round the harbours of the Huon and D'Entrecasteaux Channel as far south as Catamaran. Splitting timber was found in abundance; whaling stations and large establishments at Southport and Port Cygnet were erected by the Government for the accommodation of prisoners. These activities all led to the permanent occupation of the country, but the rainfall in that area is heavy and it was a long time before the timber-getters found it possible to deal with the largest of the trees.

Sawmills have gradually forced their way into favour during the period from 1832 to the present day. Splitters had a most prosperous time up to about the year 1870. After that date pit sawing and splitting gave way to the sawmiller, but enormous quantities of timber have been and are still being exported from this island.

After the Huon country had been denuded of its timber of commercial value, the settlers turned their energies to orcharding, for which the soil and climate is very suitable, and from the valleys of the Huon, the Derwent, and the Tamar Rivers from three to four million cases of apples and pears are exported annually from about 25,000 acres of land. This industry is a great help to this State, and gives employment to many thousands of its inhabitants.

In the early years of Sir John Franklin's reign there were a great many sheep and cattle exported to Port Phillip, which was being colonised and stocked mainly by the adventurous spirits from this island. Prices of all classes of livestock were buoyant, and the price given for agricultural produce was also most satisfactory.

Good Crown land was still eagerly sought after, and, in the year 1842, a surveyor was instructed to lay out a road from Deloraine westerly towards Emu Bay. He found this a most arduous undertaking, but the survey resulted in the discovery of some square miles of excellent chocolate soil, which was eagerly settled upon by landseekers.

The regulations under which the Government sold land at this period were continually changing. In 1841 the upset price of Crown land was 12s. per acre, and 79,140 acres were sold; in 1847 the price was raised to £1, when only 3701 acres were sold.

That many of the settlers were real triers is borne out by the following paragraph taken from the *Launceston "Examiner"* in October, 1845:—"The French brig 'Amaury,' for Bourbon, has on board as fine a cargo of wheat as ever left Launceston, consisting of 9500 bushels. The wheat was purchased by the captain, who, we are happy to hear, prior to his departure expressed himself in the most approving terms of the treatment he experienced at this port, both in mercantile and social matters."

In the forties of last century landseekers began to settle in considerable numbers on the north-west coast of this island, but the rivers in that locality are wide and could only be crossed by fording the bar at the mouth of each river on horseback. Communication with Launceston was therefore mostly handled by small sailing craft and, during the sixties, the Government decided to borrow money from England and develop the country by a policy of extensive road construction, but soon found there was no engineer available who could lay out roads and supervise their construction at a price within the means of the colony. The only precedents these engineers had to guide them were the well-laid out and suitably graded stretches of road between Hobart and Launceston and between the latter

place and Westbury, but these roads were made by men who demanded no wages. Several attempts were made to get over the difficulty by placing, side by side, split slabs across the formed strip of road, but this method was soon abandoned, and at last an engineer was appointed, who followed the American principle of making narrow roads, about 16 feet wide; this enabled the community to obtain much better value for their money.

Following the discovery of gold in the neighbouring colony of Victoria, prospectors were soon hard at work looking for minerals in this island. Gold was discovered near Fingal in 1869, and in 1870 at Léfroy and Beaconsfield. The mines paid good dividends for a considerable period, and did an immense amount of good, as many of the lucky shareholders improved their farms out of the profits made by these mining ventures.

In 1871 the Mount Bischoff Tin Mine was discovered, and shortly after payable tin was discovered over many areas on the north-east coast of this island, and it may truthfully be said that the colony never looked back for more than 20 years from the date of these discoveries.

In the early nineties of last century silver-lead deposits were discovered on the west coast of Tasmania, and these were followed by the discovery of copper ore at Mount Lyell, where the greatest copper mine in Australia is still hard at work, finding work for about 2000 employees and maintaining in comfort a town of 6000 persons at Queenstown.

This island has been proved to contain a wonderfully wide range of minerals; coal and lime is scattered all over the island.

The mining towns provide an excellent home market for farm produce, as the 5000 miners and their dependants must all be fed by the farmer.

In the year 1856 this island was given responsible Government by the Imperial authorities, and a new era began.

In 1858 the first Waste Lands Act was passed into law, and the representatives of the general public in Parliament did their best to frame land laws that were practical and useful, based upon actual experience.

This Act may be regarded as the starting point of land selection in this island under democratic government. It provided that members of the general public could select Crown land in this island on long terms of credit at the price of £1 per acre.

This Act has been amended and re-enacted many times, but its original spirit has been kept alive and embodied in every new Act.

Very little Crown land was sold from the date of the Act of 1858 at less than £1 per acre till the year 1895, when second-class land began to be offered for sale by auction at 10s. an acre.

In 1903, under the administration of the late Carmichael Lyne, selections of third-class land, up to 1000 acres in extent were authorised at the price of 5s. per acre. Members of the public were, from that date, allowed to select privately first, second, and third class Crown land.

This Act caused quite a mild land boom; large pastoralists selected the parts of their leases they considered most valuable. Men of slender means also frequently got their first start in life under the provisions of this Act, which, on the whole, acted well for the whole country, as it caused money to be spent on the improvements which were obligatory under the Act.

The Crown lands on the islands adjacent to the mainland of Tasmania have, in some instances, been found to be of good quality, and in the sixties some of the best of the small islands in Bass Strait were

selected. It was then reported to the Government by the Reverend Fereday of George Town that these islands were being selected with a view to the applicants securing a firm hold on the mutton-bird rookeries, a practice which would, if allowed to proceed, deprive the half-castes, who were at that date scattered about on these islands, and were descendants of aborigines, of any chance of making an honest living out of their principal industry of catching and processing mutton-birds.

The appeal was successful, and what remained of the rookeries were carefully reserved from sale, and a considerable industry has been built up, by which the birders make quite a respectable sum of money annually.

These rookeries, together with many other large areas of Crown land in Tasmania which are the resort of native game, have been proclaimed reserves and sanctuaries, and are placed under the control of the Fauna Board of Tasmania, a body appointed to manage the whole business of hunting game, with a view to preventing the wholesale destruction of animals and birds in this State.

The revenue received from the sale of Crown lands has been paid into the Consolidated Revenue of the State, but since the year 1870 the Government have been authorised to spend half this revenue on giving and making roads of access to the land selected. This sum has, of course, not been nearly sufficient to make a good road to each selection, but it has been a help to the various Governments, who have gradually given our settlers roads, railways, and jetties. It was soon recognised by Australian Governments that land was of little value without these necessary adjuncts. They therefore borrowed money, created a national debt, and have and are making Australia more and more productive.

Approximately 20,000 persons are employed at some form of farming work. Time has shown that the climate is suitable for every form of production adapted to a temperate climate, and is extremely healthy to all forms of animal life.

Mistakes have been made—rabbits were introduced in the early thirties and blackberries in the early forties, both these importations were unfortunate.

Notwithstanding these errors the population of Tasmania is greater in density than any other State in Australia, except Victoria, being well over eight to the square mile.

In the year 1860 the first rural municipality was created, and gradually all the well-settled pastoral districts were divided into municipalities, and the land owners proved that they were quite capable and fit to be trusted to deal with such local matters as health, maintenance of bye-roads, rabbit destruction, and ordinary police court work. So much was the legislation thought of that, in the year 1906, the whole island was divided into municipal districts. Of course, this system brought with it local taxation, but on the whole ratepayers are satisfied.

In the early nineties of last century, during a time of depression, it was decided to tax land owners on the unimproved value of their property, and this land tax has been an ever-present help to every Treasurer of this State since the tax was first imposed.

The revenue collected by this means annually has averaged about £90,000 per year since its inception. Rural lands used for farming, with a value of less than £3500 unimproved, were relieved of land tax from the beginning of the year 1938, and this boon to farmers is much appreciated by them.

The annual revenue received from land sales, rentals, royalties, and licences from Crown land amounts to about £66,000, and does not vary very much.

Land Settlement in Tasmania.

In addition to this, landed property pays a fair proportion of the probate duty collected from deceased persons' estates annually, also large and valuable estates pay a Federal land tax to the Commonwealth Government.

The total area of Tasmania is 16,778,000 acres, and of this area the amount alienated and in process of alienation is about $6\frac{1}{2}$ million acres, $2\frac{1}{2}$ million acres is leased for pasture, timber, mining, and other purposes.

This leaves about 8 million acres still Crown land, but much of this is mountainous and rough.

I have endeavoured in this article to show how the land in this island has been gradually disposed of, first by free grants, and then by purchase on long terms of credit.

This process has been carried on for 134 years, and most of the good Crown land has been selected; there is still, however, a considerable area of second and third class country in this State, and if the scientists who are striving to turn all the land in this State to a good account can make any suggestions of a practical nature as to how it may be profitably treated, the native youth of Tasmania may still be able to purchase on long terms and make a living in his native State.

