

1896.
—
VICTORIA.

REPORT

OF

PROCEEDINGS TAKEN UNDER THE PROVISIONS

OF

THE LAND ACTS AND THE WATTLES ACT 1890,

DURING THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER,

1895.

PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY'S COMMAND.

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REPORT.

*To His Excellency the Right Honorable Thomas, Baron Brassey, Knight
Commander of the Most Honorable Order of the Bath; Governor and
Commander-in-Chief in and over the Colony of Victoria and its
Dependencies, &c., &c., &c.*

Department of Lands and Survey,
Melbourne, 17th December, 1896.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

I have the honour to submit the annexed Report by the Secretary for Lands of proceedings taken under the provisions of the Land Acts and the *Wattles Act* 1890 during the year 1895.

The Report has reference to the undermentioned subjects, which are dealt with in the order indicated :—

I.—Settlement.	III.—Pastoral occupation.
II.—Sales by auction.	IV.—Miscellaneous.

DEPARTMENTAL MANAGEMENT.

In consequence of the retirement of Mr. M. Callanan from the position of Surveyor-General after being connected with the Department for nearly 42 years, Mr. S. K. Vickery was appointed to the position on 12th July, 1895.

Appendices B and C give a detailed account of the work done in the Survey and Forest Branches of the Department.

I have the honour to be,

Your Excellency's most obedient servant,

R. W. BEST,

Commissioner of Crown Lands and Survey,
and President of the Board of Land and Works.

To the Honorable Robert Wallace Best, Commissioner of Crown Lands and Survey.

Department of Crown Lands and Survey,
Melbourne, 16th December, 1896.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit the following Report of proceedings taken under the provisions of the Land Acts and the *Wattles Act* 1890 during the year 1895.

I.—SETTLEMENT.

The general methods of alienation of Crown lands in Victoria, from the first sales to the 31st December, 1895, are shown in the following Table (A):—

TABLE A.

	BY AUCTION.				BY SELECTION.						General Total. Area.
	Country Lands.	Town Lands.	Suburban Lands.	Totals by Auction, &c.	Selection and Lease.		Certificate Selection.		42nd Section, Act 1865, &c.		
					No.	Area.	No.	Area.	No.	Area.	
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.		Acres.		Acres.		Acres.	Acres.
Under Imperial Acts ...	...	...	...	3,944,237	...	...	...	...	...	...	3,944,237
„ <i>Land Act</i> 1860 ...	392,610	1,273	4,979	398,862	...	410,600	...	...	...	...	809,462
„ „ 1862 ...	422,610	2,800	31,295	456,705	...	1,363,243	...	59,992	...	...	1,879,940
„ „ 1865 ...	639,761	6,709	34,137	680,607	5,900	1,499,910	3,078	559,423	...	753,574	3,493,514
„ „ 1869 ...	986,175	17,229	32,693	1,036,097	Section 19. 66,040 10,528,462		...	...	Section 49. 11,713 183,591		11,748,150
„ „ 1878 ...	...	...	...	...	Section 11. 453 76,100		...	...	Section 10. 401 1,302		77,302
Totals ...	...	...	...	6,516,508	...	13,878,315	...	619,415	...	938,367	21,952,605
During year—	<i>Land Acts 1884-1890.</i>										
1885 ...	23,917	2,106	877	26,900	...	...	...	...	...	...	26,900
1886 ...	16,727	2,134	420	19,281	...	...	...	...	...	...	19,281
	<i>Land Acts 1884-1890.</i>										
	Section 42.										
1887 ...	16,661	2,800	104	19,565	83	11,310	...	...	...	...	30,875
1888 ...	15,549	4,373	102	20,024	290	49,745	...	...	...	...	69,769
1889 ...	10,601	2,244	835	13,680	409	63,906	41	5,383	...	...	82,969
1890 ...	8,941	3,094	166	12,201	505	91,974	33	4,409	...	...	108,584
1891 ...	4,989	1,801	563	7,353	507	88,610	26	2,069	...	...	98,032
1892 ...	7,681	2,336	603	10,620	482	74,841	16	1,960	...	...	87,421
1893 ...	3,448	2,844	254	6,546	702	99,795	13	1,554	13	58	107,953
1894 ...	4,737	2,111	...	6,848	883	97,628	92	4,112	78	363	108,951
1895 ...	1,904	1,444	...	3,348	771	72,090	39	1,896	22	106	77,440
Totals under <i>Land Acts</i> 1884-1890 ...	115,155	27,287	3,924	146,366	4,632	649,899	260	21,383	113	527	818,175

Auction 6,662,874 acres.

Selection 16,107,906 „

Total 22,770,780 acres.

NOTE.—Forfeitures have in each case been deducted from the area selected.

Table B shows the number of leases and licences under Land Acts 1869, 1878, 1890, and 1891 current on 31st December, 1895, with the area and rental:—

TABLE B.

Section of Act.	No.	Area.	Annual Rental.
		Acres.	£
<i>Progress Payments.</i>			
Residence Licences—Section 19, <i>Land Act</i> 1869–1878	624	67,172	3,359
Section 42, <i>Land Act</i> 1890 ...	4,155	568,063	28,403
Section 203, <i>Land Act</i> 1890...	37	10,799	540
Section 17, <i>Land Act</i> 1891 ...	74	785	78
Section 22, <i>Land Act</i> 1891 ...	113	527	42
Section 9, <i>Wattles Act</i> 1890...	1	131	7
Leases—Section 20, <i>Land Act</i> 1869–1878 ...	29,069	5,033,853	251,693
Section 44, <i>Land Act</i> 1890 ...	702	114,465	5,723
Non-residence Licences—Section 11, <i>Land Act</i> 1878	4	2,770	277
Section 49, <i>Land Act</i> 1890	264	21,807	2,180
„ Leases—Section 20, <i>Land Act</i> 1869–1878	398	57,808	5,781
Section 50, <i>Land Act</i> 1890	18	2,496	249
Leases and Licences (other than Agricultural or Pastoral)—Section 49, <i>Land Act</i> 1869 ...	1,923	29,002	2,797
Section 65, <i>Land Act</i> 1890 ...	4,282	78,230	6,215
Section 99, <i>Land Act</i> 1890 ...	3,175	9,988	30,696
Pastoral Occupation—			
Section 32, <i>Land Act</i> 1890 ...	9,902	3,888,502	37,260
Section 5, <i>Wattles Act</i> 1890 ...	17	6,083	51
Section 10, <i>Wattles Act</i> 1890 ...	1	548	17
Section 21, <i>Land Act</i> 1890 ...	81	1,298,423	4,244
Section 67, <i>Land Act</i> 1890 ...	1,267	403,148	3,364
Section 123, <i>Land Act</i> 1890 ...	3,556	4,765,025	16,237
Section 3, <i>Land Act</i> 1890 ...	35	197,351	580
Mallee ...	3,450	8,750,014	15,000
Swamps—Section 85, <i>Land Act</i> 1890 ...	77	3,225	1,633
	63,225	25,310,215	416,426

SECTION 20, LAND ACT 1869.

This section, the rights of which were preserved by section 2 of *The Land Act* 1884, and are continued by section 2 of the *Land Act* 1890, bestowed on licensees under Part II. of *The Land Act* 1869 the right to acquire, on expiration of the term of their licences, the fee-simple of their selections, either by paying the balance of purchase money in one sum, or by deferred payments under lease.

The following Table shows the transactions during 1895:—

TABLE C.

Applications.		Grants Gazetted as Approved.	Leases Gazetted as Approved.	Purchase Completed.	Area Purchased.	Area Leased.	Balance of Purchase Money paid by Licensees.	Area Leased and afterwards Purchased.	Amount Paid by Lessees as Balance of Purchase money.
Lodged.	Dealt with.								
76	69	4	65	1,657	Acres. 330,866	Acres. 12,049	£ s. d. 50 8 0	Acres. 330,794	£ s. d. 44,068 6 0

NOTE.—The transactions of a like nature under section 11, *Land Act* 1878, are included in this Table.

Table D shows the number of applications under section 20 of *The Land Act* 1869 of holdings varying in extent from 80 acres and under to 320 acres, which were approved during 1895, inclusive of four grants which were issued in cases where the licensees paid the balance of purchase money at the expiry of their licences:—

TABLE D.

80 acres and under ...	...	...	...	15
Over 80 and under 160 ...	...	...	...	22
Over 160 and not exceeding 240 ...	...	...	...	9
Over 240 and not exceeding 320 ...	...	...	...	23
Total ...	...	...	...	69

NOTE.—This Table includes particulars of a like nature under section 11, *Land Act* 1878

SECTION 31, LAND ACT 1869.

This section, the rights of which were preserved by section 2 of *The Land Act* 1884, and are continued by section 2 of the *Land Act* 1890, conferred on holders of licences, obtained under the repealed Acts of 1862 and 1865, to occupy lands for other than pastoral purposes, the right to acquire the fee-simple of the lands so held, credit being given in the purchase for all moneys paid by them as rent and survey fees.

In cases in which purchase has not been allowed on account of the auriferous character of the land, or of portions thereof being required or likely to be required for railways or other public purposes, such of the licensees whose payments represent an amount equivalent to the estimated value per acre of the land have continued in occupation at a nominal rental of One shilling per annum pending removal of objections or decision as to public requirements.

Table E shows the transactions during 1895:—

TABLE E.

Number of Applications.		Purchases Completed.	Area Purchased.	Balances of Purchase Money Received.	Survey Fees Allowed.
Received.	Approved.				
3	16*	16	Acres. 600	£ s. d. 11 10 0	£ s. d. 38 9 0

* The surplus of applications *approved* over the number *received* during the year consists of applications the previous objections to which have been withdrawn.

THE LAND ACT 1890.

Division 1, Part I.

Section 18 of this Act confers on licensees under section 49 of *The Land Act* 1869 the exclusive right of purchasing their holdings at a price to be determined by the Board of Land and Works. Two hundred and twelve (212) applications, representing 3,854 acres, were approved during the year, and the sum of £694 15s. 5d. was received.

Division 3, Part I.—Agricultural and Grazing Lands.

Under this Division provision is made for the occupation of Crown lands for the combined purposes of grazing and agriculture.

Section 32 empowers the Governor in Council to grant leases of "Grazing Areas" for any term of years, provided that the term for which the land is so leased shall expire not later than fourteen years after the 29th December, 1884. Table F shows the extent of the operation of this section during each month of the year:—

TABLE F.

1895.	Number of Applications.		Area Leased.
	Received.	Approved.	
January	54	25	Acres. 8,798
February	62	52	10,164
March	39	36	8,987
April	50	36	6,448
May	41	4	2,084
June	69	24	4,974
July	60	44	13,990
August	50	69	15,841
September	41	—	—
October	40	75	16,210
November	29	1	803
December	40	8	2,928
Totals	575	374	91,227*

* The annual rent payable in respect of this area is £831 15s. 10d.

NOTE.—With respect to the applications received it should be noted that in many instances several applications are made for the same Grazing Area.

Sections 42 and 49 provide for the issue of licences for agricultural allotments not exceeding 320 acres in extent. Table G shows the transactions under these sections during the year:—

TABLE G.

Section.	Number of Applications.		Area Applied for.	Area Licensed.	Fees Payable Yearly.
	Received.	Approved.			
42—Residence	951	767	Acres. 79,279	Acres. 72,029	£ s. d. 3,601 9 0
49—Non-residence	51	39	2,469	1,896	189 12 0

Section 44 enables licensees under section 42 of this Division of the Land Act to acquire, on expiration of the term of their licences, the fee-simple of their licensed holdings either by paying the balance of purchase money in one sum or by deferred payments under lease. The following Table shows the transactions during 1895:—

TABLE H.

Applications.		Grants Gazetted as Approved.	Leases Gazetted as Approved.	Purchase Completed.	Area Purchased.	Area Leased.	Balance of Purchase Money paid by Licensees.	Area Lensed and afterwards Purchased.	Amount Paid by Lessees as Balance of Purchase money.
Lodged.	Dealt with.								
222	323	8	315	7	Acres. 492	Acres. 49,276	£ s. d. 176 8 0	Acres. 280	£ s. d. 189 0 0

NOTE.—The excess of applications *dealt with* over applications *lodged* is caused by applications lodged during last year not having been dealt with till this year. This Table includes particulars of a like nature under section 50 *Land Act* 1890.

Table I shows the number of Crown Grants under section 44 of the *Land Act* 1890 of Licensed holdings varying in extent from 80 acres and under to 320 acres, the issue of which was approved during 1895:—

TABLE I.

80 acres and under ...	...	...	...	...	8
Over 80 and under 160 ...	...	...	...	...	0
Over 160 and not exceeding 240 ...	...	...	...	...	0
Over 240 and not exceeding 320 ...	...	...	...	...	0
Total ...	...	...	...	...	8

NOTE.—This Table includes particulars of a like nature under section 50 *Land Act* 1890.

Under section 56 a lessee of an agricultural allotment of land under *The Land Acts* 1884–1890, or of an allotment under Part II. of *The Land Act* 1869 or any Act amending such Part, can give an “order” for the delivery of the Crown grant to any person who has made an advance of money on the security of a lease, the mortgage being transferred from the lease to the Crown grant. One hundred and twenty-four (124) orders, representing in all an area of 29,612 acres, were registered during the year.

Section 57 empowers licensees under Part II. of *The Land Act* 1869, and licensees of agricultural allotments under *The Land Acts* 1884–1890, to register liens at the Crown Lands Office upon the security of the permanent improvements effected on their holdings up to half the value of such improvements. Thirty (30) liens, comprising an area of 5,570 acres, were registered during the year, representing, as advanced on this kind of security, £3,257 19s. 11d.

Division 4, Part I.—Auriferous Lands.

This Division provides for the occupation of Crown lands classed “Auriferous.” Under section 65, licences for the purpose of residence or cultivation may be issued for lands not included within any city or town, and not exceeding 20 acres in extent. Under section 67, licences may be issued for grazing purposes only up to 1,000 acres.

No alienation of auriferous land can take place; therefore, all occupiers of the public estate under this Division are in the relation of annual tenants, and their occupation is subordinate to that for mining purposes.

The transactions during the year under sections 65 and 67 are shown in Table J :—

TABLE J.

Section 65.			Section 67.		
Number of Applications.		Area Licensed.	Number of Applications.		Area Licensed.
Received.	Approved.		Received.	Approved.	
266	305*	Aces. 5,376	107	95	Aces. 29,797

* The excess of approved applications over applications received is caused by applications renewed in previous year not having been dealt with till 1895.

WORKED-OUT AURIFEROUS LANDS.

By the 22nd section of the *Land Act* 1891 it is provided that whenever it appears to be no longer profitable to mine for gold within 50 feet of the surface of any unalienated lands of the Crown, such lands may, after inquiry by a warden, be declared to be "worked-out auriferous lands," and licensed in allotments not exceeding five (5) acres in extent. Every licensee who shall have complied with the conditions of his licence will, at the expiration of seven (7) years, be entitled to the fee-simple of the land at a price to be fixed by the Board of Land and Works, and the amount paid as annual licence-fees will be deducted from the purchase money payable.

During the year 12 applications under this section were received whilst 22 applications, including applications made in previous years, were approved for 106 acres.

PROGRESS OF SELECTION.

Table K shows the progress of selection under sections 32, 42, 49, and 65 of *The Land Acts* 1884-1890 :—

TABLE K.—LAND SELECTED.

Year.	Under Section 32.		Under Section 42.		Under Section 49.		Under Section 65.	
	Applications Approved.	Acreage.	Applications Approved.	Acreage.	Applications Approved.	Acreage.	Applications Approved.	Acreage.
1886	1,493	591,138	...	...	...	...	48	937
1887	3,621	1,328,169	83	11,310	...	...	198	3,742
1888	3,813	1,545,612	296	50,758	...	...	421	7,936
1889	2,348	925,939	418	65,862	41	5,383	627	11,578
1890	1,612	606,185	518	94,898	33	4,409	1,057	19,154
1891	1,288	479,667	539	95,634	37	3,597	560	10,220
1892	949	347,201	538	84,924	30	3,799	524	9,530
1893	584	211,401	799	115,126	25	2,403	597	11,002
1894	636	189,874	990	112,368	99	4,635	646	11,474
1895	374	91,227	767	72,029	39	1,896	305	5,376

Reports have been obtained from Land Officers as to the proceedings of selectors and the progress of settlement during the year in their respective districts, and a digest of their reports is given in Appendix A.

LICENCES AND LEASES REVOKED OR DECLARED EXPIRED.

The following Table shows the number of licences and leases, under the sections specified, revoked or declared expired during 1895 :—

TABLE L.

				No.	Extent.
					Acres.
Licences—	Section 19, <i>Land Act</i> 1869	...	...	23	3,853
	Section 49, <i>Land Act</i> 1869	...	...	8	141
	Section 11, <i>Land Act</i> 1878	...	...	...	...
	Section 42, <i>Land Acts</i> 1884–1890	...	...	107	14,740
	Section 49, <i>Land Acts</i> 1884–1890	...	...	7	523
	Section 65, <i>Land Acts</i> 1884–1890	...	...	96	1,803
	Section 67, <i>Land Acts</i> 1884–1890	...	...	152	67,943
Leases—	Section 20, <i>Land Act</i> 1869	...	...	27	4,368
	Section 21, <i>Land Acts</i> 1884–1890	...	...	7	134,280
	Section 32, <i>Land Acts</i> 1884–1890	...	...	699	302,614

NOTE.—The Treasury profited to the extent of £5,140 0s. 4d. through revocations and forfeitures during 1895.

Table M sets forth the grounds on which the licences and leases referred to in Table L were revoked or declared expired, and the lands resumed by the Crown :—

TABLE M.

				At Licensee's or Lessee's request.	Non-payment of Rent.	Non-compliance with Conditions.	Declared Expired.	Land Sold.	Land Abandoned.	Leases Surrendered.	Total.
Licences—	Section 19, <i>Land Act</i> 1869	...	...	...	...	...	22	1	...	...	23
	Section 49, <i>Land Act</i> 1869	...	...	...	7	...	...	...	1	...	8
	Section 11, <i>Land Act</i> 1878	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	Section 42, <i>Land Acts</i> 1884–1890	...	...	23	58	6	6	6	8	...	107
	Section 49, <i>Land Acts</i> 1884–1890	...	...	2	3	1	1	...	...	...	7
	Section 65, <i>Land Acts</i> 1884–1890	...	...	60	33	1	...	1	1	...	96
	Section 67, <i>Land Acts</i> 1884–1890	...	...	13	33	...	102	...	4	...	152
Leases—	Section 20, <i>Land Act</i> 1869	...	...	...	22	3	1	...	1	...	27
	Section 32, <i>Land Acts</i> 1884–1890	...	...	51	406	62	...	...	33	147	699
	Section 21, <i>Land Acts</i> 1884–1890	...	...	...	6	...	...	...	1	...	7
Totals				149	568	73	132	8	49	147	1,126

II.—SALES OF CROWN LANDS BY AUCTION.

The principle of deferred payments was introduced in Part V. of *The Land Act* 1884, now Division 5, Part I., *Land Act* 1890, one-fourth of the price bid being paid at the time of sale, and the remaining three-fourths spread over three years, payable quarterly, in instalments of equal amounts, bearing interest at the rate of £6 per centum per annum.

Many of the purchasers only partially availed themselves of this concession, the balances having been paid during the year, in order to obtain the Crown grants.

During the year, 3,348 acres were sold for £15,958. Interest to the amount of £1,819 17s. 1d. was paid with the instalments of purchase money as they fell due.

The area of country lands sold at auction during 1895 was 1,904 acres, of which about 1,173 acres were improved and subject to valuation, and 731 acres unimproved.

Table N shows the proceeds of sales by auction of country lands during the years 1892, 1893, 1894, and 1895. Similar particulars for each year from the commencement of *The Land Act* 1869 will be found in the departmental Report for 1891 :—

TABLE N.

Year.				Area Sold.			Amount Realized.			Average per Acre.		
				A.	R.	P.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1892—6 months ending 30th June—												
	Unimproved land	...	...	1,297	1	36	3,045	17	10	2	6	11
	Improved	...	...	2,738	0	24	3,265	9	6	1	3	10
" 6 months ending 31st December—												
	Unimproved land	...	...	886	0	4	1,725	3	6	1	18	10
	Improved	...	...	2,759	1	31	3,167	0	10	1	2	11
1893—6 months ending 30th June—												
	Unimproved land	...	...	923	2	24	1,826	14	0	1	19	6
	Improved	...	...	1,426	1	26	2,017	13	8	1	8	3
" 6 months ending 31st December—												
	Unimproved land	...	...	625	2	35	880	18	9	1	8	2
	Improved	...	...	472	0	38	1,264	18	4	2	13	6

TABLE N—continued.

Year.	Area Sold.			Amount Realized.			Average per Acre.		
	A.	R.	P.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1894—6 months ending 30th June—									
Unimproved land	1,648	0	0	2,472	0	0	1	10	0
Improved "	920	0	0	1,058	0	0	1	3	0
" 6 months ending 31st December—									
Unimproved land	1,032	0	0	1,651	0	0	1	12	0
Improved "	1,137	0	0	1,279	2	6	1	2	6
1895—6 months ending 30th June—									
Unimproved land	449	3	14	1,025	12	8	2	5	7
Improved "	1,000	0	39	4,375	12	8	4	7	6
" 6 months ending 31st December—									
Unimproved land	280	3	2	1,288	9	9	4	11	9
Improved "	172	3	31	623	14	6	3	12	1

Table O shows the alienation by auction, during 1895, of town and country lands, and the amounts derived therefrom :—

TABLE O.

Town Lands.			Country Lands.		
Area.	Amount.	Average per Acre.	Area.	Amount.	Average per Acre.
A. R. P.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	A. R. P.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1,444 0 11	8,644 8 1	5 19 8	1,903 3 34	7,313 10 9	3 16 10

III.—PASTORAL OCCUPATION.

The Land Act 1884 came into operation on the 29th December, 1884, and the occupation of runs, under pastoral licence, under *The Land Act* 1869 ceased on the 31st December, 1884.

Section 3 of *The Land Acts* 1884–1890 provided, however, for the continuation, under grazing licence, of the occupation of such runs until the lands comprised therein were required for the purposes of the Act.

Four areas, comprising 9,200 acres, and being areas formerly held as pastoral runs under *The Land Act* 1869, were forfeited during the year.

The sum of £17,830 15s. 2d. was received during the year for grazing licences, under sections 3, 67, and 123 of *The Land Acts* 1884–1890.

The area of runs formerly held under pastoral licence under *The Land Act* 1869, and occupation of which was renewed under the provisions of section 3 of *The Land Act* 1884, was on the 31st December, 1895, 197,351 acres.

The amount of pastoral rent paid during the years 1892, 1893, 1894, and 1895 was £3,363 3s. 2d., £3,329 2s. 5d., £2,661 17s. 9d., and £3,874 7s. 10d. respectively. Similar information for each year from the passing of *The Land Act* 1869 up to the end of 1891 is contained in the departmental Report for 1891.

Seven (7) leases, comprising 134,280 acres, were declared void during the year. For further particulars, reference is invited to Table P.

TABLE P.

PASTORAL ALLOTMENTS—SECTION 21, LAND ACT 1884–1890.

Number of applications received from 1st January to 31st December, 1895	...	5
Number of applications approved from 1st January to 31st December, 1895	...	1
Area leased	...	25,040 acres
Area available on 1st January, 1896, for application	...	1,719,332 "

THE LAND ACT 1891.

This Act came into operation on the 29th December, 1891.

During the current year many applicants for land have availed themselves of the provision made in section 7, whereby grazing areas of 320 acres and less in extent may be at once licensed by the Governor in Council.

Section 16 provides that areas not exceeding 20 acres and not contiguous or adjacent to Crown lands and areas not exceeding 3 acres required for church sites or for any charitable purposes may be sold. Under the provisions of this section 42 cases were approved, dealing with an area of 522 acres.

Section 17 provides for the application of the "betterment" principle wherever land has been or may be enhanced in value by railways or other public works. Since October, 1893, 74 licences have been issued for an area of 785 acres, the rental of which has been increased in accordance with this clause.

MALLEE.

The *Land Act* 1890, Part II., deals with about 11,166,793 acres of land, exclusive of Mildura (250,000 acres), in the north-western district of the colony. In addition to the area above, 155,207 acres have been laid off as roads through the mallee to permit of communication.

The operations during the year were as follow :—

Leases issued	...	...	...	{	Blocks	...	Nil	Area	...
					Allotments	...	122	68,864	acres
Licences issued	...	...	...	{	Agricultural allotments	2		628	"
					Garden, Store, &c.	23		...	"
Leases cancelled for non-payment of rent and other causes	...	...	...	{	Blocks	...	1	65,120	"
					Allotments	...	86	47,680	"
Leases transferred	...	...	...	{	Blocks	...	Nil	...	"
					Allotments	{	Whole	139	55,614
						{	Portion	117	69,667
Land subdivided and made available for application	...	...	...				Nil	...	...
Applications received	...	...	...	{	Blocks	...	...	...	Nil
					Allotments	...	...	...	250
Applications granted	...	...	...	{	Blocks	...	...	...	Nil
					Allotments	...	...	...	125*
Applications refused	...	...	...	{	Blocks	...	...	...	Nil
					Allotments	...	...	...	119
Applications abandoned	...	...	...	{	Blocks	...	...	...	Nil
					Allotments	...	...	...	62
					Agricultural allotments	...	...	...	Nil
Number of Local Land Boards held	...	...	...						34
Cases dealt with	...	...	...						414

* Includes applications received during 1894 but not dealt with by local land boards till 1895.

On 1st January, 1896, the areas available and held under lease and licence were as follow :—

Available for application	...	...	...	{	Blocks	...	10	Area	1,378,264	acres
					Allotments	...	431	637,370	"	
Held under lease	...	...	...	{	Blocks	...	67	5,608,158	"	
					Allotments	...	3,383	3,141,856	"	
Held under licence	...	...	...		Allotments	...	37	10,799	"	

NOTE.—Three blocks containing 390,346 acres are permanently reserved for public purposes, and consequently are not included in land leased or available.

The revenue derived was as follows :—

	£	s.	d.
Rents on blocks	4,062	3	10
Rents on allotments	9,104	5	0
Rents on agricultural allotments	228	19	0
Survey fees on blocks	74	13	5
Survey fees on allotments (approximate)	25	0	0
Valuation of improvements on allotments	251	14	0
Interest on valuation of improvements on blocks			Nil
Fencing rate	1,072	18	1
Fees—			
Application	£250	0	0
Lease (approximate)	104	0	0
Transfer	256	0	0
Mortgage	201	0	0
Licence	1	0	0
		812	0
			0
Total	£15,631	13	4

VERMIN RATES.

Vermin rates, proclaimed by the Governor in Council on the recommendations of local committees elected or appointed for the destruction of vermin, were collected and remitted to local committees as under:—

					£	s.	d.
Northern Vermin Board	...	...	...	...	420	16	0
North-Eastern Vermin Board	...	...	...	...	211	3	8
North-Western	„	„	...	...	167	15	2
Eastern	„	„	...	...	373	14	8
Western	„	„	...	...	155	4	2
Middle	„	„	...	...	93	2	7
Warracknabeal	„	„	...	...	239	2	7
Total	...	...	...	...	£1,660	18	10

Although the business generally, as regards the number of applications and dealings, shows a decrease in comparison with the previous year, the revenue derived therefrom shows an increase of about £2,000.

IV.—MISCELLANEOUS.

SECTION 76 OF THE LAND ACT 1890.

In this section provision is made for the alienation of portions of land not more than 10 acres in extent at a price to be fixed by appraisement. During the year 486 acres were sold in this manner, realizing the amount of £1,369 12s. 7d.

SECTION 102, LAND ACT 1890.—COMMONS.

Additional commonage, to the extent of 1,175 acres, was proclaimed during the year. Commons were diminished by proclamation to the extent of 928 acres.

Five (5) commons which were found to be no longer required were abolished.

SECTION 117, LAND ACT 1890.—PENALTIES.

The amount of penalties, at the rate of Five shillings per acre, received during 1895 for non-improvement by lessees under the Land Acts of 1862 and 1865, and interest on rents in arrear, was £1,271 17s.

SECTION 128, LAND ACT 1890.—PUBLIC HEARINGS.

During the year 1895, 418 sittings of Local Land Boards were held, at which applications for land and other business, comprising in all 3,569 subjects (including applications for mallee lands), were dealt with.

Four hundred cases were publicly heard by the Minister during the year.

THE WATTLES ACT 1890.

The Wattles Act was passed with a view to afford special facilities for the cultivation of the various species of acacia which have a commercial value, but its provisions were not largely availed of during the year. During the twelve months two (2) applications for leases, embracing an area of 800 acres, were received. Two (2) applications for leases under section 5 of this Act were granted during the year for an area of 781 acres.

SECTION 36 OF THE MINES ACT 1890.

In this section provision is made whereby the holders of registered Miners' Rights may purchase the area occupied by them at a price to be fixed by appraisement.

During the year 88 persons exercised the right of purchase thus conferred, the area purchased being 55a. 2r. 30p., whilst the amount realized was £1,138 1s. 2d.

CROWN GRANTS AND LEASES.

Two thousand nine hundred and ninety-six Crown grants and 913 leases were prepared and passed from the head office during 1895.

FEES AND CERTIFICATES.

The sum of £14,010 12s. 1d. was received during the year for certificates, transfers, and registrations under *The Land Acts* 1884–1890, and for miscellaneous fees, including those payable for grants, leases, and survey charges.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

REPORT ON WORKING OF LAND ACT FOR THE YEAR 1895.

District.	Applications Approved.						Report as to the Working of Land Act 1884-1890 on Holdings under Sections 42 and 65.	Report as to use made of Land leased under Section 32 Land Act 1884-1890.	Report as to Agriculture and New Rural Industries.	Remarks.	
	Section 32.			Section 42.							Section 65.
	No.	Area in Acres.	No.	Area in Acres.	No.	Area in Acres.					
Alexandra	7	1,456	2	640	...	Satisfactory	Used for grazing purposes	Crops in many cases a failure through scarcity of rain. Dairying industry depressed through same cause	There is a large quantity of land available for selection in the eastern portion of the district; but there is no demand for it in consequence of its rangy and inaccessible character.		
Ararat ...	6	1,576	6	546	17	413	Satisfactory	Used for grazing	Owing to light rainfall the yield of hay and cereals was poor; but this has been partly compensated for by the higher prices obtained. The returns from orchards were poor, apples especially being a failure; but it was an exceptionally good season for vines. The prospects of pastoralists are far brighter than last season. The lambing percentage has been very fair, and the mortality amongst stock is now only normal.		
Bairnsdale	33	9,356	27	2,817	...	Satisfactory	The low price of stock during the year has had the effect of causing a number of leases under section 32 to be abandoned. The majority of lessees are, however, making good use of their holdings for grazing purposes, and a fair number of abandoned blocks have been reselected	There have been several failures of crops in the district, owing to the dry seasons passed through. Considerable areas have been planted with oil-producing seeds, such as linseed, rape, and sunflower with fair results; and the seed is now being treated at the oil mill sent to Bairnsdale by the Agricultural Department	A large number of applications under section 99 have been dealt with during the year, principally for garden and residence sites; and several large blocks have been taken up under section 123 for grazing, mostly in Croajingolong.		

APPENDIX A—continued.

District.	Applications Approved.						Report as to the Working of Land Act 1884-1890 on Holdings under Sections 42 and 65.	Report as to use made of Land leased under Section 32 Land Act 1884-1890.	Remarks.
	Land Act 1890.								
	Section 32.	Section 42.	Section 65.	Section 32.	Section 42.	Section 65.			
No.	No.	No.	Area in Acres.	Area in Acres.	Area in Acres.	No.	No.	No.	
Ballarat ...	1	23	1,093	43	729	<p>Report as to the Working of Land Act 1884-1890 on Holdings under Sections 42 and 65.</p> <p>Satisfactory. With regard to section 65, the majority of holders have been under the impression that after payment of rent equal to £1 per acre they would be entitled to a Crown grant. The fact that the alienation of the auriferous areas is forbidden by the Act comes as a great surprise to many. This section, since the regulation was made making the rent chargeable 1s. per acre per annum, has given greater satisfaction. These holdings are devoted to residence, cultivation, and dairying purposes.</p> <p>Conditions of licences held under sections 42 and 66 have been satisfactorily complied with. A great deal of clearing has been done, and a large area was put under cultivation, but owing to the dry season the yield was poor.</p>	<p>Report as to Agriculture and New Rural Industries.</p> <p>This district did not experience the ill effects of the dry season to such an extent as did other parts of the colony, consequently the commodities principally grown, such as wheat and oats (for hay), potatoes, and peas, gave fairly satisfactory returns. The butter-making industry is still pushed on vigorously. No new rural industries to report</p>	<p>Great annoyance is generally expressed at the locking-up of lands—the soil of which could be profitably occupied in husbandry pursuits—owing to mining objections. As all lands under licence are open for mining, it is considered that this ancient practice should not now obtain.</p>	
Beechworth	30	18	1,552	32	549	<p>Land held under section 32 has been used for grazing. Conditions of leases have been fairly complied with. Owing to the increase of rabbits in parts of this district some lessees have abandoned their holdings, finding it too expensive to cope with the pest</p>	<p>There was a large area under wheat, but the crops were a failure. The tobacco crop was the best obtained for some years past. The growers are so well satisfied with their returns that they intend to put a larger area under cultivation next season. The creameries are being worked with good results; indeed, had it not been for the establishment of creameries, to give the farmers a little ready money, many of the farmers would have been compelled to leave their holdings. A large bacon factory has been established at Wangaratta during the year</p> <p>A large area was put under wheat last season, but unfortunately it proved one of the worst for many years past, numbers of farmers getting no return from their crops. A great many were compelled to appeal to the Government for assistance to procure grain (under Seed Act) to enable them to put in some crop this season. The creameries are proving</p>	<p>The area under vines is steadily increasing, and the fruit crop was very good.</p>	
Benalla ...	6	19	2,264	...	...	<p>Land held under this section is used for grazing purposes. The lessees have fenced and complied with the other conditions of their leases, except in a few parishes, where the rabbits are so numerous that lessees have great difficulty in keeping them down</p>	<p>The holders of licences under section 42 are steadily improving their blocks, and appear to be complying fairly with the other conditions of their licences</p>	

<p>No. 46.</p>	<p>Bendigo ...</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>2,397</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>1,281</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>558</p>	<p>Very satisfactory ...</p>	<p>Principally grazing ...</p>	<p>The severity of the past season has been nowhere more apparent than in the counties of Bendigo and Rodney, where, although embracing some of the finest wheat-growing lands in Victoria, the average yield did not exceed 6 bushels to the acre. At one time indeed it was anticipated that even this quantity would not be obtained, but, owing to the improvement in some of the crops in certain localities, the results proved more favorable</p>
<p>Camperdown and Warrnambool</p>	<p>Included in Geelong</p>	<p>...</p>	<p>Section 42 is working well, but there is hardly any use made of the land under this section or 32 beyond grazing. A good deal of the land is being cleared up and grass sown. The difficulty of transit where the land is fit for cropping prevents any use other than grazing being made of it. The settlers in most instances only grow for their own requirements. Some few grow a little more in case of local demand, which, however, is necessarily a limited one</p>	<p>Land being used for grazing ...</p>	<p>No new rural industries. There would be a large increase in agriculture but for the great difficulty of transit to railway or market.</p>	<p>...</p>	<p>...</p>	<p>A large proportion of the holdings taken under section 65 of the <i>Land Act</i> 1890 have been turned to the best advantage, and, although the areas in each case are limited, good use has been made of the land. Any lands made available from time to time are keenly sought after, and very good prices are obtained for lands throughout this district.</p>		
<p>Castlemaine</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>6,385</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>2,435</p>	<p>78</p>	<p>1,208</p>	<p>Very encouraging ...</p>	<p>Depasturing stock principally ...</p>	<p>Generally speaking, the season has proved as satisfactory as could be expected, and although many of the crops were practically failures, the farmers have obtained averages of from 4 to 5 bushels to the acre. A large extent of land is being planted for orchards, and, as the district is noted for its splendid fruits, good returns are obtained from that source</p>	

Many of the blocks of abandoned diggings land, which have been occupied lately, are being levelled and planted with vines and apricot and apple trees, and, as the ground seems well adapted for that purpose, splendid samples being obtained from those areas, no doubt the whole of the remaining abandoned diggings land will sooner or later be under cultivation.

APPENDIX A—continued.

District.	Applications Approved.						Report as to the Working of Land Act 1884-1890 on Holdings under Sections 42 and 65.	Report as to use made of Land leased under Section 32 Land Act 1884-1890.	Remarks.
	Land Act 1880.								
	Section 32.	Section 42.	Section 65.	No.	Area in Acres.	No.				Area in Acres.
Echuca and Kerang	16	1,327	111	7,407	...	...	Grazing chiefly	...	<p>Report as to Agriculture and New Rural Industries.</p> <p>Considering the severity of the season, the yield, which averaged 4 or 5 bushels to the acre, may be considered fairly good. On the Gunbower Island, where a large extent of land has been recently opened up for selection, good work has been done in clearing and cultivating, and the result has proved in every sense encouraging. In the mallee country an increased area is under crop, and, notwithstanding the very dry season experienced, a very fair return was obtained from last year's harvest.</p> <p>The dairying industry has developed enormously in this district during the last three years. The Colac Butter Factory alone has no less than five creameries (and another is in course of erection) attached to it. The quantity of milk disposed of during that period has increased from 753,000, in the first year, to 1,822,000 gallons in the last year. This is the principal industry, as, in consequence of the bad roads and difficulty of transit in the forest, agriculture will not pay at the present time.</p> <p>The area under cultivation is small compared with what it might be. There has always been an abundant rainfall, and there is plenty of good land, but it is held in large estates and used for grazing. Freezing works have been established at Portland, but very little work has been done for the want of fat stock. A great quantity of rabbits have, however, been frozen and shipped to London.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the comparative failure of last season's wheat crop, farmers have again cultivated large areas this year, and if prices remain strong, good results are confidently anticipated. Creameries and butter factories are still making satisfactory progress.</p> <p>The prospects for the present season are certainly very much brighter, and the recent rainfall has produced a sufficient supply to replenish all tanks and dams, to the great relief of stock-owners, many of whom were in sore straits. Grass is now springing up nicely, and, as a consequence, the supplies of milk for the various factories are being better maintained.</p>
Geelong ...	42	8,724	48	3,979	2	40	Satisfactory	...	<p>The leaseholders, as a rule, are still clearing and improving their holdings—making gardens and orchards, &c. There are no new industries to note. There are still, however, some absentee—apparently holding their selections for speculative purposes.</p>
Hamilton ...	48	12,958	20	2,139	...	...	Satisfactory	...	<p>Section 99 appears to find favour in this district, and a number of very substantial settlements have been created under its operation. The Rabbit Preserving Company has done good work, and by it what is considered a curse has been converted into a source of profit to all connected with the industry.</p> <p>A good demand continues to be experienced for mallee land.</p>
Horsham ...	36	9,871	65	10,121	...	...	Satisfactory	...	

Melbourne	35	5,886	204	17,214	15	284	Satisfactory	...	...	Chiefly dairying—several new creameries have been started.	
Moama	5	2,935	9	1,120	1	11	Satisfactory	...	...	The wheat and oat crops were for the most part complete failures. A creamery has been established on the plains	The past season has been the worst that has been experienced for many years, owing to the rainfall in the spring being exceptionally light and the low prices ruling for stock. Those who had sheep were more fortunate. The coming season promises to be a prosperous one for both farmers and graziers. The mining developments which have taken place have given the farmers, &c., a good market for their produce.
St. Arnaud	25	2,740	71	4,987	50	878	Satisfactory	...	...	The planting of orchards and vineyards still continues to receive attention, more especially wherever water can be conserved. The creameries established within a reasonable distance from railway stations have proved a great boon to farmers	Owing to excessive drought, the yield of the year is considerably under the general average, and, in some instances, a total failure.
Sale	37	9,817	62	7,023	4	71	Satisfactory	...	For grazing purposes only	No new industries have been started in this district since last report, though there seems to be a prospect of sugar beet being grown near Maifra. There has been a large increase in the number of butter factories	On account of the drought this has been a very bad year for land-holders in this district.
Stawell	8	1,708	28	2,555	8	165	Satisfactory	...	Grazing chiefly	The land is being cultivated where suitable. Several new creameries have been started	Exceptionally good season for vines. More land being prepared for viticulture.
Seymour	12	4,002	14	2,856	25	470	Satisfactory	...	Used for grazing purposes	Crops in many cases a failure through scarcity of rain. Dairying industry depressed through same cause	Land open for selection principally 32nd section blocks of an inferior quality.

APPENDIX B.

SURVEY BRANCH.

I have the honour to report as follows as to the work performed by the Survey Branch of the Department during the year ending 31st December, 1895.

SURVEYS.

1. The principal part of the surveys required in connexion with the selection and occupation of land continues to be effected by surveyors authorized to perform the work at schedule prices fixed by the Department. This system is the result of long experience and works fairly well.

2. During the year where officers in charge of Government survey parties have come in contact with the work of the authorized surveyors, it has as a rule been found satisfactory. These inspections, however, have been of a limited character, having been made by the field-officers only in connexion with their own operations.

3. The permanent staff of field-officers at the end of the year consisted of eight assistants, of whom one—the land officer and surveyor in charge at Bairnsdale—has been inspecting and reporting on the village settlements, another has been in charge of the Melbourne district surveyor's work, while a third has been acting as land officer and supervising survey work in the Sale district.

The remaining assistants have been chiefly employed on the survey of main roads, subdivision of land for village settlement purposes, and for sale and selection, and other work as specified under the following heads:—

- (a) Subdivision of reclaimed lands at the Koo-wee-rup Swamp.
- (b) Survey of roads.
- (c) Check surveys and resurveys in the several districts.
- (d) Subdivision of town and country lands.
- (e) Topographical surveys.

4. Expenditure on departmental surveys for the year 1895 has been as follows:—

Subdivision of land for sale	...	...	...	...	£1,084	16	6
Main road surveys	...	...	...	...	1,629	14	6
Subdivision of land for selection	...	...	...	...	1,249	1	8
Check surveys and connexion lines	...	...	...	...	350	14	2
Resurveys for sale, selection, and others	...	...	...	...	520	15	2
Koo-wee-rup Swamp subdivisional surveys	...	...	...	...	635	10	6
Village settlement surveys under the <i>Settlement on Lands Act</i>							
1893	...	...	...	...	639	1	10
Mallee subdivisional surveys	...	...	...	...	129	19	11
Surveys of sites for public purposes	...	...	...	...	79	14	9
Feature surveys	...	...	...	...	198	6	11
Standard lines, boundaries, and other work, such as renewing trigonometrical stations, &c....	...	...	...	...	165	11	0
					£6,683	6	11

5. The amount received as instalments on balances due on grazing area surveys, together with survey fees collected with first rents on surveyed allotments, was £1,472 3s. 8d.

6. The Department has also to be credited with the following amounts for printing, plan work, &c., performed for other Departments:—

Chief Secretary's Department	...	...	...	...	£67	3	0
Public Works	..	..	..	..	16	0	0
Mines	..	..	..	..	29	0	0
Defence	..	..	..	..	8	15	0
Water Supply	..	..	..	..	5	0	0

7. The amount paid into Trust Fund, Survey Fees Account, by selectors and others as survey fees for the year 1895 was £5,830 13s. 11d., while the amount withdrawn therefrom for surveyors' payments, refunds to applicants, and transfers to revenue was £7,393 16s. 6d.

COMPUTING AND ADJUSTING.

8. During the year 500 plans were examined and checked (varying from 1 to 405 lots), of which 111 were returned to surveyors for amendment of discrepancies. Field notes are filed and produced for reference when required by surveyors and draughtsmen.

In the adjusting room 2,180 cases of discrepancies have been investigated, and 72 certificates of amendment prepared and issued involving altogether the preparation of about 2,270 plans and diagrams.

The staff consists of one officer in charge and seven assistants—three in the computing and four in the adjusting room respectively.

DRAUGHTING AND LITHOGRAPHY.

9. The staff has been engaged in compiling new locality and record plans of parishes, as well as plans for the use of the Settlement on Lands Branch of the Department.

The increased demand for parish plans on the 40-chain scale has necessitated the posting up and re-issue of a large number.

Requisitions for plans and tracings, supplying information to other Departments, municipalities, and public bodies, have received due attention.

Owing to the large amount of general work, the preparation of compiled plans has been greatly retarded; but nine new parish and four city and township plans have been published.

Technical descriptions for the gazettal of reserves (temporary and permanent), roads, amended boundaries of electoral districts, &c., have been prepared.

The amount of work disposed of in the lithographic and printing branches has been large, owing to requirements under the Settlement on Lands Act, also to the demand by the public for revised general maps.

The staff, including lithographers, printers, and plan-mounter, numbers 25.

ENGRAVING.

10. The plate of the Geodetic Survey of Victoria, "S," North Division, is in hand. Plates "G," "H," and "I" are being posted up to date. Additional information has been recorded on the two maps of Victoria.

The staff is limited to one engraver.

PHOTOGRAPHY.

11. Transfers for all departmental plans have been prepared, also for other branches of the service—the Mines, Defence, Government Statist, and Railways. A large amount of work for the Patents Office is in hand. Transfers of several municipal plans have been completed.

Staff, two—photographer and assistant.

S. K. VICKERY,
Surveyor-General.

APPENDIX C.

FOREST BRANCH.

STATE FORESTS.

During the year 1895 the demand for mining timber has been very large, and in the neighbourhood of the principal gold-fields it has become a question for grave consideration whether the supply can be kept up without encroaching too much upon the timber that ought to be left to come to maturity.

Thinning operations have been successfully continued in many of our State forests, and the results are becoming every year more satisfactory, as we have now trained men available to mark the trees to be removed, and to generally supervise the work.

The saw-mill industry in the colony showed a slight revival during the year, but from various causes the prospect of opening up a profitable export trade in our hardwoods with England and other countries has not up to the present time met with the success anticipated twelve months ago. This is largely owing to the fact that the forests near railways have been rapidly denuded of timber (matured), and many of the saw-millers, owing to bad times, are unable to shift their mills to more likely localities, where they could get timber, but at the same time would have to contend with many and grave disabilities through the want of or distance from railways. The very low prices realized for Australian timber in the London markets is another factor in the want of enterprise shown by the saw-milling industry as a whole.

THE STATE PLANTATIONS.

I have again to record the fact that the results obtained in the plantations at You Yangs, Creswick, and Havelock are eminently satisfactory. Although the work from its nature has been to a very great extent experimental most of the trees planted have made remarkable growth. The chief plantations for conifers are at You Yangs and Creswick. At You Yangs also many valuable native and exotic eucalypts are doing well. This is very noticeable in the case of the sugar gum *E. Corynocalyx*, which, in fact, seems at home in all parts of the colony. It is proposed to plant largely at You Yangs this year some of the more valuable Gippsland eucalypts, such as *E. Bosistoiana*, *E. Botryoides*, and *E. Muelleriana*, which succeed well near the coast, and are extremely valuable for timber supply. At Creswick the pines in the Sawpit Gully plantation are making remarkable growth, and prove the adaptability of the district for the growth of the more valuable exotic timbers.

The following figures for the years as shown hereunder should be conclusive testimony of the great value of the planting work of the Forest Branch—nearly all being introduced trees, mostly foreign:—

Years.	You Yangs.	Saw-pit Gully.	Gunbower.	Macedon.	Havelock.
	Trees.	Trees.	Trees.	Trees.	Trees.
1888-9	12,000	8,350	—	6,000	—
1889-90	52,000	42,500	—	12,000	—
1890-91	56,000	17,000	—	8,000	—
1891-2	42,008	17,821	10,000	—	—
1892-3	28,810	28,699	8,000	—	—
1893-4	22,265	16,000	3,000	—	9,500
1894-5	19,180	15,527	530	—	1,840
Totals	232,263	145,897	21,530	26,000	11,340

or a grand total of 437,030 trees* hand planted in permanent sites.

* These figures do not include about 300,000 bluegums sown in permanent plantations at Havelock and You Yangs.

The total cost of the You Yangs plantation is set forth hereunder to date :—

1889-90—Fencing, planting, &c.	...	...	...	£1,264
1890-91	”	”	...	971
1891-2	”	”	...	768
1892-3	”	”	...	512
1893-4	”	”	...	371
1894-5	”	”	...	354
Total cost of fencing, planting, &c.				£4,240

The receipts for the same period are as under—

1889 to 1895—Sale of wattle bark	...	...	...	...	£950
”	”	Grazing fees	...	...	180
					£1,130

FREE DISTRIBUTION OF TREES TO THE PUBLIC.

The free distribution of trees to the public, and public institutions such as State schools, cemeteries, churches, &c., is year by year increasing in popularity. In consequence of organization, good packing, and skilled labour at the nurseries, together with a careful selection of trees, the general planting by the outside public is fairly satisfactory, and results in about 65 per cent. of the young stock provided by the Department being successfully established.

The trees most in demand all over the colony were *Pinus Insignis*, *Schinus Molle*, and *Eucalyptus Corynocalyx*. Nearly every applicant wished to be supplied with either one or the whole of these three species.

The number of trees despatched from Macedon for the year 1895 for the use of the public amounted to 56,500, and during the six years ending 31st December, 1895, fully 350,000 have been sent to all parts of the colony. A vast amount of good is the undoubted result of tree-planting in the dry arid districts of the colony, and a love for shade trees *especially* is inculcated in the hearts of the people. It is much to be regretted that “retrenchment” and the severe cutting down of expenses in the Forest Branch militates against the extension of this most important work, which is calculated at some future time to add largely to the wealth of the colony.

YEAR 1895.—STATEMENT OF REVENUE.

	£	s.	d.
Royalty, redgum timber
Royalty, wattle bark and wattle wood
Grazing licences
Thinning area licences
Saw-mill licences
Timber area licences
Wood and jinker licences
Other licences, &c., not specified above
Penalties, &c....
			6,892 4 3

It will be noted from the above statement that a large increase, amounting to £1,433, has been received over and above last year's revenue, and there is no doubt whatever that the timber revenue would be largely augmented if the royalties on railway sleepers and other royalties were placed on a fair and equitable basis, and not so one-sided as at present, as the Government receives next to nothing for the timber compared to its market value.

GEORGE S. PERRIN,
Conservator of State Forests.