

1916.

VICTORIA.

THE LAND ACTS.

REPORT

FOR

THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 1916,

WITH APPENDICES.

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

By Authority:

ALBERT J. MULLETT, GOVERNMENT PRINTER, MELBOURNE.

No. 42.—[1s.]—15403.

APPROXIMATE COST OF REPORT.

Preparation—Not given
Printing (400 copies)

£ s. d.
18 0 0

R E P O R T .

*To His Excellency the Honorable Sir Arthur Lyulph Stanley, K.C.M.G.,
Governor of the State of Victoria and its Dependencies, &c., &c., &c.*

Department of Lands and Survey,
Melbourne, 27th September, 1916.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

I have the honour to submit the annexed Report by the Secretary for Lands of proceedings under the Land Acts during the financial year ended 30th June, 1916.

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

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--|-------------------|
| I.—Settlement. | \| | IV.—Mallee. |
| II.—Sales by auction. | \| | V.—Miscellaneous. |
| III.—Pastoral occupation. | \| |  |

Appendix A gives a detailed report by the Surveyor-General on the Professional Division of the Department.

Appendices B and C furnish information regarding various works under the Control and Management of the Department of Lands and Survey.

During 1915 the Land Acts were consolidated under the title of the *Land Act 1915*, which came into operation on 1st October, 1915.

I have the honour to be,

Your Excellency's most obedient Servant,

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

*The Honorable William Hutchinson,
Commissioner of Crown Lands and Survey.*

Department of Lands and Survey,
27th September, 1916.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit the following report on the operations under the Land Acts, and the general work of the Department during the year ended 30th June, 1916. The appendices embody separate reports by the Surveyor-General on the professional work, the Chief Inspector, Vermin Destruction Act, and the Curator of the Botanic Gardens.

REPORT.

The year 1915-16 has to be recorded as a most eventful one, the great world war continuing during the whole period, and very seriously interfering with land settlement. Following the disastrous drought of the previous year, the season proved most favorable and the record area placed under crop yielded a record harvest. The difficulty of transport, due to war conditions, necessitated special State action, and led to the taking over of the control and marketing of the whole wheat crop by the State through the Wheat Commission. Under a wise financial arrangement with the Banks, an advance of 2s. 6d. per bushel was made available on all wheat delivered, and this proved of immense benefit to the farmers, many of whom were seriously involved financially as a result of the drought period. Though, in terms of the *Seed Advances Act 1914*, not less than one-third of the amount advanced for purchase of seed and fodder was to be charged against the returns of the year under notice, the State Government decided to make no deduction from the advance of 2s. 6d. per bushel and to defer the collection of instalments until a further amount, or dividend, was paid. This concession, of necessity, seriously reduced the amount received as repayment of advances, but up to the end of the financial year a sum of £95,535 was repaid out of the total sum of money loaned in the previous year, £516,000. Of the balance, one-third is payable from the proceeds of the 1916 harvest, and one-third may be carried on to the succeeding year, unless otherwise determined.

For the year 1916, the number of crop liens registered is 3,032.

SETTLEMENT.

The absence on military service of such a large proportion of the young men of the State necessarily checked new settlement to a very great extent. The summary following sets out the number of holdings and acreage of same taken up under the leading sections :—

	Number of Holdings.	Area (Acres).
New selection (exclusive of Mallee land) ...	568	101,556
New selection, Auriferous land—Sec. 86 ...	122	1,758
New selection, Mallee land ...	238	140,325
Selections out of Grazing Area Leaseholds ...	146	46,522
Holdings converted to Selection tenure ...	179	3,175

The demand for Mallee land showed a very appreciable decline, and the difficulties in dealing with this class of country are dealt with in the Report of the Surveyor-General, Appendix A. In anticipation of them being required for settlement by returned soldiers, areas in various localities were withheld from selection.

GRAZING LANDS.

A very large extent of Crown land, comprising the high ranges and the lower lands of the eastern part of the State, was retained under annual grazing licence conditions. These areas were only lightly stocked owing to the depletion of herds by the drought losses of the previous year. A total revenue of £16,661 8s. 4d. was derived from this source.

RABBIT DESTRUCTION.

The available amount for expenditure during the year on the work of rabbit destruction was about £11,000 less than in the previous year, but the active administration of the Vermin Destruction Act and the persistent poisoning gave, generally, good results. The shortage of supplies, and excessive cost of wire netting, due to war conditions, operated unfavorably and, for the effective dealing with this pest, the making available of supplies of good netting at lower cost is most desirable. In the range country especially, as for example in South Gippsland, and the Beech Forest, smaller holdings properly netted must prevail before incursions of the rabbit can be brought under proper control. Mr. F. E. Allan, who for so many years devoted himself to the special duty of rabbit destruction, and rendered very effective service to the State of Victoria, retired from office, his duties being undertaken by Mr. Matthams, as Acting Chief Inspector, whose report appears in Appendix B.

ARREARS.

It was hoped in the early part of the year that the exceptionally large wheat harvest would have resulted in the payment of much of the arrears of rent due to the Department, but War conditions again operated unfavorably. The transport difficulty prevented full realization on the wheat produced, and the farmers could not, to any large extent, meet overdue payments on their holdings.

<i>Arrears at 30th June, 1915.</i>				<i>Arrears at 30th June, 1916.</i>			
Crown lands ...	...	£49,203	18 5	Crown lands ...	...	£45,141	
Mallee lands ...	...	£127,184	1 5	Mallee lands ...	...	£140,060	

CITY LAND HELD FOR INDUSTRIAL PURPOSES.

A number of leases expired during the year, and were renewed, the general term being ten years. A review of rents of sites held under licence was undertaken, and substantial increases were made in a number of cases. The revenue derived from these sites was £17,169.

WONTHAGGI TOWNSHIP.

The sale of Government cottages to the tenants, as authorized by the Wonthaggi Land Act, was proceeded with, and up to the end of the year 41 occupiers had entered into purchasing agreements. Business leases were all converted under agreement to purchase. A large number of tenancies under temporary licence were created, comprising land which, on account of coal prospects, cannot be alienated. These are being used chiefly as grazing paddocks by residents of the township.

NEW LEGISLATION.

By the consolidation of the Statutes, all Acts bearing on land settlement became embodied in the *Land Act 1915*, and *Closer Settlement Act 1915*. This work was much needed, and will prove of great advantage. Other Acts passed during the year are set out in the following list :—

- Albert Park Land Act 1915*, No. 2587.
- Dandenong Land Act 1915*, No. 2586.
- Footscray Land Act 1915*, No. 2588.
- Land Act 1915* (consolidation), No. 2676.
- Land Act 1915* (No. 2), No. 2770.
- Mandurang Land Act 1915*, No. 2793.
- Seed Advance Act 1915*, No. 2598.
- Willaura Land Act 1915*, No. 2795.
- Williamstown Land Act 1915*, No. 2604.

RESERVES.

The *Public Reserves Act 1914*, has proved of material value in simplifying the appointments of trustees and Committees of Management of Reserves.

CLOSER SETTLEMENT ACT.

The Lands Purchase and Management Board in its special report deals in detail with the work done under this Act. In the operations under the Act, much of the administrative work is performed by the ordinary staff of the Department. This includes the preparation and noting of leases, the making advances to settlers, and collection of repayments and rents, insurances, &c.

I.—ALIENATION OF CROWN LANDS.

The general methods of alienation of Crown lands in Victoria, from the first sales to the 30th June, 1916, are shown in the following Table (A):—

TABLE A.

	BY AUCTION.				BY SELECTION.						General Total.
	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	...	753,344	3,493,284
" 1869 ...	986,175	17,229	32,693	1,036,097	Section 19. 65,511 10,460,737		...	...	Section 49. 11,600 181,831		11,678,665
" 1878 ...	...	...	...	...	Section 11. 453 76,100		...	...	Section 10. 401 1,202		77,302
" 1884-1890	120,177	31,198	3,924	155,299	Section 42. 4,282 399,867		Section 49. 118 6,232		...	...	561,398
" 1891-1901	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Sections 22 and 106. 142 674		674
Totals ...	...	...	...	6,671,807	...	14,210,457	...	625,647	...	937,051	22,444,962
During year—	<i>Land Act 1898-1901.</i>				<i>Land Act 1898-1901-1911.</i>						
1899 ...	3,353	860	...	4,213	...	...	...	...	...	...	4,213
1900 ...	4,977	1,668	...	6,645	657	79,376	532	96,786	198	28,879	211,686
1901 ...	4,080	2,126	...	6,206	1,249	152,262	1,323	297,518	319	50,257	506,243
1902 ...	3,297	2,259	...	5,556	557	70,211	744	166,830	111	17,332	259,929
1903 ...	4,936	1,957	...	6,893	675	83,283	679	122,351	217	33,165	245,692
1904 ...	3,154	1,924	...	5,078	747	59,590	586	139,119	143	25,262	229,049
1905 ...	3,267	2,129	...	5,396	727	54,257	417	98,705	108	25,412	183,770
1906 ...	2,060	1,946	...	4,006	946	56,172	300	61,299	123	20,128	141,605
1907 ...	2,776	1,369	...	4,145	901	55,079	263	67,923	168	34,328	161,475
1908 ...	2,805	1,630	...	4,435	824	54,620	355	95,136	123	27,994	182,185
1909 ...	2,729	2,062	...	4,791	734	48,047	372	97,748	143	33,023	183,609
1910 ...	2,469	1,789	...	4,258	749	38,601	341	96,621	189	35,692	175,172
1.1.11 to 30.6.12	2,002	2,147	...	4,149	1,189	51,553	373	97,113	209	41,393	194,208
1912-13 ...	1,173	1,279	...	2,452	759	30,956	225	49,992	117	21,056	104,456
1913-14 ...	790	1,400	...	2,190	662	21,818	200	54,343	127	18,279	96,630
1914-15 ...	962	1,020	...	1,982	562	24,220	301	80,046	109	18,655	124,903
1915-16 ...	794	1,094	...	1,888	347	14,478	234	70,171	93	18,229	104,766
Totals ...	45,624	28,659	...	74,283	12,285	894,523	7,245	1,691,701	2,497	449,084	3,109,591
	Auction	...	...	...	...	...	6,746,090 acres				
	Selection	...	...	...	...	...	*18,808,463 "				
	Total	...	...	...	...	...	25,554,553 acres.				

NOTE.—Forfeitures have been deducted from the area selected,
* Exclusive of selection in Mallee Country and Mallee Border.

SECTION 31, LAND ACT 1869.

This section, the rights of which are preserved by section 2 of the *Land Act* 1915, 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 B shows the transactions during the financial year ended 30th June, 1916:—

TABLE B.

Purchases Completed.	Area Purchased.	Balances of Purchase Money Received.			Survey Fees Allowed.		
		Acres.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
3	118			Nil	3	4	0

SECTION 44, LAND ACT 1890.

This section, the rights of which are preserved by section 2 of the *Land Act* 1915, enables licensees under Division 3, Part I., of the *Land Act* 1890 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 the financial year ended 30th June, 1916:—

TABLE C.

Purchases Completed.	Area Purchased.	Area Leased and afterwards Purchased.	Amount Paid by Lessees as Balance of Purchase Money.		
			Acres.	Acres.	£	s.	d.
164	11,402	11,402	607	8	10

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

THE LAND ACT 1915.

Division 12, Part I.

Section 175 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. Thirteen applications, representing 167 acres, were approved during the financial year ended 30th June, 1916, and the sum of £71 1s. 6d. was received.

Division 4, Part I.—Agricultural and Grazing Lands.

Under this Division provision is made for the occupation of Crown lands for the combined purposes of agriculture and grazing, and section 32 of the *Land Act* 1915 provides for the issue of grazing area leases for a term of years expiring not later than the 29th December, 1920.

Table D shows the transactions during the financial year ended 30th June, 1916 :—

TABLE D.

Number of Applications Approved.	Area Leased.	Annual Rental.		
	Acres.	£	s.	d.
31	15,388	67	3	6

Sections 47 and 50 of the *Land Act* 1901, the rights of which are preserved by section 2 of the *Land Act* 1915, provide for the issue of licences of agricultural allotments, and section 54 of the *Land Act* 1901, the rights of which are preserved by section 2 of the *Land Act* 1915, allows the issue of licences of grazing allotments.

Table E shows the transactions under these sections during the financial year ended 30th June, 1916 :—

TABLE E.

Section.	Number of Applications Approved.	Area Licensed.	Annual Rental.		
		Acres.	£	s.	d.
47. (Residence) <i>Land Act</i> 1901 ...	217	8,398	349	10	8
50. (Non-residence) „ 1901 ...	18	561	26	18	2
54. (Residence) „ 1901 ...	87	29,211	581	3	8
54. (Non-residence) „ 1901 ...	28	9,224	231	8	8
Total	350	47,894	1,189	1	2

NOTE.—This Table includes selections of enhanced value.

The transactions under sections 49, 51, and 56 of the *Land Act* 1901 during the financial year ended 30th June, 1916, are set forth in Table F.

TABLE F.

Grants Gazetted as Approved.	Leases Gazetted as Approved.	Purchases 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.
			Acres.	Acres.	£ s. d.	Acres.	£ s. d.
339	758	581	44,566	116,955	3,658 17 6	35,124	4,404 11 7

Under section 61 of the *Land Act* 1915 a lessee of an agricultural or grazing allotment or selection purchase allotment 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 order, representing an area of 58 acres, was registered during the financial year ended 30th June, 1916.

Sections 71 and 72 of the *Land Act* 1901 as amended by section 70 of the *Land Act* 1911 and section 62 of the *Land Act* 1915 empower licensees of agricultural or grazing allotments and lessees of selection-purchase allotments to register liens in the Crown Lands Office upon the security, and to the value of, the permanent improvements effected on their holdings. Three hundred and seven liens, comprising an area of 192,100 acres, were registered during the financial year ended 30th June, 1916, representing, as advanced on this kind of security, £30,371 10s. 10d.

Division 5, Part I.—Auriferous Lands.

This Division provides for the occupation of Crown lands classed "Auriferous." Under section 86, 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.

In the *Land Act 1915* provision is made whereby licensees under section 86 can apply to surrender their licences with a view to obtain selection purchase leases in lieu thereof.

The transactions during the financial year ended 30th June, 1916, under section 86, are shown in Table G:—

TABLE G.

Section 86.		
Number of Applications Approved.	Area Licensed.	Annual Rental.
122	Acres. 1,758	£ s. d. 92 13 0

PROGRESS OF SELECTION.

Table H. shows the progress of selection under section 65 of *The Land Act 1890*, sections 29, 42, and 59 of the *Land Act 1898* and corresponding sections of the *Land Act 1901*, sections 8 and 13 of the *Land Act 1911*, and sections 32, 46, 50, and 86 of the *Land Act 1915*. Similar particulars under sections 32, 42, 49, and 65 of the *Land Acts 1884–1890*, from the year 1886 to the year 1898 inclusive, will be found in the departmental Report for 1908:—

TABLE H.—LAND SELECTED.

Year.	Under Section 29, <i>Land Act 1898</i> , and Section 35, <i>Land Act 1901</i> and Section 32, <i>Land Act 1915</i> .		Under Sections 42, 47, 54, and 59, <i>Land Acts 1898–1901</i> and section 8, <i>Land Act 1911</i> , and section 46, <i>Land Act 1915</i> .		Under Sections 49, 50, 54, and 59, <i>Land Acts 1898–1901</i> and section 13, <i>Land Act 1911</i> , and section 50, <i>Land Act 1915</i> . Non-Residence.		Under Sections 65, 103, and 86.	
	Application Approved.	Acreage.	Applications Approved.	Acreage.	Applications Approved.	Acreage.	Applications Approved.	Acreage.
1899	41	13,591	616	66,998	14	924	116	1,987
1900	1,558	701,504	1,349	196,127	202	29,042	178	2,946
1901	3,663	1,642,054	2,654	466,084	319	50,257	400	7,085
1902	1,173	507,403	1,459	281,569	118	18,115	245	4,584
1903	905	574,482	1,544	251,441	217	33,165	492	7,420
1904	524	290,043	1,455	226,925	156	26,667	689	12,587
1905	372	179,488	1,325	189,442	123	27,977	437	6,952
1906	219	95,647	1,439	149,893	140	23,220	477	8,623
1907	96	28,323	1,321	151,865	197	39,367	517	9,290
1908	178	85,362	1,402	184,942	131	28,941	407	7,145
1909	101	47,791	1,550	214,999	186	42,180	318	5,478
1910	84	36,089	1,527	210,331	213	38,363	304	4,864
1.1.11 to 30.6.12	89	30,279	2,006	229,598	235	44,321	549	9,497
1912-13	55	21,376	1,211	121,032	130	24,387	263	4,386
1913-14	27	11,182	1,080	109,972	143	21,768	145	2,186
1914-15	44	24,501	1,117	144,391	119	21,146	239	3,715
1915-16	31	15,388	758	115,611	103	20,070	122	1,758

NOTE.—This Table includes selections under section 17, *Land Act 1891*.

LICENCES AND LEASES SURRENDERED, REVOKED, OR DECLARED EXPIRED.

The following Table shows the number of licences and leases (together with areas), under the sections specified, which were surrendered, revoked, or declared expired during the financial year ended 30th June, 1916 :—

TABLE I.

—	No.	Extent.
		Acres.
Licences—Section 42, Land Acts 1890-1898, and Section 47, Land Act 1901	60	5,423
Section 50, Land Act 1901	3	217
Section 59, Land Act 1898, and Section 54, Land Act 1901 (Residence)	44	12,821
Section 59, Land Act 1898, and Section 54, Land Act 1901 (Non-residence)	3	179
Section 65, Land Act 1890, and Section 103, Land Act 1901	*228	4,095
Section 106, Land Act 1901	1	3
Leases—Section 44, Land Act 1890	1	108
Section 44, Land Acts 1890-1898, and Section 49, Land Act 1901	4	371
Section 61, Land Act 1898, and Section 56, Land Act 1901 (Residence)	15	3,425
Section 63, Land Act 1901	1	77
Section 85, Land Act 1890, and Section 131, Land Act 1901	6	179
Section 29, Land Act 1898, and Section 35, Land Act 1901	222	90,900
Section 8, Land Act 1911	54	8,922
Section 13, Land Act 1911	4	1,445
Section 37, Land Act 1911	12	2,181

* Includes licences surrendered to enable holders to obtain concessions allowed by Land Acts.

Land Act 1915. Part V.

VILLAGE COMMUNITY LANDS.

The number of settlers who have completed their term of permissive occupancy and obtained their leases is 3, making a total of 2,549 leases issued since the commencement of the *Settlement on Lands Act 1893*.

The total amount advanced since the inception of the *Settlement on Lands Act 1893* is £67,379 8s. 4d.

During the year 14 transfers of Village Settlement leases have been registered, making a total of 880 sanctioned to date. In every case the transferee has been a person eligible to become a Village Settler.

During the year 79 settlers have acquired Crown Grants of their holdings.

Monetary aid to the extent of £814 0s. 10d. was repaid during the year; the total amount received to 30th June, 1916, being £43,308 17s. 9d.

Under the *Settlement on Lands Act 1893* (Village Settlement) 707 settlers are actually residing, and 102 are improving but non-resident, making a total of 809 in occupation. The number of souls, including wives and children, is 3,430.

II.—SALES OF CROWN LANDS BY AUCTION.

The principle of deferred payments introduced in Part V. of *The Land Act 1884* has been continued and extended by the provisions of Division 6, Part I., of the *Land Act 1915*, one-eighth of the price bid being paid at the time of sale, and the remaining seven-eighths spread over a period not exceeding twenty years, payable half-yearly, in instalments of equal amounts, bearing interest at the rate of £4 per centum per annum.

During the financial year ended 30th June, 1916, 1,888 acres were sold for £20,370. Interest to the amount of £3,929 14s. 4d. was paid with the purchase money or instalments as they fell due.

The area of country lands sold at auction during the financial year ended 30th June, 1916, was 794 acres, of which about 175 acres were improved, and 619 acres unimproved.

In consequence of several purchasers having failed to pay the instalments of their purchase money as they became due, as required by the conditions of sale, steps were taken during the financial year ended 30th June, 1916, to forfeit to the Crown the amounts already paid and declare the sales void. As a result of this action, which was not taken until after repeated and fruitless notices to the purchasers, an area of 30a. 2r. 0p., representing fifty-one distinct purchases, reverted to the Crown, and the instalments of purchase money and survey fees already paid thereon, amounting to £803 9s. 2d., were forfeited.

The revenue raised from sales by auction is credited to the Developmental Railways Account. For the year the total amount received was £33,539 8s. 10d.

Table J shows the proceeds of sales by auction of country lands during each year from 1913. Similar particulars for each year from the commencement of *The Land Act 1869* to the year 1891 inclusive will be found in the departmental Report for that year, for the several subsequent years to 1900 inclusive in the Report for 1903, and to 1913 inclusive in the Report for 1914-15:—

TABLE J.

Year.	Area Sold.			Amount Realized			Average per Acre.		
	A.	R.	P.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1913—6 months ending 30th June—									
Unimproved land	233	2	15	806	8	7	3	9	2
Improved „	666	3	6	9,039	2	1	13	11	0
„ 6 months ending 31st December—									
Unimproved land	169	1	2	444	16	9	2	12	8
Improved „	126	1	35	490	18	5	3	17	11
1914—6 months ending 30th June—									
Unimproved land	376	1	29	1,188	1	6	3	3	2
Improved „	117	2	36	459	15	9	3	17	11
„ 6 months ending 31st December—									
Unimproved land	320	1	35	1,100	18	11	3	8	9
Improved „	168	2	8	341	8	4	2	0	7
1915—6 months ending 30th June—									
Unimproved land	124	2	14	764	3	7	6	3	3
Improved „	347	2	39	783	17	0	2	0	6
„ 6 months ending 31st December—									
Unimproved land	95	0	21	268	17	3	2	16	7
Improved „	250	2	0	1,243	10	11	4	19	3
1916—6 months ending 30th June—									
Unimproved land	368	1	34	1,231	15	1	3	6	10
Improved „	79	3	7	500	9	6	6	5	6

Table K shows the alienation by auction, during the financial year ended 30th June, 1916, of town and country lands, and the amounts derived therefrom:—

TABLE K.

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.
1,094	1	22	17,125	4	0	15	12	11	793	3	22	3,244	12	9	4	1	9

During the financial year ended 30th June, 1916, Closer Settlement Lands of an aggregate area of 717a. 0r. 12p. were sold by auction for a total sum of £10,264 0s. 5d.

III.—PASTORAL OCCUPATION.

The sum of £16,661 8s. 4d. was received during the financial year ended 30th June, 1916, for licences under section 121 of the *Land Act* 1915.

IV.—MALLEE.

The *Land Act* 1901, Part II. (as amended by the *Land Acts* 1904 and 1911), and the *Murray Settlements Act* 1907, deal with about 11,354,571 acres of land, exclusive of Mildura (62,222 acres), in the north-western district of the State. In addition to the area of 11,354,571 acres, 155,207 acres have been laid off as roads, &c., through the Mallee to facilitate travelling in this portion of the State, and 397,881 acres have been retained as reserves. The transactions for the period from 1st July, 1915, to 30th June, 1916, are as under:—

				No.	Area in Acres.
Leases issued or approved ...	{	Agricultural leases ...	...	130	77,869
		Perpetual leases ...	...	2	1,189
		Conditional Purchase leases ...	...	6	114
Licences issued or approved ...	{	Selection Purchase leases ...	...	186	109,370
		Agricultural allotments ...	...	52	30,955
		Garden, Store, &c. ...	...	221	—
Leases transferred ...	{	Conditional Purchase leases ...	...	2	67
		Agricultural leases ...	...	38	25,705
		Perpetual leases ...	...	6	3,726
Licences cancelled for non-payment of rent, &c. ...	...	...	...	56	35,658
Number of Local Land Boards held ...	...	...	...	26	—
„ cases dealt with ...	...	...	...	1,768	—

On 1st July, 1916, the areas available or held under lease and licence were as follow:—

				No.	Area in Acres.
Available under section 121, <i>Land Act</i> 1915 ...				...	813,860
Available as agricultural allotments ...				...	163,134
Areas held under section 187, <i>Land Act</i> 1901, and section 121, <i>Land Act</i> 1915				197	4,761,424
Agricultural allotments occupied under ...	{	Agricultural leases ...	...	5,711	3,471,405
		Perpetual leases ...	...	330	300,389
		Licences ...	...	1,597	1,060,738
		Selection purchase leases	...	1,190	775,341

The revenue derived was as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Rents on perpetual leases	397	7	9
Rents on conditional purchase leases	1,223	4	8
Rents on agricultural allotments	55,583	13	5
Rents on selection purchase leases	1,191	15	4
Rents under section 187, <i>Land Act</i> 1901, and 121, <i>Land Act</i> 1915	6,390	5	7
Valuation of improvements and cost of resumption	298	9	8
Interest on improvements and cost of resumption	91	3	0
Penalties and Fines	2,193	6	0
Fees—	£	s.	d.
Application	110	0	0
Licence	15	0	0
Lease	300	0	0
Mortgage	2	0	0
Transfer	8	0	0
	<hr/>		
	435	0	0
Total	<hr/>		
	£67,804	5	5

Section 222, *Land Act* 1901, enables any licensee, at the expiration of licence, or on obtaining a lease, to demand and obtain a Crown grant at any time upon payment of the difference between the amount of rent actually paid and the balance due according to classification of land. The following Table shows the transactions during the period 1st July, 1915, to 30th June, 1916:—

Purchases Completed.	Area Purchased.	Balance of Purchase Money Paid.		
		£	s.	d.
53	Acres. 24,186	5,363	0	3

Murray Settlements (Original Act 1907).

Of the Irrigation Settlements established under the above Act that at Merbein is making excellent progress. Having been laid out as a complete scheme, its development has been rapid and most successful. Any allotments becoming vacant are eagerly sought after, and the question of extending the settlement easterly to join the Mildura area is under the consideration of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission.

Another settlement at Nyah, formerly a village settlement, but subsequently dealt with on irrigation lines, after partial resumption, is also developing and giving good returns.

V.—MISCELLANEOUS.

SECTION 130, LAND ACT 1901.

Under section 130 of the *Land Act* 1901, three Conditional Purchase Leases were issued for 61 acres of swamp or reclaimed land at an annual rental of £30 4s. 10d.

SECTION 131, LAND ACT 1915 (FORMERLY SECTION 146, LAND ACT 1901).

Under this section provision is made whereby a licensee under section 129 of the *Land Act* 1915 of a site for a butter factory or creamery, or a site for a residence, garden, inn, store, smithy, or similar building not within the boundaries of any city may apply for the exclusive right to purchase such site after having been in possession thereof for a period of five years and erected buildings or made other improvements thereon, credit being given for the amount of rent paid during the period of possession.

During the financial year ended 30th June, 1916, 99 applications under this section were granted for an area of 206 acres.

SECTION 132, LAND ACT 1915.—BEE FARMS.

During the financial year ended 30th June, 1916, two applications were granted for an area of three acres.

SECTION 138, LAND ACT 1915.—BEE RANGE AREAS.

During the financial year ended 30th June, 1916, one application was granted in respect of an area of 1,050 acres.

SECTION 147, LAND ACT 1915.—COMMONS.

Commons were diminished by proclamation to the extent of 55 acres, and seven commons which were found to be no longer required were formally abolished.

SECTION 155, LAND ACT 1915.—PENALTIES.

The amount of penalties, at the rate of Five shillings per acre, received during the financial year ended 30th June, 1916, for non-improvement by lessees under the Land Acts of 1862 and 1865, and interest on rents in arrear, was £1,993 9s. 9d.

SECTION 172, LAND ACT 1915 (FORMERLY SECTION 184, LAND ACT 1901).

In this section provision is made for the alienation of portions of land not exceeding 20 acres in extent at a price determined by appraisal. During the financial year ended 30th June, 1916, 595 acres were ordered to be sold in this manner, the total purchase money being £2,483 12s.

SECTION 25, LAND ACT 1915.—PUBLIC HEARINGS.

During the financial year ended 30th June, 1916, 290 sittings of Local Land Boards were held, at which applications for land and other business, comprising in all 3,545 subjects (including applications for mallee lands), were dealt with.

Thirteen cases were publicly heard by the Minister during the financial year ended 30th June, 1916.

SECTIONS 344, 345, AND 346, LAND ACT 1901.

Any holder of a Conditional Purchase Lease under sections 344, 345, and 346 of the *Land Act* 1901 can acquire the fee-simple of the land after the expiration of six years from the issue of the lease, provided all the covenants and conditions thereof are complied with. Table L shows the transactions during the financial year ended 30th June, 1916:—

TABLE L.

Purchases Completed.	Area Purchased.	Balance of Purchase Money Paid.		
		£	s.	d.
24	A. R. P. 888 0 0	912	4	10

THE LAND ACT 1915.—DIVISION 4.—PART 1.

Under this Division provision is made for the issue of Selection Purchase Leases (residential and non-residential) of selection purchase allotments.

Table M shows the transactions under sections 8 and 13 of the *Land Act* 1911 and sections 46 and 50 of the *Land Act* 1915 during the financial year ended 30th June, 1916:—

TABLE M.

Land Act 1911.	Number of Applications Approved.	Area Leased.	Annual Rental.		
		acres.	£	s.	d.
Sections 8 and 46 (Residential) ...	454	78,002	2,374	11	3
„ 13 and 50 (Non-residential)	57	10,285	297	1	8
Total	511	88,287	2,671	12	11

SECTION 70, LAND ACT 1915.

Sub-section (4) of section 70 of the *Land Act* 1915 provides that where any licensee or lessee is required by a covenant or condition contained in his licence or lease to reside on the land thereby licensed or demised, or within a limited distance thereof (if it is proved to the satisfaction of the Minister that owing to ill health or prolonged drought such licensee or lessee is unable to reside as required), the Minister may in his discretion waive compliance with the residence condition during the period or periods of ill health or prolonged drought or such portion of any such period or periods.

Table N shows the names of persons and the periods for which they have been granted exemption in consequence of ill-health.

TABLE N.

Name.	Parish.	Area.	Period.
Frederick William Pook	Redcastle	A. R. P. 102 1 31	1.4.12 to 1.4.15
Ann Larkins ...	Warrenmang	20 0 0	1.1.12 to 9.9.15

SPECIAL SETTLEMENT AREAS.

SECTION 37, LAND ACT 1911.

During the financial year ended 30th June, 1916, one Conditional Purchase Lease was issued for 134 acres at an annual rental of £19 4s. 0d.

CROWN GRANTS AND LEASES.

Two thousand one hundred and eighty-six Crown grants and 1,962 leases were prepared and passed from the head office during the financial year ended 30th June, 1916.

FEES AND CERTIFICATES.

The sum of £10,731 5s. 4d. was received during the financial year ended 30th June, 1916, for certificates and transfers under the Land Acts, and for miscellaneous fees, including those payable for grants, leases, and survey charges.

REVENUE.

Table O shows in detail the revenue contributed by the Department to the Treasury during the financial year ended 30th June, 1916:—

TABLE O.

<i>Temporary Occupation.</i>	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Rents under section 29, <i>Land Act</i> 1898, section 35, <i>Land Act</i> 1901, section 32, <i>Land Act</i> 1915, and section 121, <i>Land Act</i> 1915 ...	27,029	14	8			
Rents under section 47, <i>Land Act</i> 1869, Divisions 6 and 8, of Part I., <i>Land Acts</i> 1890–1901, permits under section 318, <i>Land Act</i> 1901 ...	31,932	3	4			
Perpetual Leases, section 80, <i>Land Act</i> 1898, section 63, <i>Land Act</i> 1901, and section 55, <i>Land Act</i> 1915, and Auriferous Licences ...				58,961	18	0
<i>Alienated in Fee simple by Auction and Deferred Payments, also Rents received towards Alienation.</i> A. R. P.						
By auction—Town land ... 1,094 1 22	33,539	8	10			
„ Country land ... 793 3 22						
Sundry payments on account of purchase in fee simple ...	2,422	8	8			
Rents under sections 42 and 49, <i>Land Acts</i> 1890–1898, section 59, <i>Land Act</i> 1898, sections 47, 50, 54, and 106, <i>Land Act</i> 1901, and section 88, <i>Land Act</i> 1915 ...	90,499	4	8			
Rents and balances of purchase money under section 20, <i>Land Act</i> 1869, section 11, <i>Land Act</i> 1878, section 44, <i>Land Acts</i> 1890–1898, section 61, <i>Land Act</i> 1898, sections 49 and 56, <i>Land Act</i> 1901, sections 8 and 13, <i>Land Act</i> 1911, and sections 46 and 50, <i>Land Act</i> 1915 ...						
Rents and balances of purchase money under sections 5–10 and 20–24, <i>Settlement on Lands Act</i> 1893, and sections 318–322, 332–335, 344, 345, and 346, <i>Land Act</i> 1901, and sections 267, 268, and 269, <i>Land Act</i> 1915 ...				126,461	2	2
Penalties under section 155, <i>Land Act</i> 1915, and interest ...	1,993	9	9			
Fees for grants, leases, licences, surveys, &c. ...	10,731	5	4			
Sale of plans and sundries ...	31,664	4	5			
				44,388	19	6
Total Revenue ...				229,811	19	8

*This item includes interest £3,929 14s. 4d., and instalments on account of some sales.

SPECIAL VOTES.

The annual Marram Grass vote, limited to £1,250, is proving effective in arresting much of the coastal sand drift. It is expended largely through the Municipal Councils and partly under the direction of the Department. Large areas in the Yanakie Peninsula and in the vicinity of the Township of Wonthaggi were planted with good results. In some instances, interested land-owners joined in the work and the cost of planting.

MELBOURNE BOTANIC GARDENS.

The vote for these Gardens was £9,430 and, in addition to the maintenance, a measure of development work was undertaken. As a place of resort, these Gardens are much appreciated and, with the complete system of classification and naming, they are also of great value to students. A detailed report by the Curator appears in Appendix C.

PARKS AND GARDENS VOTE.

Though the sum of £5,500 voted by Parliament was allotted for the improvement of the Reserves throughout the State, it has to be specially noted that only £3,984 was claimed. The condition of the grants required a local expenditure of pound for pound, and, in many cases, the managing bodies decided, rather than divert attention from the patriotic efforts, to forego the Government grant. For the Metropolitan Parks and Gardens, controlled by a joint Committee, representing the Board of Land and Works and the Melbourne City Council, an amount of £2,692 was granted. Special grants were also made for the National Park (Wilson's Promontory), £500; St. Kilda Foreshore, £500; Albert Park, £500; Royal Park, £500; and to several suburban municipalities for other smaller reserves.

TREE PLANTING COMPETITION.

In 1912, for the purpose of encouraging the good work of tree planting on settlement areas, a Tree Planting Competition was arranged by the authority of the Cabinet, acting on proposals submitted by this Department. For the working out of the details of the scheme, a special committee was constituted, comprising the horticultural representatives of the three weekly papers, *The Australasian*, Mr. Jos. Harris; *The Leader*, Mr. D. M. Dow; *The Weekly Times*, Mr. J. Callendar; the Secretary for Lands, the Conservator of Forests, and the Curator of Botanic Gardens. The State was divided into five (5) large divisions, having regard to physical and climatic conditions, and two further divisions "small holdings dry," and "small holdings irrigated." Generous money prizes were provided, a Gold Medal being also awarded to the first prize winner in each division.

Very wide publicity was given to the scheme through the generous help rendered by the entire Press of the State, the full details being published and given great prominence. The Committee prepared a very complete list of trees suitable to the various localities, and classified according to their value for various purposes. During the currency of the competition, inquiry as to progress was conducted by the Department; a considerable number of the original 111 competitors failed to continue after the first year. The adjudication was completed during the financial year under notice, Mr. J. Cronin, Curator of Botanic Gardens, undertaking the work of inspection.

It is considered by the Committee that very valuable object lessons have been created in widely distributed localities as the result of the competition, and that tree planting, as an aid to settlement, will be encouraged thereby.

The prize list is as follows:—

	DIVISION 2.		
A. Holland	Avon Plains	1st	
W. Cornish	Lake Boga	2nd	
E. Newnham	Nagambie	3rd	
	DIVISION 3.		
J. W. Grubb	Traralgon	1st	
C. C. Rossiter	Hedley	2nd	
S. N. Francis	Coleraine	3rd	
	DIVISION 4.		
E. Bell, Jun.	Mockinya	1st	
J. Bosisto & Co.	Emerald	2nd	
	DIVISION 6.		
Mrs. M. Tredrea	Cooma	1st	
T. Lee Bake	Swan Hill	2nd	
D. J. Corboy	Shepparton	3rd	
	DIVISION 7.		
E. C. Pettett	Glenorchy	1st	
Mrs. E. Tehan	Millgrove	2nd	
S. Matchett	Iona	3rd	

TOURIST RESORTS.

The work of developing tourist resorts, which is dealt with by a Committee, representing the three departments of Lands, Railways and Public Works, was considerably restricted, owing to the reduced vote available for the purpose. This vote is provided on the estimates of the Public Works Department. The total sum expended during the year was £1,722, a considerable proportion of which was devoted to maintenance work. The Public Works Department, as usual, expended a portion of the grant under its direct control, the balance being dealt with as grants to local bodies. By the construction of new roads, under the direction of the Country Roads Board, much improved facilities for tourist traffic are being provided. Those leading from Melbourne to Frankston, Melbourne to Geelong, those traversing the Mount Dandenong district, the section of the main road between Moe and Morwell, between Stratford and Bairnsdale, and in the vicinity of Buchan Caves, are of special importance.

BUCHAN CAVES.

This Cave system is under the control of the Department, and the work of opening up new chambers has been continued, with satisfactory results. The construction of the railway line to Nowa Nowa brings these caves within a day's journey of the Metropolis, and visitors are now able to reach Buchan in the evening. The Country Roads Board has effected important improvements in the main road from Nowa Nowa to Buchan, rendering it suitable for a motor service.

During the year the total number of admissions was 2,333.

EXPEDITIONARY FORCES.

The Honour Roll of the names of the officers of this Department who have enlisted in this Great War, has been considerably increased, and now comprises:—

L. E. Trawin,	Clerk	D. A. Tregent,	Clerk
J. P. Cormack,	do.	M. H. Gray,	do.
R. H. Berry,	do.	W. Edmends,	do.
N. H. Gibson,	do.	C. E. Chancellor,	do.
J. J. Walshe,	do.	G. T. Blore,	do.
F. P. Mountjoy,	do.	T. H. Blair,	do.
J. D. Jageurs,	do.	A. R. Cross,	do.
J. A. Mahoney,	do.	A. McPhee,	do.
W. T. Long,	do.	C. M. Bell,	do.
C. C. Burge,	do.	H. R. Currie,	do.
B. O. T. Gibbs,	do.	E. H. Bugg,	Gardener
R. D. Howells,	do.	A. W. Bugg,	do.
F. J. Whitfield,	do.	G. F. Griffiths,	do.
A. F. Graham,	do.	H. Cave,	do.
C. Dewsnap,	do.	L. G. Robertson,	Labourer
W. M. Crawford,	do.	E. L. Iredale,	Pupil Surveyor
J. M. Dooley,	do.	J. A. Gray,	do.
R. R. G. Greenwood,	do.	O. G. Pearson,	Staff Surveyor
J. V. Larkin,	do.	P. M. Leckie,	do.
H. R. Gray,	do.	G. F. Murphy,	Pupil Surveyor
R. T. Olney,	do.	W. M. Olive,	Engineering Student
H. W. Boyd,	do.	W. H. L. McDonald,	Draughtsman
H. Rutherford,	do.	H. R. Wilson,	do.
R. H. Wheeler,	do.	N. H. Malcolm,	do.
R. R. Neal,	do.	N. F. W. Barnard,	do.
R. F. W. Harris,	do.	F. H. A. Moon,	Caretaker
F. A. Evans,	do.	E. J. Hubble,	Junior Messenger
V. W. Stratford,	do.	J. T. Greene,	Lift Attendant
C. M. Ewart,	do.	H. J. Whiting,	Messenger
S. G. Carter,	do.	D. A. Baird,	Assistant Photographer
E. F. H. Singleton,	do.	S. A. Glover,	Shorthandwriter and Typewriter
J. Williamson,	do.	M. A. Cronin,	Typewriter
G. Allan,	do.	S. T. Jennings,	do.
J. E. Hunter,	do.		
P. J. Cloke,	do.		

The following officers have been wounded:—

L. E. Trawin (twice).	J. V. Larkin.
C. Dewsnap.	N. H. Gibson.
W. D. Long.	E. L. Iredale (twice).
R. H. Berry.	J. A. Gray.
B. O. T. Gibbs.	F. J. Whitfield.

The death roll comprises the following:—

J. P. Cormack.	H. R. Wilson.
J. T. Greene.	A. W. Bugg.
J. D. Jageurs.	W. M. Olive.

The large withdrawal from the full staff has seriously interfered with the work of the Department, and I have, with pleasure, to refer to the readiness shown by so many of the remaining officers to meet the difficulties of the position by working overtime. The continued exceptional work in connexion with the seed and fodder loans and collection of instalments has imposed a heavy task on many officers, and it is my duty to acknowledge the good service rendered by the staff generally at a time, when, from war conditions and other causes, it became necessary to call for special effort.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

J. M. REED,

Secretary for Lands.

APPENDIX A.

Department of Lands and Survey,
Melbourne, 6th September, 1916.

The Honorable

The Commissioner of Crown Lands and Survey.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit herewith the following report on the operations of the Survey Branch of the Department during the year ending 30th June, 1916.

Although the break-up of the drought in June, 1915, was followed by timely rains which were sufficient to insure a record harvest, there was in the Mallee areas an absence of the precipitation necessary to provide for storage purposes, the consequence being that during the greater part of the period under review the difficulty as regards water in localities dependent upon supplies from catchment tanks was even more pronounced than in the drought period itself. This, together with the abnormal cost of fodder in the early part of the year, hampered field operations very considerably, and in certain localities work had to be suspended until the winter rains set in.

MALLEE LAND SURVEYS.

Notwithstanding the disadvantages stated, 110,000 acres of Mallee land have been subdivided into 141 allotments, and a further area of 120,000 acres has been featured to afford the information necessary for a system of water supply as well as for the location of roads, and to enable designs for subdivision to be readily prepared.

It has to be pointed out, however, that as regards railway communication, the limits of practical settlement are being reached in the wheat areas, the greater part of the unsurveyed lands being now from 10 to 12 miles from railway lines; and this in the Mallee country has generally been regarded as a fair limit of carting distance. From a settlement point of view, therefore, the question of the extension of some of the existing lines is becoming an important one, particularly from the fact that these Mallee lands will afford an avenue for providing for the settlement of such returned soldiers as may desire to take up wheat farming in the north-western areas.

Subdivisions of new townships have been made at Piangil and Pira, on the Swan Hill to Piangil line. This practically completes the provision for township requirements on the newly opened Mallee lines.

LANDS OTHER THAN MALLEE.

Surveys have been made of 75,000 acres in 1,217 allotments. This comprised new selections, grazing areas, garden licence blocks, auriferous areas, and excisions from State Forests under the provisions of the Forests Act of 1907. Feature surveys have also been made of a further extension of the Portland Heath land, and of areas in Eastern Gippsland, to obtain the necessary information for the location of roads, and for the projection of subdivisions.

A subdivision of 26,000 acres into cutting areas, being part of the Moormbool State Forest, was also carried out during the year for the Department of Forests.

The surveys of township subdivisions have been made at Senspray and at Kinglake, and of extensions of existing townships at Queenstown, Olinda, and Barringo.

CLOSER SETTLEMENT SURVEYS.

The following areas were subdivided for the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission during the year :—

			Allotments.			Acres.
Dudley's Estate, Shepparton	...	...	20	...	...	140
Cornelia Creek Estate	...	...	5	...	...	972
Miscellaneous	...	...	12	...	...	36
			37			1,148

DISTRICT SURVEYORS.

The District Surveyors have been fully employed during the year in supervising the work of Contract Surveyors in their respective districts, and in inspecting, reporting upon, and classifying land to be made available for settlement.

STAFF SURVEYORS.

The departmental staff has been engaged upon the work of township and selection subdivision, road surveys in Gippsland, and road and feature surveys in new country preparatory to settlement.

Three surveyors have been employed in the Mallee on road and feature surveys, and in subdivisional work. Two have been employed in Gippsland on road deviations, the location and marking of roads in new country, and in township subdivisions, and two have worked from the Head office on road, subdivisional, and miscellaneous work.

During the year Messrs. Staff Surveyors Leckie and Pearson obtained leave of absence and joined the Military Forces for service abroad.

PUPIL DRAUGHTSMEN AND SURVEYORS.

The three pupils in the service of the Department have also obtained leave of absence and joined the Expeditionary Military Forces.

CONTRACT SURVEYS.

The greater part of the settlement surveys of the State is as formerly carried out by surveyors who hold assigned districts. Twenty-three surveyors have been so employed during the year.

Messrs. M. Tiernan and A. J. Leahy answered the call of Duty and enlisted for Active Service.

The following summary gives the expenditure on surveys (including cost of the work of Staff Surveyors):—

	£	s.	d.
Main road surveys	2,344	16	10
Mallee subdivisious	1,389	1	8
Feature surveys	3,488	5	7
Subdivision of land for sale	966	3	8
Selection surveys (departmental)	1,324	17	10
Balance of fees on selection surveys (to be repaid in instalments by applicants)	254	3	0
Check surveys and connexion lines	220	7	7
Re-surveys for sale, selection, &c.	132	16	9
Reserves and other sites	413	4	6
Miscellaneous surveys	445	5	1
	<u>£10,979</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>
Trust Fund fees collected from applicants	3,463	2	3
	<u>£14,442</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>9</u>
Amount collected and deposited in Trust Fund Account	£5,664	2	0
Payments made to Authorized Surveyors	£7,707	9	4
Amount of survey fees refunded to applicants	370	9	10
Amount of survey fees transferred to Revenue	4,051	9	9
	<u>£12,129</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>11</u>

OFFICE STAFF.

Computing and Adjusting Branch.

In this Branch all Surveyors' plans are examined, compared with field notes, and computations checked.

The following were dealt with during the period under review:—

Plans of surveys of township and country subdivisions, road surveys, Closer Settlement surveys, allotments for sale, &c.	458
Plans of selection surveys	622
Certified plans prepared for leases and grants	2,665
Certificates of adjustment prepared	100

The Staff consisted of Officer in Charge and seven Draughtsmen.

Draughting Branch.

Township and parish plans compiled, full scale... ..	18
Township and parish plans revised and posted for new issues	138
Large record plans and tracings made	239
Plans of subdivisional surveys drawn from Surveyors' notes	43
Various tracings, chartings, and special plans	1,119
Certificates for Office of Titles	96
Certificated plans for certificate of Board of Land and Works	19
Technical descriptions prepared for proclamations, reservations, &c.	370
Diagrams on Crown grants and leases	4,156

LITHOGRAPHIC BRANCH.

Coloured plans of lands made available for application, including Crown lands, Closer Settlement estates, irrigation settlements, sale plans, &c., were printed and widely circulated throughout the State.

The usual supply of maps and plans for departmental use and for sale to the public was also printed. These comprised maps of the State, County sheets, Parish and Township plans.

The issue of tourist plans has been continued, and these are much appreciated by the travelling public.

The aggregate number of plans printed was about 78,000.

ENGRAVER.

The work of the Engraver consisted of the revision and posting of Geodetic sheets I north and I south.

PHOTOGRAPHIC WORK.

The photographic transfers prepared numbered 583, and included all the various departmental maps, as well as a variety of drawings for other Departments.

The combined staff of Draughtsmen, Litho. Draughtsmen, Engraver, Photographers, and Plan Monnter, numbered 26.

For the Commonwealth and other State Departments work was executed representing a value as shown below :—

							£	s.	d.
Chief Secretary	...	...	...	...	...	...	7	0	0
Defence	...	...	...	...	...	...	7	5	0
Education	...	...	...	...	...	...	20	12	4
							<hr/>		
							£84	17	4
							<hr/>		
Amount received as fees on certificates of adjustment was	...	...	...	...	...	...	£10	0	0
							<hr/>		
Amonnt received for sale of maps, plans, &c.	...	...	...	...	...	...	£427	7	3
							<hr/>		

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A. B. LANG,
Surveyor-General.

APPENDIX B.

VERMIN DESTRUCTION AND WIRE-NETTING ACTS.

The Secretary,

I have the honour to report as follows as to the above Acts for the financial year 1915-16:—

RABBIT DESTRUCTION.

The following is the total expenditure for the financial year:—

		£	s.	d.
Votes.	{ Inspectors' Salaries, Wages, and Material	23,567	15	6
	{ Fox and Wild Dog Subsidy	256	7	8
	{ Expended on private lands (cost charged to owners) ...	11,894	15	7
Total		35,718	18	9

It will be noted that although the expenditure was £35,718 18s. 9d., the actual vote was only £23,824 3s. 2d., the difference representing the total amount (£11,894 15s. 7d.) collected from landholders and repaid to the vote. The amount of £11,672 has been expended in lands for which the Crown is responsible.

The number of inspectors at present employed under the Act is 65. The number of men employed in destroying rabbits and harbor on Crown and private lands averaged about 150. The destruction of burrow and natural surface harbor is the only means by which finality in rabbit destruction can be attained, as, when the vermin are thereby exposed to the attack of dogs, they are easily suppressed, and soon cease to exist in sufficient numbers to be regarded as a pest. During recent years a vigorous attack has been made on burrow harbor, on the cleared open country particularly, many miles of log fences and stone walls have been removed or improved, and a great amount of dead and fallen timber has been destroyed, with the result that a vast improvement is perceptible in many districts that were, a few years ago, badly infested, and the necessity for the employment of large gangs of men within these districts does not now exist to the same extent.

Throughout the greater part of the State the conditions are very satisfactory. This is borne out by a report submitted by Staff-Inspector McCollough on 10th July, 1916, an extract from which reads as follows:—"During the last twelve months I have visited and made inspections over the greater part of the State, and, in my opinion, based on over thirty years' experience of the work with this Department, the State generally has never been freer of rabbits. This applies particularly from the Goulburn Valley through the northern areas to the Mallee, thence through the Wimmera District to the western plains. The mountainous country in the north-eastern districts has not been so free of the pest for many years past."

During February last a circular was sent out by the Huntly Shire to all the shires in the State, protesting against any amendment of the Act in favour of local control, as was suggested by a deputation some time ago. In reply, 53 councils stated that they were strongly opposed to any such amendment of the Act, eight councils "received" the circular, while only three favoured local control. The replies, which generally eulogized the Department's work, showed that an overwhelming majority of councillors throughout the State is of the opinion that conditions are very satisfactory. As practically the whole of these councillors are landholders, or are interested in land, their opinions are most assuring.

During the financial year 32 landholders were prosecuted for non-compliance with the Act.

FOXES AND WILD DOGS.

In recent years there has been a gradual decline in the number of shires paying the bonus on the destruction of foxes and wild dogs. During the financial year 1901-2 the Department paid £3,000 subsidy on the destruction of 48,000 foxes, while for the financial year 1915-16 the amount paid was only £256 and the number of foxes was 3,750. During the financial year 1879-80 the amount paid by the State on the destruction of wild dogs was £2,900, while in 1915-16 the amount spent was £50.

WIRE-NETTING FENCES.

On account of the high price of netting, very few landholders have exercised their powers under the Fences Act to compel adjoining landholders to bear the half cost of erecting vermin-proof boundary fences, consequently very few certificates, as compared with previous years, have been issued under that Act.

J. MATTHAMS,
Acting Chief Inspector

27th July, 1916.

APPENDIX C.

Botanic and Domain Gardens,
Melbourne, 23rd August, 1916.

The Secretary for Lands,
Melbourne.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit my Report relative to the Botanic Gardens, Domain, and Treasury Gardens for the year ended 30th June, 1916.

The Gardens, during the year, have been maintained in a generally good condition. The season was a fairly normal one. Occasional welcome rains throughout the summer season materially assisted to keep the plants in a healthy and vigorous state. The need of heavier rains during the months of May and June, however, was seriously felt. The rains during those months were only sufficient for the lawns and exposed parts of the grounds. The larger trees and shrubs in the various plantations and groups and in sheltered spots have had to be watered with hoses and sprinklers to secure a subsoil moisture for their sustenance and growth and vigorous floral development in the ensuing season.

I am pleased to officially record that, in order to give back some of the labour lost by the absence of their fellow employees who enlisted for military service, the whole of the staff gratuitously offered, in August last, to, in turn, work overtime in the performance of watching duties, &c., every Saturday afternoon. This offer, so far, has been faithfully carried out by the officers.

Various alterations and improvements have been effected during the year. In the oldest part of the garden on the east side, adjacent to Anderson-street, some old trees and shrubs have been cut out, and the exhausted ground has been thoroughly trenched and renewed. Two hundred loads of soil and manure were carted and used on the area, in which a collection of rare Cypresses, Pines, and other coniferous trees has been planted.

The Rose collection near B gate has been improved and added to during the year. There are now over 500 plants included in the collection there, which is a favorite resort of visitors in the season, each plant being carefully named by means of distinct labels.

The Australian plantation, which is one of the features of the Gardens, has received much attention during the year. A large number of plants have been added to the collection, and a few of the larger and unsightly duplicate specimens have been removed. The small plants, shrubs, and trees in this section, and which now number several thousands, are all fully labelled, and have been a constant source of interest both to our own State visitors as well as to visitors from abroad.

Interchanges of seeds, plants, &c., have been carried on during the year with private individuals, seedsmen, nurserymen, public gardens and reserves, and with similar institutions in this and other States, as well as New Zealand, Great Britain, Europe, America, South Africa, and India. By such interchanges the collections of plants are not only well maintained, but are considerably increased, and, at times, valuable new plants are introduced. In addition to the numerous plant exchanges, 610 packets of seeds were distributed and 724 packets received. Of the latter, 125 were seeds of plant species new to the Gardens.

The labelling of plants for the information and education of visitors has been well maintained. About 8,000 tablets and other labels, required for renewals and additions, were painted and written during the year. The nomenclature of the plants is kept up to date and, as the system is sought to be as perfect as possible, a large amount of time has necessarily to be devoted to searching through the latest publications for the correct botanical naming of the plants here.

The lake in the Gardens has necessitated a large amount of labour in the keeping down of the weeds and the marginal growths around the islands and on the banks. The motor-driven weed-cutter obtained on loan from the Committee of Management of Albert Park is proving effective on the lake.

The numerous waterfowl on the lake are a source of interest to visitors. The black swans and other waterfowl breed freely here. A very acceptable donation of a pair of white swans was made to the Gardens by the Creswick Borough Council during the year.

The Nymphæa lake was emptied in August, and the soil again renewed in the island and other mounds on which the lilies are planted. There was a fine display of bloom all through the summer months with over 60 different species and varieties of water lilies.

An interesting display of exotic plants has been maintained during the year at the public conservatory, which is open to visitors daily from 2 to 4 p.m. A large number of visitors patronize the conservatory, especially on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. During the year a much-needed improvement to the appearance of this building was carried out by the Public Works Department. A number of the ventilators and the doors were repaired, broken glass and sashes removed and renewed, and the whole of the exterior cleaned and repainted.

The Classification Pavilion and Museum of Economic Botany and Plant Products have been well patronized by students, botanical and other classes, as well as by the ordinary and other special visitors. The collections in both the Pavilion and Museum have been added to from time to time during the year.

In connexion with the work of the Research Committee of the British Association appointed for the chemical investigation of natural plant products of Victoria, various extractions, by distillation, of essential and other oils from material growing here of the following Victorian plants have been made during the year, viz. :—*Kunzea corifolia*, *Calythrix Sullivani*, and *Eucalyptus rostrata*.

Oils have also been distilled from the following plants, viz.:—*Rosmarinus officinalis*, *Melaleuca nesophila*, *Eucalyptus maculosa*, *E. occidentalis*, *E. macrandra*, *Juniperus Sabina*.

During the year limited supplies of botanical specimens and flowers and foliage for art purposes were made for the use of students at the University, Melbourne, Working Men's College, College of Pharmacy, technical schools of the Education Department, teachers of botany at various public colleges, &c.

Visits to the Gardens by classes, and by members and representatives from the various colleges, scientific, and various horticultural societies, sloyd centres, Workers' Educational Association of Victoria, Beekeepers' Association of Victoria, have been made, and the objects of their visits have been facilitated and assisted by the staff in every possible way.

In connexion with the work of the Medicinal Plants Board of Victoria, and as chairman of one of the sub-committees, I may state that in February last a preliminary report was prepared by the sub-committee on the cultivation of medicinal plants, and subsequently issued for general information, in the hope of stimulating interest in the growth of medicinal plants for commercial purposes. Medicinal plant seeds have been imported, and portion of these have been sown here with the object of raising plants for subsequent distribution to growers in various parts of the State.

During the year I have assisted some of the leading horticultural and kindred societies at their annual displays in Melbourne by making exhibits of plants and cut flowers from these Gardens for the purposes of public information and education. I have also assisted several municipal councils and other public bodies with suggestions and advice in laying out of grounds of various public reserves and institutions as well as military base hospitals, and limited supplies of surplus plants have been made in some cases. I have also visited various horticultural societies in and around Melbourne during the year, and addressed the members and their meetings on various subjects relating to horticulture and gardening.

The restricting of the number of band performances in the Gardens has become an absolute necessity, owing to the enormous increase in the attendance of people who congregate in the vicinity of the band house on such occasions and the difficulty of preventing damage to lawns and plantations in the locality. A site in the newly-acquired "Grange" area in the Domain might be set apart, and a band stand erected there.

Domain—Some preliminary but important work in the portion of the Domain formerly known as the "Grange" property was commenced in May last, with a small amount of savings effected in the Domain vote for 1915-16. The clearing away of dead and unsightly trees, filling in of depressions, grading the surface slopes in places, removal of old tennis court, and the formation of a footpath to the Botanic Gardens through the property are works which are still in progress. The consent of the Department having been obtained, the City Council is providing for the cutting off of a small triangular piece of the land at the corner of St. Kilda and Domain roads. This will be a great boon to traffic along the two roadways, and lessen the possibility of accidents at so dangerous an intersection.

In connexion with the celebrations of the anniversary of the landing of the Australian troops in Gallipoli, a tree-planting ceremony was carried out in the Domain on the 25th April, 1916. An area in the Domain, nearly opposite the Defence Department's official quarters (Military Barracks), St. Kilda road, was enclosed, and 32 Australian trees were planted by the Minister of Defence (Senator Pearce), the Lord Mayor of Melbourne (Sir David Hennessy), Brigadier-General McNicoll, General Williams, several ladies, and a number of returned soldiers. The area will, in future, be known as the "Anzac" plantation. A record has been made of each tree planted, and of each representative and soldier who planted them.

Treasury Gardens.—Routine and general gardening work have been carried out during the year. Improvements to and along the main pathway leading from Treasury Buildings to Jolimont have recently been effected, including removal of roots of *Ficus* trees, filling with soil the areas along either side of the pathway, alteration and renewal of brick drains, repairs to asphalt, &c.

The area comprising the Japanese Garden has been well maintained, and its picturesque appearance much appreciated by visitors and pedestrians passing through, especially during the spring and summer seasons.

Studley Park.—The control and management of Studley Park, which was carried out by this Branch of the Department since 30th March, 1897, was taken over on 1st July, 1915, by the Committee of Management duly appointed by the Government for the purpose.

Although the total vote of £9,430 for the Botanic and Domain Gardens for the year was £250 less than the preceding year, a saving of about £400 was effected, owing to enlistments for military service of some of the officers and changes in the staff, as well as to the exercise of economy in expenditure.

The total amount voted for the Treasury Gardens for the year, viz., £586, was nearly all expended.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

J. CRONIN,

Curator