

1917.
—
VICTORIA.

THE LAND ACT.

REPORT

FOR

THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 1917,

WITH APPENDICES.

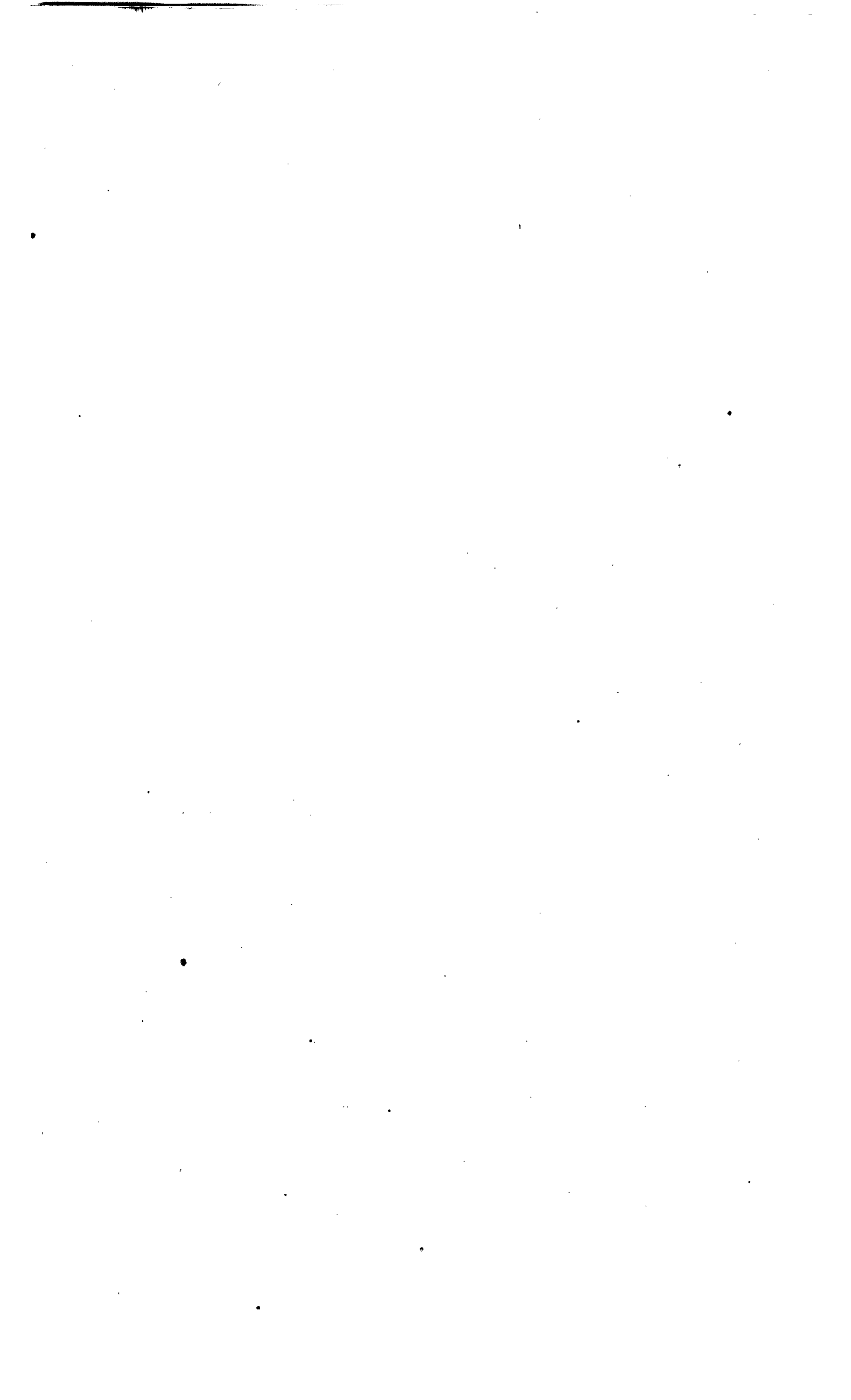
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R E P O R T .

*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, 3rd October, 1917.

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, 1917.

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. | |

And furnishes information as to the general work of the Department.

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.

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.

REPORT.

Department of Lands and Survey,
Melbourne, 21st September, 1917.

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

SIR,

I have the honour to submit my report, for the year ending 30th June, 1917, on the general work of the Department. More detailed information is given in the appendices, by the Surveyor-General on the professional work, the Chief Inspector on the operations under the Vermin Destruction Act, and by the Curator of the Botanic Gardens.

GENERAL REMARKS.

The dominating war conditions have operated seriously against the extension of land settlement, the chief factor being the absence of so many thousands of our young male population, a large proportion of whom would no doubt have been applicants for land had not the call of Empire led them to become soldiers. As a recognition of the claims of such to special consideration on their return to the State, the most desirable land has, under direction, been withheld from application, so that it may be available for soldier settlers, thus limiting the total of the year's record of land selected.

SETTLEMENT.

The following summary shows the result under the principal sections of the Land Acts, giving the numbers of the holdings and the aggregate areas :—

	Number of Holdings.	Area (Acres).
New selection (exclusive of Mallee land) ...	418	70,539
New selection, Auriferous land—Sec. 86 ...	79	1,215
New selection, Mallee land ...	176	115,164
Selections out of Grazing Area Leaseholds ...	150	43,931
Holdings converted to Selection tenure ...	204	3,605

A new class of settlement has been originated during the year, viz., "Soldier Settlement." A considerable number of the discharged soldiers have shown a desire to become land settlers, and, in anticipation of the necessary special legislation, 189 were granted holdings under the provisions of the Land Acts and the Closer Settlement Acts. These men having been discharged from military service as "medically unfit" were, in many cases able to deal only with small holdings—such as poultry farms—a few took dairy land, while some sought wheat areas in the Mallee country. Preliminary advances were made in terms of the agreement adopted at the Premiers' Conference held in Melbourne in January, 1917.

Number of Holdings, 189 ... Area, 22,461 acres
Advances to 30th June, 1917 ... £21,355
(Including land occupied under Closer Settlement Acts).

The *Land Act* 1915 (No. 2) made provision for concessions to soldiers on active service, and under this authority 383 licensees and lessees were granted suspension as to payment of rents or residence or compliance with the improvement conditions. Notification has been received of the death of seventeen of this number.

SEED AND FODDER ADVANCES.

A great deal of work was performed in connexion with the seed and fodder advances made during the year 1914-15 under the authority of the *Seed Advances Act* 1914. The record harvest of the year 1915 (58,521,706 bushels) was followed by another bountiful season, and the total wheat yield for the year 1916-17 was approximately 51,862,438 bushels. Again the operations of the Wheat Pool proved of the greatest advantage to the farmers. Further dividends on the crop of the previous year were paid by the Wheat Commission, of 6d., on 21st September, 1916, 1s. (less charges) on 19th April, 1917, which, with another declared on 1st July, 1917, gives a total of 4s. 6d. per bushel (less charges), with a prospect of a further small dividend. On the crop for the year under notice, an advance of 2s. 6d. per bushel was made on delivery, and a dividend of 6d. on 1st August, 1917. These payments have enabled thousands of farmers to retrieve their position, and, on the whole, the repayments to the Department of the instalments of loans were very satisfactory. The total amount received by the Department and applied to repayment of loan and interest was £279,723 ; £39,103 was passed to merchants in payment of cornsack accounts. The third instalment of money advanced for seed and fodder is secured on the crop of the year 1917-18. Total number of liens registered, 2,455. •

GRAZING LANDS.

There was an appreciable falling-off in the demand for grazing lands. This was due to the limited stock supplies, consequent on the losses by drought and to the high prices ruling for stock. The total revenue derived from grazing licences was £14,254 8s. 5d. In the licences of these areas a special condition has been introduced, with a view of checking the burning-off, which has caused so much timber destruction.

SWAMP AND RECLAIMED LANDS.

The abnormally wet season caused extensive flooding on some of the swamp areas as at Koo-wee-rup and Condah; also on the reclaimed land known as "Portland Heath." Many of the settlers sustained serious losses of root crops.

RABBIT DESTRUCTION.

The total expenditure on this work, including amount spent on private property to be charged against owners, was £33,836 17s. 3d., being about £1,900 less than the cost of the previous year. Active poisoning operations are insisted on, but the prohibitive cost of wire netting has added to the difficulties of land-owners in coping with this pest. The full report of the Chief Inspector is embodied 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, 1916.</i>			<i>Arrears at 30th June, 1917.</i>		
Crown lands	...	£45,141	Crown lands	...	£43,385
Mallee lands	...	£140,060	Mallee lands	...	£133,750

CITY LAND HELD FOR INDUSTRIAL PURPOSES.

Renewals of expiring leases have been effected, the term generally being ten years. Other sites have been dealt with under licence, and rents are continually under review. The total revenue from these sites was £18,445.

TOWNSHIP OF WONTHAGGI.

The conditions in this township have become more established, and, with few exceptions, the improvements effected on the business sites have met the requirements as to the minimum value. Purchasing agreements have been substituted for leases in a number of cases. In the residential quarters further Government cottages have been dealt with under agreement to purchase, and the improvements made on the home sites, with the development of the numerous gardens, have been very satisfactory.

NEW LEGISLATION.

No land legislation of any special importance was passed during the year under notice. The following is the list of Acts passed :—

Bellarine Land Act 1916, No. 2839.
Colac Market Land Act 1916, No. 2826.
Creswick Land Act 1916, No. 2837.
Heatherton Sanatorium Act 1916, No. 2842.
Mildura College Land Act 1916, No. 2848.
South Melbourne and Port Melbourne Land Act 1916, No. 2840.
Thornbury Land Act 1916, No. 2882.

CLOSER SETTLEMENT ACT.

The details of Closer Settlement work are dealt with in the special report of the Board. The departmental staff is charged with a large portion of the administrative work of dealing with the advances to settlers, the collection of repayments, instalments, and rents, the insurance of improvements, the preparation and noting of leases, together with the review of the general compliance with the conditions of leases.

I.—ALIENATION OF CROWN LANDS.

The general methods of alienation of Crown lands in Victoria, from the first sales to the 30th June, 1917, 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 1863, &c.		
					No.	Area.	No.	Area.	No.	Area.	
Under Imperial Acts ...	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Under Imperial Acts ...	...	...	...	3,944,237	...	...	...	...	...	...	3,944,237
„ <i>Land Act 1860</i> ...	392,610	1,273	4,979	398,862	...	410,600	...	...	...	...	809,462
„ „ <i>1862</i> ...	422,610	2,800	31,295	456,705	...	1,363,243	...	59,992	...	...	1,879,940
„ „ <i>1865</i> ...	639,761	6,709	34,137	680,607	5,900	1,499,910	3,078	559,423	...	753,344	3,493,284
„ „ <i>1869</i> ...	986,175	17,229	32,693	1,036,097	Section 19. 65,511 | 10,460,737		...	...	Section 49. 11,597 | 181,791		11,678,625
„ „ <i>1878</i> ...	...	...	...	...	Section 11. 453 | 76,100		...	...	Section 10. 401 | 1,202		77,302
„ „ <i>1884-1890</i> ...	120,177	31,198	3,924	155,299	Section 42. 4,281 | 399,806		Section 49. 118 | 6,232		...	...	561,337
„ „ <i>1891-1901</i> ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Sections 22 and 106. 144 | 682		682
Totals ...	...	...	...	6,671,807	...	14,210,396	...	625,647	...	937,059	22,444,869
During year—	<i>Land Act 1898-1901.</i>				<i>Land Act 1898-1901-1911-1915.</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
1916-17 ...	514	508	...	1,022	341	12,890	171	46,290	94	19,551	79,753
Totals ...	46,138	29,167	...	75,305	12,626	907,413	7,416	1,737,991	2,591	468,635	3,189,344
	Auction	...	...	...	...	...	...	6,747,112 acres	...	...	...
	Selection	...	...	...	...	...	...	*18,887,101 „	...	...	...
	Total	...	...	...	...	...	...	25,634,213 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, 1917:—

TABLE B.

Purchases Completed.	Area Purchased.	Balances of Purchase Money Received.	Survey Fees Allowed.
	A. r. p.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
2	39 3 24	Nil	3 0 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, 1917:—

TABLE C.

Purchases Completed.	Area Purchased.	Area Leased and afterwards Purchased.	Amount Paid by Lessees as Balance of Purchase Money.
	Acres.	Acres.	£ s. d.
157	11,048	11,048	734 7 2

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. Nine applications, representing 135 acres, were approved during the financial year ended 30th June, 1917, and the sum of £15 5s. 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, 1917 :—

TABLE D.

Number of Applications Approved.	Area Leased.	Annual Rental.		
	Acres.	£	s.	d.
24	12,836	67	6	0

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, 1917 :—

TABLE E.

Section.	Number of Applications Approved.	Area Licensed.	Annual Rental.		
		Acres.	£	s.	d.
47. (Residence) <i>Land Act</i> 1901 ...	185	6,147	295	15	6
50. (Non-residence) „ 1901 ...	11	788	42	8	1
54. (Residence) „ 1901 ...	68	22,809	434	11	8
54. (Non-residence) „ 1901 ...	17	5,451	136	5	6
Total ...	281	35,195	909	0	9

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, 1917, are set forth in Table F.

TABLE F.

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.
676	565	48,395	102,754	3,210 5 11	39,434	3,682 10 2

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. Three orders, representing an area of 897 acres, were registered during the financial year ended 30th June, 1917.

Section 62 of the *Land Act* 1915 empowers 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. Nineteen liens, comprising an area of 6,533 acres, were registered during the financial year ended 30th June, 1917, representing, as advanced on this kind of security, £2,350 13s. 4d.

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, 1917, under section 86, are shown in Table G:—

TABLE G.

Section 86.		
Number of Applications Approved.	Area Licensed.	Annual Rental.
79	Acres. 1,215	£ s. d. 63 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	23,323	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	121,052	130	24,387	263	4,336
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
1916-17	24	12,836	641	82,780	107	22,459	79	1,215

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, 1917 :—

TABLE I.

	No.	Extent.
		Acres.
Licences—Section 42, Land Acts 1890-1898, and Section 47, <i>Land Act</i> 1901	32	3,335
Section 50, <i>Land Act</i> 1901	4	573
Section 59, <i>Land Act</i> 1898, and Section 54, <i>Land Act</i> 1901 (Residence)	29	9,844
Section 59, <i>Land Act</i> 1898, and Section 54, <i>Land Act</i> 1901 (Non-residence)	2	885
Section 65, <i>Land Act</i> 1890, and Section 103, <i>Land Act</i> 1901	*239	4,213
Section 106, <i>Land Act</i> 1901 ... ..	...	...
Leases—Section 44, <i>Land Act</i> 1890	1	61
Section 44, Land Acts 1890-1898, and Section 49, <i>Land Act</i> 1901	4	445
Section 61, <i>Land Act</i> 1898, and Section 56, <i>Land Act</i> 1901 (Residence)	10	2,845
Section 61, <i>Land Act</i> 1898, and Section 56, <i>Land Act</i> 1901 (Non-residence)	2	488
Section 85, <i>Land Act</i> 1890, and Section 131, <i>Land Act</i> 1901	2	78
Section 29, <i>Land Act</i> 1898, and Section 35, <i>Land Act</i> 1901	174	70,084
Section 8, <i>Land Act</i> 1911	68	10,651
Section 13, <i>Land Act</i> 1911	7	1,450
Section 37, <i>Land Act</i> 1911	20	3,378

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

Land Act 1915. Part V.

VILLAGE COMMUNITY LANDS.

One settler has completed term of permissive occupancy and obtained lease, making a total of 2,550 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 26 transfers of Village Settlement leases have been registered, making a total of 906 sanctioned to date. In every case the transferee has been a person eligible to become a Village Settler.

During the year 60 settlers have acquired Crown Grants of their holdings.

Monetary aid to the extent of £626 9s. 5d. was repaid during the year ; the total amount received to 30th June, 1917, being £43,935 7s. 2d.

Under the *Settlement on Lands Act 1893* (Village Settlement) 671 settlers are actually residing, and 79 are improving but non-resident, making a total of 809 in occupation. The number of souls, including wives and children, is 3,274.

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, 1917, 1,022 acres were sold for £11,714. Interest to the amount of £4,092 13s. 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, 1917, was 514 acres, of which about 124 acres were improved, and 390 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, 1917, 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 108a. 3r. 20p., representing eighty-two distinct purchases, reverted to the Crown, and the instalments of purchase money and survey fees already paid thereon, amounting to £714 9s. 6d., were forfeited.

The revenue raised from sales by auction is credited to the Developmental Railways Account. For the year the total amount received was £29,626 15s. 3d.

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
„ 6 months ending 31st December—									
Unimproved land	140	3	17	555	7	1	3	18	10
Improved „	35	0	5	95	0	6	2	14	3
1917—6 months ending 30th June—									
Unimproved land	248	3	19	873	4	8	3	10	2
Improved „	89	1	15	542	1	0	6	1	4

Table K shows the alienation by auction, during the financial year ended 30th June, 1917, of town and country lands, and the amounts derived therefrom:—

TABLE K.

Town Lands.			Country Lands.					
Area.			Area.					
Amount.			Amount.					
Average per Acre.			Average per Acre.					
A.	R.	P.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
507	2	38	9,647	18	0	19	0	0
514	0	16	2,065	13	3	4	0	4

During the financial year ended 30th June, 1917, Closer Settlement Lands of an aggregate area of 794a. 1r. were sold by auction for a total sum of £7,482 15s. 10d.

III.—PASTORAL OCCUPATION.

The sum of £14,254 8s. 3d. was received during the financial year ended 30th June, 1917, for licences under section 121 of the *Land Act* 1915.

IV.—MALLEE.

The transactions from 1st July, 1916, to 30th June, 1917, are as under:—

	No.	Area in Acres.
Leases issued or approved ...	103	67,174
{ Agricultural leases ...	—	—
{ Perpetual leases ...	7	90
{ Conditional Purchase leases ...	172	111,984
{ Selection Purchase leases ...	4	3,180
Licences issued or approved ...	46	—
{ Agricultural allotments ...	4	49
{ Garden, Store, Grazing, &c. ...	4	—
{ Conditional Purchase leases ...	247	149,187
Leases transferred ...	10	3,856
{ Agricultural leases ...	64	39,944
{ Perpetual leases ...	12	—
Licences and Leases cancelled for non-payment of rent, &c. ...	292	—
Number of Local Land Boards held ...		
" cases dealt with ...		

On 1st July, 1917, 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 ...	...	872,456
Available as agricultural allotments ...	...	152,723
Areas held under section 187, <i>Land Act</i> 1901, and section 121, <i>Land Act</i> 1915	206	4,742,624
Agricultural allotments occupied under ...	5,814	3,538,579
{ Agricultural leases ...	253	212,342
{ Perpetual leases ...	1,537	956,718
{ Licences ...	1,341	871,653
{ Selection purchase leases ...		

The revenue derived was as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Rents on perpetual leases	817	5	7
Rents on conditional purchase leases	2,430	4	10
Rents on agricultural allotments	67,611	2	2
Rents on selection purchase leases	4,407	18	9
Rents under section 187, <i>Land Act</i> 1901, and 121, <i>Land Act</i> 1915	6,026	6	8
Valuation of improvements and cost of resumption	350	18	8
Interest on improvements and cost of resumption	128	3	4
Penalties and Fines	3,935	15	9
Fees—	£	s.	d.
Application	55	10	0
Licence	30	0	0
Lease	282	0	0
Mortgage	3	0	0
Transfer	15	0	0
	<hr/>		
	385	10	0
Total	£86,093	5	9

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 balance of purchase money due, according to classification of the land. The following Table shows the transactions during the period 1st July, 1916, and 30th June, 1917:—

Purchases Completed.	Area Purchased.	Balance of Purchase Money Paid.		
		£	s.	d.
41	Acres. 17,993	4,498	8	7

Murray Settlements Act (Original Act 1907).

On the Merbein Irrigation Settlement the development has been maintained and extended in a very satisfactory manner. This is proving the most successful irrigation settlement in the State. An area of 308 acres adjoining Merbein has been subdivided and allotted to twenty-three returned soldiers.

The Nyah settlement also is making good progress.

V.—MISCELLANEOUS.

SECTION 110, LAND ACT 1915 (FORMERLY SECTION 130, LAND ACT 1901).

Under section 110 of the *Land Act* 1915, two Conditional Purchase Leases were issued for 65 acres of swamp or reclaimed land at an annual rental of £38 11s.

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, 1917, 69 applications under this section were granted for an area of 148 acres.

SECTION 132, LAND ACT 1915.—BEE FARMS.

During the financial year ended 30th June, 1917, two applications were granted for an area of four acres.

SECTION 147, LAND ACT 1915.—COMMONS.

Two 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, 1917, for non-improvement by lessees under the *Land Acts* of 1862 and 1865, and interest on rents in arrear, was £2,139 0s. 10d.

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 appraisalment. During the financial year ended 30th June, 1917, 352 acres were ordered to be sold in this manner, the total purchase money being £1,381 9s.

SECTION 25, LAND ACT 1915.—PUBLIC HEARINGS.

During the financial year ended 30th June, 1917, 265 sittings of Local Land Boards were held, at which applications for land and other business, comprising in all 1,558 subjects (including applications for mallee lands), were dealt with.

Five cases were publicly heard by the Minister during the financial year ended 30th June, 1917.

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, 1917:—

TABLE L.

Purchases Completed.	Area Purchased.			Balance of Purchase Money Paid.		
	A.	R.	P.	£	s.	d.
16	426	0	0	418	11	1

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, 1917:—

TABLE M.

Land Act 1911.	Number of Applications Approved.	Area Leased.	Annual Rental.
		acres.	£ s. d.
Sections 8 and 46 (Residential) ...	388	53,824	1,480 10 10
„ 13 and 50 (Non-residential)	79	16,220	465 14 4
Total	467	70,044	1,946 5 2

SPECIAL SETTLEMENT AREAS.

SECTION 261, LAND ACT 1915.

During the financial year ended 30th June, 1917, Five Conditional Purchase Leases were issued for 858 acres at an annual rental of £98 13s. 8d.

CROWN GRANTS AND LEASES.

Two thousand and eighty-one Crown grants and 1,250 leases were prepared and passed from the head office during the financial year ended 30th June, 1917.

FEES AND CERTIFICATES.

The sum of £8,892 9s. 8d. was received during the financial year ended 30th June, 1917, for certificates and transfers under the Land Acts, and for miscellaneous fees, including those payable for grants, leases, and survey charges.

REVENUE.

Table N shows in detail the revenue contributed by the Department to the Treasury during the financial year ended 30th June, 1917:—

TABLE N.

<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 ...		25,266	12	5			
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 ...		33,584	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 ...					58,850	15	9
<i>Alienated in Fee simple by Auction and Deferred Payments, also Rents received towards Alienation.</i>							
	A.	R.	P.				
By auction—Town land ...	507	2	38	*29,626	15	3	
„ Country land ...	514	0	16				
Sundry payments on account of purchase in fee simple ...				1,618	4	5	
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 ...				88,118	17	11	
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 ...							
Penalties under section 155, <i>Land Act</i> 1915, and interest ...				2,139	0	10	
Fees for grants, leases, licences, surveys, &c. ...				8,892	9	8	
Sale of plans and sundries ...				32,651	0	3	
							119,363 11 7
							43,682 10 9
Total Revenue ...							221,896 18 1

*This item includes interest £4,092 13s., and instalments on account of some sales.

SPECIAL VOTES.

PARKS AND GARDENS.

The actual amount expended out of this vote of £5,500 was £3,903. A number of the Committees of Management recognising the paramount claims in connexion with the local Patriotic Funds, decided not to avail themselves of the grants allotted. Throughout the State this vote, distributed on a basis of pound for pound of local expenditure, has proved of great value in stimulating local effort.

For the improvement of the Metropolitan Parks and Gardens the amount of £2,817 was granted, and the following ones were also provided:—

National Park (Wilson's Promontory) ...	£500
St. Kilda Foreshore ...	500
Albert Park ...	500
Royal Park ...	300

with other smaller amounts to several suburban municipalities.

MARRAM GRASS VOTE.

An amount of £1,250 was voted for the planting of Marram Grass to arrest sand drift, and was expended partly under departmental control, and partly through the medium of the municipal councils.

To a limited extent, interested land-owners have joined in this work.

MELBOURNE BOTANIC GARDENS.

For the full information regarding these gardens reference is made to Appendix C containing the report by the Curator of the gardens.

IMMIGRATION.

During the year under review, immigration has been practically suspended owing to the war. The total number of assisted immigrants who arrived in the State for the financial year was 266. They consisted chiefly of persons, mostly wives and

families, nominated by relatives or friends already here. Similar nominations are still being received, and those being nominated include the wives of returned soldiers.

The staff which was employed on immigration work has been greatly reduced. Fifteen (15) officers enlisted for active service, nine (9) are on duty at the State War Council, and others are on service in other Departments. The small staff remaining is employed chiefly in the collection of instalments due from assisted immigrants. In this way, a sum of nearly £5,000 was received through the office during the last financial year. The office in London, which has been carried on in conjunction with the New South Wales Government, has also been reduced to the lowest possible basis, the total cost to the State of the administrative work, exclusive of rent of the portion of the Agent-General's Office occupied, being about £750.

GOVERNMENT LABOUR BUREAU.

At the Labour Bureau, engagements made during the financial year numbered 4,130, as compared with 4,977 during the previous financial year.

The bulk of these men have been engaged for railway construction and maintenance, and for other public works, but a great deal of useful work has been done by the Bureau in supplying farm and other labour for private employers in country districts. During the last year or two, when farm labour has been more than usually scarce, while it has been of the greatest importance to secure all men possible for increasing cultivation, the Labour Bureau has given special attention to the supplying of the labour requirements throughout the State.

Railway fares are advanced by the Bureau to men engaged for private employment, or to those who have secured for themselves employment in country districts. The value of rail tickets so advanced during last financial year was £2,870, while for the same period the total amount received in repayment of rail fares advanced, either during this or previous financial years, was £2,255.

TOURISTS' RESORTS.

The Committee representing the Lands, Public Works and Railway Departments, Messrs. Reed (Chairman), Catani, and Keast continued the work of dealing with the development of Tourists' resorts, the vote for which was provided on the estimates of the Public Works Department.

The limited vote prevented the undertaking of any extensive new improvements, and a considerable portion of the money available was expended on maintenance work on the most important places of resort, such as Mount Buffalo, the Grampians, Mount Dandenong, Warburton to Healesville, Marysville, Sorrento (Ocean Park), &c.

Victoria's resorts, through the medium of the Department's fifteen publications and other advertising, are becoming better known, and their growing popularity is evidenced by the increasing traffic during the Christmas and Easter holidays.

BUCHAN CAVES.

These further attractions are controlled by the Department and the development of a new cave has been carried on in addition to maintenance work. Leaving Melbourne by morning train to Nowa Nowa, and thence by motor service, the tourist can reach Buchan in one day. A substantial increase in the number of admissions has to be recorded, the total for the year being 2,630, yielding a revenue of £246.

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	R. D. Howells,	Clerk
J. P. Cormack,	do.	F. J. Whitfield,	do.
R. H. Berry,	do.	A. F. Graham,	do.
N. H. Gibson,	do.	C. Dewsnap,	do.
J. J. Walshe,	do.	W. M. Crawford,	do.
F. P. Mountjoy,	do.	J. M. Dooley,	do.
J. D. Jageurs,	do.	R. R. G. Greenwood,	do.
J. A. Mahoney,	do.	J. V. Larkin,	do.
W. T. Long,	do.	H. R. Gray,	do.
C. C. Burge,	do.	R. T. Olney,	do.
B. O. T. Gibbs,	do.	H. W. Boyd,	do.

EXPEDITIONARY FORCES—*continued.*

H. Rutherford,	Clerk	G. L. Wood,	Clerk
R. H. Wheeler,	do.	R. Hanslow,	do.
R. R. Neal,	do.	E. H. Bugg,	Gardener
R. F. W. Harris,	do.	A. W. Bugg,	do.
F. A. Evans,	do.	G. F. Griffiths,	do.
V. W. Straford,	do.	H. Cave,	do.
C. M. Ewart,	do.	G. F. Price,	do.
S. G. Carter,	do.	L. G. Robertson,	Labourer
E. F. H. Singleton,	do.	E. L. Iredale,	Pupil Surveyor
J. Williamson,	do.	J. A. Gray,	do.
G. Allan,	do.	O. G. Pearson,	Staff Surveyor
J. E. Hunter,	do.	P. M. Leckie,	do.
P. J. Cloke,	do.	G. F. Murphy,	Pupil Surveyor
D. A. Tregent,	do.	W. M. Olive,	Engineering Student
M. H. Gray,	do.	W. H. L. McDonald,	Draughtsman
W. Edmends,	do.	H. R. Wilson,	do.
C. E. Chancellor,	do.	N. H. Malcolm,	do.
G. T. Blore,	do. (reported missing)	N. F. W. Barnard,	do.
T. H. Blair,	do.	F. H. A. Moon,	Caretaker
A. R. Cross,	do.	E. J. Hubble,	Junior Messenger
A. McPhee,	do.	F. T. Currie,	do.
C. M. Bell,	do.	J. T. Greene,	Lift Attendant
H. R. Currie,	do.	H. J. Whiting,	Messenger
E. Michell,	do.	D. A. Baird,	Assistant Photographer
W. Muir,	do.	S. A. Glover,	Shorthandwriter and Typist
H. Russell,	do.	M. A. Cronin,	Typewriter
W. M. Somerville,	do.	S. T. Jennings,	do.
H. B. Wade,	do.	H. Norton,	do.
H. D. Tong Way,	do.	C. J. E. Pollock,	do.

It is with much regret that I record the names of those whose lives have been sacrificed in the cause of Empire :—

J. P. Cormack.	C. M. Bell.
J. T. Greene.	T. H. Blair.
J. D. Jageurs.	F. A. Evans.
H. R. Wilson.	E. J. Hubble.
A. W. Bugg.	B. O. T. Gibbs.
W. M. Olive.	H. W. Boyd.
N. F. W. Barnard.	W. Jenkin.

STAFF.

Many staff changes were made during the year owing to the retirement of a number of senior officers.

Mr. W. McIver succeeded Mr. W. H. Gregson as Chief Clerk.

Mr. James Butler was promoted to the position of Accountant.

Mr. W. H. Luly was appointed Chief Vermin Inspector.

The positions of Chief Draughtsman of Lands and Mines Departments were amalgamated, Mr. William Thorn being appointed thereto.

The retirements and further enlistments involved a serious reduction in the staff, particularly of senior officers, and imposed additional work and responsibility on those remaining. I have to express my appreciation of the service rendered by the officers generally, and the special efforts made by many to do their full part in carrying on the work of the Department under the difficult conditions consequent on the War.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

J. M. REED,

Secretary for Lands.

APPENDIX A.

Department of Lands and Survey,
Melbourne, 7th September, 1917.

The Honorable
The Commissioner of Crown Lands and Survey.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit, herewith my report on the survey work carried out by the Department during the financial year ending 30th June, 1917.

MALLEE LAND SURVEYS.

During the year 90,000 acres of Mallee land have been subdivided into 147 allotments, and, in addition, a further area of 120,000 acres has been featured to obtain the information necessary for a system of water supply, as well as for the location of roads and the preparation of designs for subdivision.

The land dealt with is all capable of being watered by catchment tanks, which afford a ready means of providing for water storage in this new country, until a more permanent supply can be given by connecting them with the channelling system.

I would, however, draw attention to the fact that, as regards railway communication, the limits of practical settlement have been reached in these Mallee subdivisions, and would urge the necessity for extensions of the existing lines from the present termini at Nandaly, Manangatang, and Piangil. These extensions will all serve considerable areas of country well adapted for wheat growing, and must be considered as necessary for the proper working of a good proportion of the land surveyed during the year, as well as for the development of the country which lies further back—railway communication and water supply being essentially necessary for the successful settlement of these northern lands.

LANDS OTHER THAN MALLEE.

Of lands other than Mallee, 58,000 acres have been surveyed into 540 allotments. These comprised new selections, grazing areas, auriferous areas, garden licence blocks, and sub-divisions and allotments for the settlement of returned soldiers.

In addition, some 270 miscellaneous blocks, with an area of 1,200 acres, were marked for sale by auction and for public purposes.

The survey of a township has been made at Malanganee, on the Heywood to Mount Gambier line, and also of extensions of existing townships at Seacombe, Balmoral, Kaniva, and Warrandyte.

CLOSER SETTLEMENT SURVEYS.

The following areas were subdivided during the year:—

	...	...	Allotments.	...	...	Acres.
Tyntynder	...	...	19	...	...	488
Yallock...	...	...	5	...	...	593
Lake Baker	...	...	10	...	...	580
Miscellaneous	...	...	48	...	...	911
			82			2,572

DISTRICT SURVEYORS.

The district surveyors have been fully employed during the year in supervising the work of contract surveyors in their respective districts; in inspecting, reporting upon, and classifying land to be made available for settlement; and also on special inspection work in connection with closer 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. One has 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 in connection with soldier settlement.

Messrs. Leckie and Pearson are still on active service abroad.

PUPIL DRAUGHTSMEN AND SURVEYORS.

The three pupil surveyors in the service of the Department are still engaged with the Military Forces.

In order to relieve the pressure of work in the draughting room consequent on retirements and enlistments for active service, four pupil draughtsmen were appointed during the year, and their progress in their work has given every satisfaction.

CONTRACT SURVEYORS.

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

Messrs. M. Tiernan and A. J. Leahy are still absent on active service—the former is reported to have been severely wounded in France.

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

	£	s.	d.
Main road surveys	2,079	5	10
Mallee subdivisions	1,493	15	4
Feature surveys	2,502	8	10
Subdivision of land for sale	491	3	7
Selection surveys (departmental)	1,276	16	5
Balance of fees on selection surveys (to be refunded in instalments by applicants)	232	2	6
Check surveys and connexion lines	236	14	8
Re-surveys for sale, selection, &c.	133	15	6
Reserves and other sites	264	17	5
Miscellaneous surveys	529	14	10
	<hr/>		
Trust Fund fees collected from applicants	2,540	13	9
	<hr/>		
Total	£11,781	8	8
	<hr/>		
Amount collected and deposited in Trust Fund Account	£3,420	18	10
	<hr/>		
Payments made to Authorized Surveyors	£6,260	17	6
Amount of survey fees refunded to applicants	153	1	3
Amount of survey fees transferred to Revenue	3,077	19	10
	<hr/>		
	£9,491	18	7
	<hr/>		

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.	405
Plans of selection surveys	416
Certified plans prepared for leases and grants	2,042
Certificates of adjustment prepared	95

The Staff consisted of Officer in Charge and seven Draughtsmen.

Draughting Branch.

Township and parish plans compiled, full scale... ..	31
Township and parish plans revised and posted for new issues	114
Special plans, tracings, and postings	196
Plans of subdivisional surveys drawn from Surveyors' notes	121
Various tracings, chartings, and lithos posted	1,253
Certificates for Office of Titles	138
Certificated plans for certificate of Board of Land and Works	20
Technical descriptions prepared for proclamations, reservations, &c.	332
Diagrams on Crown grants and leases	4,195

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 38,000.

ENGRAVER.

The work of the engraver consisted of the revision and posting of Geodetic sheets M south, L north, and 16-mile Map of Victoria.

PHOTOGRAPHIC WORK.

The photographic transfers prepared numbered 377, 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 Moulder, numbered 28.

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

	£	s.	d.
Country Roads Board	0	10	0
Government Statist	2	0	0
State Rivers and Water Supply Commission	12	0	0
	<hr/>		
	£14	10	0
	<hr/>		
Amount received for sale of maps, plans, &c.	£326	5	9
	<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 to the above Acts for the financial year 1916-17 :—

RABBIT DESTRUCTION.

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

		£	s.	d.
Votes	{ Inspectors' Salaries, Wages, and Material	23,416	17	8
	{ Fox and Wild Dog Subsidy	341	1	7
Total		23,757	19	3

The sum of £6,723 15s. 9d. was collected for work done on private property under section 17 of the Act, and was repaid to the vote.

The sum of £10,078 18s. was spent in destroying rabbits on Crown lands.

The number of inspectors employed under the Act during the financial year 1916-17 was 64. There were also casual labourers numbering 120, who were under the control of the inspectors. The staff has, owing to the unfortunate war, been somewhat disorganized, owing to a number of inspectors having enlisted for active service. It is a pleasure to state that practically every fit inspector has offered his services to the Empire. Casual labourers have also responded well to the call, one inspector having some 28 of his men now at the front. One inspector, who has returned wounded, has now resumed duty in his old district, another inspector has been on extended leave, and, I regret to say, one has had to be dismissed.

During the past financial year I have made inspections in nearly every district, and with the exception of parts of the Northern districts, especially the Mallee, the rabbit has been well kept under. The Mallee settlers have become somewhat alarmed, and they have every reason to be so, knowing what they have suffered in the past, but I have no hesitation in saying that their anxiety will be relieved shortly.

The reason for the increase in the Mallee can be attributed to causes over which the Department had little or no control. In the first place, rabbits bred all the year round, an exceptional thing for them to do. The good season has been to the advantage of the pest. The fact of labour being scarce, and practically unobtainable, both for Departmental and private work, at the most essential time, has proved a heavy handicap. Poisons which were mostly used were unobtainable, except at such exorbitant prices that private persons could not afford to buy them. Wholesale druggists have now declined to quote prices, and did not tender for this and most of last year to supply same, giving as their reason that poisons were not obtainable owing to war conditions.

The rumour that was widespread over this State, that the Government had ordered the suspension of poisoning, had a bad effect with the most careless and indifferent settlers, and they neglected to keep the rabbits under. I have pleasure in stating that a large number of letters were received asking if such an order had been issued, and if such were the case, protesting against it, and strongly recommending it to be cancelled immediately, as it would be disastrous to the country if poisoning operations were suspended.

From other States there have been inquiries, both personally and by letter, in reference to the method of destruction of rabbits in this State. Reports in various papers have stated that the Act here, and the system of working it, is the best.

Every concession as regards compliance with the Act has been extended to landholders who are at the front. The inspectors have been instructed to render every assistance, free of cost, and I have pleasure in stating that neighbours have readily rendered assistance in that direction.

A book of instructions has been issued to the inspectors for their better guidance in the execution of their duties; and the financial work of the Branch has been brought more in line with the system in use in the Accounts Branch of the Department.

Section 17, work which has been carried on at a loss to the Department, is now being made to pay, and this will have the effect of causing the landholders to do the work themselves, rather than leave it to the inspectors.

There have been very few applications by landholders for certificates to compel their neighbours to wire-net boundary fences. This is mainly on account of the high price of wire netting.

During the latter part of the year inspectors were called upon to erect "mouse-proof" fencing around the wheat stacks in the infested area. To this they responded willingly, and it was mainly on account of the interest displayed that the fencing proved such a success. Credit is, therefore, due to them, especially Senior-Inspector McCullough, who was most indefatigable in the work, which has been very heavy. Credit is also due to the Head-quarters staff for the manner in which the work has been carried out, taking into consideration the number employed and the extent of the outside work undertaken by the Department.

In conclusion, I regret to say that the late chief, Mr. Allan, who was respected by all who came in contact with him, passed away during the year.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

W. H. LULY,

Chief Inspector.

APPENDIX C.

Melbourne Botanic Gardens,
South Yarra, 18th September, 1917.

The Secretary for Lands,
Melbourne.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit my report relating to the Botanic Gardens, Domain, and Treasury Gardens for the year ending 30th June, 1917.

Notwithstanding the continued loss of labour by reason of the absence of several officers who are engaged on military service abroad, the Gardens have been maintained in a fairly good condition by the remaining staff. The season was a specially favorable one for gardening purposes, as very acceptable rains fell at useful intervals during the early summer months, and only very short periods of really hot or dry weather occurred during the season. The result of the very favorable moist summer and autumn has been seen in the luxuriant growths and early promise of abundant flowering of plants. This is specially noticeable in the acacias and numerous other native plants in the Australian vegetation section.

One of the junior gardeners and one garden labourer enlisted, and left for military service abroad during the year, making, in all, six officers whose places are being kept open for them, and to which it is hoped they will all return before another year elapses.

In order to make good some of the labour lost by the absences of officers on military service, their fellow employees have continued to perform overtime work in gratuitously undertaking watching duties on Saturday afternoons throughout the year.

Examinations of officers desirous of being appointed to the position of 1st and 2nd grade gardeners, as opportunities occur, were held at the Gardens on 21st March and 30th May, 1917, when at the former four officers passed for 1st grade and two officers passed for 2nd grade, and at the latter five officers passed for 1st grade and four for 2nd grade.

In addition to the special autumnal season work of digging, manuring, weeding, and topdressing the lawns, resoiling of many of the groups, plantations, &c., in readiness for the spring and summer floral displays, special attention was given, during April, to the bulb ground on the west side of the Gardens. The whole of the beds and plots were renewed, and the bulbs were replaced, and other plants added to make the collection as interesting and extensive as possible.

The fine collection of Camellias, Ericas, Magnolias, Azaleas, Rhododendrons, Double-flowering Peaches, Plums, Cherries, Roses, Begonias, Dahlias, &c., attracted large numbers of special visitors in their respective flowering seasons.

In addition to the re-potting and maintenance of the collection of ornamental exotic and stove plants in the public conservatory, successive seasonal displays of flowering and coloured foliage plants were made throughout the year. The conservatory was largely patronized by visitors.

The Classification Pavilion and Museum of Economic Botany and Plant Products both continued to be well patronized on the days they were open to the public. The collections prove of much interest and instruction to the ordinary visitors, but are specially appreciated and valued by students of botany, horticulture, and gardening.

The water weeds in the large lake have been kept down fairly well by the use of the motor-driven weed cutter, but only by frequent cuttings in the spring and summer season. A large amount of labour has had to be devoted in keeping the vegetation around the margin of the lake and of the islands in the lake trimmed. The waterfowl luxuriate here, and do not seem to be seriously interfered with by visitors. One or two clutches of the Black Swans have been hatched out safely during the year. The Lily lake was emptied of water, and the plantations of Nymphaeas and other lilies were renovated with fresh soil. This caused a very fine display of blooms during the summer months on the surface of the lake.

The Nelumbium or Lotus Lily in the lake proved to be a very prominently attractive feature of interest to visitors.

The nomenclature and labelling of plants throughout the entire grounds is a most essential work, and is much appreciated by visitors. During the year no less than 7,929 labels of various descriptions were painted and written and affixed to plants for general information. This is considered to render these Gardens distinctively valuable from horticultural, gardening, and educational standpoints.

In addition to the label writing, the painting of the Regulation Boards, various notices and sign boards, entrance gates, conservatories, rest houses, &c., was carried out during the year by the staff.

Towards the close of the year the Public Works Department also made provision for and carried out the painting of the exterior of the Museum of Economic Botany and Plant Products, and several of the Lodges, a work which was most necessary.

Plant pests have necessitated a great deal of labour and attention. Spraying and other means have had to be constantly adopted in order to keep them down. The yellow weed (*Hypochaeris radicata*) has become a source of much trouble on many of the lawns and requires continuous attention to keep it in check.

The leaf collecting machines which have been in use for the past few years do a good work, and save a great amount of labour on the oak and other lawns during the autumn or leaf-shedding season.

During the year thefts of many valuable plants have taken place from time to time, notwithstanding the vigilance of watchmen and other workmen on duty, and of the plain clothes police who are occasionally engaged in order to trace the offenders.

Owing to the increasing interest being taken both by numerous public bodies and individuals in gardening and horticultural matters, the correspondence is continually on the increase. In addition to numerous verbal inquiries made officially, almost daily information has been afforded to correspondents in the suburbs and country districts, and in other States, on matters relating to the designing of gardens, suitable plants for various districts and purposes, the growth and culture of plants, remedies for diseases, &c.

Many additions of new and rare plants have been made to the collection during the year, both by gifts and purchases. Several donations of seeds have been received indirectly from soldiers abroad, from the numerous places they had visited in and about the theatres of war. The exchanges with kindred institutions throughout Australia and New Zealand and Europe, Asia, Africa, and America have been maintained. Some 342 packets of seeds were supplied from here to various correspondents abroad, and 548 packets of seeds were received. Of those received, 106 proved to be new species to the Gardens.

In order to assist the leading horticultural and other kindred Societies at their annual Shows in Melbourne, I have exhibited, for the information and instruction of those attending the same, representative suitable displays of plants and flowers from these Gardens on several occasions. I have also visited various Societies during the year, and addressed the members and visitors on subjects relating to gardening and horticultural matters. Visits to some country districts and military camps were made by me in order to advise municipal councils and societies and the authorities in regard to the laying out of public reserves, gardens, and camp areas. In addition, written communications giving advice on planting, and lists of suitable plants for planting for various purposes, have been forwarded to public bodies and private correspondents. Limited supplies of surplus plants were made for various camps and some of the prominent municipal bodies. Interchanges of plants and seeds with similar institutions in this and other States, as well as abroad, and with nurserymen, municipal gardens, and private individuals, have been continued during the year. By this means the stock of plants here is maintained and the collections considerably augmented.

The identification of flowers and other botanical specimens is a work which is growing, and which occupies a great deal of the Classifier's and other officers' time. Over 700 specimens have been submitted, named for, and returned to senders during the year.

Limited supplies of botanical specimens have been made regularly for the use of science and art students at the University, Working Men's College, College of Pharmacy, Technical Schools of the Education Department, Teachers of Botany at the various public colleges in Melbourne and suburbs.

The Research Committee of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, which was appointed for investigating the Natural Plant Products of Victoria, has been at work here during the year. Oils have been distilled at the laboratory in these Gardens from the following plants, viz. :—*Eucalyptus cinerea* var. *multiflora*, *E. fastigiata*, *E. gonicalyx* (variety from Lysterfield), *E. hæmastoma*.

Many inquiries continue to be made with regard to herbal and other medicinal plants, with the object of ascertaining the value of growing the same for commercial purposes. The Medicinal Plants Board of Victoria, of which I am a member, is hoping to improve the methods of experimenting with the growth and culture of medicinal plants, with a view to the possibility of establishing important industries in Victoria in connexion therewith.

Domain.—During the month of May last I was enabled to utilize a large number of the staff at the work of alteration and improvement of the portion of the Domain formerly known as the "Grange" property. By official arrangement the City Council were permitted to make an alteration at what was known as the entrance to the "Grange," at the corner of St. Kilda and Domain roads. This was absolutely necessary, in order to give greater facilities for vehicular traffic at the intersection. A new line of road and pathway was allowed to encroach into the Domain a few feet. The ploughing, harrowing, and removal of part of the embankment parallel with St. Kilda-road, and surfacing with new soil a portion of the area, has been carried out. This has necessitated a large amount of cartage, as it involved the removal of over 1,200 loads of clay, soil, &c. A wide pathway has been formed, leading from the corner of St. Kilda-road and Domain-road to the Gardens F Entrance, and 500 loads of metal have been spread to form a basis for the same. During next year it is hoped to have a considerable portion of the area judiciously planted.

In addition to the work at the "Grange" portion, the Domain throughout has been kept in a generally good condition. The rockeries and plantations of trees and grasslands and roads have been well maintained. During the summer nearly the whole of the footpaths were repaired and re-tarred and sanded, for the safety and convenience of pedestrian traffic.

Treasury Gardens.—These have been maintained in fairly good order during the year, notwithstanding the absence of one of the garden labourers on military duty abroad during the greater portion of the year.

The Japanese Garden section has been neatly kept, and continues to be an interesting and attractive feature to visitors and others who frequent these Gardens.

Votes.—Although an amount of £10,027 was voted for the Botanic and Domain Gardens for the year, only £9,291 was expended. This was due to changes in the staff on account of retirements, transfers, &c., whereby a saving of over £540 was made in the salaries under "General Division," and other savings effected, amounting to nearly £200, in the various items under "Ordinary Expenditure."

Of the amount of £596 voted for the Treasury Gardens, only £388 was expended. A saving of £208 was effected owing to the absence of one of the staff during a greater portion of the year, and to anticipated expenses not having been incurred.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

J. CRONIN,

Curator.