

1918.

VICTORIA.

 THE LAND ACT.

REPORT

FOR

 THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 1918,

WITH APPENDICES

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

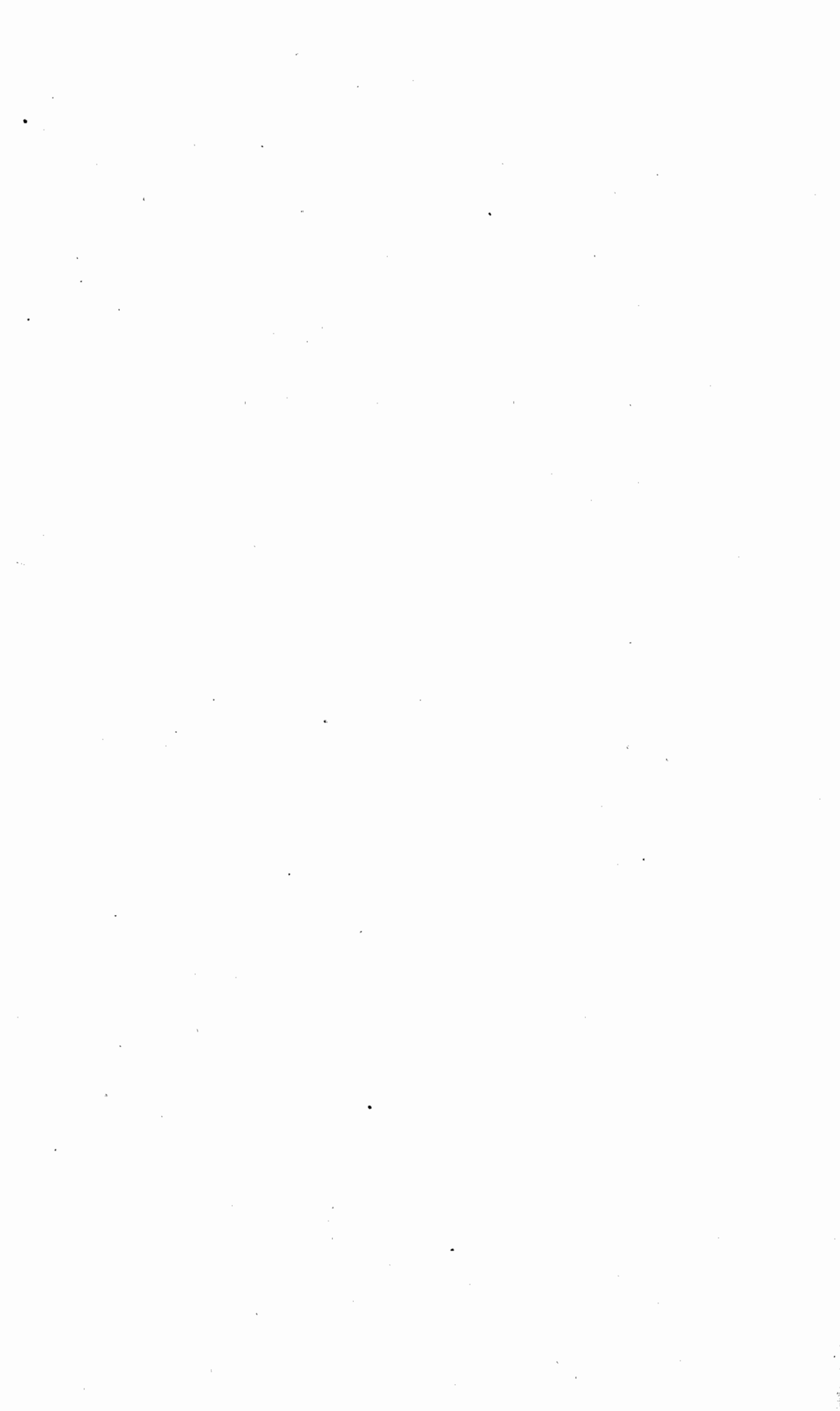
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R E P O R T .

*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, 26th October, 1918.

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, 1918.

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

<p>I.—Settlement.</p> <p>II.—Sales by auction.</p> <p>III.—Pastoral occupation.</p>		<p>IV.—Mallee.</p> <p>V.—Miscellaneous.</p>
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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,

FRANK CLARKE,

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

REPORT.

Department of Lands and Survey,
Melbourne, 30th September, 1918.

The Honorable Frank Clarke,
Commissioner of Crown Lands and Survey,
Melbourne.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit my report, for the year ending 30th June, 1918, 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 Vermiu 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 ordinary application, and is being made available for soldier settlers, thus limiting the total of the year's record of land selected.

LAND SETTLEMENT.

The total area of the State is 56,245,760 acres. This comprises—

Lands alienated in fee simple	...	...	...	24,427,467	acres
Lands in process of alienation	...	...	...	7,559,809	„
Crown lands	...	...	...	24,258,484	„
				56,245,760	„

The Crown lands comprise—

Permanent forests	...	...	...	3,376,221	acres
Timber reserves	...	...	...	753,557	„
Water reserves	...	...	...	315,596	„
Reserves for agricultural colleges	...	...	...	84,990	„
Reserves in the Mallee	...	...	...	397,881	„
Other reserves	...	...	...	306,097	„
Roads	...	...	...	1,744,452	„
Water frontages, beds of rivers, lakes, &c., unsold land	...	...	...
in cities, towns, and boroughs	...	...	...	2,147,923	„
Grazing area leases	...	...	...	2,573,143	„
Perpetual leases	...	...	...	210,704	„
Other leases	...	...	...	121,294	„
Temporary grazing licences	...	...	...	9,522,261	„
Unoccupied	...	...	...	2,704,365	„
				24,258,484	„

Note.—These figures represent the latest information available, and have been computed to 31st December, 1917.

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) ...	247	42,176
New selection, Auriferous land—Sec. 86 ...	72	1,138
New selection, Mallee land ...	180	68,447
Selections out of Grazing Area Leaseholds ...	134	41,404
Holdings converted to Selection tenure ...	191	3,401

Settlement under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act has increased during the year, and soldier settlers have been placed on Crown lands as shown hereunder :—

Special Settlement Areas, Merbein ...	65
Mallee lands ...	58
Other Crown lands ...	55

The *Land Act* 1915 (No. 2) made provision for concessions to soldiers on active service, and under this authority 383 licensees and lessees last year and 99 this year were granted suspension as to payment of rents or residence or compliance with the improvement conditions.

SEED AND FODDER ADVANCES.

The final instalment of seed and fodder advances made in 1915 under the authority of the *Seed Advances Act* 1914 became due from the proceeds of the 1917-18 harvest. Owing to various causes the area of crop sown by farmers was slightly decreased, and the yield for the State (37,737,552 bushels) showed a considerable reduction, particularly in the Mallee areas.

The return in most cases was, however, sufficient to enable the farmer to pay off the balance of the liability, but in a few cases it has been found necessary to extend the term for repayment until next harvest.

The amounts collected during the year were :—

Principal ...	£109,403 16 6
Interest ...	5,072 5 0
Total ...	<u>£114,476 1 6</u>

The position as at 1st July, 1918, is that out of a total of £500,600 15s. 6d. advanced under the Act, only £17,750 7s. 6d. is outstanding.

Liens on crops to the number of 281 have been registered for the season 1918-19.

These advances were made at a time when the farmers of the State were faced with ruin owing to drought, and have proved of inestimable value to thousands, who have thereby been enabled to retrieve their positions.

FLOODS RELIEF ADVANCES.

During the year heavy floods brought financial difficulties to a number of settlers in the Nathalia and Koo-wee-rup districts, and, in order to assist them to remain on their holdings as producers, a sum of £1,300 has been advanced for the purchase of seed, fodder and stock. The loans are repayable over short periods, and it is expected that the results will be satisfactory.

GRAZING LANDS.

There was still a limited demand for grazing lands. This was due to the small stock supplies, consequent on the losses by drought and to the high prices ruling for stock. The total revenue derived from grazing licences was £14,748 12s. 2d. The licences of these areas contain a special condition, with a view of checking the burning-off, which has caused so much timber destruction.

RABBIT DESTRUCTION.

The total expenditure on this work, including amount spent on private property to be charged against owners, was £36,711 7s. 9d., being about £2,874 more 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.

A slight reduction in the arrears was made during the year, but as the greater number of tenants who had seed and fodder loans to repay have completed their payments, it is expected that a greater reduction will be made during the current year, and special efforts will be made for this purpose.

<i>Arrears at 30th June, 1917.</i>			<i>Arrears at 30th June, 1918.</i>		
Crown lands	... ..	£43,385	Crown lands	... ..	£41,906
Mallee lands	... ..	£133,750	Mallee lands	... ..	£127,570

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 £19,415.

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.

During the year special legislation was enacted to facilitate the settlement of discharged soldiers on the land, and, under the favorable conditions contained in the *Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act 1917*, it is expected that several thousands of these men will, after their return, be satisfactorily placed on farms of their own.

The following is a list of the Acts passed:

- Wodonga Land Act 1917, No. 2902.*
- Clunes Lands Act 1917, No. 2905.*
- Port Melbourne Land Act 1917, No. 2906.*
- Redbank Recreation Reserve Act 1917, No. 2910.*
- Melbourne General Market Lands Act 1917, No. 2913.*
- Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act 1917, No. 2916.*
- Albert Park Land Act 1917, No. 2923.*

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, 1918, are shown in the following Table (A):—

TABLE A.

—	BY AUCTION.				BY SELECTION.						General Total. Area.
	Country Lands.	Town Lands.	Suburban Lands.	Totals by Auction, &c.	Selection and Lease.		Certificate Selection.		42nd Section, Act 1865, &c.		
					No.	Area.	No.	Area.	No.	Area.	
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.		Acres.		Acres.		Acres.	Acres.
Under Imperial Acts ...	...	...	...	3,944,237	...	...	...	...	...	...	3,944,237
„ <i>Land Act</i> 1860 ...	392,610	1,273	4,979	398,862	...	410,600	...	...	...	...	809,462
„ „ 1862 ...	422,610	2,800	31,295	456,705	...	1,363,243	...	59,992	...	...	1,879,940
„ „ 1865 ...	639,761	6,709	34,137	680,607	5,900	1,499,910	3,078	559,423	...	753,344	3,493,284
„ „ 1869 ...	986,175	17,229	32,693	1,036,097	Section 19. 65,511 10,460,737		...	...	Section 49. 11,593 181,744		11,678,578
„ „ 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. 4,281 399,806		Section 49. 118 6,232		...	...	561,337
„ „ 1891-1901	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Sections 22 and 106. 145 687		687
Totals ...	...	...	...	6,671,807	...	14,210,396	...	625,647	...	936,977	22,444,827
During year—	<i>Land Act</i> 1898-1901.				<i>Land Act</i> 1898-1901-1915.						
1899 ...	3,353	860	...	4,213	...	...	...	...	...	...	4,213
1900 ...	4,977	1,668	...	6,645	Sections 42, 47, 8, and 46. 657 79,376	Sections 59, 54, 8 and 46. 532 96,786	Sections 49, 50, 59, 54, 13 and 50. 198 28,879	Non-residence. 54 13	...	...	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
1917-18 ...	680	449	...	1,129	228 5,018	142 39,093	43 7,391	...	...	...	52,531
Totals ...	46,818	29,616	...	76,434	12,854	912,431	7,558	1,777,084	2,634	476,026	3,241,975
	Auction	...	...	...	...	...	6,748,241 acres				
	Selection	...	...	...	...	...	*18,938,561 „				
	Total	...	...	...	...	...	25,686,802 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, 1918:—

TABLE B.

Purchases Completed.	Area Purchased.	Balances of Purchase Money Received.			Survey Fees Allowed.		
		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
3	A. r. p. 93 0 35	Nil			5 15 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, 1918:—

TABLE C.

Purchases Completed.	Area Purchased.	Area Leased and afterwards Purchased.	Amount Paid by Lessees as Balance of Purchase Money.		
			£	s.	d.
144	Acres. 13,041	Acres. 13,041	799 13 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. Six applications, representing 42 acres, were approved during the financial year ended 30th June, 1918, and the sum of £32 15s. 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, 1918:—

TABLE D.

Number of Applications Approved.	Area Leased.	Annual Rental.		
		£	s.	d.
25	Acres. 10,405	53 17 9		

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, 1918:—

TABLE E.

Section.	Number of Applications Approved.	Area Licensed.	Annual Rental.		
			Acres.	£	s. d.
47. (Residence) <i>Land Act</i> 1901 ...	177	4,040	187	18	0
50. (Non-residence) „ 1901 ...	8	411	18	4	2
54. (Residence) „ 1901 ...	59	19,052	304	7	3
54. (Non-residence) „ 1901 ...	9	4,118	103	0	0
Total ...	253	27,621	613	9	5

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, 1918, 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.
453	577	55,668	77,180	3,467 6 7	46,288	6,048 18 4

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. Four orders, representing an area of 617 acres, were registered during the financial year ended 30th June, 1918.

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. Six liens, comprising an area of 1,135 acres, were registered during the financial year ended 30th June, 1918, representing, as advanced on this kind of security, £330 13s. 7d.

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, 1918, under section 86, are shown in Table G:—

TABLE G.

Section 86.		
Number of Applications Approved.	Area Licensed.	Annual Rental.
	Acres.	£ s. d.
72	1,138	58 17 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</i> 1898, and Section 35, <i>Land Act</i> 1901 and Section 32, <i>Land Act</i> 1915.		Under Sections 42, 47, 54, and 59, <i>Land Acts</i> 1898-1901 and section 8, <i>Land Act</i> 1911, and section 46, <i>Land Act</i> 1915.		Under Sections 49, 50, 54, and 59, <i>Land Acts</i> 1898-1901 and section 13, <i>Land Act</i> 1911, and section 50, <i>Land Act</i> 1915. Non-Residence.		Under Sections 65, 103, and 86.	
	Applications 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
1917-18	25	10,405	486	64,902	61	11,674	72	1,188

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, 1918 :—

TABLE I.

	No.	Extent.
		Acres
Licences—Section 42, Land Acts 1890-1898, and Section 47, <i>Land Act</i> 1901	15	1,301
Section 50, <i>Land Act</i> 1901	2	19
Section 59, <i>Land Act</i> 1898, and Section 54, <i>Land Act</i> 1901 (Residence)	14	4,230
Section 59, <i>Land Act</i> 1898, and Section 54, <i>Land Act</i> 1901 (Non-residence) ... ..	...	...
Section 86, <i>Land Act</i> 1915	*233	4,103
Section 88, <i>Land Act</i> 1915	1	5
Leases—Section 44, <i>Land Act</i> 1890	1	22
Section 44, Land Acts 1890-1898, and Section 49, <i>Land Act</i> 1901	11	1,861
Section 61, <i>Land Act</i> 1898, and Section 56, <i>Land Act</i> 1901 (Residence)	15	4,613
Section 61, <i>Land Act</i> 1898, and Section 56, <i>Land Act</i> 1901 (Non-residence)	12	2,936
Section 85, <i>Land Act</i> 1890, and Section 131, <i>Land Act</i> 1901	16	543
Section 29, <i>Land Act</i> 1898, and Section 35, <i>Land Act</i> 1901	153	77,699
Section 8, <i>Land Act</i> 1911	87	15,630
Section 13, <i>Land Act</i> 1911	16	4,264
Section 37, <i>Land Act</i> 1911	5	568

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

Land Act 1915. Part V.

VILLAGE COMMUNITY LANDS.

Leases to the number of 2,550 have been 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 920 sanctioned to date. In every case the transferee has been a person eligible to become a Village Settler.

During the year 137 settlers have acquired Crown Grants of their holdings.

Monetary aid to the extent of £524 11s. 3d. was repaid during the year; the total amount received to 30th June, 1918, being £44,459 18s. 5d.

Under the *Settlement on Lands Act* 1893 (Village Settlement) 449 settlers are actually residing, and 130 are improving but non-resident, making a total of 579 in occupation. The number of souls, including wives and children, is 1,634.

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, 1918, 1,128 acres were sold for £14,389 8s. 2d. Interest to the amount of £2,816 13s. 2d. 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, 1918, was 680 acres, of which about 317 acres were improved, and 363 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, 1918, 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 214a. Or. 31p., representing ninety-three distinct purchases, reverted to the Crown, and the instalments of purchase money and survey fees already paid thereon, amounting to £1,149 3s. 0d., were forfeited.

The revenue raised from sales by auction is credited to the Developmental Railways Account. For the year the total amount received was £20,162 12s. 8d.

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	2	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
1917—6 months ending 31st December—									
Unimproved land	223	1	10	1,107	5	10	4	19	2
Improved „	52	3	2	387	13	1	7	6	11
1918—6 months ending 30th June—									
Unimproved land	138	3	21	1,073	19	8	7	14	11
Improved „	264	1	2	1,670	4	3	6	6	4

Table K shows the alienation by auction, during the financial year ended 30th June, 1918, 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.
448	2	15	10,150	5	4	22	12	6	680	0	0	4,239	2	10
												6	4	8

During the financial year ended 30th June, 1918, Closer Settlement Lands of an aggregate area of 11a. 2r. 24p. were sold by auction for a total sum of £486.

III.—PASTORAL OCCUPATION.

The sum of £14,748 12s. 2d. was received during the financial year ended 30th June, 1918, for licences under section 121 of the *Land Act* 1915.

IV.—MALLEE.

The transactions from 1st July, 1917, to 30th June, 1918, are as under:—

		No.	Area in Acres.
Leases issued or approved ...	Agricultural leases ...	221	141,839
	Perpetual leases ...	—	—
	Conditional Purchase leases ...	14	240
Licences issued or approved ...	Selection Purchase leases ...	47	28,843
	Agricultural allotments ...	13	8,915
	Garden, Store, Grazing, &c. ...	19	—
Leases transferred ...	Conditional Purchase leases ...	8	198
	Agricultural leases ...	350	186,287
	Perpetual leases ...	6	2,898
Licences and Leases cancelled for non-payment of rent, &c....	...	77	49,361
Number of Local Land Boards held ...	...	22	—
„ cases dealt with...	...	878	—

On 1st July, 1918, 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 ...	...	...	2,944,000
Available as agricultural allotments ...	...	...	146,200
Areas held under grazing licence, section 121, <i>Land Act</i> 1915	...	193	2,670,000
Agricultural allotments occupied under ...	Agricultural leases ...	6,004	3,670,739
	Perpetual leases ...	217	202,342
	Licences ...	1,350	845,653
	Selection purchase leases ...	1,341	871,235

The Revenue derived was as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Rents on Perpetual leases ...	177	13	10
Rents on Conditional Purchase leases ...	2,327	16	5
Rents on Agricultural allotments ...	56,811	14	1
Rents on Selection Purchase Leases ...	4,435	13	5
Rents on Grazing Licences, Section 121, <i>Land Act</i> 1915 ...	6,112	18	5
Valuation of improvements and cost of resumption ...	215	1	1
Interest on improvements and cost of resumption ...	339	16	11
Penalties and Fines ...	3,572	2	9
Fees—	£	s.	d.
Application ...	47	10	0
Licence ...	40	0	0
Lease ...	268	0	0
Mortgage ...	6	0	0
Transfer ...	20	0	0

Section 222, *Land Act* 1901, provides that any licensee, at the expiration of his licence, or on obtaining a lease, may demand and obtain a Crown grant at any time upon payment of the balance of purchase money due. The following Table shows the transactions during the period 1st July, 1917, and 30th June, 1918:—

Purchases Completed.	Area Purchased.	Balance of Purchase Money Paid.		
		£	s.	d.
31	Acres. 9,679	784	8	9

Murray Settlements (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 571 acres adjoining Merbein has been subdivided and allotted to thirty-six 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, nine Conditional Purchase Leases were issued for 339 acres of swamp or reclaimed land at an annual rental of £56 3s.

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, 1918, 96 applications under this section were granted for an area of 207 acres.

SECTION 132, LAND ACT 1915.—BEE FARMS.

During the financial year ended 30th June, 1918, eight applications were granted for an area of 8 acres.

SECTION 147, LAND ACT 1915.—COMMONS.

One common which was found to be no longer required was 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, 1918, for non-improvement by lessees under the Land Acts of 1862 and 1865, and interest on rents in arrear, was £2,214 4s. 11d.

SECTION 172, LAND ACT 1915.

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, 1918, 422 acres were ordered to be sold in this manner, the total purchase money being £1,700 11s. 2d.

SECTION 25, LAND ACT 1915.—PUBLIC HEARINGS.

During the financial year ended 30th June, 1918, 277 sittings of Local Land Boards were held, at which applications for land and other business, comprising in all 2,273 subjects (including applications for mallee lands), were dealt with.

Two cases were publicly heard by the Minister during the financial year ended 30th June, 1918.

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, 1918 :—

TABLE L.

Purchases Completed.	Area Purchased.			Balance of Purchase Money Paid.		
	A.	R.	P.	£	s.	d.
22	440	0	0	271	10	10

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

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, 1918 :—

TABLE M.

Land Act 1911.	Number of Applications Approved.	Area Leased.	Annual Rental.		
		acres.	£	s.	d.
Sections 8 and 46 (Residential) ...	250	41,810	955	19	8
„ 13 and 50 (Non-residential)	44	7,145	181	7	6
Total	294	48,955	1,137	7	2

SPECIAL SETTLEMENT AREAS.

SECTION 261, LAND ACT 1915.

During the financial year ended 30th June, 1918, Two Conditional Purchase Leases were issued for 135 acres at an annual rental of £16 10s. 0d.

CROWN GRANTS AND LEASES.

Two thousand and ninety-two Crown grants and 1,452 leases were prepared and passed from the head office during the financial year ended 30th June, 1918.

FEES AND CERTIFICATES.

The sum of £8,282 2s. 11d. was received during the financial year ended 30th June, 1918, for certificates and transfers under the Land Acts, and for miscellaneous fees, including those payable for grants, leases, and survey charges.

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 name of person and the periods for which he has been granted exemption in consequence of ill-health.

TABLE N.

Name.	Parish.	Area.	Period.
		A. R. P.	
John Richards ...	Daalko ...	656 2 15	2 years and 3 months between 1.6.12 and 1.6.18.

REVENUE.

Table O shows in detail the revenue contributed by the Department to the Treasury during the financial year ended 30th June, 1918:—

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 ...				24,934	4	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 ...				34,017	13	7			
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 ...							58,951	18	3
<i>Alienated in Fee-simple by Auction and Deferred Payments, also Rents received towards Alienation.</i>									
	A.	R.	P.						
By auction—Town land ...	448	2	15	*20,162	12	8			
„ Country land ...	680	0	0						
Sundry payments on account of purchase in fee-simple ...				2,077	5	4			
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 ...									
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 ...				85,151	5	8			
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 ...							107,391	3	8
Penalties under section 155, <i>Land Act</i> 1915, and interest ...				2,214	4	11			
Fees for grants, leases, licences, surveys, &c. ...				8,282	2	11			
Sale of plans and sundries ...				10,404	2	9			
							20,900	10	7
Total Revenue ...							187,243	12	6

*This item includes interest £2,816 13s. 2d., and instalments on account of some sales.

SPECIAL VOTES.

PARKS AND GARDENS.

The actual amount expended out of this vote of £4,000 was £3,537. 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 an amount of £895 was granted, and the following grants 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, out of which £1,215 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.

As the War has progressed, operations in connexion with Assisted Immigration have been reduced to a limited system of nominated passages, under which, as opportunities are available, wives and children and other near relatives are being assisted from England to rejoin their friends here. The number who so arrived during the financial year was 118, and a further number of, approximately, 250 are still awaiting passages.

Collections of payments and instalments from immigrants already in the State have proceeded, and the total sum of £3,626 has been received through the office for the period under review. As previously indicated, the Staff is now necessarily very much reduced; 16 Officers have enlisted for active service; three (3) are loaned to the Repatriation Department; one (1) to the State War Council, and others are engaged in other Departments. The arrangement in London, under which immigration work was carried on in conjunction with the New South Wales Government, terminated on 30th June.

GOVERNMENT LABOUR BUREAU.

Engagements were effected at the Government Labour Bureau to the number of 4,378, as against 4,130 for the previous financial year.

A good demand for labour has been maintained almost continuously throughout the year, and very little unemployment has prevailed.

The position frequently has been that men required either for skilled or unskilled work have had to be advertised for.

Railway fares advanced by the Bureau to men proceeding to private employment in country districts amounted to £2,096, while the total sum received in repayment of fares advanced was £2,052.

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. During the year Mr. G. Kermode was appointed to the Committee.

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 seventeen 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. Tourists leaving Melbourne by morning train to Nowa Nowa, and thence by motor service, can reach Buchan in one day. A substantial increase in the number of admissions has to be recorded, the total for the year being 3,500, yielding a revenue of £350 18s. 9d.

EXPEDITIONARY FORCES.

The Officers whose names appear hereunder enlisted and embarked for Active Service during the year :—

- | | | |
|-----------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| G. V. Stafford, Clerk | \| | A. C. Alexander, Messenger |
| C. J. Kerr, do. | \| | J. A. Cloonan, Rabbit Inspector |

EXPEDITIONARY FORCES—*continued.*

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.
G. T. Blore.	J. Williamson.
G. Allan.	H. R. Currie.
C. Dewsnap.	H. Rutherford.
R. H. Berry.	J. A. Gray.

STAFF.

During the year the position of Chief Clerk became vacant, and was filled by the appointment of Mr. A. A. Peverill, from the State Land Tax Department.

Further enlistments involved a serious reduction in the staff, 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,

W. McIVER,

Secretary for Lands.

APPENDIX A.

Department of Lands and Survey,
Melbourne, 31st August, 1918.

The Honorable
The Commissioner of Crown Lands and Survey.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit my report on the Professional Division of this Department for the year ending 30th June, 1918.

MALLEE LAND SURVEYS.

During the year an area of 75,000 acres, comprising 142 allotments (including reserves), has been surveyed; careful attention having been given to the location of roads and to the provision of water reserves in suitable positions as sites for catchment tanks—these surface catchments being the only source of water supply until the channelling system is extended.

The area that can advantageously be subdivided in the Mallee country is year by year becoming more restricted by the want of railway communication, the greater part of the land surveyed during the period under review being over 10 miles from the railway lines in the several localities dealt with.

It is satisfactory, however, to know that the extensions from Piangil and Manangatang are now under consideration by the Railways Standing Committee. These extensions, together with that from Nandaly—which is under construction at present—will serve a considerable extent of country well adapted for wheat growing, and of which a large portion has been subdivided in readiness for settlement.

The survey of new townships has been continued at local centres, and subdivisions have been made at Pier-Millan and Mittyack, on the Nandaly-Kulwin line, and extensions of existing townships at Ouyen, Kiamill, and Murrayville.

The featuring of country in advance of settlement to obtain the information necessary for the location of roads and for water supply purposes has been continued during the year.

LANDS OTHER THAN MALLEE.

Of lands other than Mallee, 66,000 acres have been surveyed into 578 allotments. These comprised grazing area leases, selections from leases, new selections, auriferous areas, garden licence blocks, and allotments for Returned Soldiers' Settlement; 340 allotments, with a total area of 2,288 acres, have also been marked for sale by auction, school sites, and other public purposes.

Surveys of extensions of townships have been made at Balmoral and Dartmoor to meet the demand for settlement blocks at those centres.

STAFF SURVEYORS.

The departmental staff has been engaged on the work of township and selection subdivision, road deviations in Gippsland, and road and feature surveys in advance of settlement.

Three have been engaged in the Mallee in featuring new country, and locating roads and reserves prior to subdivision; also in obtaining information necessary for a system of water supply. Two have worked from head office on roads, subdivisional, and other surveys in connection with soldier settlement, and on general departmental survey work.

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

	£	s.	d.
Main road surveys	1,780	19	8
Mallee subdivisions	1,469	1	0
Feature surveys	2,401	14	9
Subdivision of land for sale	459	8	6
Selection surveys (departmental)	1,436	10	5
Balance of fees on selection surveys (to be refunded in instalments by applicants)	88	14	6
Check surveys and connexion lines	192	2	11
Re-surveys for sale, selection, &c.	140	5	4
Reserves and other sites	232	10	10
Miscellaneous surveys	278	8	1
	8,479	16	0
Trust Fund fees collected from applicants	2,253	2	2
Total	10,732	18	2
Amount collected and deposited in Trust Fund Account	3,520	15	6
Payments made to Authorized Surveyors	5,737	0	11
Amount of survey fees refunded to applicants	140	0	4
Amount of survey fees transferred to Revenue	2,710	5	3
	8,587	6	6
Amount received for sale of maps, plans, &c.	327	12	9

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 1917-18 :—

RABBIT DESTRUCTION.

The following was the total expenditure for the financial year 1917-18 :—

		£	s.	d.
Votes	{ Inspectors' Salaries, Wages, and Material ...	29,931	17	5
	{ Fox and Wild Dog Subsidy ...	198	17	5
Total ...		30,130	14	10

The sum of £6,580 12s. 11d. was collected for work done on private property under section 17 of the Act, and was repaid to the vote.

The sum of £15,031 16s. 7d. was spent in destroying rabbits on Crown lands.

The number of inspectors employed under the Act during the year was 64. With the exception of Mallee lands, which are receiving special attention, conditions throughout the State are satisfactory, considering the shortage of poison and material, which, at periods, have been almost unprocurable.

Owing to the abnormally good seasons during the past three years, conditions have been most favorable for the breeding of rabbits. This applies particularly to the Mallee, where breeding has been going on continuously for the past two years. The position has been aggravated by the large number of unoccupied and absentee soldiers' allotments requiring attention. Every consideration has been extended to landholders serving with the A.I.F., or their dependants; inspectors have been instructed to render every possible assistance in the matter. I am pleased to report that in many cases neighbouring landholders have also rendered much assistance free of cost in attending such allotments.

The position is getting better every day, and during the next few months, by the aid of simultaneous poisoning throughout the whole of the Mallee, I am sanguine that the trouble will be over. Fortunately, the Honorable the Minister has been able to procure enough strychnine from England to supply present requirements. With an adequate supply of poison and strict supervision during the summer months I am confident that the position will be further improved.

The shortage of poison gave many landholders an excuse to hold back, but digging out and fumigating has been rigidly enforced where that work was possible, and those failing to comply have been prosecuted, and in every instance fines have been inflicted.

During the financial year over 200 landholders were summoned under section 15 of the Act, and the total sum from fines paid into the revenue amounted to about £500.

Four assistant inspectors (working foremen) have been appointed during the year to assist inspectors in the more infested districts of the Mallee, and the results have been most gratifying, so much so that additional appointments are contemplated in different parts of the State.

During the year the Department was called upon to take over the work of fencing the wheat stacks from the mice. This was carried out without releasing inspectors from their ordinary duties.

Conferences have been held with the inspectors with a view to adopting a more uniform system of administering the Act, also the best means of coping with the pest; and these have produced most beneficial results to date.

In conclusion, I might state that the increase of the pest in the two adjoining States has caused a number of inquiries to be made, both personally and by letter, to this Department in reference to the methods of destruction carried out in this State.

Yours obediently,

W. H. LULY,
Chief Inspector.

APPENDIX C.

Botanic and Domain Gardens,
Melbourne, 2nd September, 1918.

The Secretary for Lands,
Melbourne.

SIR,

I have the honor to submit my report for the year ending June, 1918.

Expenditure.—The total amount voted for the maintenance of the Botanic and Domain Gardens was £10,222, of which amount £9,337 was allotted for Salaries and Wages. A total saving of over £600 was effected by the exercise of strict economy in respect to purchase of materials, &c., and owing to vacancies in the staff not being filled promptly as they arose.

Of the amount of £604 voted for the Treasury Gardens, £80 was saved through economy in incidental expenditure.

In addition to the usual routine work, alterations were necessitated in the north-eastern section of the grounds by the erection of a new lavatory for men, which required the removal of certain trees and plants, and the refurnishing of the site with other suitable vegetation. A section in the vicinity of the Band Rotunda, was also remodelled, and the site prepared and planted with shrubs, &c., particularly suited to the situation.

In the Lily lake the fine collection of nymphæas and other aquatic plants were seasonably treated with suitable soils and manures, and produced a fine effect during the summer. The Lotus Lily (*Nelumbium*) was, as in former years, a special feature in this area. The Director of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens kindly donated new varieties of water lilies to the collection, which is now one of the most extensive and representative in the Commonwealth.

The Conservatories, Classification Pavilion, Museum of Economic Botany, and collections of economic medicinal plants are of special interest to students of botany and horticulture, and were liberally patronized during the year. The probability of the cultivation of certain economic plants on a commercial scale being made an important factor in the repatriation scheme for returned soldiers has caused a deal of inquiry, and all available information has been supplied on the subject.

Repairing and painting of conservatories, rest houses, seats, &c., have received due attention, and the labelling of plants has been maintained, over 5,300 tablets and other labels being painted and written during the year. The educational value of the correct naming of plants is generally recognised, and a deal of investigation is necessary to insure that the nomenclature is according to the latest accepted classification.

Correspondence on matters of botanical and horticultural interest is still increasing, and numerous verbal inquiries have been answered on the various phases of gardening work, such as selection of plants and trees, suitability of soils and situations, manuring, pruning, &c., &c., the most general source of inquiry being in connexion with the planting of memorial trees and avenues in various parts of the State.

Special assistance has been rendered to the leading horticultural societies in Melbourne in connexion with their annual shows, when I have exhibited suitable displays of Australian and other plants and flowers from these gardens, which were greatly appreciated and proved a source of information and helpful instruction to those attending the various shows. During the year I have visited many of these Societies in Melbourne and suburbs, and, also, in some of the country districts, and given lectures to the members on various subjects relating to gardening and horticultural matters generally. Visits have, also, been made by me to various country districts and Military Camps, and advice given to Municipal Councils and other authorities in regard to the laying out and planting of local public gardens, reserves, and camp areas.

In connexion with the work of the Research Committee of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, oils have been distilled at the laboratory in these gardens from the following plants, viz.:—*Boronia pinnata*, *Eriostemon myoporoides*, *Eucalyptus saligna*, *E. diversicolor*, *E. Sieberiana*, *E. punctata*, and *Diosma alba*; three of these being new to science, viz.:—*Boronia pinnata*, *Eriostemon myoporoides*, and *Diosma alba*.

During the year three public demonstrations in distillation were made at the laboratory here to the students of the Burnley School of Horticulture, and to the members of the Victorian Horticultural Society, and the Scents and Essential Oils Association.

Domain.—The principal work has been the improvement of the old "Grange" section. The work has been necessarily slow by reason of shortage of labor and filling material, but is now nearly completed, and will be opened generally during the coming year. The present aim is to continue the park-like features to the boundary, providing for any further improvement that may be considered necessary in future years in the direction of more intensive cultivation, with its attendant greater cost of maintenance. The footpaths, rockeries, &c., have been kept in fairly good order generally. The main traffic road through the Domain, which is largely used by motorists, is badly in need of a thorough renovation. No money has been available to do more than repair very bad spots, while the whole is in a condition that compares unfavorably with Alexandra Avenue and other places near by.

Treasury Gardens.—General gardening and routine work has been carried out during the year, the gardens being generally maintained in good order. Some very necessary asphaltting and repair work to several of the footpaths was attended to towards the end of the year.

The Japanese Garden, which has been kept in good order, was again a very striking feature of these gardens, being much admired by the numerous visitors passing through the grounds.

Throughout the year certain members of the Botanic Gardens and Treasury Gardens staffs have continued to perform watching duty gratuitously on Saturday afternoons to help make good the loss of labour occasioned by the six officers who are away on military service. These officers are to be commended for their patriotic action, which is in strong contrast to that of some of the other employees, who not only abstain from assisting, but have consistently opposed this worthy measure of relief.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

J. CRONIN,

Curator.