

I feel it my duty at this place to state that no less a sum than £22,631 13 3 appears by the books of my Office, to be still due upon previous Land transactions, but many of the original purchasers (I have reason to believe,) have abandoned the land and left the country, and yet their names still remain on the Books and Plans of this Office as having a claim to the land in question. The area covered by their claims cannot be less than 150,000 acres.

In addition to the above quantity of Land, most of which is held in breach of the conditions of purchase, I have to Report, that from Returns made to me, I estimate that no less than 1,600 heads of families have taken unauthorized possession of Crown Lands, comprising an extent of 168,000 acres, which at 3s. per acre, may be reckoned at £25,290.

These two items therefore present the sum of £48,121 upon which but little interest is paid, and only a small portion of the principal to all appearance will ever reach the Provincial Chest.

I am far from wishing to deal harshly with actual Settlers upon the waste lands of the Crown, and I would cheerfully bestow fifty acres upon every man who is or should be willing to become an actual and permanent Settler; but while I would extend this consideration to the bona fide Settler, I cannot think that it is dealing fairly with the man who purchases and pays the whole amount down, agreeably to the Government Regulations of May 1843, to allow unauthorized possession of any extent of the Crown Lands; because it is in fact lowering the value of the Land to him who bought and paid for it according to Regulations, to permit its gratuitous occupation by another who sets laws and regulations at defiance.

It is, I am aware, a difficult question to deal with, but it is equally certain that the longer its settlement is delayed, the more embarrassing will it become.

The great impediment to the due administration and management of the Crown Estate for some years past has appeared to me to have been the dread of incurring expense, because, however judicious the expenditure may be, objections are easily raised, and the measure is condemned before its results could possibly be ascertained; hence, the reluctance of the Executive Government to embark in any general and extensive measures for the amelioration of the Province, as connected with its Wild Lands, and the settlement of the Wilderness, is attributable to the labour of the Squatters, and those few Settlers who are honest enough to pay for the land they have purchased and occupied.

It may be considered as a fact, that this Province presents eight millions of acres of vacant Crown Lands, of unexceptionable quality, fit for Agricultural purposes; and the question has to be determined whether this valuable estate shall be thrown open to improvement by a judicious expenditure of the Public Money in Roads and Surveys through the most eligible tracts, so as to connect distant settlements, and encourage the occupation of the intervening spaces, or whether the mere Squatter shall be permitted to continue, in point of fact, the chief engineer of the Province, for it is undeniable that wherever these poor people settle there the Bye Road Money soon finds its way.

It is right that the poor man should receive all the assistance that the Public Funds are able to afford in improving that home in the wilderness in which he must suffer so many bitter privations; but while the Crown Estate has been given up to meet the expenses of the Civil List, the public at large have a right to demand that those resources should be duly cared for, judiciously developed, and fairly administered for the general good.

It has ever appeared to me to be unreasonable to suppose that a vast estate, comprising an area equal to that of Ireland, can possibly be advantageously and properly managed without the annual expenditure of a considerable sum of money; and experience has shewn that when the expenditure was the greatest, the Revenue was also in the same proportion.