

Victoria.

STATISTICS

OF

THE COLONY OF VICTORIA

FOR THE YEAR 1854.

COMPILED FROM OFFICIAL RECORDS IN THE REGISTRAR GENERAL'S OFFICE.

LAID UPON THE COUNCIL TABLE BY THE CHIEF SECRETARY.

BY COMMAND OF

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR,

AND

ORDERED BY THE COUNCIL TO BE PRINTED,

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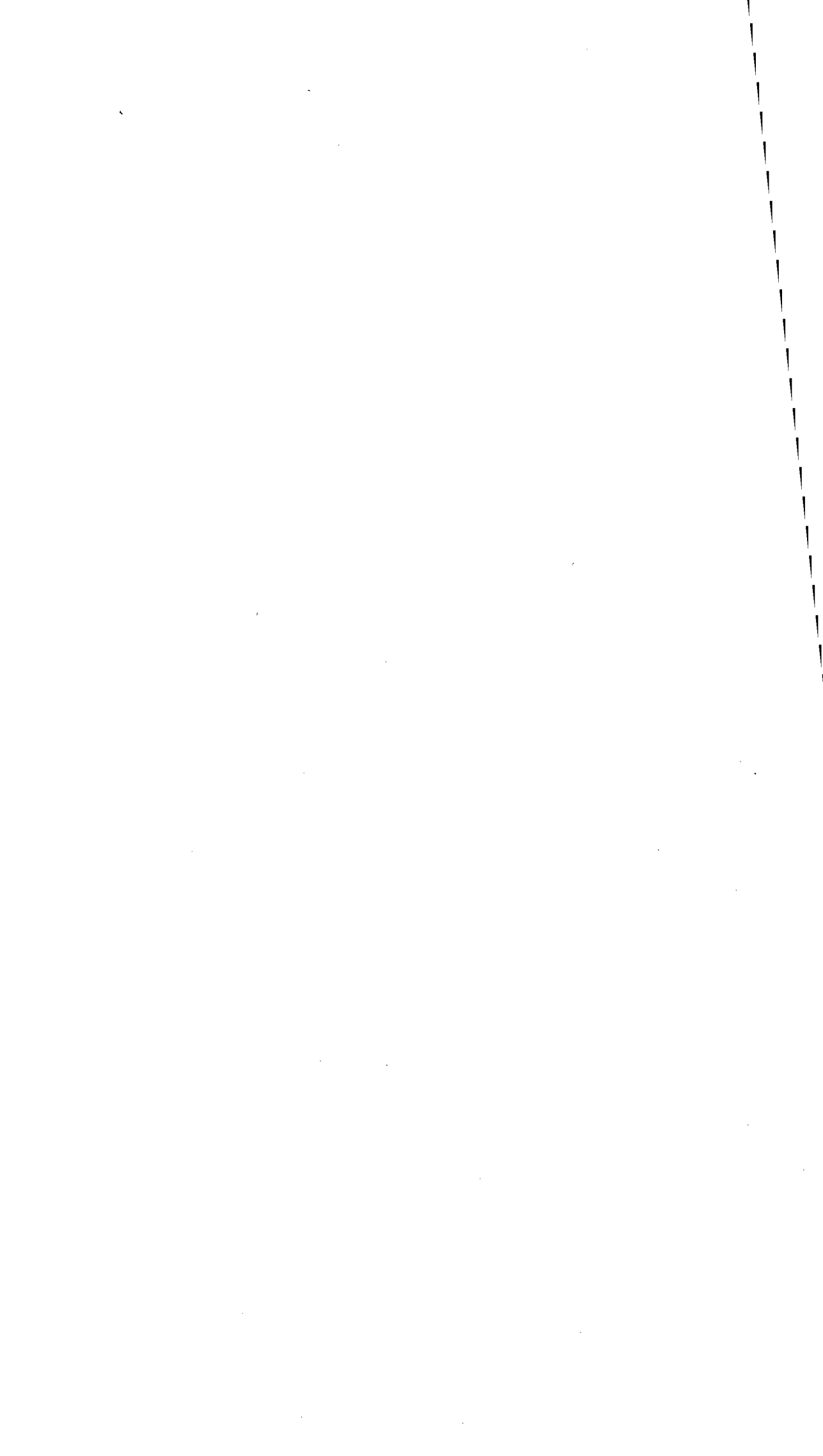


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REPORT OF THE REGISTRAR GENERAL, ENCLOSING THE
ANNUAL STATISTICS OF THE COLONY.

Registrar General's Office,
Melbourne, 22nd November, 1855.

SIR,

I have the honor to transmit herewith, for the purpose of being laid before the Legislative Council, the usual Annual Statistical Returns of the Colony for the year 1854.

2. With a view to the introduction of a more reliable and efficient system of collecting Statistics, His Excellency the Governor, as intimated in my last year's Report, has been pleased to sanction the employment on this occasion of the Deputy Registrars, so far as circumstances rendered their agency practicable.

3. Although I do not venture to assert that this experiment has resulted in the attainment of a complete body of Colonial Statistics, yet it is satisfactory to be able to announce that a commencement has been made in the adoption of a better system, and one which must improve with the experience acquired in each succeeding year. So far as the information respecting Agricultural Statistics has been collected, it may be received as authentic; but it is very difficult to overtake the numerous clearances and settlements which are scattered over the country, frequently, too, unknown beyond their own immediate neighbourhood.

4. It is yet more difficult in many cases to obtain information from the parties who alone are able to supply it, owing to prejudice or misconception of the objects of an enquiry which they deem to be inquisitorial, and it has happened in some instances that not only have gates been barred and dogs unloosed on the approach of the Collectors, but abusive language has been showered upon them, as the supposed precursors of increased taxation. Time, however, and proper explanation will remedy this evil; and it is but fair to state that such obstructions are not peculiar to our rural districts, but have been experienced, so lately even as the year 1854, in one of the English counties, where least of all one would have expected to hear of impediments being thrown in the way of collecting Agricultural Statistics; yet it will be seen by a Parliamentary Paper in the Library of the Legislative Council, that Sir John Walsham, Poor Law Inspector, reports instances where the Boards of Guardians in parts of Norfolk refused to co-operate with him, and other cases where his enquiries met with the combined opposition of the occupiers of several parishes, and that such frequent obstacles were encountered in some of the Unions that it required a good deal of persuasion on his part, and of moral courage on that of the Officers employed, to induce them to persevere in their efforts.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

NORMAN CAMPBELL,

Registrar General.

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary,
&c., &c., &c.

