

Then things went on smoothly, the best gold being obtained on, or almost on, the surface. Everyone seemed to be getting gold at this time, when Messrs. Doveton and Armstrong arrived with fifteen armed black troopers. Their mission was to demand the payment of a digger's licence of 30/- a month the same as in New South Wales (it had been tried previously by the Government, before the people obtained payable gold, and failed.) A mass meeting of the diggers was held at which Mr. Swindells presided when a resolution was passed that the Commissioners be waited upon with reference to the collection of the tax. Mr. Oddie was selected to interview them, and Mr. Doveton promptly told him that they (the Commissioners) did not make the law, but they were administering it and that they would make the diggers pay up. Connor obtained the licence as he considered it better to do so than lose his claim which was an exceedingly profitable one.

Mr. Oddie's hut, which was situated next to some exceedingly rich workings was 20ft. by 20ft. and was made of saplings and calico. From the time the first settlers arrived in 1837 the winter seasons had been getting more and more severe until in 1851 when the month of September was simply awful - so Mr. Oddie found it. His place in the tent was at the end near the door, and he had usually to empty his boots of water before getting into them in the morning. To add to the discomfort arising from the bad weather, they were put on short allowance owing to the difficulty in getting supplies from Buninyong. But they were consoled and compensated by the gold which they obtained.

The population, in the meantime grew apace, and no one knew when the thing would end. Then a report arrived that gold was being obtained in large quantities at Mt. Alexander, and Golden Point was relieved.

Then Mr. Oddie removed to Fiery Creek - as Ballarat so far as the surface workings were concerned, seemed exhausted. His move was a profitable one. One party there obtained 30lb. weight of gold in a month. A stranger arrived from