the men carry onward the improvement of their holdings hand-in-hand with it. The object is so to arrange that when the drainage is done the men shall remain rooted to the soil as the holders of improved allotments and comfortable homes.

The means adopted are simply these: Twice as many men are put on the land as the department employs. Instead of all the men being given continuous work by the department, each settler works for half a month, and then he has to spend the other half improving his allotment.

The wages (6d. to 9d. per yard piece-work) are so scaled that married men are able to earn about £5, or 8s. per day, for the half-month. In that way they need not starve during the other fortnight. The result of this system is that twice as many men are employed as would be were the employés to devote their whole time to the reclamation. Better still, when the reclamation is ended the labourers will be permanently settled on the soil, and they will be State tenants, in a fair way to be self-supporting, instead of workless nomads clamouring to the Government for further aid, as so many of our co-operative labourers do. This alternative system, under which men divide their time between Government work and the cultivation of their blocks, is the one which Mr. Carruthers, of New South Wales, proposes to put in force at Lake Cowal. The only difference is that he means that the men should work alternate months instead of alternate half-months.

How, you may ask, does the Government insure that the men work honestly on their land during their spell off, and do not simply loaf or go to town on drinking-bouts? They do so by sending an inspector round the lots, who has to certify that three pounds' worth of improving work is done on each lot every month. Unless he thus certifies the settlers are not taken back to work by the department. Under this arrangement the men's wives and families are brought out of town and live on the holdings. Moreover, the Government is not obliged to advance considerable sums to each settler, as is the case in ordinary village settlements, as the men are earning subsistence-money during their first year or two of occupation. I do not think that the piece-work arrangement under which the men are paid is as good as your co-operative contract system. Nor do I think that the tenure under which the Koo-wee-rup settlers are holding their lots is as good as our perpetual lease. But those are mere details which there is no need to imitate. Of course, to carry out anything of the sort in New Zealand you would require to choose some public work sufficiently big or difficult to take many months, such as a viaduct, bridge, or tunnel. For the men to be at all comfortable, the work must not extend more than a few miles from their holdings, as it does not do for them to leave their crops or gardens for weeks at a time. But, with this reservation, I cannot speak too highly of the Koo-wee-rup system, as one which we should study, and, where practicable, adopt. I therefore most earnestly commend it to the attention of yourself and your permanent officers.

After seeing Koo-wee-rup, which, I may mention, is about forty-six miles from Melbourne, I made another journey into Gippsland, this time going more than three times as far, in order to see the Sarsfield, Eagle Point, and Raymond Island Settlements. The two first do not differ sufficiently from our New Zealand villages to make it needful for me to describe them at much length. They consist of local unemployed—country people who were out of work. They therefore do not represent any attempt to solve the problem of city poverty, except in so far as they may have kept some of their settlers from drifting into Melbourne. The allotments at Sarsfield, too, are noteworthy for their small size. There ten families are placed on no more than 33 acres of land in all, yet are doing well. Of course the land is rich, is contiguous to a main road (it was once camping-ground for travelling sheep), and is not more than ten miles from a country town—Bairnsdale. Still, fifty souls on 33 acres of land is something unusual. As in New Zealand, the people look to making part of their living by getting jobs outside. They were making good progress, and those I spoke to were confident and hopeful.

I could say much the same of the Eagle Point Settlement, though there both the number of the settlers and the size of the allotments are larger. It is on a narrow tongue of land jutting out into the Gippsland lakes. Nothing could look better than some of the spade-cultivation I saw there. Placed between a river and a lake, the settlers have the advantage of a supply of fish. They reckon also on getting work from their neighbours.

The village on Raymond Island is a fishing settlement. The island is long and low, contains about 2,000 acres, and stands near the sea in the Gippsland lakes. The fishermen have been given land there in order that they may have two strings to their bow, and divide their time between fishing and cultivation. I not only got a good view of their holdings, as the boat steamed slowly past their front gates, but I landed and went into some of the gardens and talked with the settlers. Though not much of the land on the island seemed to be good, there is enough of the better quality for the settlers to grow fruit and vegetables in small gardens, and I dare say the scheme will turn out to be successful. I was told that the fishing in the lake for the last year had been very bad, and one of the men remarked to me emphatically, "We could not have lived but for our allotments." That testifies to the usefulness of the mixed system. Still, as a rule, it is obvious that such settlements should be placed where the fishing can be relied upon. Fishermen are not, as a class, supposed to be fond of working on land, but from the look of their fences, cottages, and spade-work on Raymond Island I should say that these Gippsland fishermen were taking to their amphibious mode of living fairly well. In addition to their allotments they were allowed to run stock over the island rent-free. Generally speaking, the tenure in Victorian village settlements is of the most ultra-liberal kind. The land is appraised at a moderate capital value, and the settlers pay 4 per cent. on it annually for twenty-five years, after which it becomes theirs without further payment of any description. Moreover, the first two or three annual payments are postponed. You will, doubtless, agree with me that our perpetual-lease system is fairer to the State and its taxpayers than this.

My last day in Victoria was given up to a journey to Leongatha. This is not a village settlement; neither is it a labour colony, as it is usually incorrectly styled. The people are not settled