

1895.
NEW ZEALAND.

SETTLEMENT OF THE PEOPLE ON THE LAND

(REPORT ON THE, IN THE COLONIES OF NEW SOUTH WALES, VICTORIA, AND SOUTH AUSTRALIA,
BY J. E. MARCH, SUPERINTENDENT OF SETTLEMENTS).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by command of His Excellency.

Mr. J. E. MARCH, Superintendent of Settlements, to the Hon. the MINISTER of LANDS.

SIR,—

Wellington, 25th June, 1895.

In compliance with your letter of instructions, dated the 22nd April, that I should proceed to Australia and visit the village settlements and labour colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia, inspect them, and obtain all necessary information as to their methods of working and results, and report thereon, I have the honour to state that I left Wellington immediately on receipt of your instructions, and arrived in Sydney, *via* Auckland, on 29th April.

I propose reporting on land settlement in the colonies I have visited in the following order: New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia. But before doing so may I be permitted to state that I have not the least wish to reflect on the methods adopted by the various Governments in their endeavours to promote a better state of things amongst those who have no permanent abode or fixed employment. I only record facts, and I may be pardoned if I occasionally express my individual opinion thereon.

NEW SOUTH WALES.

In this, the mother-colony, very little has been done to settle the people permanently on the soil. It is true that on the 13th June, 1893, an Act was passed to establish and regulate labour settlements on Crown lands, which was amended in 1894. The Act provides for the appointment of Boards of Control to whom the Crown may lease the area set apart for a labour settlement for any term not exceeding twenty-eight years, commencing on the date of the Governor's approval of the lease, with a right of renewal for a further term not exceeding twenty-eight years. The rent of the land is determined after appraisalment by the local Land Board, and is payable annually after the expiration of the fourth year of the lease.

It is provided under the Act that the Colonial Treasurer may, from any moneys voted for the purpose, advance by way of loan to the Board of Control for each enrolled member:—

- | | |
|---|-----|
| (a.) Who is head of a family dependent upon him | £50 |
| (b.) Who is a married person without a family dependent on him | £40 |
| (c.) Who is an unmarried person over the age of twenty-one years, which term shall be held to include a bachelor, a spinster, a widow, or a widow | £30 |

Before making any advance satisfactory proof must be given that the improvements made upon the labour settlement are of a value approximating to the aggregate amount of money previously advanced by the Crown. The term "improvements" with respect to any labour settlement is held to include any live-stock or working-plant the joint property of such settlement.

At the expiration of four years from the commencement of the lease, and each following year, 8 per cent. of the total sum advanced to the Board is charged on the revenues of the settlement, until the amount advanced, with interest at the rate of 4 per cent. per annum, has been repaid.

The Government charge the Board of Control a nominal rent per acre per annum—in the case of Wilberforce Labour Settlement it is 6d.—and the Board may, subject to the approval of the Minister of Lands, grant a sub-lease of any land vested in it to any enrolled member at such rent, and subject to such conditions, and for such term, as it may think fit. The settlers have the right under the regulations of nominating a portion of the Board, which in this case consists of nine members. The settlers nominate four, and the Government appoint five.

Under the powers of the Board, I would draw special attention to clause 7 of the Act, as under: "The Board may establish and manage any trade or industry, and may, by regulation, dispose of and apportion the proceeds and profits derivable therefrom among the enrolled members;

and may, for sufficient cause, disenroll and remove any member from the labour settlement, and may include therein any new member."

Only three settlements have been established—namely, at Pitt Town, Wilberforce, and Bega. The total area occupied by these settlements is 5,140 acres, namely:—

Pitt Town	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Acres.
Wilberforce	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2,150
Bega	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,630
								1,360
								<hr/> 5,140

The number of settlers originally enrolled was 145—namely, Pitt Town, 96; Wilberforce, 35; Bega, 14: total, 145.

The expenditure has been about £8,900—namely, at Pitt Town, £6,705; Wilberforce, £1,540; Bega, about £655: total, £8,900.

The value of improvements, including working-plant, are estimated as follow: Pitt Town, £5,992; Wilberforce, £1,718; Bega, about £600: total, £8,310.

It cannot therefore be said that the settlements are a success financially, and the cause seems to me apparent when the manner in which they were formed and the quality of the soil are taken into consideration.

First, with respect to Pitt Town, some seven hundred men were registered at the Labour Bureau as applicants for land in this settlement, and about one hundred men were selected and sent to occupy an area of 2,150 acres of second-class land. Many of the men had no previous experience, their wives and families were in a destitute condition, their landlords were turning them out of their houses because they were unable to pay their rent, and these men, with their families, were sent to settle on a block of land, a large proportion of which was only fit for grazing purposes. Under such circumstances, how can they be expected to succeed? And this is not all. The Act provides that Boards of Control may be nominated or appointed for the management of these settlements. Unfortunately, the original Board appointed to manage the affairs at Pitt Town was not a success. It is stated that the Board permitted an undue waste of money in the purchase of luxuries. For every shilling spent for bread twice as much was spent for butter, and it is alleged there was extravagance of all sorts. Then, again, it is said the Board did not agree amongst themselves, nor were they able to work together. It is true the Board was composed of men, many of whom had philanthropic views and kindly dispositions, yet, through weak management and internal dissensions amongst themselves, the Board soon became a source of weakness rather than of strength to successful settlement. It is not surprising, therefore, that the members resigned, and the Government appointed a Board, composed partly of Government officers and representatives nominated by the settlers, to manage and control the settlement.

The number of settlers now at Pitt Town comprise eighty-eight men, eighty-one women, and 275 children under fourteen years of age; of the eighty-eight men, seven are single. The Board of Control appoint a Superintendent, who is the responsible Executive Officer for the direction of the works undertaken, and the management of the settlers in relation to their employment. The men are put into gangs by the Superintendent, and work forty-eight hours per week under his directions, and under the co-operative system, they draw for food and clothing goods to the value of 5s. per week for male adults, 2s. for female adults (wives of settlers), and 1s. for each child. The maximum amount must not exceed 14s. per week for families and 5s. per week for single men.

In the building used as a store I observed the following:—

"Notice.—On and after Monday next, the 18th February, absolutely no credit will be given at the store or butcher's shop. Settlers who are short must borrow from each other. George Waite, Superintendent."

If it was necessary to show the mistake of placing a large number of people on inferior land, a better illustration than the above could hardly be given. It is not the fault of the settlers, or that they are idle, as the Superintendent assured me they all worked very well, but in the fact that too many men have been placed on poor land, and consequently it cannot yield sufficient to support the number.

A good schoolroom has been erected at this settlement, and at the time of my inspection 150 children were on the roll, and the average attendance was 120. The master of the school, Mr. A. J. Bennett, informed me that all the children attending belong to the families in the settlement. They are strong and healthy, and their conduct is very good. The school has now been established one year, and is entirely maintained by the Government. It was a very pleasing feature to note that education was in no way neglected, for in addition to the master there is an assistant master, a mistress, and assistant mistress. It was evident that the children were well cared for and carefully taught.

There is abundance of good clay and shale on the land; bricks are made by the settlers, and a brick building 60ft. by 30ft. was in course of erection for religious services.

In order to form a correct opinion of the future prospects of this settlement, I think the views of the settlers themselves are of value. I interviewed several. The first I spoke to was an old Canterbury settler, Mr. H. L. He said, "The co-operative system under which we are working is a failure. The men do not agree amongst themselves, some think favouritism is shown. Many of us remain here in the hope that the Government may do something for us by removing part of our number to better land; there are too many altogether in this settlement to make it a success, when you consider the quality of the land." Another settler, J. C., said, "There are about thirty in the settlement who have known each other over two years, we like the co-operative system, and we are prepared to go together anywhere the Government like to send us, and work under that system, provided the land is fairly good, or we would remain here by ourselves, and we think we could

make the settlement a success. Amongst our number we have farm labourers, ploughmen, bushmen, carpenters, wheelwrights, blacksmiths, sawyers, engine-drivers, and others, we should all work together as we know each other, and the thirty of us could make a good living for ourselves and families."

Prior to my inspection of Pitt Town I had been informed that the settlement was a complete failure. I must confess it is not the success I should like to see it, still there is no reason why it should be a complete failure. In my opinion all that is required is to transfer to better land two-thirds of the present settlers, and I am assured there is a very large area of good land in the colony suitable for settlement. If this was done, and about thirty of the present settlers allowed to remain, the average area for each settler would then only be about seventy-one acres, by no means a large amount considering the quality of the soil. The liabilities, however, in connection with the settlement are large, for in addition to the expenditure already alluded to—namely, £6,705—the Government had advanced to the Board a further sum of £750 for the purpose of carrying on the work. This amount I understood the Board had in hand at the time of my visit, but it will doubtless be expended by the end of June, thus making the total cost £7,455, or equivalent to an advance of nearly £84 15s. per settler.

I have no doubt, however, that should the matter be properly represented to the Hon. the Minister of Lands that gentleman will see that no settler is unduly burdened with debt, as I am convinced the Minister is most anxious to see the settlement eventually a success after the expenditure which has been incurred upon it; and here I might perhaps be allowed to remark that there are other matters to take into consideration in connection with land settlement beyond the mere question of pounds shillings and pence. Think of the 275 children now on the land, surely it would be a fatal mistake for the parents of these children to be compelled to go back again to town life. Pitt Town was an experiment, and all experiments cost money, but wisdom is generally gained thereby, and this lesson is learnt: that in order to promote settlements which shall be financially a success three essentials are requisite—namely, good land, right localities, and an industrious class of settlers.

The settlement at Wilberforce was started on co-operative principles by forty settlers placing in a common fund £10 each. The amount was banked to the credit of the settlement, and operated on by the Board of Control. This money had to be expended before any loan was obtained from Government. An area of 1,630 acres, originally a portion of the Wilberforce Common, was set aside for the purpose of this settlement. The land is mixed bush, in many parts heavily timbered with ironbark, box, and gum.

This being a co-operative settlement, when it was first started a store was erected, and each family supplied from it. Settlers were allowed to draw for food and clothing goods to the value of 6s. per week for each enrolled member, 4s. per week for his wife, and 1s. per week for each child up to the age of fourteen years. From their number the settlers nominated a superintendent, whose appointment had to be approved by the Board of Control, but from the first there appears to have been no check as to whether the men worked or not. Each man did what he thought was right for himself. They had nothing in common, they were taken from the town, sent away in a body, perfect strangers to each other, and it is no wonder they were unable to make the settlement a success; the wonder would have been if they had done so. The Wilberforce Labour Settlement is not now co-operative. The land has been subdivided and allotted to the settlers.

In company with J. J. Paine, Esq., Mayor of Windsor, and other members of the Board of Control, I paid a visit of inspection to this settlement on the 3rd May. The total number of souls is eighty-nine—namely, twenty married men and women, nine single men, and forty children. No school buildings have yet been erected, but there is a school about two miles distant, at which some of the elder children attend.

As a rule, the settlers speak hopefully of their future prospects. I interviewed several. The first I saw was a jeweller by occupation. He said, "I have a wife and seven children, and draw at the rate of 15s. per week for food. I have at present to depend on friends for clothing. I hold 35 acres, but that is not sufficient. If I had 80 acres I think I should succeed very well."

J. G. said, "I am single, and a stonemason by trade; I hold 35 acres, and think I can get on fairly well. I am going to put in fruit-trees this year, and after a little I intend to marry and settle down."

W. R. said, "I am married, and have five children; I am a carpenter, and hold 42 acres, but I am anxious to get a little more. I have only been here three months, but I have 2 acres cleared, a cottage built, and I have made the largest dam in the settlement, it is 16ft. square and 10ft. deep. I am doing very well, and intend to remain here."

L. B. said, "I am married, and have four children; I receive rations to the value of 13s. per week; I make that do with the vegetables, &c., I grow in my garden; I am getting on very well; I have made up my mind to make this my home, and intend to do so. If work and a willing mind can do it, my home shall not be a failure."

J. C. said, "I am single, and hold 45 acres; I have 1½ acres cleared and partly ploughed; I have the materials for a cottage, and intend to settle; I am quite contented, and getting on very well, but if rain came more frequently we should all do much better."

C. R. said, "I am married, and have six children; I am doing as well as I possibly can; I have a cow and pig and ninety head of poultry; my improvements were valued at £115 by the surveyor, and this was all my own work. During the last few months I have cleared 4 acres; I intend to remain here, and do my best."

I think it is evident that this settlement at Wilberforce is more likely to succeed under the present individual effort of working than under the system formerly in existence. Co-operative settlements are all very well, and may be made a great success when all the settlers are known to each other, and when they all agree to work together, but this agreement of working together must be

made by themselves. It is unreasonable to suppose that a number of men, perfect strangers to each other, can be placed on a block of land, and told to work for one common fund, and make the experiment a success. How can they make it a success, when, as a matter of fact, they have nothing in common, and this was clearly shown by the reports of Government officers prior to the land being subdivided. It is stated that one side locked up the tools so that the other side should not use them. There was a dispute as to who owned the cows, and while the dispute was going on the cows were not milked. This was, of course, bad for the cows. However, these disputes are now happily over, and each settler has the opportunity of proving to his neighbour, and to the country generally, that he is an industrious man, and thus help to make the settlement a success financially and otherwise. I firmly believe more good will be done in this way than by any other. For if it can be shown that small settlements may be made a financial success, and undoubtedly it can be, it would be the means of opening up better land in suitable localities for other settlements.

The amount advanced by Government to the Board of Control of the settlement at Wilberforce has been £1,540, and the Board has in hand a further sum of £400, the total cost to the end of June will be about £1,940. The improvements are valued at about £1,718.

As I was anxious to devote some little time at the Labour Bureau, I did not personally inspect the labour settlement at Bega. The number of settlers there is very small. I learnt, however, that the settlement has gone through difficulties and misfortunes which might have been avoided. It is thought that the worst is now over, and that the settlement may yet succeed.

Mr. H. C. Taylor, of the Crown Lands Department, accompanied me on my inspection of the settlements at Pitt Town and Wilberforce, and I am indebted to him for his kindness in giving me all necessary information.

I regret there is not more to report on, in connection with labour or village settlements in the mother-colony.

The Condition of Labour in New South Wales.

Mr. Creer, the Superintendent of the Government Labour Bureau, and his assistant, Mr. Bloxham, gave me every information respecting the arrangements made to meet the "unemployed" difficulty, which in the mother-colony, I regret to say, is very acute. On the day after my arrival in Sydney I saw 653 men at work (levelling sand) in Centenary Park for their food. The men receive rations in return for their labour, but no money. Work is given based on the value of 5s. per day of eight hours. Married men have a full day's work at a time, and those with large families are permitted to work for longer periods. Single men are only allowed to work for three hours per day, they also receive rations based on the value of 5s. per day of eight hours. The following is the scale of work and rations:—

Workmen.	Hours to be worked per Day of Eight Hours.	Allowance.	
		Rations.	Extras.
Single men	3 hours	1 ration	1 tin milk.
Married men with wife only	6 "	2 "	1 tin milk and 2lb. extras.
Married men with 1 child	8 "	3 "	1 " 4lb. "
Married men with 2 children	9 "	3 "	1 " 6lb. "
Married men with 3 or 4 children	11 "	4 "	1 " 7lb. "
Married men with 5 or 6 children	14 "	5 "	2 " 7lb. "
Married men with 7 or 8 children	16 "	6 "	2 " 7lb. "

A ration consists of 4lb. of bread, 3lb. of meat, 2lb. of sugar, and $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of tea; contract price, 1s. 4d. per ration. Extras consist of oatmeal, sago, or rice; cost, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb.

It was a painful and distressing sight to see so many able-bodied men thus employed, for it cannot in any sense be termed profitable employment, as a pair of horses and a scoop would do more work in one day than the 653 men do in two days, and the men must know this. But I was informed that the difficulty was to find any suitable employment near the town for a large body of men to do, and as the work is within the capacity of all men in a fair condition of health, no matter what their previous occupations have been, it was decided to put a proportion of the unemployed on at this work.

In addition to the above number at work, I frequently saw from 700 to 800 men outside the Labour Bureau seeking employment. The Superintendent informed me that there were employed in Centennial Park on relief-works during the month of April 7,735 men, of whom 5,375 were married and 2,360 single. The expenditure was at the rate of nearly £500 per month, and, in my opinion, there was very little to show for so large an amount.

Having since seen what has been done in other colonies to meet the same difficulty by opening up lands for settlement, and the establishment and promotion of labour colonies (which can be enlarged and improved on), I am constrained to remark that those colonies have found a more excellent way in dealing with this important question.

It is not that there is any lack of land in New South Wales suitable for settlement, as I travelled through some very good country, not a great distance from the city, admirably adapted for small settlement. A few sheep are at present in occupation, and thus on the one hand I saw a large army of able-bodied men employed on comparatively unprofitable employment for their food with a larger army at the Labour Bureau seeking work, and on the other a few sheep trotting over

excellent land which would support in comfort hundreds of families. The time will, no doubt, shortly arrive when a Land for Settlements Act will be one of the statutes of the parent-colony.

I must, however, state that much greater difficulties exist in New South Wales in dealing with this subject than in any other colony, and this is clearly shown in the report by the Superintendent of the Labour Bureau of last year. He says, "In addition to the estimated number of thorough professional loafers are a number treading closely on their heels, and who work sufficiently long to enable them to unfit themselves for more exertion by drinking to excess; and there is still another class, principally of younger men, whose only work consists of waiting until others more honest and less cute earn it, and then proceed to fleece them in various ways. I regret to say that this class appears to be on the increase, judging by the large number of such cases noted at the Bureau."

Fossicking.

Mr. Creer informs me that in August, 1893, the Under-Secretary for Mines prepared a minute, showing that a number of the unemployed might make a living on the old goldfields of the colony. This minute was approved by the Minister of Mines, and afterwards by the Premier, with the result that a Board was appointed to give effect to the minute. The Board consisted of the Under-Secretary for Mines, the Chief Inspector of Mines, and the Superintendent of the Government Labour Bureau. The Board met from time to time to consider the best means to adopt, with the view of sending out fossicking parties from those of the unemployed who desired to go, and it is surprising the large number who have taken advantage of this means of obtaining a livelihood.

The mode adopted is this: those desirous of going on the old goldfields apply first at the Mines Department. If the applicant is considered to be suitable he is given a recommendation to the Superintendent of the Labour Bureau, who is empowered to grant a railway pass and a miner's right, and the applicant signs a guarantee to refund the cost when able to do so. Those in destitute circumstances receive, in addition to the miner's right and railway pass, the following stores to assist them to reach their destination—namely, 10lbs. flour, 5lbs. sugar, and $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. tea, costing 2s. each.

During the year ending February, 1895, the number of rations issued to destitute fossickers was 2,320, at a cost of £232.

There is evidence that a large number of these men have succeeded, in the fact that no less than 600 families have been sent to join their husbands, making their homes in different parts of the country, where the opportunity of doing so is easier and better than in the city. Of course, a number of men who have been sent out have done little or no good. Want of means with some, and want of experience with determination and perseverance, with others, have been the chief cause of failure.

Other evidence, and perhaps the best, is in the increase of gold. In 1893 and 1894 the Sydney Mint authorities state that the increase was of the value of £263,086 as compared with previous years, and for the months of January and February, 1895, the increase was 7,000oz. over the corresponding period of the previous year.

I fully indorse the views expressed by the Superintendent of the Labour Bureau in the following paragraph of his report: "Considering the large number of men who have been sent out in this way, many of them thoroughly practical miners, it is but reasonable to expect, and sincerely to be hoped, that some of them may succeed in finding payable fields, and thus be largely instrumental in reducing to a minimum the depression from which the colony is now suffering."

I have, in accordance with your instructions, obtained full details of the working of the Labour Bureau and copies of the various forms used there. It would take up too much valuable time to enter fully into the matter in this report, nor is this the place. I therefore propose to furnish you with a separate report on this subject, and also separate reports on one or two other matters which I have noted in my tour, more especially a training-ship for boys.

VICTORIA.

In this colony an Act was passed on the 31st August, 1893, in consequence of so many people being out of employment in Melbourne, to provide for the establishment of—

1. Village communities.
2. Homestead associations.
3. Labour colonies.

Village Communities.

The Act provides that any land not alienated from the Crown, and not being auriferous land, or lands permanently reserved for any purpose, may be set apart for village-community allotments, and surveyed into areas of from one to twenty acres each, according to the quality of the soil and situation of the land. The Board of Land and Works may grant to any person a permit to occupy a village-community allotment for a period not exceeding three years at a nominal rental (generally about 6d. per acre), and such permit contains conditions as to *bonâ fide* occupancy during such period as the regulation may prescribe, and, at the expiration of the period specified in the permit, the Board may grant a lease of the allotment to such person for a period of twenty years provided that the Board is satisfied that the conditions of the permissive occupancy have been fulfilled, and that such person is a fit and proper person to hold such lease. It is also provided that the Board may cancel the permit if it is found at any time during the permissive occupancy that the occupant is not a fit and proper person to hold a lease under the Act.

Every lease of a village-community allotment contains the following covenants:—

1. For the payment in advance of the annual rent reserved in forty equal half-yearly instalments of the price of the allotment.

2. To repay all moneys advanced by the Board by equal yearly instalments during the currency of the lease.
3. To repay the cost of the survey within five years in ten equal half-yearly instalments in advance.
4. That upon the payment of the last sum due on account of rent reserved, advances, and survey the lessee is entitled to a grant in fee of the land leased.

There are also covenants as to improvements required, to keep in repair all buildings, fences, and other permanent improvements. And there is a condition that if the lessee, his wife, and children be absent from the settlement for more than four months during any one financial year the Board, after giving one month's notice in writing to the lessee of intention so to do, either personally or by posting such notice on the land, may resume possession of the allotment and relet the same to any other person. It will thus be seen that no interest is charged for advances, but that the amount advanced has to be repaid in equal yearly instalments during the currency of the lease, and at the end of twenty years (all arrears being paid) the lessee obtains the freehold.

With respect to village communities, or, as we should term them, village settlements, they differ from those formed in New Zealand in this respect:—

1. Greater assistance is given in Victoria, by way of loan, to enable the settlers to build their cottages, fence, &c. The amount formerly granted was £30 to each settler, but it has recently been increased to £40.
2. Permissive occupancy only is granted for the first three years.
3. The freehold can be obtained after twenty years, provided all amounts due to the Crown have been paid.

The total number of village settlements formed in Victoria under this system (exclusive of Koo-wee-rup, which I will deal with separately) is seventy-two. The number of settlers actually residing was 2,008—namely, married 1,415, single 593, the total, including wives and families, number 6,563, and in addition 418 settlers are improving their holdings, but not residing at present.

The total amount of monetary assistance paid to village settlers to the end of March, 1895, was £23,397 12s. 6d., and the value of improvements effected is stated to be £56,817. The rent under permit is 6d. per acre per annum, but as most of the settlers are still receiving aid very little rent has been paid, the total amount being about £200.

I found on inspection that wherever the right localities had been chosen, with good soil and an industrious class of settler, there the settlements were a marked success; but this is by no means the case with a number of settlements formed in Victoria. The right localities have not been chosen, the soil is very light and poor, and many of the settlers would have done much better if they had first gained some little experience in a labour colony before taking up land on their own account. As a rule, the settlers are a hard-working body of men and women, anxious to establish homes for themselves and families, and speaking generally they appear very contented, and express the hope that they may be able to remain permanently on the land. Of course there is a percentage in many of the settlements who will abandon their holdings, and several have already done so; but taking the settlers as a body they recognise the many advantages they have gained by being permitted to take up land and establish homes under liberal regulations. In many of the settlements I found that on no consideration would the settlers go back to town life again. I noticed also with pleasure the appearance of the children, and there cannot be a doubt but that country life with its pure fresh air and wholesome diet has wonderfully improved their condition; nor is their education neglected, as school-buildings are erected wherever it is necessary, and qualified teachers appointed. In one school I visited in the Bairnsdale district there were seventy children on the roll out of 103 in the settlement, the room was so crowded that a class of twelve had to receive instruction outside under the verandah, but this is to be altered at once by providing additional accommodation.

I interviewed several of the settlers. An interesting case was that of a blind man—quite blind from his youth—at Eagle Point Settlement, Bairnsdale. He said, “I make baskets and cane chairs; we get the willows about eight miles from here; my wife paints or varnishes the chairs afterwards, as I could not do that part of the work. I have a van and horse, and often travel for miles seeking work; my wife drives, and we take our child (aged two years) with us; we live and sleep in the van, but now that I have a bit of land I intend to start poultry farming. I shall put up a good yard and have wire netting so that my poultry shall not be any annoyance to my neighbours. When my poultry-farm is established, my wife will remain at home and look after it, and I shall get a boy to drive me when I go with the van. Now that I have got this bit of good land I have a future before me. I am quite contented because I think I shall do very well, and my mind is easy, as there is now no rent to make-up on a Monday morning.”

Thus it will be seen that even a blind man rejoices and is made happy and contented when placed in possession of a small block of land—a place which he may call “my home,” and have no further dread of the landlord or his agent's footsteps on Monday mornings. If it is so with the blind, how much more will it be with those who have all their faculties, especially that of sight, for they can see the fruit of their labour, and take pleasure in the work of their own hands.

Several of the settlers are devoting their attention to the cultivation of sugar plants, oil plants, and other industries, a bonus for the cultivation of general products being granted by Parliament. Others are engaged in the pork industry, and have made the fences in some of their paddocks pig-proof. Many of the settlers at Raymond Island Settlement devote a portion of their time in fishing: there is always a good demand for fish in Melbourne, and they have no difficulty in sending it to market, or disposing of it when there. The settlers have made satisfactory improvements on their holdings, and are likely to remain there permanently.

The settlers at Sarsfield are all very hopeful and contented, although the area of land they hold does not average more than 3 acres each, but the soil is very good, and the settlers are making the

most of it. One of them said to me, "I am going in for potatoes and onions, I have occasional work some little distance away, I cannot complain in any way, I consider that this settlement business has been as good as £100 to me, and it is my home for life."

Another said, "I have a wife and eight children, I can make half a living for all of us out of my 3 acres, I am very contented, the village-settlement scheme is a great boon to the working-man."

At Newham Settlement several of the settlers are tradesmen, and the following are represented: carpenters, painters, bakers, grocers, &c.; they all seem to be doing very well, and express themselves as being quite contented with their position. I was interested in one case I saw there, that of a party who had seen much better days, a married man with a wife and family. He said, "I was a commercial traveller until I went on my own account and failed, then I took up this land. I was broken down in health by worry, but soon after coming here I recovered my strength and renewed my youth, the climate is thoroughly good, a clear bracing mountainous air. I have cleared with my own hands 3 acres, built my own house, except the brick chimney, you see I have a nice place, and if I can jog along till next harvest I think we shall do very well. I find that a man with a good vegetable garden and abundance of fruit, plenty of milk, with a rabbit occasionally, can do fairly well, and that his other wants are comparatively few. I am contented in every way. I think, however, that a much larger number of settlers would succeed if a little further aid was granted, the amount is now £40, if it was increased to £60 to enable us to get a crop off our land before the assistance ceases we should all do much better."

I interviewed a number of the settlers at Macedon Settlement, Mr. Kavanagh, the officer in charge, states that the number of original settlers was 154, the present number is 115, and probably one-half of these will be permanent as they chiefly comprise young men, the sons of farmers in the district. There are two principal reasons why this settlement has not been a success. In the first place a great deal of the land chosen was inferior, and Mr. Kavanagh informs me that many of the original settlers made no effort to make the settlement a success, they were not the right class and became discontented and left. There are, however, a few good men left at Macedon who have been fortunate to obtain somewhat better land than the general average. One of these, A. J. B., said, "I have a wife and four children, I am a portmanteau-maker, but there is no employment at my trade just now, I think I shall do very well on the land, I am going in for a market garden, and all kinds of fruit will grow very well here." E. C. said, "I am getting on fairly well, only want a little more assistance till we can get a crop off the land. My wife would not go back to town on any consideration, I have a horse and cart, cow, pigs, and poultry, I have nothing to grumble about, I came here to make a home, and intend doing so."

I could multiply these cases if it was necessary, but sufficient, I think, has been said to show that even on a very small area of good land an industrious man can do very well, and is never found in the ranks of the unemployed.

I could also have given the opinions of gardeners, farm labourers, and others accustomed to the soil, who are doing well, but I prefer to give the opinions of men who have not been accustomed to work on the land. Mr. Lardner, of the Crown Lands Department, accompanied me on my tour and gave me much valuable information.

Koo-wee-rup.—I was ably assisted by Mr. Catani, Engineer in Charge, to inspect one of the greatest works now going on in Victoria in connection with land settlement—namely, the drainage and settlement of the swamp at Koo-wee-rup; the area of this swamp is 52,900 acres. The work of drainage was started prior to the depression and was carried out by contract in the ordinary way as a remunerative work. The sum of £87,000 was spent under contract. On the 1st March, 1893, the Butty Gang system was introduced, doing away with contracts, and in May of the same year the village-settlement scheme was introduced by which permanent settlement was promoted and employment given to a large number of men.

The Public Works Department has utilised the expenditure which was sanctioned by Parliament for the reclamation of the swamp as a means of settling the people on the land, areas of 20-acre lots have been surveyed on each side of the drain and in its vicinity. The men are employed for a fortnight on the drainage works and a fortnight on their allotments, thus the work gives employment to double the number of men, than if they were employed continuously.

It is hoped that at the end of three years when the drainage works will practically cease, the settlers will have so far established themselves as to manage without further aid. The present settlers have only a permit to occupy the sections they are now on, but it is understood that at the end of three years (provided they are fit and proper persons) they will receive a lease from the Crown Lands Department and be called on to pay rent. The rent will be equivalent to 4 per cent. on the capital value of the land which is estimated at from £4 to £5 per acre. The value of the land in its natural state is £1 per acre, to which must be added the cost of reclamation about £3 per acre, thus making the total value about £4 per acre.

Two settlements have been established by the Public Works Department, each is served by a main line of railway—namely, the Eastern line which forms the northern boundary, and the Great Southern line which skirts the southern portion of the swamp.

Each settlement is connected with the railway-station by a wooden tramway, and both tramways are about five miles in length. These tramways have been made by the settlers on the co-operative system, they are their own property, and are worked and managed by themselves through an elective committee. The Government contributed the rails (blue-gum, 3in. by 3in.) and paid the wages of two carpenters for about three months. The settlers found the sleepers, which they cut in the bush, and the labour of five men, who worked with the carpenters. The settlers also contributed 1s. per month per man for six months, which sum went to revenue.

Each settlement is managed by an Inspector of Works under the direction of the Engineer for Roads and Bridges, who is responsible for the proper distribution of the work amongst the men in such a way that each settler has the opportunity of earning (by piecework) the amount allowed him

by the regulations, which is as follows: Married men, £5 per fortnight. Those having more than four children are allowed to earn 10s. per month per child over that number. Lads over sixteen and girls over seventeen years of age are not included, as they are supposed to earn their own living elsewhere. Single men are allowed to earn £3 10s. for the fortnight. Married men not having their families in the settlement are deemed to be single. The rates formerly prevailing were: Married men £4 per fortnight, and single men £2 10s.

An inspector of improvements has charge of both settlements, so far as improvements on the land are concerned, and, after the first fortnight's work on the drain, each settler before he is again admitted to work must produce to the Inspector of Works a certificate to the effect that he has done the minimum of improvements necessary on his section—namely, to the value of £2 10s. for the fortnight. On the receipt of this certificate the settler is eligible to continue work on the drain. Instances have been known where men have been kept for three months from work owing to their not having made the necessary improvements, but in these cases generally the men had found temporary employment elsewhere.

The department allow three months' leave of absence in the year to enable settlers to take other work at shearing and harvest time. After an absence of three months without leave a settler is struck off the roll.

Advances in tents, tools, galvanised iron, fencing wire, and seeds of all descriptions are made to the settlers, to be repaid in monthly instalments at the following rate: Balances up to £2,—5s. per month; up to £3,—6s. 6d. per month; up to £4,—8s. per month; up to £5,—10s. per month.

No credit is given over £5, except in very special cases. Arrangements are then made for the repayment of the amount, and a deduction of £1 per month from the settler's wages is always insisted on.

Formerly there was a private store in the settlement, but in consequence of the exorbitant rates charged, the settlers are now supplied through the Government store, at Melbourne wholesale prices, plus 7 per cent. All goods obtained from the store must be paid for in full each month.

The Lands Department during the past five months have utilised a portion of the reclaimed area for village-settlement purposes, the area allotted to each settler is 5 acres, and a number of settlers have been transferred from other settlements, where, owing to the unsuitable nature of the soil, there prospects of success were very remote.

Up to the present eighteen miles of the main drain have been made, the top width is 90ft., and the bottom width one chain, the slopes being two to one, and the depth averages 12ft. The total cost of the works has been £120,000, but, as previously stated, £87,000 had been spent before settlement under the scheme alluded to was instituted, the average expenditure now is £20,000 per annum; nearly the whole of the main channel is completed, and there only remains the secondary drains to make.

The total number at Koo-wee-rup under the Public Works Department is 350 settlers, by far the majority of whom are married. The Lands Department has received 270 applications, and about 200 settlers have been placed on the land, making a total of 550 settlers.

There can be no question as to the value of the land when it becomes consolidated for growing all manner of fruits and all kinds of produce. Looking at the large number of settlers now located on the land, many of them on small areas, there is every probability of several industries being started in the district, which we may hope will give profitable employment to many.

I attach to this report a plan of the settlement showing the areas of subdivision.

Homestead Associations.

Under the Act an association means a combination of persons of not less than six who may be desirous of settling on land adjacent to each other. Blocks of land set apart for homestead associations shall not contain more than 2,000 acres, inclusive of roads, townships, and reserves. The number of persons located in each block shall not be less than one person for every 50 acres of its total area. No settler is allowed to hold more than 50 acres in addition to a township allotment. The covenants and conditions are somewhat similar to those under village communities.

Up to the present the associations formed in this colony have not, I regret to say, been successful.

Labour Colonies.

Blocks of land not exceeding 1,500 acres in extent may be set apart as a labour colony, and vested in five trustees. For the purpose of aiding the trustees, the Act provides for persons subscribing to the funds of any labour colony to elect a committee of management of four members. Each subscriber of £1 or more to the funds of any labour colony has a vote for every pound sterling so subscribed for each member of the committee. The trustees and committee of management establish, maintain, manage, and conduct each labour colony, and appoint and dismiss all officers and servants.

The trustees and committee of each labour colony, with the approval of the Governor in Council, may make rules for such colony for—

- (a.) The collection, spending, and application of moneys;
- (b.) The rate of allowance for work to be paid to persons employed;
- (c.) The cleanliness, good order, and health of the labour colony;
- (d.) The maintenance of order and discipline;
- (e.) The punishment for breaches of rules, provided that no pecuniary penalty shall exceed £2;
- (f.) And generally for the better carrying out of the purposes and provisions of the Act relating to labour colonies.

In the *Nineteenth Century* for January, 1891, there is an able and very interesting article by

the Earl of Meath on labour colonies in Germany. His Lordship says, "Work is a divinely sent antidote for most of the evils of this life, though it may not always cure it seldom fails to alleviate. . . . 'If a man will not work neither shall he eat,' and nature is a stern mother to her children and does not spare the rod in teaching them this wholesome lesson. . . . The Germans have of late years been careful never to separate relief from work, and, in order to render possible the practical enforcement of this principle, have established, under the inspiration and direction of Pastor Von Bodelschwinch, twenty-two labour colonies in the country and two in towns, where men who are really desirous of obtaining work are received and given labour for which they are paid at a low rate, so as not to compete with the open market, after they have earned the cost of their food and lodging. The success which has attended the establishment of these labour colonies is remarkable, and the directors can point to numerous cases where men who had not worked for years have been restored to a sense of the dignity of labour, and have become useful citizens.

"The object of the labour colony, as expressed in its statutes, is to give suitable employment, without distinction of rank or creed, to men who are capable of work, but are without occupation, such work to be temporary, or, as far as possible, to be continued only until some other remunerative work has been found for them, and in order to assist those who are seeking employment to improve their condition. . . . If the work performed by the colonist, after the expiration of ten days, and which is given him by the piece, does not amount in value to the cost of his board and lodging (3s. 10½d.) per week, he is warned, and, if after three warnings his work still falls short of the proper money value, he is dismissed unless some good reason can be given why he has failed to earn the cost of his board and lodging. On the other hand, any money which he earns in the week over and above the 3s. 10½d. is placed to his credit. He receives no cash so long as he remains in the colony, but, as far as his credit will permit, he can purchase from the store, at the cheapest possible rates, almost anything he can legitimately desire. Each colonist is provided with a debtor and creditor account-book showing clearly his financial position; this book is audited weekly, and he is required to certify to its correctness by affixing his signature at the time of audit. On leaving the colony all money to his credit is handed over to him."

The Victorian Government set apart a block of 800 acres of excellent but heavily-timbered land, situated at Leongatha, for the purpose of a labour colony, on lines somewhat similar to those adopted in Germany. I was informed by Colonel Goldstein, the Honorary Superintendent, to whom I am much indebted for very valuable information, that it was the outcome of a public movement commenced in March, 1893, for the relief of the unemployed of Melbourne. A General Council, consisting of about seventy gentlemen, was appointed at a public meeting to direct this new institution. The Council appointed a committee of management, nine in number, five of whom were nominated as trustees, and were subsequently approved and appointed trustees by the Governor in Council. The labour colony was started on the 24th June, 1893.

The duty of the committee, comprising the five trustees and four others, consisted in managing the labour colony under the direction of the General Council, in rendering fortnightly reports to such Council, and submitting to it all questions of policy. Under this system, the General Council decided that the labour colony should be open to all men out of work, irrespective of age or qualification; and that there should be a maximum wage of 10s. per week, with food costing about 5s. more. It is only right to say that very few of the Council had any previous knowledge of the labour-colony system, which necessitates confining wages to a very moderate amount.

Financial disaster was hastened by the fact that the general public took little interest in a movement, the meaning of which was entirely new to most of them. The Government had from the first contributed £2 for each £1 subscribed by the public, and were obliged to make up the deficiency as subscriptions decreased, until in December the General Council decided that the Government must supply all funds, or the colony must be closed. Finally, in February, 1894, the Lands Department took the supervision of the colony into its own hands, and Colonel Goldstein generously undertook its charge as Honorary Superintendent. In company with this gentleman I visited Leongatha and inspected the colony. Of the 800 acres, 600 acres have been substantially fenced and subdivided into ten paddocks. The men have absolutely cleared and grubbed 60 acres, the whole of which is under crop, and much of it has been done by spade-cultivation after ploughing.

The number of men on the colony at the time of my visit was 113. Since the inception of the colony in June, 1893, 1,307 men have been removed from the streets of Melbourne and sent to work on the labour colony. From the register kept there I found that over 360 have had employment found them by means of the Labour Bureau on the colony, and I was informed that employers generally were well pleased with the men sent them. Over 250 have been placed on village-settlements lands, or sent prospecting, or have had work found them by friends, others have left to look for work elsewhere, being better fitted for such by their experience on the labour colony. The dismissals number eighty. It is satisfactory to know, however, that the conduct of the men generally has been very good. The men are told off to work in parties under a ganger, who receives a little extra pay per week. The live-stock comprise fifteen milking-cows, twelve working-bullocks, and sixty-two pigs.

In consequence of the low price of dairy-produce, I understand that it is contemplated by Colonel Goldstein to introduce to the Melbourne public sterilised milk with a view of lowering the high death-rate amongst children. I am told that it is very much used on the Continent of Europe and in some parts of America, and the demand for it is increasing.

With respect to the area of land now cleared at Leongatha, one object in view is to establish an experimental farm, which is said to be much needed in that part of Victoria; or it may be subdivided into small areas, and placed under village-settlement regulations, giving those on the colony, and who are suitable, the first chance of acquiring a little home of their own. I was deeply interested in the work going on at Leongatha, because I saw that the objects were the following:—

1. To provide employment for the unemployed.
2. To enable citizens to direct "unemployed" labour to a place where they can obtain good food and shelter, and a wage according to their ability in exchange for their labour.
3. To prepare them by proper instruction for work on the land.
4. To obtain more profitable employment for all deserving men at the earliest possible moment.

And the methods adopted are,—

1. Good food.
2. Hard work in the open, with abundance of fresh air.
3. Cleanliness.
4. The encouragement of thrift.

The real success of a labour colony depends in a very great measure on the management. At Leongatha the manager, Mr. William Squire, appears to be doing excellent work, and he is able to instruct the men in all branches of husbandry; he has also some very good men under him working on the colony, and who have been sent from the streets of Melbourne. One case particularly came under my notice, that of the bullock-driver, J. H. The manner in which this man handled his team of bullocks was remarkable. I was told he never swore at them, certainly he did not during the time I was there, and I watched him closely for some time extracting stumps by the aid of an appliance locally-made at Leongatha, and known there as the "Forest Devil." (The appliance is very simple and very inexpensive, the cost being a little over £7. I attach to this report a sketch with explanatory notes.) Stump after stump was extracted by four bullocks with the greatest ease. The driver had a whip, but rarely used it. A few encouraging words to the team, and they followed his lead backwards and forwards. One could see the bullocks had been well trained, and that the driver was very firm, but exercised great kindness and forbearance. I thought it an excellent example of the manner in which a labour colony should be managed—namely, by firmness combined with kindness.

I attach to this report a statement of the receipts and expenditure of the labour colony for the twelve months ending 30th June, 1894, together with a copy of the weekly pay-sheet; also form showing work done, goods supplied, &c.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

Considerable progress has been made in this colony to promote the welfare of the people by settling them on the land. In December, 1893, the Crown Lands Act was amended, and provision made for the repurchase of lands for homestead blocks and loans to blockers. Provision was also made for the establishment of village settlements.

Homestead Blocks.

The Act provides that, before proceeding to acquire any land for the purpose of homestead blocks, the Commissioner of Lands shall require every person qualified, and declaring his intention to become the lessee, to enter into an undertaking that in the event of the land being acquired he will forthwith apply for a homestead block, and the Commissioner shall also require such person to deposit with him before the schedule of the land is laid before Parliament an amount equal to 5 per centum of such value. The total area repurchased to May, 1895, for homestead blocks was 3,304 acres, the cost being £17,170, or an average of £5 3s. 11½d. per acre, some of the land, however, cost from £25 to £30 per acre.

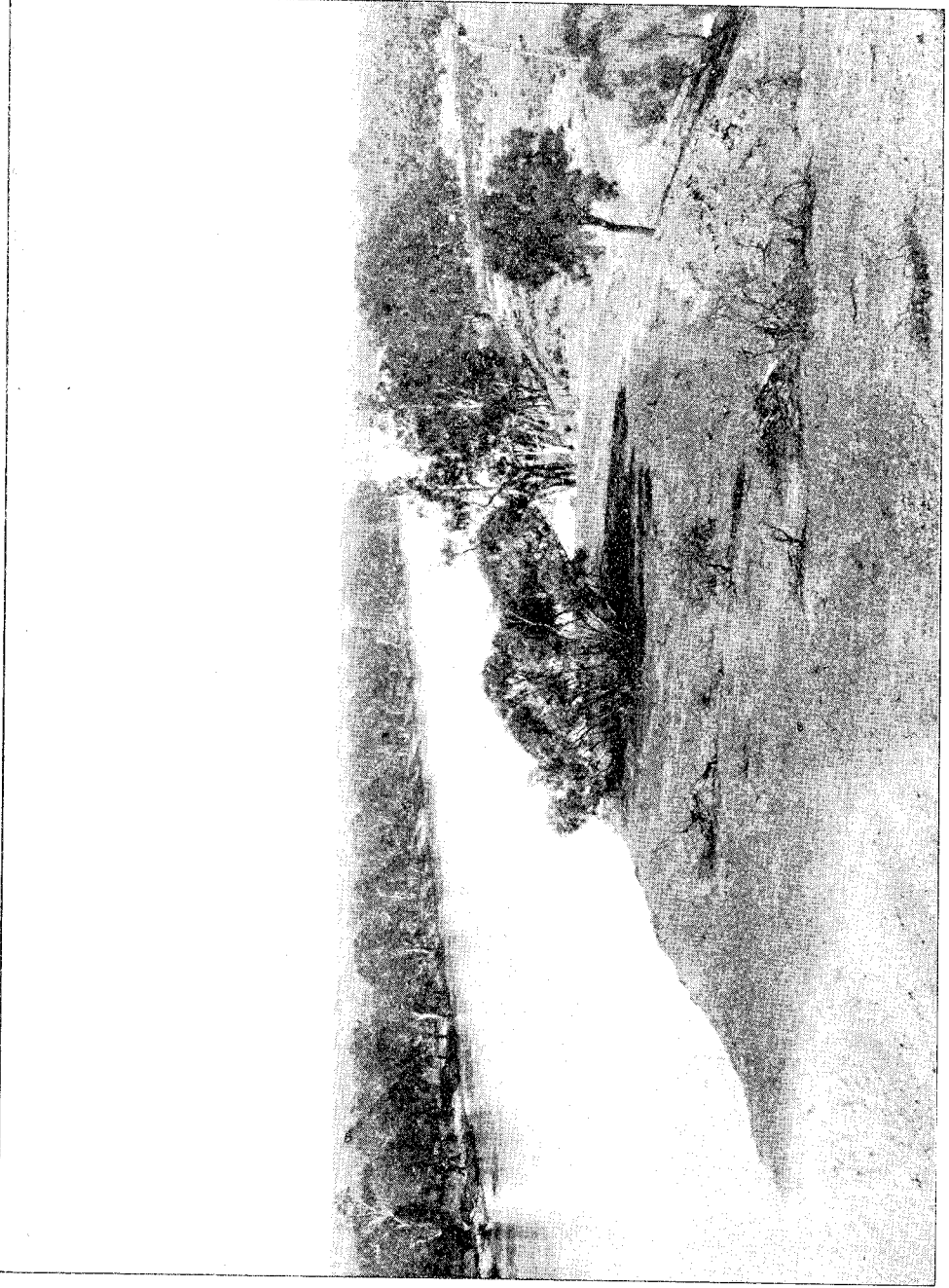
The following return shows the work done in South Australia for the repurchase of land for homestead blocks:—

LANDS REPURCHASED FOR HOMESTEAD BLOCKS.

Hundred.	Area repur- chased.			Cost.			5 Per Cent. on Amount.			Area leased.			Annual Rental.			Per- centage on Cost.	Total Amount of Rent received.		
	A.	R.	P.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	A.	R.	P.	£	s.	d.	About	£	s.	d.
Yongala ..	951	3	35	3,957	17	6	197	17	10	721	0	28	166	13	10	4½	329	19	9
Melville ..	444	0	0	1,021	4	0	51	1	3	245	1	22	44	14	10	4½	101	15	8
Munno Para..	582	3	14	2,900	0	0	145	0	0	536	0	20	148	14	5	5½	256	14	0
Gilbert ..	212	0	0	1,000	0	0	50	0	0	145	2	0	40	7	8	4	58	16	10
Dalrymple ..	164	2	0	411	5	0	20	11	3	90	3	0	11	6	10	2½	12	10	0
Blanche ..	80	0	0	2,000	0	0	100	0	0	71	2	2	95	3	3	2½	132	6	3
Neales ..	400	0	0	300	0	0	15	0	0	378	2	0	19	2	5	6½	19	16	1
Davenport ..	183	0	0	503	5	0	25	3	3	174	0	0	25	19	0	5½	30	11	6
Adelaide ..	80	0	0	2,080	0	0	104	0	0	74	2	0	104	19	7	5	104	19	7
Booyoolie ..	130	1	19	717	0	6	35	17	0	130	0	0	37	4	6	5½	37	7	5
Yatala ..	76	0	0	2,280	0	0	114	0	0	69	1	24	120	18	9	5½	108	13	5
Totals ..	3,304	2	28	17,170	12	0	858	10	7	2,636	3	16	815	5	1	4½	1,193	10	6

The total number of blockers at present is 3,337, representing a population of over 10,000. The total area held under the system is 45,717 acres, or an average of about 13½ acres to each blocker. Near the City of Adelaide the average area is about 5 acres each. The number who hold their lands under right of purchase is 2,857; and on perpetual lease, 480: total, 3,337. The area held under right of purchase is 41,128 acres; under perpetual lease, 4,589 acres: total, 45,717 acres. The annual rent under right of purchase amounts to £3,062 8s. 5d., an average price of about 1s. 5½d. per acre.

The annual rent under perpetual lease is £927 10s. 6d., an average of about 4s. 0½d. per acre.



Village Settlement, River Murray : River Frontage to Gillen.

By "The Blockholders Loan Act, 1891," small advances were authorised to be made to settlers in building or completing their dwelling-houses. The Act has since been amended so as to include other permanent improvements.

Mr. E. Wilson, Inspector of Homestead Blocks, places the blocks under the following classification :—

1. Those around large towns forming homes for men in partial employment.
2. Those in agricultural districts occupied chiefly by men employed on neighbouring farms, and used by the family as their home.
3. Those which provide homes for the families of men whose employment is intermittent, uncertain, often distant, and at no fixed place.

That the system has been a great boon to the working-classes is shown by the number now on the land, and by the satisfactory replies received from the blockers, many of whom only hold a small area of land. Mr. Wilson rightly says, "The system of homestead blocks is destined to show the 'way out' from the deplored congestion of large towns and the dangers to society arising from the increasing difficulty in finding full employment for the industrial classes."

It is, however, very doubtful if the plan of disposing of the land by right of purchase will be beneficial. I am borne out in this by the opinion of the Surveyor-General of South Australia. In his annual report of last year he says: "Homestead Blocks.—In centres of population and in localities where work is obtainable, or the land is suitable for gardening purposes, this system of leasing small blocks is a decided success; but it is feared that giving the right of purchase without some provision that the land shall be retained as homestead blocks will, in a great measure, defeat the object of settling people permanently on the land, as (excepting within a radius of ten miles of the General Post Office, where blocks are only let on perpetual leases) many of the holders will dispose of their blocks to adjoining landowners on expiry of the first six years, when they can complete purchase."

Village-settlement Associations.

The Act provides that any twenty or more persons of the age of eighteen years or upwards may, by subscribing their names to a memorandum in manner prescribed, form an association for the purpose of village settlement. Provision is made for registration, and every registered association is a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal, and the right and liability to sue and be sued. Upon any association being registered, a portion of Crown lands is set apart of sufficient area to provide not exceeding 160 acres for each villager, and all roads and reserves as the Commissioner shall think necessary. Upon any village being proclaimed, a perpetual lease thereof is granted to the association. The annual rent is fixed by the Land Board, but no rent is payable for the first year of the term. Every lease contains covenants on the part of the association,—

- (1.) That after the first six months from the date of the lease, one-half, at least, in number of the villagers shall reside upon and utilise the land in manner prescribed;
- (2.) To pay in advance the rent reserved;
- (3.) To pay all rates and taxes, including land-tax;
- (4.) That every year during the first ten years the sum of two shillings per acre at least shall be expended in improvements on the land;
- (5.) To keep in repair to the satisfaction of the Commissioner all improvements erected or made upon the land;
- (6.) That the land, or any part thereof, shall not be sublet or disposed of to any person other than a villager.

The Act also provides that no lease shall be capable of being assigned, mortgaged, or encumbered in any manner whatever.

Advances.

Advances out of any funds provided by Parliament may be made to registered associations, not exceeding in the aggregate to any one association the sum of £50 for every villager, and not exceeding one-half the cost to the association of the improvements thereon. Such advances may be made for the purpose of providing tools or materials, or making payment for improvements. All advances are to be repaid by ten equal annual instalments, with interest computed at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum on the moneys for the time being remaining unpaid. The first instalment is payable at the expiration of three years from the date of the advance.

Management of Village-settlement Associations.

Subject to the Act and to the rules, the affairs of every association are managed by a Board of not less than three trustees (one of whom shall be chairman), to be elected by the villagers in manner prescribed by the rules. The moneys owing for advances by any association is the first charge on the assets of such association in priority to all other creditors. The villagers are jointly and severally liable for the due repayment of all moneys advanced by the Government for the purposes of the association, and for the due observance and performance on the part of the lessees of all the covenants and conditions of the lease.

Rules for Village-settlement Associations.

The rules of every association provide for the management of its affairs for the common benefit of the villagers upon principles of co-operation and equitable division. Such rules are not to be acted upon until after they have been submitted to the Minister of Lands, and his approval in writing has been indorsed thereon; and they are to be laid before Parliament within fourteen days of such approval, if Parliament be then sitting, and, if Parliament is not sitting, then within fourteen days from the first meeting of Parliament; and if any rules are disapproved of within fourteen days after being so laid before Parliament, by a resolution of both Houses of Parliament, the rules so disapproved shall have no force or effect after such disapproval.

What is being done.

To the present Government of South Australia belongs the credit of initiating one of the most interesting systems of land settlement I have yet seen. It is an entirely new departure, not only in land legislation, but also in assisting the unemployed, and endeavouring to provide a permanent cure by utilising land with unutilised labour. To lift, as it were, from the streets and by-ways of a city an army of men, women, and children, many of them comparatively quite destitute, place them on land, which by irrigation can be made most productive, assist them to accomplish this by aiding them to obtain the requisite plant and machinery, and further assist them to establish homes for themselves, each villager working for the common benefit of all, upon principles of co-operation and equitable division of labour and profits, is certainly a great and noble work, and this is what is being done by the Government of South Australia, ably assisted by many philanthropic ladies and gentleman of that colony.

The scheme has, of course, been ridiculed, and there are those ever ready to predict failure when the proposal is to place men on the land, and show them how to make a living from it for themselves and families. It was said the result would be sure to be a failure; but up to the present it has not been so. It is true that a number of the original villagers have left, but the number is comparatively small. It was only natural that a certain weeding-out process should take place soon after the settlements were formed, but I have reason to believe those who are now on the land will remain. These villagers have ventured forth in faith, being firmly of opinion that if they work zealously together they have a great future in the land they occupy. That the soil is marvellously productive when irrigated there can be no doubt. This was fully borne out by Mr. Glyde, for many years a resident in Canterbury, and now Chairman of the Fruit-growers' Association, Mildura, who I had the pleasure of meeting. He informed me of the case of a settler, resident in the Murray District, and on similar soil to that in the village settlements, who had cleared, after planting four-and-a-half years, from $9\frac{1}{2}$ acres of fruits (chiefly raisins) £24 per acre. Another settler obtained 24 tons of raisins from $13\frac{1}{2}$ acres, after four years' planting. The average price he obtained was 3d. per lb., equal to £28 per ton, or £672 for the crop.

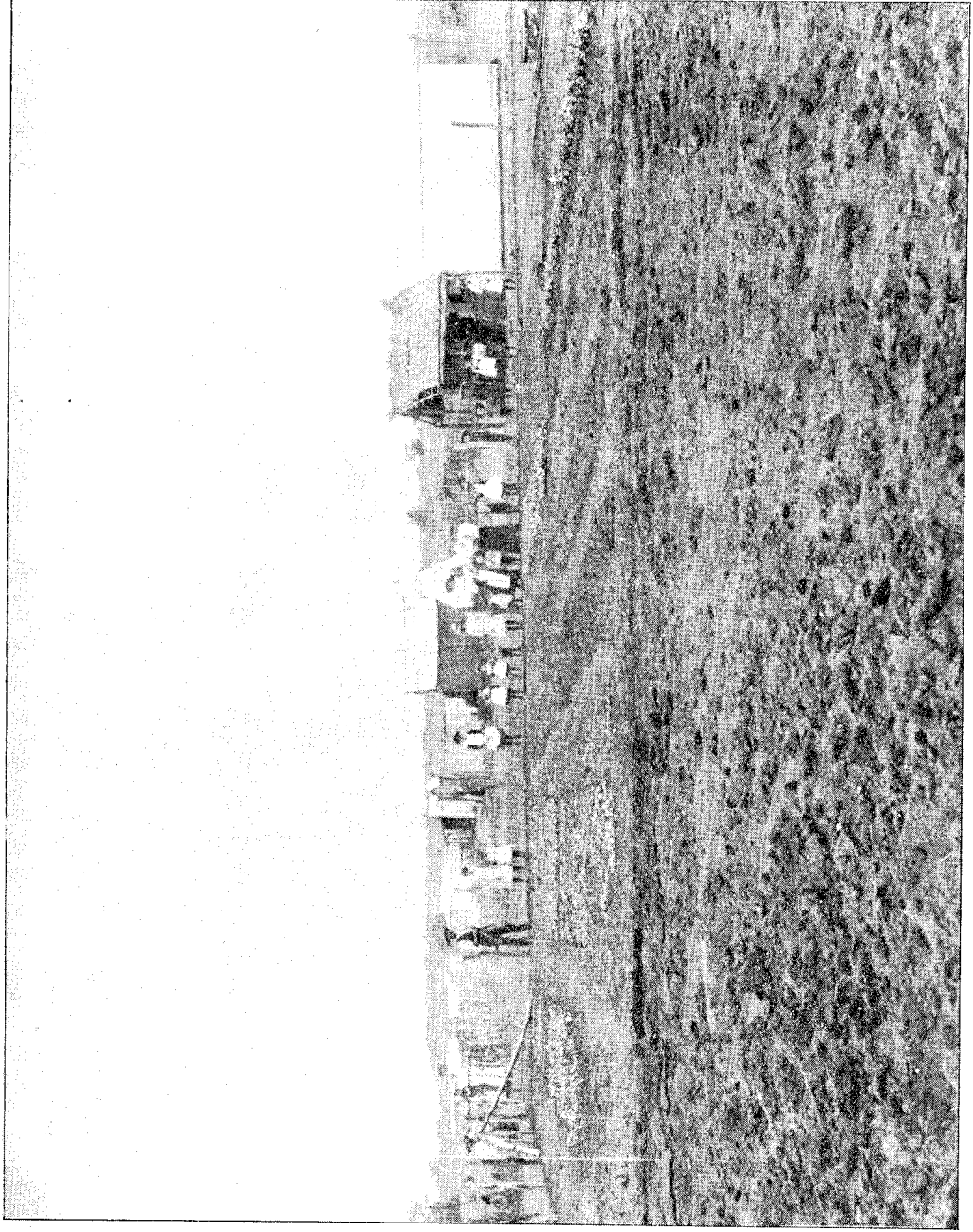
Thirteen settlements are now established under the Act, composed of 470 settlers, who have signed the prescribed memorandum of association. These, with their wives and families, represent a total of 1,935 settled on the land. Eleven of the settlements are on the banks of the river Murray, and shown on the lithograph attached. There is also one at Mount Remarkable, to the north of Adelaide, and one at Nangkita, to the south. The number of settlers on the Murray, including wives and families, is 1,679.

The total area held by the village settlement associations is 67,191 acres. The tenure is perpetual lease, at an average rental of nearly 3d. per acre per annum. Advances made by Government on behalf of the settlements, as provided by the Act, being 50 per cent. of the value of improvements made by the villagers, amount to a total of £15,974 17s. 7d. to 31st May, 1895, equivalent to an advance of £25 2s. 2d. per settler.

The following return shows the position of the eleven settlements on the River Murray:—

Name of Settlement.	Area.	Original Number of Villagers.	Present Number.			Total Number.	Horses.	Cows.	Sheep.	Pigs.	Poultry.	Working Bullocks.
			Men.	Women.	Children.							
New Era ...	2,095	22	22	22	54	98	9	19	150	26	200	...
Gillen ...	9,990	65	30	30	73	133	4	6	160	12	150	8
Ramco ...	2,240	14	15	3	4	22	4	10	200	...	...	...
Waikerie ...	3,082	36	30	24	80	134	2	2	150	...	...	...
Holder ...	7,540	71	54	43	183	280	23	7	50	32	...	...
Kingston ...	4,800	25	25	21	65	111	13	10	125	27	...	...
Moorook ...	3,200	21	18	17	45	80	4	2	25	...	...	...
New Residence	4,000	20	14	12	49	75	4	2	25	2	...	...
Pyap ...	10,530	90	75	70	255	400	15	37	500	20	200	8
Lyrup ...	14,060	70	85	55	165	305	37	13	600	40	400	...
Murtho ...	2,000	20	13	7	21	41	9	10	100	6	...	...
Totals ...	63,537	454	381	304	994	1,679	124	118	2,085	165	950	16

To assist the Government in its laudable efforts to solve the problem of the unemployed difficulty, a "Land Settlement Aid Society" was formed in South Australia, and Mr. T. H. Smeaton (formerly of Christchurch, Canterbury) became its energetic and enthusiastic secretary. I have before me a copy of the first annual report of the society, and I gather that all classes have combined to help, "from the squatter, who with princely liberality sent his 1,000 sheep as a token of his sympathy, down to a contributor who, as 'Wage-earner,' sent his packet of cornflour and sugar, with the prayer that it may assist a brother or sister in want." The report says: "A noble response from the public has been given to our efforts. Assistance has been cheerfully rendered by many who had no faith in the political or social aspect of the question, and many helped from sympathy with the movement itself. We must most especially mention the splendid work done by the ladies of Adelaide in connection with this society. That our work has been of considerable service to the Government we know, but it gives us great pleasure to state thus publicly that the Government have also very cordially recognised the fact, and have, whenever possible, helped us in our arrangements. When it became apparent that the quantities of goods and stock of various



Village Settlement, River Murray: Moorook.

kinds which were contributed by friends in all parts of the colony would absorb more than all our funds for railway transit, the Government with wise thoughtfulness granted us the privilege of forwarding all gifts to the settlers free on the railways. This concession, we are assured, amounts to well on £1,000 in value. . . . It would be impossible to particularize the many gifts which have passed through our hands, nor the very kind donors of them; but roughly speaking there have been 2,000 sheep, 40 horses, 100 cows, 500 bushels of wheat, a great variety of agricultural implements, harness, and tools of all sorts. . . . As to the future, we can see that the work of this society, so far as the settlements are concerned, will be absolutely necessary for another year at least. When their need ceases so will our work. From the personal observation of some of your committee of the work achieved by the settlers in their first year's work, we are encouraged to believe that our efforts and the efforts of the public to assist them are amply justified."—I may be allowed to add that the Rev. J. Berry, one of the Vice-Presidents, was in the chair at the annual meeting. The rev. gentleman takes the deepest interest in these settlements, and a very interesting article written by him on the subject appears in the *Review of Reviews* for April last. The settlers have also a very kind friend in the Rev. Corley Butler, who goes amongst them and does his utmost to promote their welfare.

It would, of course, be premature to say that the problem of the unemployed difficulty has thus been solved, and that hundreds of men, women, and children can be placed on the soil, and, after certain assistance has been granted them, thrown on their own resources, and then they can make a living from the land. This much however may truthfully be said, that the settlers are going the right way to accomplish the object of making a living by their own resources, and if they continue in this way they are sure to succeed. I fully agree with the report quoted above, that further assistance for at least another year will be required, not only from private sources, but from the State, and then I see no reason why the settlements should not be self-supporting. And here I may remark that it is unreasonable to suppose that large blocks of land can be made reproductive in one year. A longer period is required and necessary, and more especially is this the case where the land wants irrigation. Again, on many of the settlements the land was pretty heavily timbered, and it was no easy task to fell and grub the gum, box, and pine trees growing thereon; a portion of this work has been done, and throughout the settlements over 4,100 acres have been cleared, and a large proportion of the land cultivated.

If a stranger inspects the work already done on these settlements in the short space of fifteen months by men, many of whom were not brought up to agricultural pursuits, and observes the amount of land they have cleared, grubbed, and brought under cultivation, their pumping machinery and plant in full working order, the quantity of different kinds of fruits planted, such as apricots, almonds, figs, lemons, muscatels, mulberries, olives, peaches, plums, prunes, quinces, strawberries, vines, and Zante currants, their brick-kilns, drying-kilns, lime-kilns, and other works and industries established, and then notes all the settlers fully employed working under the direction of one of their own number, elected by themselves, he must admit that it is most gratifying, and a scheme that should command success.

The opinion of the villagers themselves is also very encouraging. I interviewed several. One said, "We are very comfortable and getting on nicely. The Government Inspector (Mr. Inglis) comes round once a month, and the trustees give him an account of the work done since his last inspection; they also put on what they consider a fair valuation for these improvements. The Inspector examines each piece of work; if the valuation is fair it is passed by him; if he thinks it incorrect he makes inquiries, and the matter is adjusted. We are allowed by Government 50 per cent. on the value of our improvements, consequently the more we do as a body the more we get; we find it better to work together; no man could do much good here working by himself, as it costs a large sum for pumping-machinery; the one we have cost over £800. We have been ably assisted by the public; and Mr. Smeaton (Secretary of the Village Settlement Aid Association) has been most kind to us. The Government allow each settler £50, and when that is exhausted, the settlement is supposed to be self-supporting; but I doubt if it will be; perhaps if the Government see we are doing our best, we may be allowed a little more." Another said, "We have thirty settlers—twenty-four married and six single; there are also eighty children, making the total number of our village 134. Our machinery will raise 38,000 gallons of water per hour, 150 feet up the cliff to the delivery channel; we have plenty of stone on the settlement, and thus some of our buildings are more substantial; then we have a large quantity of timber, at present we have pit-saws and sawpits, but we are going to erect a mill to be driven by the pumping-engine, which is 20 horse-power. We do not expect to make a fortune; we shall be perfectly satisfied if we make a good home and food for ourselves and families. The women and children are contented and happy. The village is laid out as a square, with streets one chain wide; each member is allowed one half-acre to erect his cottage and make his home. It is a great boon to us to have no rent to find on Monday mornings."

I was fortunate to meet the chairman of the trustees at Lyrup, who showed me over the settlement and gave me much useful information. This settlement is without doubt the most prosperous of any. It was started on the 22nd February, 1894. The full membership is 100, the number at present is eighty-five, of whom fifty-five are married and thirty single, and the total number of men, women, and children is 305. Villagers are supplied at the cost of the association, so far as the assets will permit, with necessary food and clothing at a fixed scale in proportion to the number and ages of each family, and also with medical attendance and medicine. In addition to the rations, each member when at work receives a coupon of—at present—to the value of 6d. per day, paid by the association, the whole or any portion of which may be exchanged at the store for goods available—tobacco, gunpowder and shot, extra sugar, &c., not included in the scale of rations; any portion of such coupons not exchanged being placed to the credit of members whose names they bear. The credit balances of coupons is a first charge on the profits of the association, but not payable until the financial position of the association enables it to declare a dividend. No villager

can at any time acquire a share or interest greater than that of any other member in the property or profits of the association. The interest of any member who may by old age, unforeseen illness, or accident, become incapacitated for work, is not affected thereby.

"The affairs of the association are managed by a Board of five trustees, elected annually at the annual general meeting of the association from amongst the members of the association, and hold office until their successors are elected. All important decisions of the Board have to be referred to the members of the association for confirmation: decisions, for instance, such as for any outlay exceeding £50, to erect any permanent buildings, or undertaking any particular work, &c. Any resolution carried by a two-thirds majority of the members has to be enforced by the Board. It will be seen from this that the trustees do not govern the association, but their duty is to see that the wishes of the majority regarding the working of the association are duly carried into effect.

"For certain offences specified in the rules a member would become liable to expulsion. The Board, upon complaint made by any member, or upon their own motion, would serve a notice on such villager stating the charge against him, and requiring him to appear before the Board at a certain time (not being earlier than seven days after the service of the notice). The Board would then investigate the charge at the time and place appointed, and, should the members be of opinion that the charge was sustained, the villager would be expelled, and a notice to that effect under the seal of the association served upon him; but he can, within seven days from the receipt of this notice of expulsion, lodge with the Board a notice that he wishes to appeal to the association. The Board would then have to convene a special meeting (giving not less than seven or more than fourteen days' notice) to hear the appeal. The meeting by a majority of votes may confirm or annul the expulsion.

"Besides other meetings which may be called as provided by the rules, a general meeting has to be held on the first Friday in every month, when the Board submits a progress report of the last month's work, and also a schedule of the work they propose to do during the coming month; this is discussed, and a majority, should they see fit, may alter or amend the plan of work for the ensuing month. At this meeting all correspondence and minutes of Board meetings are read, so that all members may be fully acquainted with the business of the association. The names of all trustees voting in favour of and against the various motions at Board meetings are recorded and read out, whereby members are enabled to see how all the trustees are acting, whether to their satisfaction or not.

"The area of land cleared and grubbed at Lyrup is 800 acres, and 250 acres have been under irrigation during the past season. We have one 8 horse-power portable engine (Marshall's), a 6in. centrifugal pump which throws 600 gallons per minute; close by is the saw-mill, with a circular saw worked by the same engine. We have constructed one half-mile of flume of galvanized corrugated iron, and four miles of main channels, besides smaller channels and head ditching. We planted out, last season: 40 acres of vines, chiefly muscatels; 9 acres of peach trees (Early Crawford, Lemon Cling, and Lady Palmerston); $6\frac{1}{2}$ acres of lemon trees (Lisbon); 4 acres of apricot trees (Morepork and Pennant Hill); 2 acres of fig trees; 1 acre of prune trees. We have a large nursery, from which many thousands of trees and vines will be planted out this season; nearly a ton of fruit-stones were put into the nursery this year, also 100,000 cuttings for wine grapes, and we are going to put in a large quantity of orange and lemon pips.

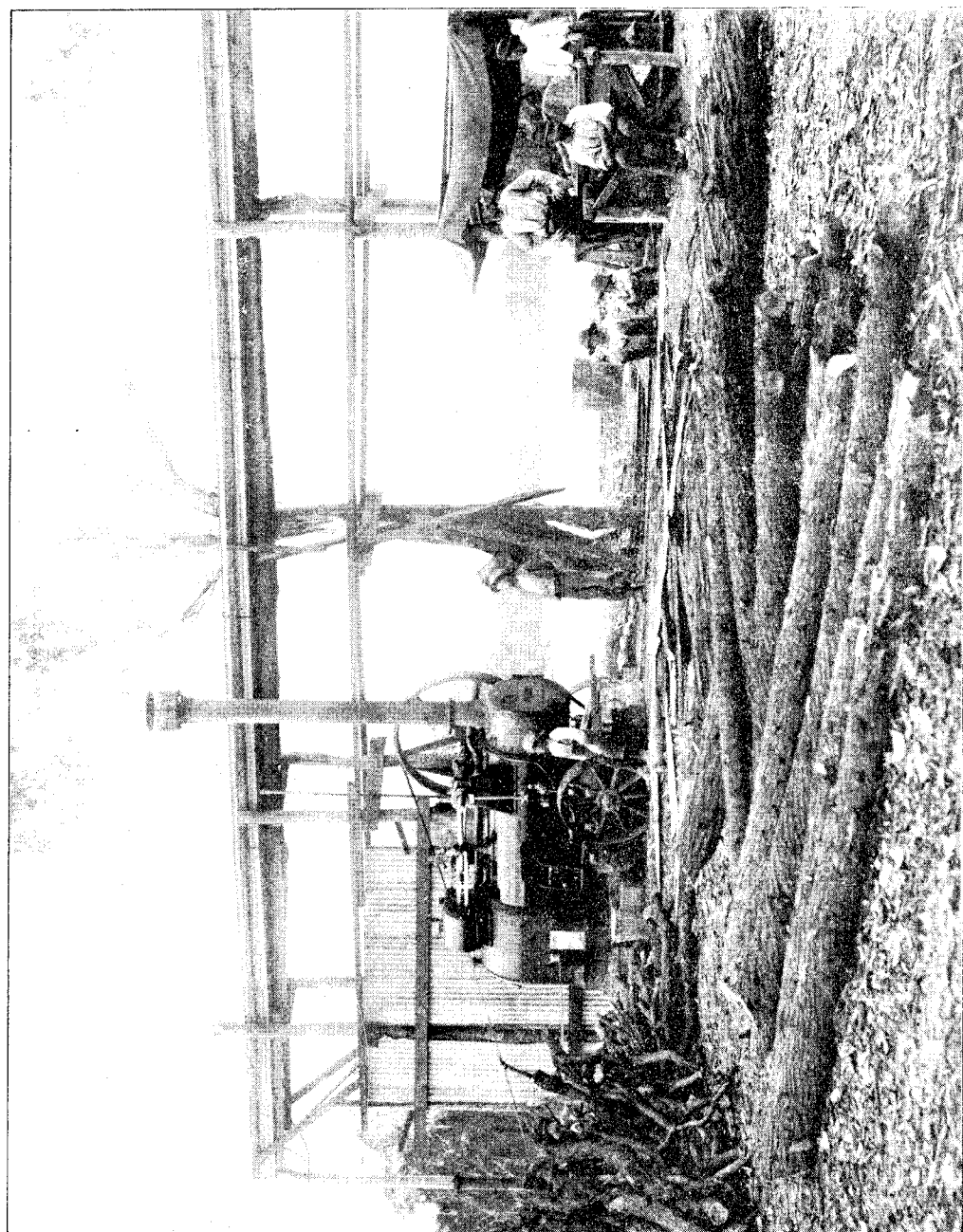
"We are still busy planting wheat, and by the time we have finished we shall have from 500 to 600 acres in. We have from 8 to 9 acres under vegetables of various kinds, besides 30 acres in potatoes and 2 acres under onions, also a few acres of sorghum. We have one acre set apart for experimental purposes, having established a branch of the Agricultural Bureau at Lyrup. We have tried a small quantity (100 plants) of tobacco, which we found came on remarkably well. Altogether, by the end of this planting season we expect to have 800 acres under cultivation.

"We have a large brick-kiln capable of burning 32,000 bricks at a time, and a large drying-shed to dry as many as 40,000." (The bricks being turned out are of excellent quality, and at the time of my visit they were being used in the erection of the school building, which is 85ft. over all in length, by 30ft. 4in. broad and 16ft. high). "We have surface lime-stone from which we are burning very good lime, and we are also making some very good sand bricks.

"Our permanent buildings are the school already mentioned, a butcher's shop with work-room, and a large cellar for curing, &c.; the baker's shop is a red-brick building, where all the bread is baked for the village; a galley, built of sand bricks, where meals are prepared for single men. Most of our houses at present are built as follows: We obtain corn-sacks, cut them open, then sew them together, put up the framework of the building with sawn timber from the mill, then tightly stretch and tack on the sacking, this is whitened inside and outside with lime-wash mixed with a small quantity of sugar or soap to make it adhere and not wash off with the rain, the lime fills up all the small holes in the sacking; the roofs are of galvanised iron. We find the houses very warm and comfortable. Of course they are cheap and very quickly run up. After a time, and as we get on, we hope to erect more substantial buildings."

[I was very pleased with one case which came under my notice on inspecting this settlement. A poor woman (the wife of one of the villagers) became ill, and was sent to the hospital at Adelaide. Unfortunately she did not improve in health, and as the medical officers at the hospital could do nothing further for her, she returned to her own people at the village. The Board at once decided to place her in more comfortable quarters than the building she was living in, and accordingly a nice brick cottage was erected for her, where she now resides with her husband and family.]

"We also have a wheelwright's shop, a blacksmith's shop, and shops for the tinsmiths and carpenters, and a temporary-built boot and shoe shop. In implements we have a 4-horse-power gear for chaff-cutting, a mowing machine, a corn-crusher, a corn-sheller, four scarifiers, three buck-scrappers, seed-sower, ten ploughs, including single- and double-furrow and one treble-furrow, stump-jumper, &c.



Village Settlement, River Murray: Lyrup Pumping Station.

"In live-stock we have thirty-seven horses, thirteen cows, one bull, twelve calves, forty pigs, and 600 sheep. Many of these things were presents to us from kind friends who were desirous to give us a start in life. The vines you saw planted out were obtained from Messrs. Chaffey Brothers. Several of the villagers went to work for them, but in lieu of their wages being paid in money they preferred to receive the value in vines, &c."

In closing this account of the settlement at Lyrup, I think I cannot do better than quote, from an interesting report on these settlements in the *South Australian Register*, a portion of the Hon. C. C. Kingston's address to the villagers, on the occasion of his recent official inspection. The Hon. the Premier said:—

"The Government have done what they could, not to temporarily meet the demands of the unemployed, but to provide a permanent cure for the problem. Unutilised land and unutilised labour were a double waste. He was abundantly pleased at what he had seen at Lyrup. He was of a fairly sanguine disposition, but he was surprised to see the good results they had achieved. He now had greater courage and confidence in village settlements than he had previously possessed. Seeing was believing, and he saw a magnificent estate and a number of hard-working settlers doing their best to improve it. He saw what had been regarded as a worthless bush cleared and cultivated, water applied to it, and trees and vines growing in a way that could not be beaten in any part of South Australia. In future he should decline to argue with critics of the village settlements. He should tell them, 'Go and see for yourselves. If you have any doubt it will vanish into thin air when you go to Lyrup.' They had done well; he hoped they would do better. From strength to strength go on, let not what they had accomplished be a vain and feeble augury of what they might do in the future. He hoped they would value their estate. Some people said State Socialism was a bad thing, but he said they had every reason to be encouraged with that form of State Socialism, if they chose to call it so, which existed at Lyrup."

The Hon. P. P. Gillen, Minister of Lands, also addressed the villagers, and reviewed the circumstances which had led to the establishment of the settlement: "They had been told that the Village Settlements Bill was a 'fad.' That it was cruel to send a lot of men, women, and children to the Murray, because starvation alone awaited them there, and that they would be back again in the city in three months. He had not seen any hungry people on the Murray yet. For the next two years, of course, the people of Lyrup would have a hard fight, but he believed that the harder the fight the better would be the work. He wished to tell the temperance party that these settlements provided one of the greatest movements in the interests of temperance that the colony had ever witnessed."

To those in New Zealand who take an interest in village settlements, the above remarks from two very able men are, I think, most encouraging. I could give the opinion of many other villagers; they are all hopeful, and a spirit of general contentment reigned amongst them. One settler said, "We do not aim at being rich; we hope that the wool from our sheep will find us in money to buy our clothing and boots, and we can grow on the land sufficient food for ourselves and families."

Another said, "I am getting on splendidly, could not wish to do better; have been here from the start, having assisted to select the land; our motto is 'all for each, and each for all,' and we must ever keep that in view. We have only to pull together for the first few years and then I am certain the settlement will be a success. There will be a little income from this out; but we have to gain experience and strike the season for the best crop: onions, for instance, if we can get a good crop in September we can get a ready market for them, potatoes and other things in the same way; we shall shortly be able to supply Renmark with all the vegetables required there, and we hope to open up other markets."

Another said, "We estimate the value of our assets over our liabilities last January at £43 per member; a man now joining would have to pay our association £43 and take his share in the liability. If he had not the money in cash, he could bring any kind of stock or useful farm implements, and their value would be placed to his credit. If he had no money or means, by a vote of the majority of the members in his favour he could join, and the £43 would be a first charge on any dividend coming to him."

I think the main reason why there is that spirit of contentment amongst the village-settlers on the River Murray, and also amongst other small settlers wherever they have been placed on good land, is this: they feel they have now a stake in the country, and that by industry and perseverance they can establish homes for themselves and families; and they set to work to do so with a right good will.

I send forward with this report a number of photographs of the settlements on the Murray, kindly given me by the Hon. J. A. Cockburn, Minister of Agriculture and Education. These views will be found most interesting, and clearly indicate the good work going on and the progress the settlements have made.

My work of inspection is over, but before leaving this subject I desire to express the deep sense of gratitude I feel to those members of the Government of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia, to whom I had letters of introduction, and who so kindly and ably assisted me in the duty I was instructed to undertake. To the Premier of South Australia, the Hon. C. C. Kingston, to the Hon. P. P. Gillen, Minister of Lands, to the Hon. J. A. Cockburn, Minister of Agriculture and Education, my thanks are specially due.

I desire also to return my sincere thanks to the Hon. R. W. Best, Minister of Lands, Victoria; the Hon. H. Foster, Minister of Mines; W. Davidson, Esq., Inspector-General of Public Works; M. Callaman, Esq., Surveyor-General of Victoria; and Colonel Goldstein, honorary Secretary of Leongatha Labour Colony, Victoria, for the courtesy and consideration I received at their hands.

I also sincerely thank the Hon. J. H. Carruthers, Minister of Lands, New South Wales, and the Hon. J. Gerrard, Minister of Public Instruction, for their kindness.

I am also deeply indebted to the officers of the Crown Lands and Survey Departments, and to

the officers of the Public Works Departments, of the colonies I visited, for much valuable information.

My best thanks are also due to T. H. Smeaton, Esq., Secretary of the Village Settlement Aid Association, F. Duffield, Esq., Adelaide, and to A. R. Mursell, Esq., Renmark, for their kind assistance in my mission.

What may be done in New Zealand.

And now the question will naturally arise: "What can be done in New Zealand, and what recommendations can be made to deal successfully with a difficulty—the excess of labour—which is continually arising in the large centres of population?" I find in all the Australian Colonies there has been great scarcity of work, and in several employment is still most difficult to obtain. New Zealand by no means stands alone in this respect. Unfortunately, also, this unemployed difficulty is no new thing amongst us. It has been constantly cropping up for years past, and will continue to do so until a radical cure is provided.

There is no easy or royal road to prosperity, but I have seen that it can be attained by industry, perseverance, and sheer hard work; and am decidedly of opinion that in this colony, where there is so much remunerative work to be done, there should be very few, if any, unemployed among the able-bodied men. In order to bring this about I would respectfully recommend:—

1. That more vigorous measures should be adopted to promote settlement under the village homestead system on suitable land in country districts, and the acquisition of land under the Land for Settlements Act, near large centres, for the same purpose.

The regulations under "The Lands Improvement and Native Lands Act, 1894," provides that: "The Commissioner of Crown Lands, or the Chief Surveyor of the district, will in each case select the men who are to form the association." I think similar power should be given in connection with the occupation of village-homestead settlement lands, more especially where those lands have been acquired under "The Land for Settlements Act, 1894." Take, for instance, land purchased near a town or city. There the object is to offer some little assistance to artisans and others whose trade or occupation is in a town, and who may only be working half-time. Ploughmen, farm-labourers, shepherds, bush-men, and others, who are accustomed to work on the land, should be directed to a village settlement allotment in the country districts, and should not be eligible for land acquired near a city. To promote this class of settlement successfully it will be necessary to grant by way of loan a little monetary assistance.

I have pointed out in this report that the aid granted in New South Wales is £50, in Victoria £40, and in South Australia £50, with every probability of it being increased in certain cases. In England the amount set out by the Colonising Society as being necessary, in their opinion, to carry out the work of land settlement successfully, is £100 per family. I recommend, therefore, that assistance should be given to village settlers who are approved by the respective Land Boards to the following amount: On plain or open land (for dwelling-house) £20; on bush-lands, £40—namely, £20 towards the erection of a dwelling-house, and £2 per acre up to 10 acres for clearing, burning, and grassing.

Regulations should be made for the repayment of these advances by instalments, after the first four years; a fund would thus be created from which assistance might be granted to new settlers.

2. I would also recommend that the regulations under improved settlement farms should be made more generally known; and that married men taking up land under those regulations be granted an advance of £20 (by way of loan) towards the erection of a dwelling-house.

3. The promotion of co-operative settlements on a somewhat similar plan to that adopted at Koo-wee-rup, Victoria—namely, to take a block of Crown land, or to acquire a block under the Land for Settlements Act, where drainage or other works are necessary to bring it into a state for profitable occupation, the men to be employed for a portion of a month on the works, and an equal portion on their holdings in the immediate vicinity.

4. The establishment and promotion of labour colonies.

I have frequently been asked what is the meaning of a labour colony, and what are the objects sought to be attained.

I reply that there are labour colonies and labour colonies, and it is quite feasible to establish them on greatly improved lines to the one at Leongatha, Victoria. For instance, there might be a labour colony,—

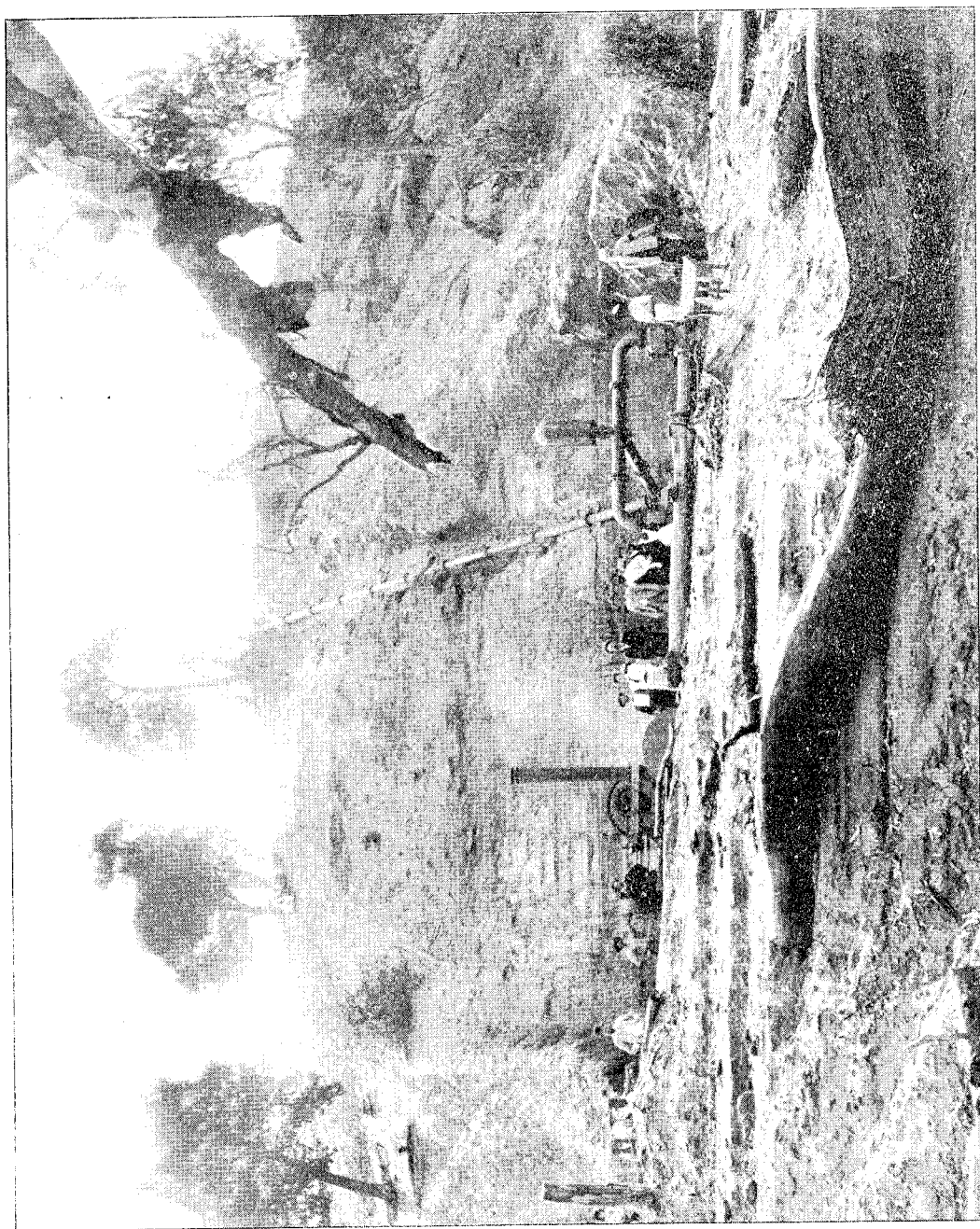
- (a.) To provide work for the unemployed, and to give instruction to men who have previously received no training or education for work on the land. Employment on a labour colony of this class, which might be established on bush-land, would be temporary, until something better was found for the colonist, or until he is able to take up a village settlement allotment on his own account.

I am correct, I think, in stating that all those who have been brought into contact with our surplus labour are aware that a large percentage of the men lack experience on land, and they require instruction to gain this knowledge. If a labour colony does not immediately repay so much per cent. on the outlay, no one need be discouraged, for if the colony is wisely and properly managed it is doing good work—work beyond the power of any one to assess at so much money value.

We spend annually a large sum of money on education, but no one anticipates to see an immediate return of 5 or 6 per cent. in hard cash on the outlay. We have, however, faith in believing that the expenditure thus incurred will eventually return some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundred fold.

So also with respect to labour colonies, the instruction to be gained thereon, and the truly valuable work which may be accomplished, will repay the State by-and-by, if it does not immediately.

- (b.) A labour colony could be established on open land to provide permanent and settled homes for men (including their wives and families) who have passed the prime of



Village Settlement, River Murray : Kingston Pumping Station

life, and who are not exactly able-bodied men, but who, nevertheless, can work, and are anxious to do so according to their ability; they have no desire to be paupers, or to be compelled to apply for assistance; they can earn their living from the soil, or by working at other industries (besides tillage) which should be established, provided they are given the opportunity. A colony of this class should work under approved regulations made for the common benefit of the colonists, and under a competent manager.

- (c.) A labour colony could be established either on open or bush lands for men whose employment has been so irregular that they have no fixed place of abode; men who are constantly on the tramp looking for work. They are not adapted to take up land on their own account, but yet something should be done for them. I think they can also, if so disposed, be put in the way of making their living from the soil in a labour colony, or by working at other industries established thereon; for I hold that, as it is from the land that all productions are derived, so also it is to the land that all surplus labour should be directed.

It has been customary during the past few winters to establish in the principal Cities Winter-Work Funds, for providing employment for men out of work. This is a step which must commend itself to every one; but I would nevertheless point out that it has a tendency to bring men from the country into the towns, and it will continue to have that tendency until steps are taken to establish labour colonies, or find other employment, in the country districts.

I have indicated what can be accomplished by these colonies on bush lands. Thus, we see at Leongatha no less than 60 acres practically cleared of all bush, every stump extracted, and the whole area brought into that state that it can now be worked by spade-cultivation, and admirably adapted for village-homestead settlements. There is one other point well worthy of consideration: all valuable timber on a labour colony can be utilised, and need not be wasted or destroyed by fire.

On plain or open lands other industries in addition to the cultivation of the soil can be introduced, whereby employment might be found for a number of men.

If labour colonies are established, men need never be in want of either good food or shelter, and from their wages they can have a sum to draw on leaving. That labour colonies can be made a great boon to destitute men out of employ, and to society generally, there cannot be a doubt. Permit me to give an illustration. At Sydney, as I have already stated, there is a great deal of genuine distress, and, go where you may, constant applications are made for assistance. The tales told of the actual want of food and the inability to procure shelter are most distressing. Without turning a deaf ear to so much misery, you yet feel that any help given can only be temporary relief, and the recipient will be just as badly off to-morrow; he may be told to go and look for work, but, where there are so many out of employ, his chance of obtaining any is very unlikely.

In Melbourne, however, when an appeal for assistance is made, you may relieve the applicant; but you can do much more, and say: "Meet me at 9 o'clock to-morrow morning at 440, Lonsdale Street (the office of the labour colony), and I will speak to Colonel Goldstein on your behalf. You may rely in obtaining good food and shelter on the labour colony, with wages according to your ability, and the prospect of obtaining permanent employment. Do not fail to be there, for no real case of distress is turned empty away from that office."

Objection may be taken to the recommendations made herein, on the ground that to carry them out would involve a large expenditure. I am aware of this, and I am also certain that it is impossible to promote successful settlement, or meet the "unemployed" difficulty, without the expenditure of money; but I venture to predict that the State would be repaid a hundredfold for moneys advanced and judiciously expended in the direction I have indicated, in addition to the knowledge of the great and lasting good which is being accomplished.

In the important work of colonization in which so many are engaged, and in the earnest efforts being made here to build up a nation which may in process of time be equal in every respect to other nations of the world, not only in physique, but in those higher attainments which constitute a nation's greatness, it is essential to build on a firm and solid foundation; and it will be well with us if the present generation can be encouraged to take to the soil, to go out into the interior of the country, conquering and to conquer the numerous difficulties there are in the way; but this great and noble work cannot be accomplished without means.

It affords me great pleasure to place before you here some of the results which have been achieved under the village-homestead settlement system in New Zealand, initiated and placed under liberal regulations by the late Hon. J. Ballance:—

Number of settlements in the colony	...	...	...	...	144
Number settled on the land, including wives and families	...	...	...	...	4,561
Area occupied (acres)	...	...	...	...	33,804
Amount advanced for cottages, bush-felling and clearing	...	...	...	...	£25,778
Amount paid by settlers as rent and interest from the commencement of the system	...	...	...	...	£17,620
Value of improvements now on the land	...	...	...	...	£92,834
And if the amount advanced is deducted, there remains as representing the value of the work done by the settlers	...	...	...	...	£67,056

These figures prove beyond doubt the success of the village-homestead system.

I had the privilege of reading the confidential report to the Hon. the Premier, relative to the village settlements in Australia, by the Hon. W. P. Reeves. My observations fully confirm all the Minister has written, and I entirely endorse his recommendation "that we should now take a fresh departure and push on the work of village settlements much faster than in recent years."

In concluding this report, permit me to express my very hearty thanks to the Hon. W. P. Reeves for the recommendation made by him that I should inspect the Australian settlements, and to the Hon. the Premier and yourself in permitting me to do so.

It has been my privilege to see and learn a great deal relating to the important work of land settlement, more especially in connection with village settlements, as carried on in the other colonies, and I sincerely trust my visit will bring about results satisfactory to the Government and beneficial to the people of New Zealand.

I have, &c.,

J. E. MARCH,
Superintendent of Settlements.

The Hon. J. McKenzie, Minister of Lands.

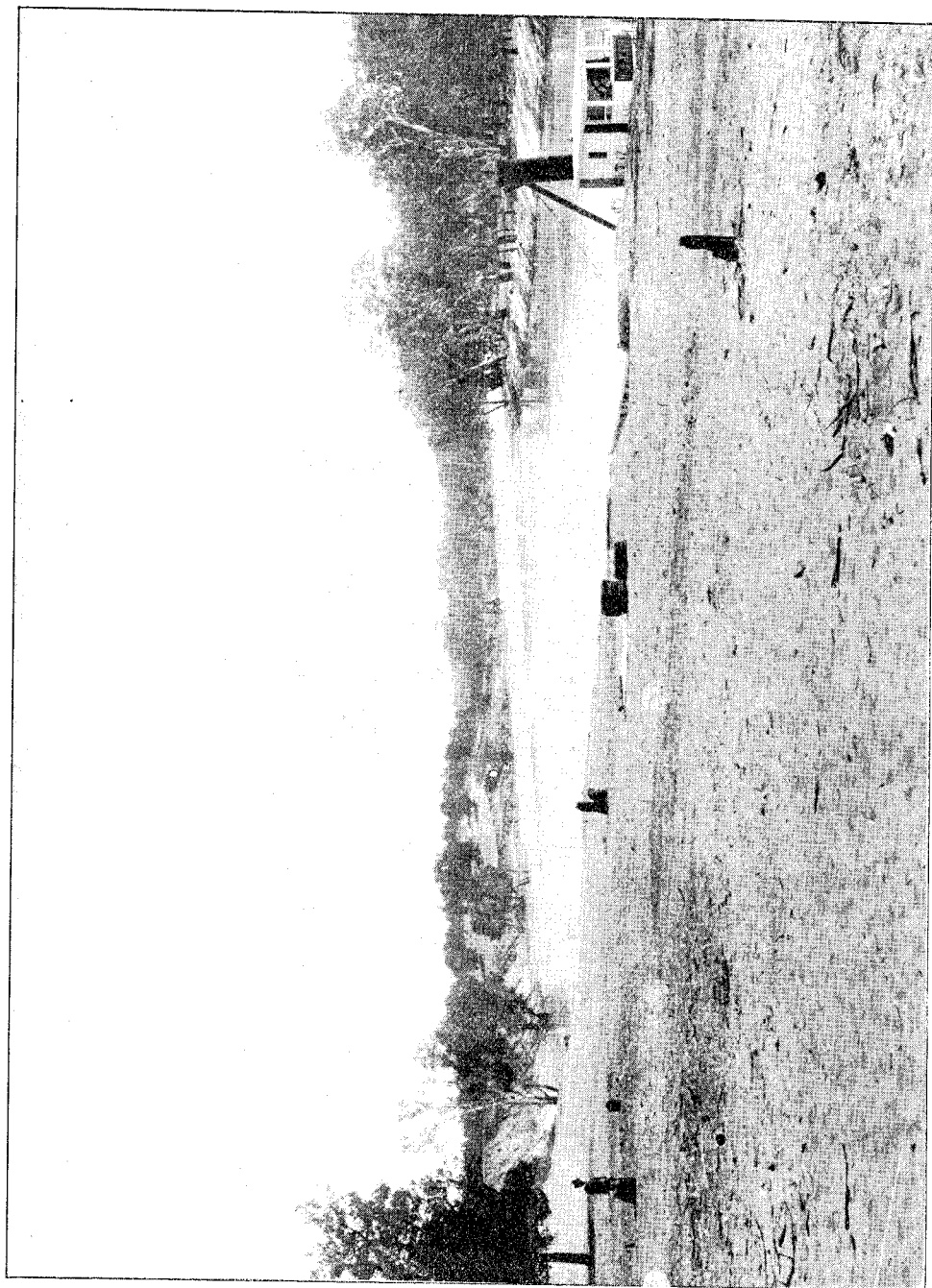
Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (3,350 copies), £18 18s.

By Authority: SAMUEL COSTALL, Government Printer, Wellington.—1895.

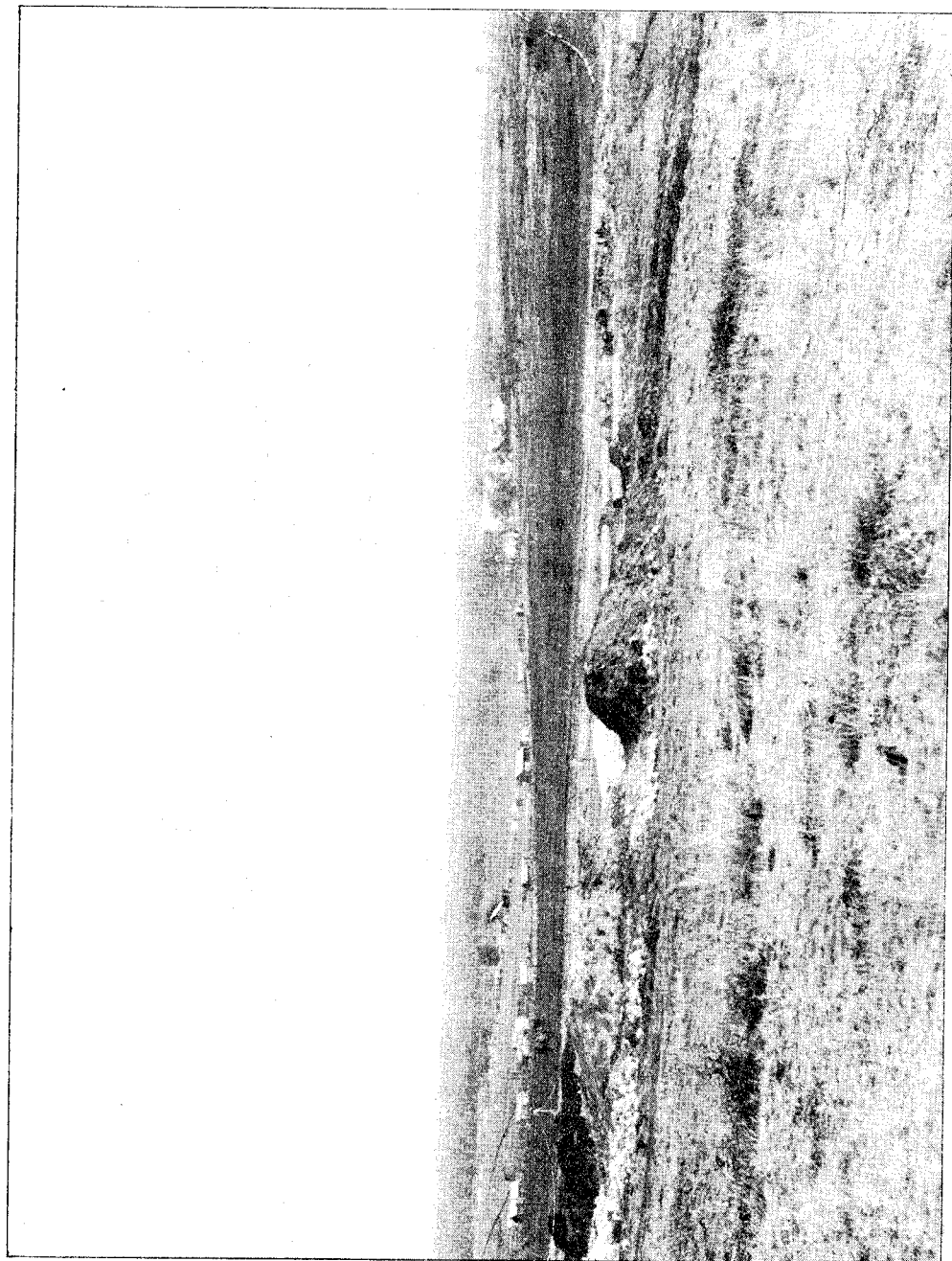
Price 9d.



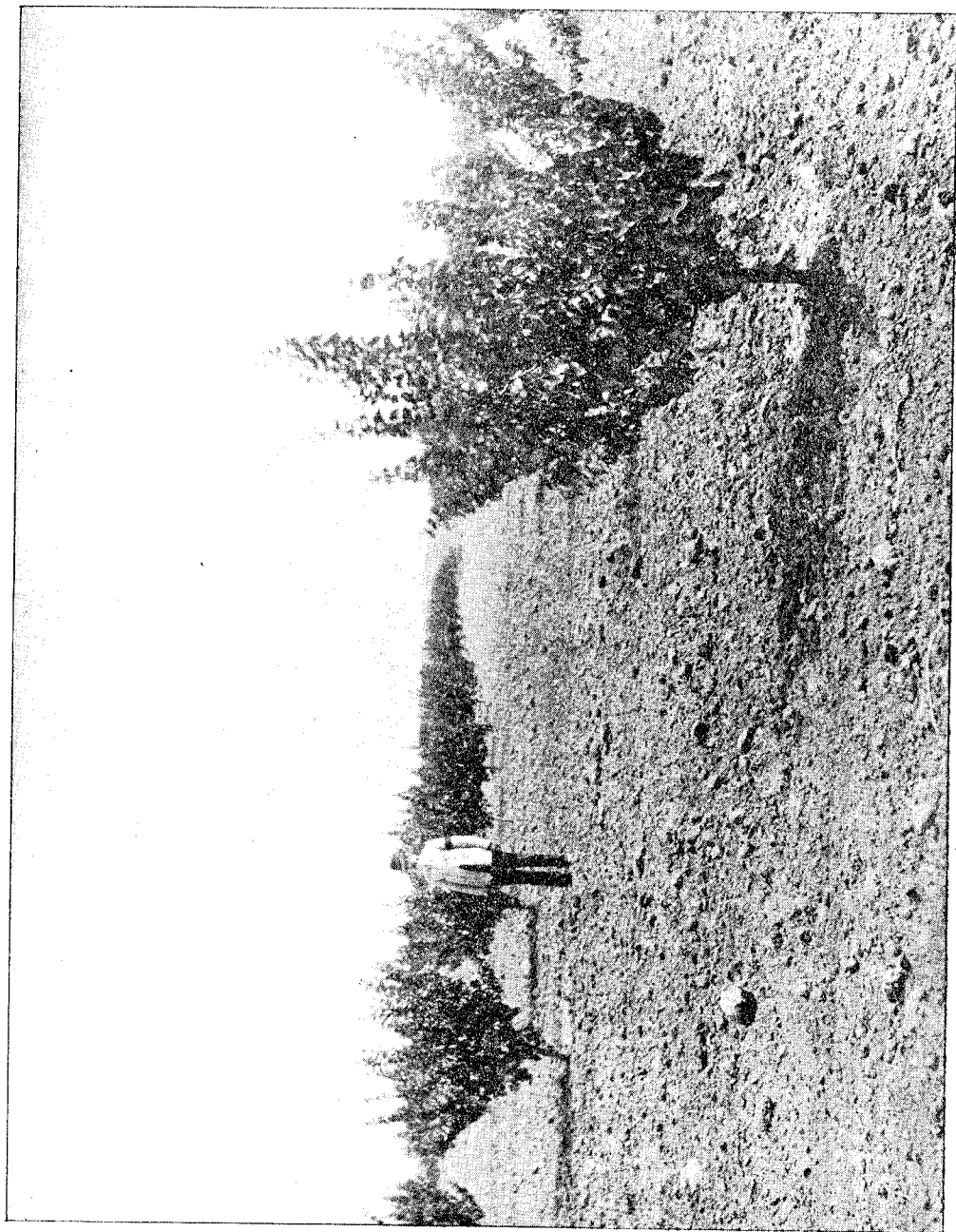
Village Settlement, River Murray: Holder Pumping Station.



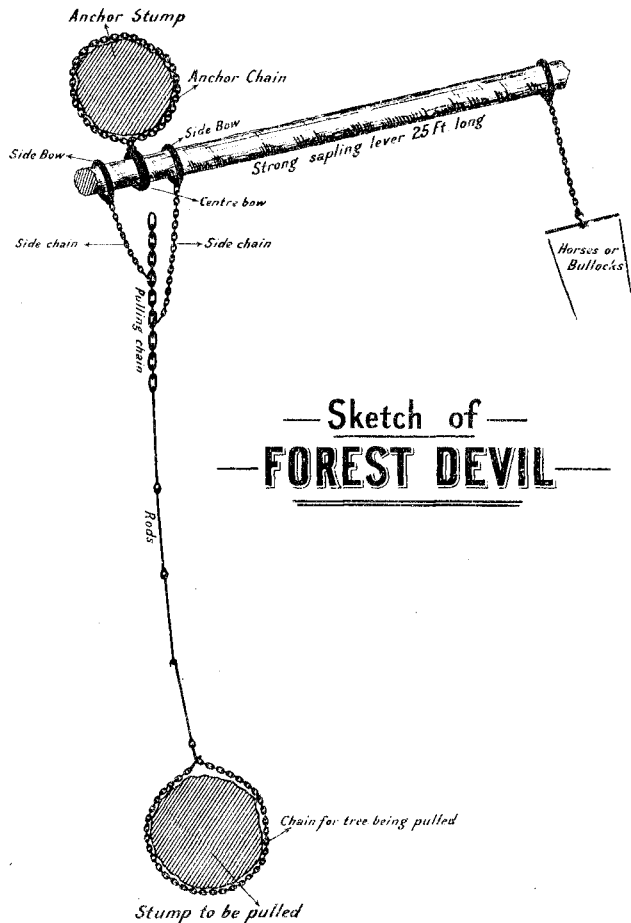
Village Settlement, River Murray: River Frontage to Ramco.



Village Settlement, River Murray : Pyap.



Apricot Trees at Renmark, 2½ years after planting.



PARTICULARS OF FOREST DEVIL, WITH COST, AND DIRECTIONS FOR MAKING.

1 Anchor Chain, of 1-inch iron.

3 Bows, viz.: 1 Centre Bow, 17in. by 9in. clear, of $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch iron; 2 Side Bows, each 14in. by 7in., of $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch iron.

2 Side Chains, 5ft. each (attached to Side Bows), of $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch iron, with steel hook at end of each to fit in links of pulling chain, which should be 5in. long and 1in. wide, clear.

1 Pulling Chain, 10ft. long.

Rods, 9ft. long, of 1-inch iron; a link on one end, and a link and hook on the other end.

1 chain, for tree being pulled, 9ft., of $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch iron, with hook and ring.

NOTE.—The bows to be fixed on the lever 12in. apart, centre bow to be stapled on with 6in. staples on face of lever, next tree being pulled; side bows to be stapled on face of lever next anchor stump.

The appliance was made at the Labour Colony, Leongatha, and the chains, ironwork, and making cost £7 1s. 2d.

