

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 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 particularise 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. Ingles) 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 ft. 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."