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Empty Spaces and Smiling Faces:

The New Settlers' League and Australian Immigration

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Abstract

Population and immigration have long been concerns for colonial, Commonwealth and state governments in Australia, with issues such as empty spaces, a vulnerable north, national development, labour supply, and race persistently arising. So too has settlement, the corollary of immigration, proved challenging, particularly in regional and rural areas and in the country's north. "Empty Spaces and Smiling Faces" examines a significant but overlooked contributor to Australia's immigration and settlement history, the New Settlers' League of Australia.

The New Settlers League emerged from collaboration between the Commonwealth, states and civil society in the years following World War One when unprecedented national significance was given to immigration. Funded initially by the Commonwealth and later by state governments, the league was formed in March 1921 to promote British migration and provide aftercare to immigrants by ensuring they were welcomed, employed and integrated into their new communities. The New Settlers' League expanded into a vast and vigorous network spanning the country and lasting from several years in most states to many decades in Queensland. This thesis examines the league from its formation to its demise.

Immigration is an issue vital to understanding the Australian nation as it is and as it aspires to be. Consequently, the history, influence and contribution of the New Settlers' League merit detailed exploration. Though a few historians have made reference to the league, no detailed account has been published. This thesis redresses that void. It first considers the historical background of Australian immigration and

factors that led to the league's formation then examines how the league pursued its four main objectives and what led to the demise of four state divisions, followed by a separate exploration of the exceptional Queensland division. The final chapter examines the contributions of the league's members, particularly women, and their motives for volunteering.

This thesis augments existing research by appraising the New Settlers' League in the context of Australia's immigration history. As a volunteer organisation, the league played a major role in immigration and settlement, not only promoting immigration's benefits to an often doubtful Australian public, but undertaking responsibility for the welfare, employment, accommodation and social needs of many thousands of immigrants over many years. From its beginning when immigration programmes were exclusively British-focused, until mid-century when there was a broader embrace of peoples from many nations, the New Settlers' League made a remarkable contribution to Australia's success as a nation of immigrants.

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List of Abbreviations

Australian Agricultural Company	AAC
Australian Bureau of Statistics	ABS
Australian Dictionary of Biography	ADB
Australian National University	ANU
Big Brother Movement	BBM
British Oversea Settlement Department	BOSD
Captain	Capt.
Cambridge University Press	CUP
Commonwealth Migration Office	CMO
Farmers and Settlers Association	FSA
Good Neighbour Council	GNC
House of Representatives	HOR
Macquarie Valley Irrigation League	MVIL
National Archives of Australia	NAA
National Archives of the United Kingdom	NAUK
National Council of Women	NCW
New Settlers' League of Australia	NSL
Parliament of Australia	P of A
Prime Minister	PO
Prime Minister's Office	PMO
Queensland State Archives	QSA
Returned Soldiers and Sailors Imperial League of Australia	RSSILA
Senate	Sen
Sydney Morning Herald	*SMH*
Society for Oversea Settlement of British Women	SOSBW
Ugly Men's Association	UMA
Victoria League	VL
World War One	WWI
World War Two	WWII

Introduction


MR. H. S. GULLETT,
Commonwealth War Correspondent in Palestine, who has returned to Sydney.

Pl.1 Henry Somer Gullett conceptualised the New Settlers' League of Australia and was instrumental in its formation.[1]

> Australia has five millions of people. Of those fully half live in cities and towns. About five-sixths of the population live on the southern half of the continent. The magnificent fertile North is empty, ungarrisoned. And in Asia and Europe there are hundreds of millions of people starving for land and lack of elbow-room.
> In the war nearly sixty thousand young working Australians have been killed. It can safely be said that, with those who have been incapacitated, the war has robbed the Commonwealth of one hundred thousand workers. In addition to that the war will have been responsible for stopping all immigration into Australia for at least six years. In those six years we should at a modest estimate have gained 150,000 workers from overseas. So that in 1920, when, as we hope, the war will be behind us, and we recommence our normal life, we shall be short of 250,000 producers.[2]

So wrote Henry Somer Gullett in 1919 as the despair of war began to shift allowing thoughts of the future in Australia and when unprecedented national significance was given to immigration. His words encapsulate the conditions that led the Hughes government, in which Gullett held the position of press liaison officer, to undertake a massive immigration scheme. Australia saw itself as vulnerable to invasion,

[1] "War, Ancient and Modern," *Capricornian* (Rockhampton), 13 September 1919, 54.
[2] H S Gullett, *Unguarded Australia: A Plea for Immigration* (London: np, 1919), 4.

particularly by Japan, and believed the best form of protection was nation-building based on populating and developing the land. Only through nation-building could Australia strengthen its defences and recover from the war's economic and social impacts. For nation-building focused on rural development, as was intended, a great many rural workers would be required. Gullett was the innovator behind Hughes's decision to establish a nation-wide volunteer organisation to assist with the ambitious scale of immigration intended. The New Settlers' League of Australia (NSL), established to promote immigration and provide welcomes and aftercare for immigrants, resulted from collaboration between the Commonwealth, states and civil society.[3] The league's rich and extensive history has for decades, however, lain largely undisturbed and unnoticed in the pages of newspapers and historical documents. This thesis quarries those sources to discover why and how the league came about, what it aimed to achieve, what it did achieve, and who the people that sustained it were.

Nation-building embodied two essential elements, the more imperative being development, with progress needed across industry, agriculture, infrastructure, and defence. With a huge population increase needed to occupy the country's vast empty spaces and develop the land, the only solution was to greatly increase immigration. Australia wanted its British "kith and kin" to migrate and settle in rural areas where they would boost national development, and thereby reduce war debt, justify the nation's hold on the land and provide a bulwark against invasion, particularly in the sparsely populated north. Hundreds of thousands of immigrants would be needed to supply a population that could occupy Australia's land mass sufficiently to ward off

[3] The words "immigrant" and "migrant" in this thesis are used in accordance with the meanings ascribed in the *Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary*.

"other nations with covetous eyes," and stimulate development by increasing the labour force and economic demand.[4]

The other less obvious but essential element of nation-building was "national spirit." For nation-building to succeed through immigration, Australians needed to regard immigration as desirable. The Australian government aimed to consolidate and capitalise on the sense of nationhood that had begun with federation, was forged more convincingly during the war, but needed strengthening to ensure a sense of nationhood robust enough to cope with the intended massive immigration scheme. For such a scheme to succeed, all Australian governments needed to ensure new settlers would quickly establish themselves socially and economically. It would be essential for immigrants to quickly acquire suitable employment, housing and a sense of belonging. This task, however, was beyond government capabilities, but by establishing a nation-wide organisation of civic-minded volunteers to tend to settlers' "after-care," success could be assured. The New Settlers' League of Australia became the prime instrument for promoting the benefits of immigration and of ensuring its success by providing "after-care" to settlers.

The NSL was established with the four main objectives of welcoming all new settlers, assisting them to secure employment, offering advice, and promoting their welfare and settlement. With hundreds of branches nation-wide and many hundreds of volunteers, the NSL in pursuing its objectives delivered crucial services to thousands of immigrants, many of whom might otherwise have returned to their homeland or become a burden rather than an asset to Australia. The league was

[4] "Civic Welcome: Homage by the People," *Register* (Adelaide), 29 August 1919, 9.

influential in informing the public of the benefits of immigration, countering resistance to immigrants - even British immigrants - and ensuring their welcome and care in communities across the nation. The NSL also worked to co-ordinate employment opportunities, to ascertain and recommend potential development projects, and to monitor immigrants' employment conditions. As such, the NSL significantly enhanced social cohesion and national development in Australia, and its contribution warrants analysis. This thesis elucidates the role and impact of the little-known NSL in Australia's immigration history.

This thesis explores the background of Australian immigration, from colonisation until World War One (WWI), before examining the NSL's formation, structure, aims and objectives, geographic and temporal range, and membership base - with a focus on the contribution of women. Examining how the NSL affected public attitudes towards immigration, in what practical ways it fulfilled its objectives, and what influence it had on immigration and settlement processes, develops an understanding of its impact on Australian immigration. Also investigated are relationships with and between the Commonwealth and state governments and how these affected the league, factors that led to the NSL's demise.

"Migration research," states Michele Langfield, "is loosely divided into two areas: intake issues and settlement issues." While intake deals with selection, numbers, composition, timing, motivation, and demand, settlement broadly encompasses post-arrival, social issues, and employment.[5] As the NSL was initially established to tend to settlers' "after-care" and promote governments' immigration objectives, intake

[5] Michele Langfield, "Gender Blind? Australian Immigration Policy and Practice, 1901-1930," *Journal of Australian Studies* 27, no.79 (2009): 144.

and settlement issues are both relevant research areas, though in practice, settlement issues placed much more demand upon the league's services. This thesis is therefore situated within a broad field of Australian immigration historiography but resides principally in the body of work that examines immigration after WWI, when attention focused on British migrants. This field encompasses such studies as British immigration to Australia, post-WWI immigration, youth migration, and immigrant welfare. Other relevant fields of historical scholarship include those dealing with such matters as White Australia and the "right type" of immigrant, rural settlement, post-WWI Australian society, war and grief, women in Australian society, civil institutions and voluntarism, and Commonwealth-state relations.

Popular narratives and historical scholarship on Australia's immigration programmes have focused far more frequently on those that followed World War Two (WWII), rather than on those after WWI. Among explorations of post-WWI immigration, scarcely any information is available on the NSL. The NSL was established as a volunteer organisation to ensure that an immigration scheme agreed to by the Australian Commonwealth and six state governments in 1920 would succeed in its implementation. It was pre-eminent in dealing with immigration promotion and after-care in the decades following WWI. Besides furnishing a scholarly treatise of this significant but previously overlooked organisation, in examining the NSL this thesis contributes further insights to the political, industrial, social, and personal impact of immigration in post-WWI Australia.

Langfield's identification of two areas of immigration scholarship, intake and settlement, offers a useful basis for surveying the available literature. The intake of

British migrants to Australia is a well-discussed topic, but that discussion is heavily biased towards post-WWII immigration. Through her many journal articles Langfield provides fundamental information on British immigration to Australia extending back to WWI and before. "Gender Blind? Australian Immigration Policy and Practice, 1901-1930," for example, discusses Australia's immigration policies, assisted immigration, and the different experiences of male and female immigrants.[6] Her article, "Voluntarism, Salvation, and Rescue: British Juvenile Migration to Australia and Canada, 1890-1939," offers insights into who were considered the "right type" of immigrants, what role volunteer organisations played, and their relationships with governments.[7] The summarised resources in her archival guide, *More People Imperative: Immigration to Australia, 1901-39*, provided valuable groundwork for this thesis and offered a comprehensive overview of immigration during that period.

David Pope, James Jupp and Geoffrey Sherington each extend their studies back to the nineteenth century, offering perspectives on complex government immigration policies. Pope's work on government policies regarding land settlement shows that governments were not and could not be as single-minded about rural settlement's role in development as they often purported to be.[8] Pope also explicates state and Commonwealth tussles over assisted passage.[9] Migration specialist Jupp offers a body of work that addresses Australia's long focus on whiteness and Britishness, and the transition to multiculturalism. His books, *The English in Australia* and *From*

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[6] Langfield, "Gender Blind?" 143-152.
[7] Michele Langfield, "Voluntarism, Salvation, and Rescue: British Juvenile Migration to Australia and Canada, 1890-1939," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 32, no.2 (2004): 86-114.
[8] David Pope, "Australia's Development Strategy in the Early Twentieth Century: Semantics and Politics," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 31, no.2 (1985): 218-229.
[9] David Pope, "Assisted Immigration and Federal-State Relations: 1901-30," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 28, no.1 (1982): 21-31.

White Australia to Woomera, along with articles such as "Immigration to Australia," furnish solid explorations of those topics.[10] Sherington also explores migration across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and provides perspectives on youth migration and settlement.[11]

Australia, Britain, and Migration, 1915-1940: A Study of Desperate Hopes, Michael Roe's comprehensive study of interwar immigration, offers a clear and detailed understanding of the complex interactions between the British and Australian Commonwealth and state governments. This work has also been valuable because it addresses nation-building, including women's involvement and, notably, the NSL. Roe's introduction explains that though the work's main concern is "the development of Australian policy and the consequent interaction of governments, there are some subsidiary stories of interest and importance." Among these he cites "the migrants' personal experience," and, almost uniquely, offers some discussion of the NSL.[12]

For understanding Australia's migrant intake policies, and who was considered to constitute the "right type," scholarship on national identity offers pertinent insights. "Australia," writes Jupp, is the "product of conscious social engineering to create a particular kind of society."[13] The NSL operated during the era of White Australia

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[10] James Jupp, *The English in Australia* (Cambridge, UK: CUP, 2004).
James Jupp, *From White Australia to Woomera* (Cambridge, UK: CUP, 2002).
James Jupp, "Immigration to Australia," *Teaching History* 38, no.1 (2004): 7-10.
[11] Geoffrey Sherington, *Australia's Immigrants, 1788-1978* (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1982).
Geoffrey Sherington, "'A Better Class of Boy' the Big Brother Movement, Youth Migration and Citizenship of Empire," *Australian Historical Studies* 33, no.120 (2002): 267-285.
Geoffrey Sherington, "Assisted English Settlement 1918-1939," in *The Australian People: An Encyclopedia of the Nation, Its People and Their Origins*, ed James Jupp (Cambridge, UK: CUP, 2001), 311-314.
"Starting Something Since 1904: 110 Years of History," Big Brothers Big Sisters, 2014, http://www.bbbs.org/site/c.9iILI3NGKhK6F/b.5960955/k.E56C/Starting_something_since_1904.htm.
[12] Michael Roe, *Australia, Britain, and Migration, 1915-1940: A Study of Desperate Hopes* (Cambridge, UK: CUP, 1995), 2.
[13] Jupp, *From White Australia to Woomera*, 5.

when race and culture were influential in determining who could settle in Australia. White Australia meant, therefore, that the NSL catered almost exclusively to the needs of white British settlers until the aftermath of WWII prompted major change in Australian immigration. Along with Jupp, David Walker has several works, notably *Anxious Nation: Australia and the Rise of Asia 1850-1939*, which offer comprehensive analyses of national identity through examining the perceived threats, largely Asian, which stimulated white Australia and immigration control.[14]

As a field of immigration research, settlement lends itself to a diversity of topics, such as employment, housing and - significant for this thesis - volunteering. With charity and philanthropy among the many institutions and traditions retained from its British heritage, volunteering has been integral to modern Australian society's development. From earliest settlement, colonial governments partnered with volunteer charitable institutions to tend to convicts' and settlers' welfare needs. Despite this long history of volunteerism, substantial research has been carried out only since the 1990s. "Voluntary action remains largely invisible in the history of Australia," observed Melanie Oppenheimer in 2005, and where research has been conducted, historians "focussed on nineteenth century philanthropy, and the emergence of state welfare in the twentieth century." Despite some research since then, available in journal articles, the gap noted by Oppenheimer still remains to be addressed. Oppenheimer herself furnishes a reliable and informative body of research on the history of Australian volunteer organisations, including the roles women have

[14] David Walker, *Anxious Nation: Australia and the Rise of Asia 1850-1939*, (Crawley, WA: UWA Publishing, 2012).
David Walker, "Re-Thinking the Asian Dimension of Australian History," (keynote address presented at the National History Teachers' Conference, Adelaide, SA, 3 October 2011), http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/verve/_resources/ProfDW_RethinkAsianDimenAusHist_HTAAOct2011_Rec191011Paper.pdf.
David Walker, "Survivalist Anxieties: Australian Responses to Asia, 1890s to the Present," *Australian Historical Studies* 33, no.120 (2002): 319-330.

played in volunteering. Studies of other settlement topics, such as the failure of settlers on unsuitable rural lands across many states, offer pertinent material for understanding the work conducted by the NSL.[15]

As so little research has yet been conducted on the NSL, this thesis has made robust use of primary sources to establish the league's history. Newspapers have been quite heavily used and, acknowledging that reportage is not always accurate, as far as possible articles have been cross-checked against archival records. Favouring the use of newspaper articles as a reliable source in constructing the NSL's history, however, is the fact that the league itself made frequent use of the press as it was largely through this medium that the NSL communicated with the public. Its development, from inauguration to demise, is therefore writ large upon the pages of almost all urban and rural newspapers across Australia. Archival records have also contributed significantly by furnishing documents and publications with information on why, how, where and when the league was established, how it conducted its activities, key figures, and negotiations with governments, particularly over funding. From archive holdings of correspondence between immigrants and the NSL, personal insights into

[15] Melanie Oppenheimer, "Lady Helen Munro Ferguson and the Australian Red Cross: Vice-Regal Leader and Internationalist in the Early Twentieth Century," in *Founders, Firsts and Feminists: Women Leaders in Twentieth-Century Australia*, ed Fiona Davis, Nell Musgrove and Judith Smart (Melbourne: eScholarship Research Centre, University of Melbourne, 2011) 274-91, http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/fff/index.html.
Melanie Oppenheimer, interview with Kelly Fuller, *Ordinary People, Extraordinary Service*, ABC 101.9 2NWR FM, 17 September 2009, radio broadcast, http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2009/07/13/2624482.htm.
Melanie Oppenheimer, "Voluntary Action and Welfare in Post-1945 Australia: Preliminary Perspectives," *History Australia* 2, no.3 (2005): 82.1-82.16.
Melanie Oppenheimer, "Voluntary Work," in *Encyclopedia of Women & Leadership in Twentieth-Century Australia* (Australian Women's Archive Project, 2014), http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/biogs/WLE0623b.htm.
Melanie Oppenheimer, "A Short History of Volunteering in Australia," in *Volunteering in Australia*, eds Melanie Oppenheimer and Jeni Warburton (Sydney: Federation Press, 2014), 13-23.

issues that affected individual immigrants and how the NSL assisted them were gained.

As this thesis constitutes the first detailed research conducted into the history of the NSL, the scope is broad. The thesis begins by exploring the background to the NSL's formation in 1921 and pursues its activities until the demise of its last state division in 1959. In so doing, the research encompasses why, how and where the NSL was established, identifies its aims and objectives, and how it pursued these. The league's membership is also analysed, with major figures identified and their roles and impact within the NSL and for the immigration campaign explored. In particular, the role of women within the league is illuminated. To establish how the NSL as a civil-society volunteer organisation operated, relationships between the NSL, Commonwealth and state governments and, to some extent, Britain, are examined, including the NSL's observations and recommendations to governments.

The first chapter, "A Nation of Immigrants," charts in brief Australian immigration from colonisation until WWI. Then follows an examination of how the war affected Australian attitudes to population, defence and development and the implications for immigration that led to the NSL being established. Chapter Two, "Preach Always the Gospel of Immigration," chronicles the NSL's inauguration, the many issues surmounted and the support marshalled to bring the nationwide organisation into being. Chapters Three, Four, Five and Six deal respectively with how the NSL worked to achieve its four stated objectives of welcoming settlers, ensuring they gained employment, offering them advice, and seeing them well-established in Australia. The next two chapters cover the NSL's demise, with Chapter Seven

focusing on NSL divisions in Victoria, New South Wales, Western Australia and Tasmania, and Chapter Eight on the exceptional Queensland division. While Chapter Nine, "A Fine Worker," could logically have followed chapter one, which looks at the NSL's establishment, it has intentionally been reserved for last to highlight the work of members, with the remarkable efforts of several noteworthy individuals singled out. In looking at the membership base, the objective was not to explore members' personal views, but to explore their roles and contributions in upholding and achieving the league's, and thereby the governments', objectives.

From first settlement, Australia relied upon immigration to bolster and grow defence and development. The significant post-WWII boom in migration from Britain and Europe is a familiar episode in immigration history. Australian society brims with anecdotes about ten-pound poms or struggling Europeans who made good in 1950s Australia, particularly as many Australians have direct experience of such events. Less familiar is the post-WWI immigration campaign, and the NSL, integral to the campaign, is almost unknown with little researched or written about its role. This thesis redresses this dearth as it explores why and how the league arose, what its functions and objectives were, how and by whom these were executed. The exploration will elucidate the league's role in Australia's immigration history and the making of a nation of immigrants. Though the NSL's benevolence aided many immigrants, its operations exposed tensions between Commonwealth and states, the folly of inordinate rural settlement, and Australians' enduring misgivings about immigration and immigrants. While much is different in early twenty-first century Australia compared to the early twentieth century, several issues that emerged in researching the NSL still bear relevance. In the following chapters, the New Settlers'

League is revealed as a dynamic volunteer organisation whose members strove to ensure security and prosperity for immigrants and the Australian nation.

CHAPTER ONE:

A Nation of Immigrants

The Rare Book Collection of the Library of Congress in the United States holds a copy of a small work written in the late 1950s by John F Kennedy. The book's title, *A Nation of Immigrants*, is a phrase that had seen occasional use in the United States for some time. During an 1896 immigration debate, Republican congressman Knute Nelson described the United States as "a nation of immigrants."[1] In Australia, as far back as 1871 the *Geelong Advertiser*, extolling the colony of Victoria's progress, told how "we enjoy the comforts, conveniences, and luxuries of modern civilisation to an extent undreamed of as the daily usage of a nation of immigrants."[2] Kennedy's work appears to have popularised the phrase which Australians also use to describe their nation. A 1968 *Good Neighbour* newspaper edition reminded readers that Australia was a nation of immigrants.[3] In 1972 Al Grassby, ALP member for Riverina, proclaimed Australia as a nation of immigrants.[4] In 2011 at a United Nations Alliance of Civilizations forum, Australia's Foreign Affairs Minister, Kevin Rudd, furthered the claim by asserting that "our natural condition in Australia is that we are a nation of immigrants, and immigrants from everywhere. Not just Anglo-Saxons, not just Anglo-Celts, but now from everywhere."[5] His comment referred to the changed nature of contemporary Australian immigration, but this "natural

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[1] "Foreign Born Sons," *Saint Paul Globe* (Minnesota, US), 15 May 1896, 1.
[2] Editorial, *Geelong Advertiser*, 3 April 1971, 2.
[3] "Merry Christmas in a New Home," *Good Neighbour* (ACT), 1 December 1968, 2.
[4] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, HOR Official Hansard, no.39, 1972, Appropriation Bill No.1, Albert Grassby, 27 September 1972, 2044.
Shortly after this Grassby became Minister for Immigration when the Whitlam government came to power with the election of 7 December 1972.
[5] Kevin Rudd, "UNAOC: A New Paradigm to Manage Intercultural Relations" (speech delivered at the 4th UN Alliance of Civilisations Forum, Doha, Qatar, 11 December 2011), http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/2011/kr_sp_111212.html.

condition" has eventuated by way of an immigration history fraught with complexity, contestation and contention.

"The natural strength of a country must consist first in its population is a maxim that … admits not opposition," asserted the *Sydney Gazette* in 1804.[6] From the time Governor Arthur Phillip realised that the settlement he was trying to establish at Sydney Cove could not progress on convict labour alone and that he would need to entice free settlers to come and work the land, successive Australian governments have endeavoured to attract settlers to the land.[7] From first settlement it was evident that, in an era of empires, securing British settlers to occupy and develop the land would be imperative for Australia to be held as a British colony. From 1820 the English press promoted New South Wales as a suitable destination for men with capital and the British government also promoted immigration to Australia's colonies. Ann Curthoys cites migration as "integral to colonisation, settlement and, later, nation-building."[8]

At the end of WWI over a century later, Australia again focused upon immigration. Immigration, however, also generated persistent concerns. Among politicians, labour organisations and the general public, immigration evoked responses ranging from feeble support through to open hostility. There were concerns that immigration would exert pressure on employment, Australia would become a dumping ground for Britain's unwanted, and costs to Australia of assisted passage and settlement would be burdensome. Tensions among competing colonial, and later Commonwealth and

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[6] "Natives," *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 24 June 1804, 3.
[7] Manning Clark, *A Short History of Australia*, illus ed, (Ringwood, Vic: Penguin, 2001), 24.
[8] Ann Curthoys, "History and Identity," in *Creating Australia: Changing Australian History*, eds Wayne Hudson and Geoffrey Bolton (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1997), 25.

state, interests also complicated immigration. Underlying all debate and policy disputes, however, was the ideal of Australia as a white, British nation.

Settlement to federation

At the outset of settlement, urgent need so prompted agricultural development that by the time Phillip returned to England in 1792 modest fruit and vegetable gardens were established and 600 hectares were under crop cultivation.[9] Beginning with one hundred acres in 1793, John Macarthur was the first to clear and cultivate land, for which he employed convict labour.[10] Two decades later, in April 1824, Macarthur's son, John junior, played host in his London law chambers to a meeting at which the Australian Agricultural Company (AAC) was established with the objective of cultivating fine wool, wine, olives, flax and other Mediterranean products.[11] With agricultural development firmly under way, demand for agricultural workers grew, though attracting free settlers to a distant outpost of empire was difficult.

Inducements were offered to free settlers to come and work the land. John Bowman, a free settler who arrived in New South Wales in 1798, was instrumental in lobbying for government assistance. Bowman contended that all free settlers were entitled:

> To have a passage found, and our families to be victualled by Government during the voyage; On our arrival in the Colony, to have the Grant of one hundred acres of land at Port Jackson, or fifty acres at Norfolk Island; to be victualled and cloathed from the public Stores for the term of twelve months after being put in possession of our respective allotments, and to be allowed the labour of two convicts (maintained by Government) for the same term;

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[9] Stuart Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia* (Cambridge, UK: CUP, 2003), 32.
[10] Margaret Steven, "Macarthur, John (1767-1834)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography (ADB)*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University (ANU), published first in hardcopy 1967, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/macarthur-john-2390/text3153.
[11] Damaris Bairstow, *A Million Pounds A Million Acres: The Pioneer Settlement of the Australian Agricultural Company* (Cremorne, NSW: Damaris Bairstow, 2003), 4-5.

> after which, we and our families are to be of no further expence to the Crown. To have the same proportion of stock, feed grain, and agricultural tools as have been furnished to other Settlers, together with such other assistance as the Governor may judge proper to afford us.[12]

In 1805 his demands were acceded to, applied retrospectively to all others who had come, and to all subsequent free settlers. Bowman's experience featured several issues that adhered to Australian immigration well into the twentieth century, such as attracting rural workers and migrants of the right type, government assistance as inducement, the provision of land for agricultural pursuits, and assisting new settlers until they had established themselves.

Up to the 1860s, most migrants were rural labourers encouraged to emigrate as family units. Their assisted passages were arranged in England, often with funds raised from the sale of land in Australia.[13] Though by the 1880s miners and railway workers were arriving, immigrants were still largely agricultural workers.[14] As an inducement to settle in the colonies, many received financial assistance for passage costs. Assistance ranged from loans for individual passage to covering a family's entire passage costs.[15] Existing settlers, however, expressed concerns about the cost of assisting migrants and the type of migrant arriving. As early as 1826, an *Australian* editorial extolled as superior the knowledge and experience of "native born youth … to effect great improvements in the face of the country" over those "from emigrants, who are strangers to the climate and the system of agriculture which ought to be adopted."[16] In an 1833 address entitled "Emigration," John

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[12] "General Orders," *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 22 September 1805, 1.
[13] Jupp, *The English in Australia*, 28.
[14] *Ibid*.
[15] *Ibid*.
[16] Editorial, *Australian* (Sydney, NSW), 19 January 1826, 2.

Dunmore Lang referred to the Home Government's decision to fund immigration by selling colonial land. He considered it a duty colonists owed themselves to ensure:

> That the immigrants for whose importation the colony is thus to be charged shall be a class of persons the most useful to the Colony at large that can possibly be procured; for if the funds of the Colony are to be appropriated in effecting another such immigration as the one we are now witnessing in the worn-out dissipated pensioners (for such, I am sorry, to say is the character of the great majority of them) who have come to the Colony during the last twelve-months, apparently for no other purpose than to increase the sum total of wretchedness throughout this community, and to extend and perpetuate its moral debasement, I think it would be far better just to cast the money at once into the depths of the sea.[17]

Concerns were still expressed over four decades later when a *West Australian Times* article claimed that to "shovel the 'bone and sinew' of older nations upon the shores of a young country" was suicidal.[18] Assisted passage, the article alleged, was a financial burden on the public unless the immigrants' "dual powers of production and consumption" could guarantee that the outlay be speedily recouped.[19] "No person," it cautioned "should be brought to a new country at the expense of its taxpayers who is not calculated to increase its wealth and importance"[20] Concerns were not confined, however, to costs and the calibre of immigrants.

Australians were also antipathetic towards immigration because they believed it had a negative effect on the labour market. "Indiscriminate immigration" was cited as causing an unsettled and confused relation between labour and capital in which wages sank and unemployment rose.[21] An *Argus* 1877 edition described how fifteen hundred workers gathered in Sydney to protest against immigration complaining they "did not desire more competitors and that there were unemployed in the community

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[17] "Emigration," *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 25 June 1833, 4.
[18] "Our Immigration Policy," *West Australian Times*, 19 March 1878, 2.
[19] *Ibid*.
[20] *Ibid*.
[21] *Ibid*.

already." This, the writer claimed, was "the splash made by the stone as it drops into the water," for it served to amplify such sentiments across the colonies.[22]

Queensland, however, was a colony particularly keen to attract settlers. In 1863, when Queensland had gained independence from New South Wales, several newspapers carried a column claiming that Queensland's immigration policy, despite a multitude of defects, seemed to be working effectively as it was succeeding in attracting a "good stream of population of a very desirable class to the shores of a comparatively unknown colony." Migrants who sought the touted better life in Australia were often disappointed, dispirited and dismayed by the reality. In 1853 the *Moreton Bay Courier* published a poem by "Agricola Migratus" which detailed the migrant experience. It read in part:

> The brighter side you have been shown
> Of what Australia is;
> The darker too should be made known,
> Before you cross the seas….
>
> The Assisted Immigration Act
> Looks plausible and fair;
> Seduced by it I did contract
> Ah! hither to repair
>
> Arriv'd upon a foreign shore,
> Far, far from friends away,
> We're sold to strangers here and there,
> Our passage to repay.
>
> For two long years we're bound to serve,
> For what they choose to give;
> Nor care they what our wants may crave,
> If those two years we live.[23]

Until the 1860s, immigration had been largely unrestricted with Chinese on the goldfields, Afghan cameleers, Malay and Japanese pearlers, and Pacific Islanders

[22] Editorial, *Argus* (Melbourne), 8 June 1877, 4.
[23] Editorial, *Moreton Bay Courier*, 26 February 1853, 2.

labouring on sugar plantations in the tropics. This, says Mary Kalantzis, was because it served the purposes of *laissez faire* capitalism and Imperial pragmatics.[24] After this time, however, Colonial Secretary Robert Herbert stated that the focus should be on receiving immigrants from England, Ireland and Scotland.[25]

Despite some consensus between colonies, immigration aroused strenuous debate. The 1891federation debates saw William Collard Smith declare that Victoria, the colony he represented, had long abandoned assisted immigration and unless migrants came at their own expense, he objected to immigration. He sought to clarify whether the Commonwealth would be able to override states' objectives.[26] At the 1898 convention, B R Wise of New South Wales explained that "until the Commonwealth passes a law relating to immigration the state has exclusive jurisdiction … and as long as the state jurisdiction can be exercised the state alone should be able to control the rights of the aliens." Edmund Barton stated that once the Commonwealth legislated with regard to immigration this would displace states' law.[27] Wise argued that movement between states should be termed immigration. Barton, unconvinced, responded:

> We have made the dealing with aliens, which includes a certain degree of coloured immigration, a power of the Commonwealth … so that all those of the races who come into the community after the establishment of the Commonwealth will not only enter subject to laws made in respect to their

[24] Mary Kalantzis, "Australia in the Making," in *States of Mind: Australia and New Zealand, 1901-2001*, ed Arthur Grimes, Lydia Wevers and Ginny Sullivan (Wellington, NZ: Institute of Policy Studies, 2002), 72-73.
[25] "Queensland," *SMH*, 22 June 1863, 5.
[26] National Australasian Convention, and University of Sydney Library Scholarly Electronic Text and Image Service, *Official Report of the National Australasian Convention Debates Sydney, 2 March to 9 April, 1891* (Sydney: University of Sydney Library, Scholarly Electronic Text and Image Service, 1999), np.
[27] Australasian Federal Convention, *Proceedings of the Australasian Federal Convention held at Parliament House, Melbourne, 20th January to 17th March, 1898* (Melbourne: R S Brain, Govt Printer, 1898), http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-22315525.

> immigration, but will remain subject to any laws which the Commonwealth may specially devise for them.[28]

Colonies, however, were anxious about movement between states and their future ability to apply restrictions to specific races and occupations, such as Afghan hawkers, Chinese in factories and Pacific Island labour. Dr John Cockburn of South Australia argued vehemently for Commonwealth control of immigration, claiming that some colonies were "colourblind with regard to immigration." Placing power in the states' hands, he argued, would allow them to do a "very great evil to the Commonwealth" by forcing on it "an obnoxious citizenship." As far as Cockburn was concerned:

> This power should be in the hands of the Commonwealth; it should itself possess power to define the conditions on which the citizenship of the Commonwealth shall be given; and the citizenship of the Commonwealth should not necessarily follow upon the citizenship of any particular state.[29]

The debates over immigration and who should control it were not fully resolved, however, so the wrangling continued after federation.

Despite some misgivings, the push for immigration continued to gain traction. An 1867 *Argus* article described how, when immigration is neglected, "agriculture languishes, commerce declines, and there is a notable absence of that buoyant and hopeful spirit which usually animates the industries of young countries."[30] During the 1891 debates leading up to federation, Arthur Rutledge of Queensland emphasised that Australia depended on immigration. It was essential, he insisted, "on

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[28] *Ibid*.
[29] *Ibid.*
[30] Editorial, *Argus*, 19 August 1867, 4.

a very extensive scale" for resource development and to "accomplish all we hope for as the result of establishing this constitution."[31]

Though immigration for defence purposes featured little during early settlement, Australia started to become conscious of its vulnerability. As colonial armed forces were never more than a smattering of troops, upon federation the colonies readily yielded defence to the Commonwealth.[32] Shortly over a decade later, however, when war erupted defence became a firm consideration and one inextricably linked with population, race and immigration. If Australia was to be able to defend itself in its geographic isolation from the West, most notably Britain, and if development and productivity were to progress, it needed to substantially increase its population.

Federation

Though federation was suffused with state rivalries and jealousies, evidenced by two formal ceremonies being held; the first in Sydney in January 1901 followed by one in Melbourne in May, race was a unifying issue.[33] That the first major pieces of legislation passed upon federation were the Immigration Restriction Act and the Pacific Island Labourers Act attests to this.[34] Stuart Macintyre states that the "new nation was shaped by external threat and internal anxiety" which, combined, led "exclusive racial possession" to be the "essential condition of the nation-state." These fears coalesced with internal racial anxieties, including the history of tension

[31] National Australasian Convention, and University of Sydney Library Scholarly Electronic Text and Image Service, *Official Report of the National Australasian Convention Debates Sydney, 2 March to 9 April, 1891*, np.
[32] Fred Alexander, *Australia since Federation* (West Melbourne, Vic: Thomas Nelson Australia Pty Ltd, 1980), 12-13.
[33] Alexander, *Australia since Federation*, 5.
[34] Kalantzis, "Australia in the Making," 72-73.

with the Chinese in Australia.[35] Australia's proximity to Asia and experience of Asian competitiveness on the goldfields led to growing consensus on immigration.[36]

Edmund Barton, Australia's first Prime Minister (PM), took little time in addressing the nation on the white Australia issue. His Maitland speech, delivered on 17 January 1901 to a crowd bursting out the doors of Sydney's Town Hall, proclaimed that "legislation against any influx of Asiatic labour we shall regard simply as a matter of course. As to Polynesian or kanaka labour, if we were at the beginning of it now we should have an equally strong objection …. We shall ensure the gradual abolition of the importation of these people."[37] Later that year, Senator Josiah Symon advocated not just white Australia, but British Australia. "We are nearly all of us agreed," he announced:

> That Australia is peculiarly fitted to be the home of the British race….we should make Australia the resort and the home of ourselves, of our children, and of all of the same blood who choose to come here…. I do not extend it even to other white races. I am, and always have been, an advocate of keeping Australia … for those of British blood, so far as we possibly can.[38]

With white, British Australia a cornerstone of federation, Australia's immigration focus remained solidly affixed to this ideal for decades to come.

Prior to federation, each colony appointed agents-general in London who served as immigration officials. This system continued for several decades after federation,[39] and the states also retained responsibility for assisted immigration, though they attempted to secure Commonwealth support. Though PM Fisher would not agree to

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[35] Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia*, 139-41.
[36] Alexander, *Australia since Federation*, 9-10.
[37] Edmund Barton, *SMH*, 18 January 1901, 7-8.
[38] Josiah Symon, Sen, no.48, Pacific Island Labourers Bill, 28 November 1901, First Parliament, First Session, 7986-7.
[39] Frank Bongiorno, "Appendix 3. Who Were the Early Agents-General?" in *The High Commissioners: Australia's Representatives in the United Kingdom, 1910-2010*, eds Carl Bridge, Frank Bongiorno, and David Lee, Barton, ACT: Dept of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2010, 241-245

provide funds, PM Cook agreed to subsidise state schemes.[40] With the onset of war, state immigration departments severely curtailed operations and numbers aspiring to emigrate also declined. Though immigration was extremely reduced, it did not cease altogether. Immigration during this period was mostly British and, as most of these had been nominated prior to the war by guarantors in Australia or selected by immigration officials, their passages were already booked.[41] In 1915, New South Wales and Victoria agreed on a policy to actively seek domestic servants, nominated passengers and juveniles. Also at this time, while at a federal level several Labor and a few Liberal politicians opposed continuing immigration, the Millions Club in Sydney was urging PM William Hughes to ensure the advertising of Australia did not wane, for it believed that when war ceased there would be vast numbers of settlers keen to emigrate.[42]

Langfield asserts that despite a prevailing assumption that the trend was towards increasing immigration until interrupted by WWI, the contrary was actually the case. She observes that for several reasons, such as the state of the economy, reduced labour demand and higher shipping fares, immigration had drastically declined long before the war. The onset of war saw immigration and its encouragement almost completely cease and the hiatus provided opportunities for existing policies to be rescrutinised, modified and reformulated. As the states had faced severe difficulties for over eighteen months, notes Langfield, the war afforded them an escape from "an embarrassing and costly situation." As such, policy changes made in 1914

[40] Alexander, *Australia since Federation*, 31.
[41] Michele Langfield, "Recruiting Immigrants: The First World War and Australian Immigration," *Journal of Australian Studies* 23, no.60 (1999): 56.
[42] Langfield, "Recruiting Immigrants," 56-57.

immediately before war broke out were reversed while changes intended to be put into effect upon active resumption of immigration after the war were disregarded.[43]

Defence and debt

With war's end imminent, in 1918 Australian governments intensified their focus on the immediate post-war period. The two dominant concerns were to shore up the country against the perceived threat of invasion and to reduce the national debt, which had increased dramatically during the war. Key to alleviating both concerns was an increased population. Increasing and re-distributing the population would, it was believed, generate development and secure a legitimate hold upon the land. Senator John Earle articulated prevailing concerns when he stated:

> We have in Australia a rich continent, some 13,000 miles in circumference, capable of producing all that is required by the human race, and occupied by less than 5,000,000 people. We all recognise that we hold this country absolutely and solely owing to the protection which the British Empire gives us. If it were not for the British Empire, with its Navy and other instrumentalities for the protection of Australia, we could not hold it for three months. We must, and do, recognise that fact; but it is our duty to use every effort to relieve the Mother Country and the Empire of that responsibility by increasing our own population.[44]

William Archibald, Nationalist member for Hindmarsh, warned "we must always recollect that the population of Australia is only 5,000,000." He added that unless there was a rapid increase in the population, Australia's capacity for military defence would be seriously limited. Noting that Australia was "still part of the far-flung British Empire" and Britain was likely to cooperate to "insure the adequate defence of the Pacific," Archibald urged that, after the war, Australia should survey its

[43] Langfield, "Recruiting Immigrants," 55.
[44] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, Sen Official Hansard, no.12, 1920, Governor-General's Speech: Address-in-Reply, John Earle, 12 March 1920, 366.

position and consider what to do according to its population. "Because we possess an island continent almost as big as Europe," he reasoned:

> It cannot be argued that we should spend money for the purpose of protecting it in proportion to its size. That would be an insane project. We are limited, as to the amount of money we can spend for this purpose, by our population, and by the protection that our relations with Great Britain will afford us.[45]

While Britain's support was generally accepted as certain, Australia's recognition of the need for planning and action on population increase met with a positive response from Britain, which also saw benefits in a migration programme.

Across the nation, an effect of the war had been to stimulate fervour for immigration so Australia could remain a thriving white, British nation. Of immediate concern as a military threat was Japan, perceived as desirous of Australia's spaces. Fear of invasion flourished, fostered by such reports as that in the *Morning Bulletin*, which stated, "Were the artificial barriers between them thrown down, and the protection of the British navy withdrawn, China and Japan could sweep the white Australian working man cleanly and swiftly out of existence."[46] Voicing concerns over the defence implications of Australia's meagre population, federal and state politicians espoused large-scale immigration as the solution.

William Fleming, Nationalist member for Robertson, claimed "it is generally recognised that the only way to hold this country for white men is by adopting a sound immigration policy and by increasing production."[47] Edwin Kerby, Nationalist member for Ballarat, observed that:

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[45] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, HOR Official Hansard, no.42, 1918, Loan Bill (No.2), William Archibald, 17 October 1918, 7054.
[46] "Australia: Land of the Golden Fleece," *Morning Bulletin* (Rockhampton), 10 July 1924, 13.
[47] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, HOR Official Hansard, no.11, 1920, Debate on Supply Bill (No.4), William Fleming, 10 March 1920, 277.

> Here we have an area greater than that of the United States of America yet we have only 5,000,000 inhabiting it. We have to increase our population. We… need assistance in dealing with the great Defence problems that are arising. The best way in which we can immediately increase our population is by encouraging a suitable type of immigrant to come to Australia.[48]

Some, such as Senator Thomas Glasgow, invoked a moral imperative. A country so thinly populated as Australia, located in a region where people were "fighting for elbowroom," claimed Glasgow, had no "moral right to retain" the land if it could not people it.[49] When Senator Pratten called for an allocation of funds to construct temporary parliamentary buildings in the new national capital, Canberra, Senator James Guthrie suggested money should instead be spent on "such reproductive works as … immigration." When the "cheapest way to defend the country is to populate it," he lamented, not nearly sufficient was being spent on immigration. "Instead of throwing away £150,000 on iron huts at Canberra," he suggested immigration funding be substantially increased from the "paltry sum of £100,000."[50]

In May 1918 Senator Allan McDougall exhorted Australia to build up its industries so the country could "carry millions of population," for only by such means could the nation be secure. "Until we have sufficient people in Australia," he stressed, "it cannot be considered impregnable. We cannot expect to hold the country with the handful of people we have here now. The one thing necessary to enable us to retain this country is a sufficient population." McDougall included the rider that "that population must be a white population." Concomitant with the white ideal was

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[48] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, HOR Official Hansard, no.9, 1920, Preparation of Address-in-Reply to Governor-General's Opening Speech, Edwin Kerby, 26 February 1920, 55.
[49] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, Sen Official Hansard, no.48, 1920, Debate on Appropriation Bill, Thomas Glasgow, 24 November 1920, 6884.
[50] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, Sen Official Hansard, no.40, 1920, Debate on Loan Bill, James Guthrie, 1 October 1920, 5229-30.

Britishness.[51] It was generally agreed that to strengthen the nation's defences its vast unoccupied and unutilized areas would need to be settled and made productive.

Acknowledging that sparsely populated Australia would struggle to defend its extensive boundaries, the Australian government committed to vigorously pursue immigration. A "Secret" telegram from Hughes to Acting PM Watt read:

> If we are to hold Australia and develop its tremendous resources we must have numerous population. The time is rapidly approaching - it is indeed at hand - when demobilization of British Army will offer unique opportunity of securing right type of immigrant. The glorious exploits of our soldiers have given Australia magnificent and priceless advertisement. Tens of thousands of men in prime of life, who would make most desirable settlers on soil, and who will be disinclined to remain in Britain, will be soon released from army…. If we want to get men we must bestir ourselves immediately. What is wanted is concerted action, unified control this end, proper handling by States in Australia, and shipping facilities….approach States, call conference to state definitely and in detail what they are prepared to do towards finding land farms for British soldiers; of course care Australian soldier being our first and sacred duty.[52]

On 30 December Hughes again telegrammed Watt on a "secret" matter "of vital importance" to state that "Australia simply must have more people and of right sort." Hughes observed that thousands of British soldiers unsettled by war did not want to remain in Britain. He was confident that if Watt could get the states to agree to proposals - adding an assurance that authority over their own state would not be lessened - the Agents General and High Commissioner would work in harmony on immigration.

As an outcome of the 1920 Conference of Senior Officers of the Australian Military Forces, Australia's Department of Defence produced a report entitled "Military

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[51] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, Sen Official Hansard, no.21, 1918, Income Tax Assessment Bill 1917-1918, Allan McDougall, 22 May 1918, 4905.
[52] NAA, Canberra: A3934, SC23/1, Emigration of British Soldiers to Australia, 1918-1919, W M Hughes, decipher of cablegram, 5 November 1918.

Defence of Australia." Outlining major concerns and possible solutions, the report offered compelling reasons for population increase. It concluded in part that:

> The great natural resources of Australia, coupled with the sparseness of her settlement, render her desirable in the eyes of any nation with a limited territory and a large population. Our extended coast-line and the fact that the greater part of our population and of our secondary industries, as well as much of our primary resources, is at the coast, make Australia peculiarly vulnerable to attack. When to this is added the fact that, at least, one fundamental tenet of Australian policy – the maintenance of a White Australia – is easily capable of being made a *casus belli*, apart from all other considerations, it becomes clear that Australia cannot hope that good intentions, however pacific, will prove an efficacious guarantee against attack. [53]

The report detailed where such a threat could arise. Noting that Japan's population was 76,000,000 it:

> Estimated that Japan could, without difficulty, place in the field an army of 600,000 men…. There is reason to believe that the shipping available to Japan would enable … [it] to transport an army of 100,000 men fully equipped in one convoy….it is probable that she could land troops at almost any place desired on the Australian coast….it must be conceded that Australia is exposed to the danger of invasion…. There are distinct limits to the capacity of 5,000,000 people adequately to defend on shore so great and undeveloped a country as Australia.[54]

Of further note was that though northern Australia was particularly vulnerable, it was neither possible nor practicable to increase defence bases in the region because resources, finances and service personnel were insufficient and communication and transport facilities were grossly inadequate. The report confirmed the Australian government's conviction that a rapid population increase was imperative for defence, especially in rural and regional areas. In January 1921 Hughes delivered an address at the Australian Natives' Association Annual Luncheon where applause resounded

[53] NAA, Canberra: The Shedden Collection, A5954, 797/1, Report on the Military Defence of Australia by a Conference of Senior Officers of the Australian Military Forces Volume 1, 1920.
[54] *Ibid*.

when he proclaimed that, to secure Australia's future, "a national spirit was needed" and "efforts should be concentrated to encourage immigration."[55]

After the war, Britain perceived another distinct threat. This was to the empire's strength and viability from extensive reliance upon foreign goods. Britain determined it should look to the empire's member nations in order to become self-sufficient. If the dominions provided raw materials while Britain supplied capital and finished products, empire self-sufficiency could result, but dominion populations would need boosting.[56] The Royal Colonial Institute commissioned Christopher Turnor and Edmund Jowett to compile the report "British Empire Land Settlement for Ex-Service Men." Presented in January 1920, the report found that "rapid and effective placing of settlers upon the land" was essential from both imperial and national perspectives for every British Empire nation. Increased agricultural development was considered vital for three main reasons. First, if all empire food requirements were produced within it, imports would reduce and thereby improve the international exchange rate. Second, to "recuperate quickly from the effects of the war," the empire should develop new sources of wealth. Land was advocated as the best source of new wealth. Third, the "best way to get cheap food" and settle "labour unrest caused by dear food," would be to increase production from available empire land. The implication for Australia was that a desirable course would be to settle returning soldiers "considered suitable for agricultural life" upon the land. The report observed, however, that even when all suitable Australian soldiers had been settled, vast tracts of agricultural land would remain available. British ex-servicemen were

[55] "Australia's Progress," *Brisbane Courier*, 1 February 1921, 7.
[56] Langfield, "Recruiting Immigrants," 55-64.

therefore encouraged to settle on the land in Australia. Britain supported emigration to Australia as this suited its purposes for nation and empire.[57]

Keen to reduce the massive national debt incurred during the war, Australia saw industry and development as vital. Hughes and others considered this achievable only if immigration increased. "We have to increase our population," exhorted Edwin Kerby, Nationalist member for Ballarat, because "we want assistance in shouldering our financial burdens."[58] Senator Herbert Pratten advocated "the necessity of greatly stimulating production of every kind," particularly "the production of metals, the building of ships, and the manufacture of munitions of war." Though war was a "drain upon the resources of the Commonwealth in men and money," reasoned Senator Thomas Bakhap, should it prove the "catalyst for a leap forward in production … because of the prosperity resulting from the stimulation of our industries" it would be a "blessing in disguise."[59]

At a 1919 public meeting in Brisbane, Hughes informed the three-thousand-strong crowd that Australia had accrued a debt of £400,000,000, the burden of which would fall upon "every citizen and every branch of human activity… and the only thing to do was produce more and more and more." Rousing cheers resounded when he proclaimed that the key to Australia's prosperity was land settlement.[60] He reiterated this message in a policy speech delivered later in Bendigo. "If Australia is to become a great nation," he stated:

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[57] NAA, Canberra: A458, G154/7 PART 1, Immigration Encouragement: Main policy file, 1919-1924, Part 1, 1919-1924Christopher Turnor and Edmund Jowett, Report, "British Empire Land Settlement for Ex-Service Men," January 1920.
[58] HOR Official Hansard, no.9, 1920, Kerby.
[59] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, Sen Official Hansard, no.4, 1918, Supply Bill (No.5) 1917-1918, Thomas Bakhap, 23 January 1918, 3425.
[60] "The Evening Meeting: Prime Minister Ovationed," *Brisbane Courier*, 22 October 1919, 7.

> Its greatness must rest upon the basis of land settlement. National safety, the economic, social and financial welfare of the nation, make the adoption of an effective policy of land settlement imperative. This great Commonwealth, which could easily support in comfort 100,000,000 people – with its illimitable resources, its rich soil, its great mineral wealth – has now but 5,000,000, more than half of whom throng our great cities. Our huge debt, our isolation, point to us the road we must travel if we would avert national ruin. [61]

Now citing a £740,000,000, debt Hughes reasoned that if Australia had ten million people it would not only halve its "great debt per head, but should produce double the amount of wealth." Pledging to foster primary industry conditions that would induce overseas kin to emigrate, he won the crowd's approval.[62]

Not all, however, were convinced that immigration was the solution to the debt and defence crises, particularly regarding employment. Tasmanian Senator John Earle endeavoured to convince doubters by arguing that:

> Every person who comes to the country not only produces more, but assists to consume more. Although he may compete in one line of industry with those who are already here, he necessarily adds a customer to many other lines of industry, and so adds to the prosperity of the nation as a whole. If we have more people the continent of Australia will be rendered safer for the white races, there will be less taxation per head, and the national debt … will also be less per head.[63]

When Senator Herbert Pratten presented a case of struggling New South Wales jam manufacturers, Queensland Senator Matthew Reid offered immigration as the solution. Noting the "great tracts of sugar country which could be settled," Reid argued that Australia most needed a large population increase to alleviate financial burdens. "Instead of asking the Government to reduce the price of sugar," he

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[61] "Mr. Hughes's Policy Speech," *Argus*, 31 October 1919, 8.
[62] *Ibid.*
[63] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, Sen Official Hansard, no.42, 1920, Debate on Supply Bill (No.4), John Earle, 13 October 1920, 5531.

charged, "Senator Pratten would be doing greater service to our secondary industries if he vigorously advocated immigration.[64]

Henry Pigott, Nationalist member for Calare, exhorted the government to act swiftly on the matter so as not to lose what he considered a great advantage afforded Australia during the war. "While our boys were at the Front," Pigott explained:

> They proved the very best immigration agents we could have had. They spoke of the attractions Australia held out; and while the iron is hot, I think the Government should send some of our returned soldiers to America, Great Britain, France, and other Allied countries to address associations of ex-soldiers of those countries and endeavour to induce the best of them to emigrate to Australia. We have a huge continent, as big as Europe, with only 5,000,000 people in it, and every immigrant we get will help to share the burden of debt which is now crushing us down.[65]

William Finlayson, ALP member for Brisbane, observed that Australia was "faced with a load of debt and heavy commitments," and agreed that the "only remedy [was] to produce, produce, produce," and "in order to produce, we must have population." The difficulty he perceived was "Where are we to get it?"[66]

The "right type"

Though desire for immigrants was strong, who constituted a desirable immigrant was debated. In a policy speech delivered in Bendigo in October 1919 Hughes stated that, despite the urgent need for immigrants, they should be of the "right sort" and settle in the "right place." Australia, he assured his audience, would not become "a dumping ground for the world's refuse population," nor would immigrants settle in "already

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[64] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, Sen Official Hansard, no.35, 1919, Debate on Commercial Activities Bill, Matthew Reid, 28 August 1919, 12027.
[65] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, HOR Official Hansard, no.37, 1919, Debate on Supply Bill (No.2), Henry Pigott, 12 September 1919, 12305.
[66] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, HOR Official Hansard, no.35, 1919, Debate on Immigration Bill, William Finlayson, 27 August 1919, 11981.

overcrowded cities." The government's immigration policy was quite clear, he insisted, for it "clearly recognises the urgent need for more population. And it is going to get it. We shall seek the right kind – Britishers, soldiers, and farmers especially."[67] "We want white people," declared Senator Earle, "we want, if we can get them, those of our own kith and kin. We want English, Irish, Welsh, and Scotch people. We want to encourage them here by the thousands."[68]

In 1921, the newly-established Country Party released its political platform which, under the heading "Australian National Spirit," committed to the "encouragement of a national spirit among the Australian people for the ideal of a White Australia and the integrity of the British Empire." Race and nationality, though priorities, were not the only factors determining the right type of immigrant. Along with physical health and moral character, a migrant's skills and experience were important. The Country Party's policy document advocated "a vigorous immigration policy, care being taken in the selection of immigrants, and preference being given to agriculturists, farm labourers, and domestic servants of British origin."[69]

Rather exceptionally, Finlayson argued that as Britain could not provide enough immigrants, Australia should not allow unfavourable wartime prejudices towards Germans, Austrians, Hungarians, Bulgarians and Turks to be written into a bill that would prohibit admission to thousands of potentially worthy immigrants. He was "opposed to making any discrimination against another country" because, he reasoned, "each nation has its good points as well as its bad points, and our

[67] "Mr. Hughes's Policy Speech," *Argus*, 8.
[68] Sen Official Hansard, no.12, 1920, Earle, 366.
[69] Australian Country Party, *Federal Political Platform of the Country Party* (Sydney: Australian Country Party, 1921), np.

immigration laws should be wide enough to take the best of any country."[70] While this stance received scant support, some Australians did not even want British immigrants.

In 1919, James Fenton, ALP member for Maribyrnong, took issue with introducing "foreigners," even if they were British, particularly if it meant that Britain would be ridding itself of its less desirable citizens.[71] During debate on a bill to grant families tax exemptions, he declared:

> A country's best assets are its children. When we have found employment for our own people it is well to think of immigration – to bring to Australia people of our own kith and kin – but we could have no better asset than Australian-born babies. There is, unfortunately, a decline in our birth rate…. Australia is the brightest and best piece of God's earth, and if we are not the best people in the world we ought to be…. I agree with [Jowett] that anything calculated to encourage large families in Australia is well worth doing.[72]

Norman Makin, ALP member for Hindmarsh, was also reluctant to endorse large-scale migration, even of British people, unless he could be certain that Australian workers were secure in the labour market. He did not wish, he explained, "to be accused of advocating a great influx of immigrants without first looking into the employment conditions of those already here." Makin insisted Australian workers' conditions should be assured before implementing an extensive immigration policy.[73] Fenton believed that "the waste places of this continent should be filled as quickly as possible with a virile population," and "that our best type of immigrant is the Australian born baby." He was, he said, "sounding a note of warning that we do not

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[70] HOR Official Hansard, no.35, 1919, Finlayson, 11989-90.
[71] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, HOR Official Hansard, no.41, 1919, Debate on Income Tax Bill (No.3), James Fenton, 9 October 1919, 13237.
[72] *Ibid.*
[73] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, HOR Official Hansard, no.10, 1920, Debate on Supply, Norman Makin, 4 March 1920, 178.

want this country to be made the dumping ground for Great Britain's surplus female population."[74]

Some Australian citizens agreed, as evidenced in a letter to the *Sydney Morning Herald* (*SMH*) from "A Father" who wrote:

> No one denies the need for population, and better than any of the past schemes of immigration or importation of either white or black labour is the peopling of the land by native-born Australians…. It is, however, to be hoped that the scheme recently outlined and advocated for some form of national endowment to parents after the second child, under certain prescribed conditions, shall become law…. Such legislation would … increase population, and ultimately advance the industries and defences of the country.[75]

One reason British immigration did not please all Australians is that during the war, "while the pick of Australia's young men had gone to fight, immigrants were being encouraged to fill their places at home." Antipathy towards immigration is evident in the poem, "Hysteric Immigration," submitted to the *Northern Territory Times and Gazette* in 1914:

> If, on the altar of hysteric immigration,
> We offer as a sacrifice a nation,
> Then why not forego our rights to Heaven above
> When we give to others all the land we love,
> (For patriotism is next to Godliness itself;
> Oh, pity the patriot in the Commonwealth.)
> We offer up to them all our born rights
> If they'll only come along and choose the sites
> Of where they'll dwell.
> Even though they bring along a living hell
> Of centuries of unjust laws and squalid wrongs,
> And crowd our country with revengeful throngs.
> In the old land - away across the brine,
> We offer, five, and hawk our cheap sunshine;
> And thus full seven times of our native population
> We invite to come along by immigration.
> We know not what we offer - that's the truth,
> For we also offer up the polling booth.

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[74] HOR Official Hansard, no.11, 1920, Debate on Supply Bill (No.4, James Fenton, 11 March 1920, 316-317.
[75] A Father, "The Australian Family," *SMH*, 21 January 1918, 8.

> But this is not our land - merely "our colonies,"
> They own it all - the seas, the land, the skies, the trees -
> We're patronised by aliens, who win the nation's polls;
> We have no national feeling - we're only mere creoles.[76]

Many Australians were reluctant to introduce thousands of immigrants, particularly when Australian ex-servicemen were due to return and settle on the land. This so bothered Australian trade unions and labour councils that Hughes assured the Australian public and unions that "for the duration of the war, no such labour would be imported." His assurance, however, followed an incident that had already outraged many, when groups of Maltese, who were British subjects, and Greeks arrived. Hughes responded by ensuring such immigrants were prohibited from 1916 to July 1920.[77] Some politicians elucidated the possible social impacts of escalating immigration. "No country in the world has greater need of immigration than has Australia," conceded Senator John Newland:

> But we have to be very careful.… We are obliged to get people from overseas; but, whilst we are told that a great many people in the Old World are anxious to come here, we must see that only the right class is imported….we do not want the men from the cities; we have enough men and women in our cities now. The people we require are those who will go out back and do the pioneering work, developing the country, instead of walking the gaslit streets of the cities. In getting population from overseas we must be careful also to see that, in the first place, our returned soldiers are adequately provided for. They must be the first care and charge of the people of Australia, and every soldier who wants land, and can furnish proof of his capability or probable capability of working it successfully, must be given an opportunity to secure it. Then, again, we must be careful that no injustice is done to the people who are already in Australia, and that those who are anxious and prepared to work are not shouldered aside by newcomers from other countries. Subject to these precautions, we can proceed with our immigration scheme at the earliest possible moment.[78]

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[76] W McG, "Hysteric Immigration," *Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, 26 March 1914, 5.
[77] Langfield, "Recruiting Immigrants," 57-58.
[78] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, Sen Official Hansard, no.9, 1920, Governor-General's Speech: Address in Reply, John Newland, 26 February 1920, 24-25.

The government's ambition was, however, to fulfil its need for people, though with the "right type" to maintain a white Australia.

In 1919, Hughes's press liaison officer, Gullett, attended the Paris Peace Conference where the participants' overt "lust of territory" both disturbed him and impressed upon him Australia's vulnerability. Impelled to write and publish the booklet, *Unguarded Australia: A Plea for Immigration*, Gullett drew attention to Australia's vast, scantly occupied areas and persuasively argued that "immigration was defence."[79] A *Western Mail* review of Gullett's book suggested:

> Australians will require to look less askance at the immigrant and cease to regard him as an interloper. The word 'pommy,' which has found its way into our vocabulary, instead of being a term of reproach ought to be rather a term of friendship. After all, we or our fathers have all been pommies, and one of the charms of Australia – one of the facts which recommend it is that it is essentially British…. This is a fact of rare advertising value, and ought to be made the most of.[80]

Australia, remarked a *SMH* review:

> has had no adequate and systematic immigration policy; the trades unions have been actively hostile and others who should have known better have, from timidity or lukewarmness, failed to make the most of their opportunities. Mr. Gullett appeals to Australians to realise the issues involved. He is quite aware that a forward immigration policy must expect to encounter opposition, but he thinks that it is surmountable, and he throws out some practical suggestions in that direction. His eloquent plea should make an impression on all thoughtful Australians.[81]

Mr William Smith of Currabubula wrote that Gullett's book should "receive the earnest consideration of every Australian as a true warning."[82]

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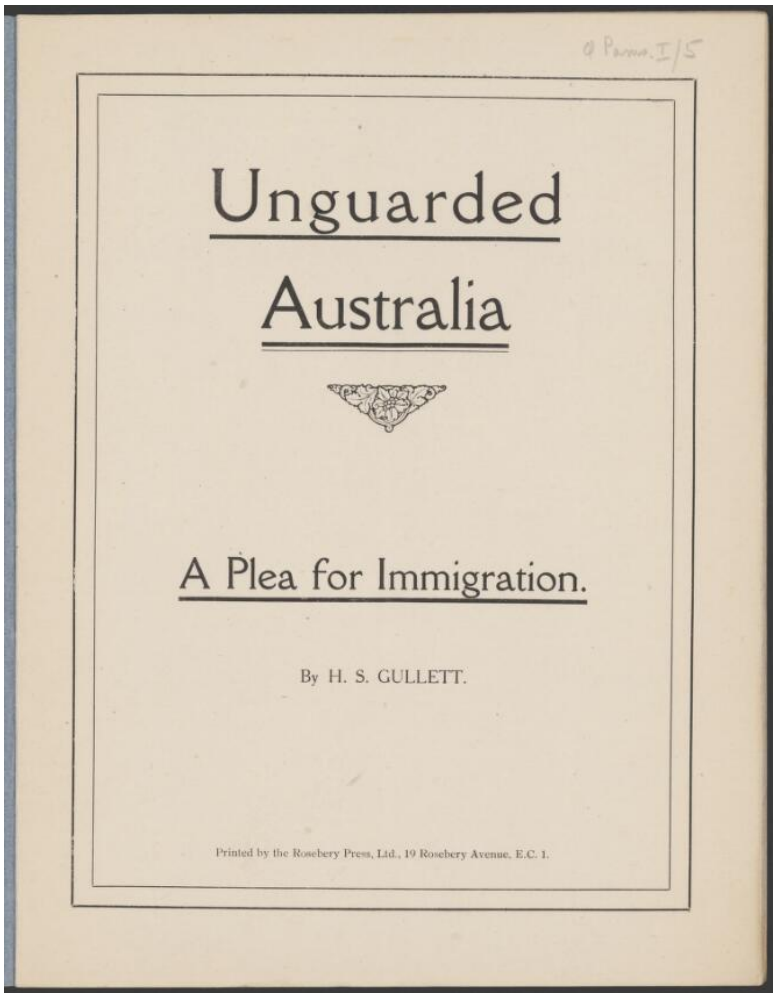
[79] A J Hill, Gullett, "Sir Henry Somer (Harry) (1878-1940)," *ADB*, National Centre of Biography, ANU, published first in hardcopy 1983, http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A090132b.htm
[80] "Unguarded Australia," *Western Mail* (Perth), 10 July 1919, 27.
[81] "Unguarded Australia," *SMH*, 26 July 1919, 8.
[82] "Readers' Views," *Land* (Sydney), 8 August 1919, 9.



Pl.2 Gullett's influential sixteen-page pamphlet covered a comprehensive range of issues, all of which were germane to existing and ensuing immigration debates. The topics included: Lust for Land, Our Safety, People Mean Peace, Immigration is Defence, Australia Must Carry 100,000,000 People, Deep-rooted Antagonism, Attitude of the Employer, Trades Union Hostility, Our Soldiers First, Supply of Farm Workers, Domestic Servants, The Immigrant's Attitude, and more.[83]

While the desirability of immigration and who constituted a desirable immigrant were challenging issues, how to convince immigrants of Australia's desirability was also a challenge. In considering the processes of attracting and settling British ex-servicemen upon the land in Australia, the Turner- Jowett report stressed the importance of having strategies in place to ensure success. As Australia had neglected to make any "special effort" to "secure her fair share of migration," British migrants gravitated to less remote countries such as the United States and Canada.

[83] Gullett, *Unguarded Australia*.

Turnor and Jowett cautioned that if Australia continued to neglect attracting migrants, it would continue to lose the "pick of the settlers." As Australia was "undoubtedly the most important part of the Empire to fill with English speaking people," it was imperative that the Commonwealth and state governments implement effective procedures as soon as possible.[84]

Commonwealth and states

Devastating though the war was, it was perceived to have galvanized national pride and a cohesive sense of nationhood. "During the past few years," effused Finlayson, "a fine national spirit has been growing in Australia. Great strides have been made towards the realization that Australia is not a mere Federation of States, but is becoming a nation."[85] Henry Gregory, Nationalist member for Dampier, claimed it was the "individuality and personality, as well as that trait of originality, which during the late war won for our people their claim for nationhood." [86] Obvious to Jowett was the advantage to be gained by capitalising on that sentiment to pursue nation-building through immigration. "If after the war we have to endeavour to lay again the foundations of national greatness," he asked, "on what basis can we hope to build, if we have a population that is stationary, if not actually diminishing!"[87] A policy of "organised and scientific settlement" was advocated in which groups of approximately two hundred British men would be placed on the land with individual holdings of no more than one hundred acres, and close enough to each other to

[84] NAA: A458, G154/7 PART 1, Turnor and Jowett.
[85] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, HOR Official Hansard, no.3, 1918, Supply Bill (No.5) 1917-1918, William Finlayson, 18 January 1918, 3277.
[86] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, HOR Official Hansard, no.17, 1921, Tariff, Henry Gregory, 27 April 1921, 7795.
[87] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, HOR Official Hansard, no.20, 1918, Income Tax Assessment Bill, Edmund Jowett, 15 May 1918, 4690.

"obtain the full benefits – social and economic – of community life." This, it was considered, would reduce the risk of failure to settle successfully and avert country to city drift.[88] This, however, required co-operation between the Commonwealth and six State governments.

With formerly independent colonies yoked as states into a federation, national issues often provoked recalcitrance rather than co-operation. "When Australia was divided into petty States," waxed John West, ALP member for East Sydney:

> People had a very limited idea of national life, but when the Commonwealth was inaugurated the people stepped on to the broad path of nationhood, the Australian spirit and sentiment began to grow, and we accepted our responsibilities as a nation.[89]

Yet Senator William Senior of South Australia bemoaned that "twenty years ago there was… a sounder national outlook" with "a larger conception of our individual and national responsibilities than today" when "we appear scarcely to realize that we are on the threshold of nationhood." The Australian parliament, urged Senior, should "function in the truest sense of the word" and all "State jealousies should be absent from … deliberations."[90] Senator Patrick Lynch of Western Australia reminded Senator Guthrie of South Australia that:

> Up to the present the people of South Australia have not expressed much gratitude for relief from the burden which the Commonwealth lifted from their shoulders, and which, by the way my vote helped to lift. The Northern Territory was South Australia's nightmare - a crushing incubus - for years until the Commonwealth made it the chief concern for the whole of Australia. The Commonwealth also took over that derelict railway… which… kept the railway finances of South Australia in a hopelessly chaotic condition.[91]

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[88] NAA: A458, G154/7 PART 1, Turnor and Jowett.
[89] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, HOR Official Hansard, no.22, 1921, Tariff, John West, 2 June 1921, 8833-8834.
[90] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, Sen Official Hansard, no.41, 1921, Supply Bill (No.3), William Senior, 13 October 1921, 11926.
[91] Sen Official Hansard, no.12, 1920, Adjournment, Patrick Lynch, 18 March 1920, 513.

Lynch also pointed out that "Victoria and New South Wales likewise benefited from Federation." [92] Finlayson asserted that "the States have still too much power, and should long ago have surrendered to the Commonwealth a large part of the powers they possess."[93] States' rivalries and jealous guarding against Commonwealth intrusion impeded consensus on the delineation of immigration responsibilities.

To implement its immigration scheme the Commonwealth needed to convince the six state governments that they would not be unduly burdened with financial and social responsibilities for immigrants. The fragmentary nature of immigration, in which the Commonwealth and six state governments operated independently, was a significant impediment. No immigration scheme could go ahead successfully, argued Earle Page, Farmers' and Settlers' Association member for Cowper, without altering the Constitution to allow the Commonwealth complete control. Page decried the system in which each state had representatives and agents in London counterproductively vying against each other to attract immigrants and which saw the states, when "not actually decrying each other… vaunting their own particular State."[94] Pigott had earlier noted that while there was "an Immigration Bureau controlled by the Federal Government and similar bodies under the control of the several States," they all existed "for the common purpose of encouraging people to come to Australia." He advocated that immigration be solely the Commonwealth's responsibility as "it matters not if an immigrant settles in New South Wales, Victoria, or any of the other

[92] *Ibid*.
[93] HOR Official Hansard, no.3, 1918, Finlayson, 3277.
[94] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, HOR Official Hansard, no.12, 1920, Governor-General's Speech: Address-in-Reply, Earl Page, 17 March 1920, 471.

States; he becomes a citizen of the Commonwealth."[95] Kerby also observed the folly of multiple immigration policies, stating:

> We have in the United Kingdom at the present time, hundreds of thousands of discharged soldiers who are awaiting an opportunity to come to Australia, but, unfortunately, we have in London six different States with six different immigration policies, each practically working against the other. We have no co-ordination of effort…. If the Commonwealth Government would set to work to co-ordinate the efforts of the States, giving us unity of purpose, and advertising, not one part of Australia, but the whole of it, we should secure a suitable type of immigrant… and induce such people to come here in their thousands.[96]

Hughes sought to end the situation of six states touting for immigrants by presenting a paper to a Premiers' Conference in May 1920 proposing that the Commonwealth assume responsibility for assisted migration and for creating a central body to do so.

Hughes succeeded in gaining the premiers' endorsements and, at a further conference in July, the states formally agreed to the scheme.[97] The landmark agreement (hereafter referred to as the Joint Agreement) read in part:

> Joint Commonwealth and States' Immigration Scheme
>
> In 1920 an arrangement was arrived at between the Commonwealth and State Governments under which the Commonwealth is responsible for the recruiting of immigrants abroad and for their transport to Australia; whilst the State Governments advise the Commonwealth as to the numbers and classes of immigrants which they are prepared to receive. Briefly stated, the Commonwealth selects the immigrant according to the requirements of the State concerned and brings him to Australia; and on his arrival the State Government assumes the responsibility for placing him in employment or upon the land. Incidentally, the Commonwealth undertakes all publicity and propaganda in connexion with the encouragement of immigration.[98]

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[95] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, HOR Official Hansard, no.27, 1919, Ministerial Statement, Henry Pigott, 3 July 1919, 10456.
[96] HOR Official Hansard, no.9, 1920, Kerby.
[97] Roe, *Australia, Britain, and Migration*, 20-21.
[98] ABS, *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia, vol 17 (1924)*, comp Chas H Wickens, ed John Stonham (Melbourne: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, 1924), 944, http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/1301.01924?OpenDocument.

Whereas previously immigration encouragement and advertising had been a state responsibility, when the Immigration Act took effect in 1921 the Commonwealth assumed control. The Joint Agreement allowed each state to determine how many assisted migrants it would take and with what skills while the Commonwealth exercised selective measures in securing immigrants.[99] Notably, the Joint Agreement referred to "assisted" immigrants, that is, those the government considered desirable and was prepared to offer financial assistance for passage costs. "Nominated" immigrants, however, would be the responsibility of their nominators – usually family or employers – and would be required to fund their own passage.[100]

Notwithstanding state rivalries, the Joint Agreement facilitated a concerted and co-ordinated immigration campaign. Hughes further aided this by appointing Percy Hunter as Director of Migration and Settlement in London, and Gullett as Commonwealth Superintendent of Immigration in Australia. Hunter had formerly held the position of Victorian and New South Wales Director of Immigration, during which time he had investigated tourism and immigration possibilities and worked towards recruiting British and northern European emigrants to Australia.[101] Gullett was a journalist who had served in the war, first as an official Australian correspondent, then as an enlisted soldier. Gullett was a fervent proponent of immigration as vital for Australia's defence and development. Even prior to the war, he published several newspaper articles relating to migration and development and in 1914 published a handbook titled *The Opportunity in Australia*. In this guide, he discussed what land was available for settlement and offered advice to immigrants

[99] Langfield, "Recruiting Immigrants," 55.
[100] Roe, *Australia, Britain, and Migration*, 22.
[101] "Australian Immigration: Northern Europe as a Field," *Mercury* (Hobart), 12 January 1914, 3.

with or without capital.[102] Upon returning to Australia in 1920, Gullett happily accepted Hughes's invitation to the position of Commonwealth Superintendent of Immigration.

Though politicians largely accepted the necessity for increased immigration, both politicians and the public contested how much funding it should receive and at the expense of what other projects. Responding to a 1920 *SMH* article appealing "to Australia to make the most of the present invaluable opportunity to secure the right immigrants," Florette S Herring described how some organisations, such as the YWCA and the Household Service Association, had endeavoured to do so by implementing housing schemes, hostels, and domestic service training schools. She lamented, however, that these organisations could do little unless the government backed them. "It is of no use," she argued, "stating the kind of immigrants we desire unless we also give definite information as to conditions, provide hostels for receiving them, and see that the work we ask them to do is honoured, and that the people we ask to come and help us are welcomed as brothers and sisters."[103]

Gullett's conviction of immigration's centrality to Australia's development and defence saw him committed to ensuring the programme received every chance to succeed. Gullett pressed upon Hughes his idea for an organisation that would ensure successful settlement by attending to immigrants' needs. Extensive immigration would necessitate careful planning to cater for housing and employment needs and to liaise with the general public, various interest groups, and representatives of the regional and rural areas where governments intended to settle immigrants. He found

[102] H S Gullett, *The Opportunity in Australia* (London: The Field & Queen (Horace Cox), 1914).
[103] Florette S Herring, "Immigration," *SMH*, 23 January 1920, 6.

in Hughes a receptive ear and, from such concerns, the New Settlers' League of Australia arose. The league would promote the cause of immigration, welcome immigrants and attend to their needs. It would also assist the federal and state governments with immigration processes, liaise with community organisations and the public, seek and promote development projects that would generate employment or the opening of land for farming, and see immigrants successfully integrate into their communities. As the Joint Agreement took effect, Gullett set about establishing what would become a vast and vigorous network of NSL branches that would span the continent and, in some states, attain several decades' longevity.

CHAPTER TWO:

"Preach Always the Gospel of Immigration"

"Let us all – citizens and officials, pull cordially together in this great nation-building effort," appealed H S Gullett, Commonwealth Superintendent of Immigration, "and preach always the gospel of immigration."[1] This call for citizens and officials to co-operate characterised the formation of the New Settlers' League of Australia. While the Joint Agreement saw responsibilities for immigration allocated between the Commonwealth and states, it effectively resulted in a third level of responsibility. In this level, Australian citizens would administer the practical and personal elements of immigrant settlement. Gullett had convinced Hughes that Australia's campaign to boost population by prodigiously increasing immigration could only succeed by implementing a scheme for attending to immigrants' needs. Hughes accepted Gullett's proposal for a national volunteer-based civic institution that would co-operate with Commonwealth and state governments. The NSL was formed with the broad purposes of assisting governments to promote immigration and of providing "after-care" to immigrants. At a time, however, when the twenty-year-old nation had borne the impact of WWI, the structure and funding arrangements for an organisation that demanded co-operation between the Commonwealth and states provoked sensitivities and challenges.

This chapter focuses on the formation of the NSL. Beginning with Hughes's approval to establish the league and subsequent approaches to the states, it examines the league's structure, funding arrangements, the 1921 First Interstate Conference

[1] "Recruiting Settlers," *Cairns Post*, 9 January 1922.

and the membership drive that saw branches proliferate across Australia. This examination reveals the NSL as a product of a Commonwealth, states and civil society collaboration in a post-war climate where immigration was accorded hitherto unrivalled national significance.

Believing that neither the Commonwealth nor the states could ensure immigration would succeed "without the hearty and systematic co-operation of the people," Gullett and Hughes were convinced that a civic organisation to assist Commonwealth and state governments was vital.[2] Langfield explains that Gullett's approach was a "distinct break from the past" as, before the war, Australian governments were reluctant to cooperate with independent immigration organisations and scorned their promotion efforts.[3] In 1920, while discussing the Joint Agreement, Hughes had mooted the idea of a government-run central body with "branches in each State whose duty it would be to receive immigrants, maintaining them until such time as they could be placed, and secure them employment," but noted it would be expensive.[4] By late 1920 Hughes accepted that a broad civic network was needed to assist with immigration. Gullett was informed that Hughes was:

> Much disturbed at the prospect of immigrants arriving in this country for whose reception no preparations have been made…. He has already discussed with you the steps that are necessary, including reception depots at various ports, distributing depots throughout the country, together with local committees in each township or district…. He strongly urges you to complete the machinery for the above, and start it in motion without delay.[5]

Gullett drafted a proposal to "establish over the Commonwealth a chain of Immigration Committees which will gather in all organised bodies and individuals in

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[2] NAA, Canberra: A457, D400/2, Immigration Encouragement Conference Convened by Lord Mayor of Melbourne, 1921-1921, Gullett to Hughes, February 1921.
[3] Langfield, "Voluntarism, Salvation, and Rescue," 97.
[4] NAA: A458, G154/7 PART 1, Hughes, 21 May 1920.
[5] *Ibid.,* Hughes to Gullett, 22 December 1920.

favour of Immigration" and use these to foster sentiment favourable towards immigration. District committees would be formed in metropolitan and country areas with an honorary Central State Committee composed of "representatives of leading public, social, professional, pastoral, agricultural, commercial and industrial bodies, including all classes and interests." The proposal espoused using publicity abroad, such as pamphlets, leaflets, news, photographs, films and exhibitions of Australian produce and culture, to attract migrants. Responsibility for "reception and transfer of the Immigrants upon arrival to the states" would devolve to district committees that would take "every possible step to encourage the nomination of individuals" and ensure their prosperity. Presciently, Gullett noted to Hughes that "care will be necessary here not to interfere with the functions and responsibilities of the States."[6]

Commonwealth and states

As in North America, British colonisation of a relatively vast and under-populated Australia progressed as independently governed colonies with no centralised government beyond London. Upon federation it was "reasonable, then," states Robert Vineberg "to retain a structure" with which the population was familiar as it "ventured into the unknowns of creating a new national government." [7] The nature of Australian federation, explains Vineberg, emerged as competitive rather than co-operative, with competition not only between the states and the Commonwealth, but

[6] *Ibid.,* Draft proposal on immigration work in Australia.
[7] Robert Vineberg, "Immigration and Federalism: Responsibility for Immigration in the Light of the Literature on Federalism," in *Immigration Regulation in Federal States: Challenges and Responses in Comparative Perspective*, eds Sasha Baglay and Delphine Nakache (Dordrecht: Springer, 2014), 24, http://link.springer.com.elibrary.jcu.edu.au/book/10.1007%2F978-94-017-8604-1

also between the states themselves.[8] Sir John A Cockburn, who represented South Australia at federation conferences and conventions, explained in his 1901 text, *Australian Federation*, that though the "six component parts of the Commonwealth … are to be known in future as States," this did not "imply that the individuality of the several States is to be absorbed by the Commonwealth. On the contrary, the whole trend of the federal constitution is towards the maintenance of their distinct identities."[9] Though Commonwealth pronouncements would be "definite and coherent" on matters of its concern, which included immigration, the "many voices of the states" would not be ignored.[10]

Immigration, which had previously been the independent concern of each colony, became an arena for contestation and suspicion between the Commonwealth and states. Discussing motives for federation, Chad Rector contends that "to the extent that Australians *had* developed political identities" up to and including federation, these were based on their state governments and not on the geographical region of Australia which was "a remote abstraction." In contrast, each state had distinctive functioning governments each with their own established institutions which meant that the "important decisions governing people's lives came from their state parliaments."[11]

David Pope has explained how the federal conventions of the 1890s resulted in the colonies safeguarding their powers from Commonwealth intrusion by conceding only those necessary for the workability of the federal system and retaining all else. That

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[8] Vineberg, "Immigration and Federalism," 23.
[9] John Cockburn, *Australian Federation* (London: Horace Marshall & Son, 1901), 12.
[10] Cockburn, *Australian Federation*, 13.
[11] Chad Rector, *Federations: the Political Dynamics of Cooperation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), 90.

the preservation of state rights was paramount is evident in the adoption of the United States method of power distribution rather than the Canadian. In the first, the powers pertaining to the Commonwealth are defined while leaving all else to the states, whereas in Canada the inverse applies where states' powers are defined with all residual powers falling to the federal government.[12] Pope writes that though the topic of immigration made it into the constitution, it was only with regard to the control of undesirable immigrants and did not broach the encouragement of desirable immigrants. With each state retaining its own immigration agents in Britain, the Commonwealth's immigration activities were confined more to restriction than encouragement.[13]

As WWI stimulated interest in immigration that resulted in the formation of the pivotal Commonwealth and states' Joint Agreement, responsibilities were apportioned between the two levels of government. Upon reaching agreement, the Commonwealth immediately began implementing plans which necessitated that the states respond. The NSL's formation was one such plan that commanded a response from the states. As Roe notes, while Hughes "moved towards involving federal bureaucrats with grassroots migration matters," this was thwarted by the states' jealousy.[14] The Commonwealth hoped to placate states' suspicions of encroachment by establishing independent state divisions.

Fostering favourable sentiment

[12] Pope, "Assisted Immigration and Federal-State Relations: 1901-30," 22.
[13] *Ibid.,* 22, 24.
[14] Roe, *Australia, Britain, and Migration*, 246.

Gullett also recognised that immigration would succeed only if immigrants felt personally welcome and accepted. The NSL therefore must provide social support to immigrants. Effective social support would consist of ongoing personal contact and the provision of social opportunities. The purpose of the NSL, Gullett informed the Australian public, was:

> To give that friendly, human character to greeting which no Government Department, however amiably disposed the officials may be, and doubtless are in their private capacities, can impart into their reception as per regulations prescribed.[15]

Gullett would need to enlist the support of civic-minded Australians who accepted that the nation's wellbeing was contingent upon immigrants and their wellbeing. Before the Commonwealth could begin campaigning for the public to take up the cause, however, it needed to convince the states to co-operate in the planned tripartite arrangement for immigrant "after-care."

Consequent to the Joint Agreement in which the states were responsible for immigrants upon arrival, Hughes contacted all states in January 1921 with suggestions for an immigration committees' scheme. The letter, drafted by Gullett, opened with an invitation to co-operate "with this Government in a general movement to promote a more active interest in Australia in the vital subject of immigration."[16] While the Commonwealth and states were in favour of immigration, Hughes claimed "the general public is curiously apathetic on the subject."[17] Pointing out that there were "many organised bodies and thousands of individuals of influence who recognise the urgent national importance" of immigration, he contended that leadership and education would "change entirely the attitude of the people as a

[15] "The New Settlers' League," *West Australian*, 27 October 1921.
[16] NAA, Canberra: A458, A154/18, Immigration Encouragement New Settlers' League Policy, 1921-1925, Hughes to Australian State Premiers, 13 January 1921.
[17] *Ibid*.

whole," and bring about "an almost unanimous appreciation of the national and cash value of the desirable immigrant." [18] Organisation, he insisted, was essential to achieving immigration aims, and successful organisation depended upon co-operation between Commonwealth and states. However, no organisation would succeed, he declared, unless supported by public opinion and co-operation. It was essential, therefore, "that we should cultivate within Australia a strong sentiment, irrespective of political parties, in favor of immigration of an approved kind."[19] Hughes then introduced the concept of a civil organisation to assist with immigration. "To supplement the activities of the Commonwealth and State Governments," he explained:

> Local committees should be formed throughout the Commonwealth. These are to be spread over the Commonwealth as a whole, but each State is to be regarded as a unit for operations. Branches are to be established in every country district. The functions of these Committees would be -
>
> To promote by all available means a public opinion favorable to immigration, and,
> To undertake individually and collectively to assist immigration and immigrants by the nomination of desirable people, by the employment of immigrants, and by assisting immigrants in all possible ways.[20]

Having mooted the fundamental elements of the scheme, Gullett and Hughes awaited state responses.

States decide

Victoria responded quickly with immigration enthusiast, Melbourne Lord Mayor John Swanson, advertising in February a forthcoming public meeting on the matter.[21] Gullett reported to Hughes on 10 March that the NSL was launched in Melbourne the

[18] *Ibid*.
[19] *Ibid*.
[20] *Ibid*.
[21] "Assisting Immigration," *Argus*, 25 February 1921.

previous day with strong support. "Practically every organised body of importance… sent delegates," he wrote, "with the exception of the Trades Hall." A committee was formed with William Stillman, the Commonwealth Immigration Office (CIO) representative in Victoria, appointed as secretary.[22] Convened by Swanson, the first NSL branch was established at a public meeting in Melbourne on 9 March 1921. The *Argus* of 8 March 1921 published excerpts from the proposals which stated:

> This meeting, representative of all classes of the community, rural and urban, wishes to impress upon the people of Victoria the vital importance of immigration to the maintenance of a White Australia, to national safety, and to the industrial development of the Commonwealth, and appeals to each individual, and all organised bodies, to exercise every endeavour to assist the flow of selected people from overseas, particularly Britishers, and to ensure their well-being upon arrival. This meeting is convinced that the safety of Australia will not be assured until the population of the Commonwealth is increased to numbers sufficient (a) to bear the cost of a comprehensive system of railways necessary for the extension and development of land settlement; (b), to enter upon a vigorous policy of developing and utilising the enormous potential resources of Australia; and (c), to maintain manufacturing industries capable in time of national peril of being adapted to the production of munitions and equipment of war.[23]

The newly-formed league outlined several aims "of first-class national importance" that it would strive to fulfil. These included:

1. To impress upon the people … the vital importance of immigration to the national safety of the Commonwealth; to the maintenance of a white Australia; to the effective occupation and use of the land; to the free development of industry; and to the per capita reduction of the National debt.
2. To co-operate vigorously with the Commonwealth and State Governments in the introduction of selected new settlers ….
3. To welcome all new settlers; to assist them in securing employment; to afford them courtesy and advice, and generally to promote their welfare and settlement.[24]

Though the Victorian division was swiftly established, responses were slower from the other states whose individual concerns required Gullett and Hughes to negotiate.

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[22] NAA, Canberra: A458, C154/18, Immigration - New Settlers' League - Victorian Branch, 1921-1932, Gullett to Hughes, 10 March 1921.
[23] "Helping Immigration," *Argus*, 8 March 1921.
[24] "Aid Immigration," *Argus*, 21 April 1921.

In an internal memo a few days prior to the formation of the NSL in Melbourne, Hughes had noted that the "Premier of Queensland notifies agreement in the scheme, but no further replies have been received except in the case of New South Wales." [25] It was, however, 22 July 1921 before Gullett was able to telegram Percy Hunter, Director of Migration and Settlement, London, that a NSL division had been successfully formed in Brisbane, with forty associations represented.[26] Queensland, which had established its division three days earlier, would go on to be the most enduring of all branches, far outlasting those of Victoria, New South Wales, Western Australia and Tasmania.

On 25 February, New South Wales informed Hughes that cabinet had considered its position. There was no reference to co-operating with the proposed network of local volunteer committees. The Acting Premier explained:

> It is no use stating that we are at present open to receive numbers of immigrants, because it is a fact that there are hundreds of desirable bona fide settlers with a little capital ready and willing to go on the good lands of this state…. To bring people here at present in search of employment is ridiculous as we have a large body of unemployed of our own and it is very difficult to finance the Public Works which are now in hand…. Until the problems indicated are solved it would be unfair to the British settler to ask him to come.[27]

Hughes wished to remind Premier John Storey that "the immigration proposals were made as a result of an agreement already arrived at with his State." [28] Gullett sent Hughes a draft letter for approval and noted that the:

> suggested reply might have been couched in stronger terms, but in view of the fact that I am proceeding to Sydney to launch the New Settlers' League

[25] NAA: A458, A154/18, Hughes, 5 March 1921.
[26] NAA, Canberra: A457, G400/4, Immigration New Settlers' League Queensland Branch, 1921-1923, Gullett to Hunter, 23 July 1921.
[27] NAA: A458, A154/18, NSW Acting Premier to Hughes, 25 February 1921.
[28] *Ibid.,* Hughes, 10 March 1921.

> there I think it undesirable to do anything that will further antagonise the Government of New South Wales towards a vigorous immigration policy.[29]

How Gullett was going to launch a branch in Sydney without the approval of the premier he did not explain. Not till May were negotiations under way and it was June before he could confirm the league's establishment in New South Wales.[30]

Tasmania's Premier Walter Lee sent an equivocal response on 15 March. Applying pressure, Hughes and Gullett replied that the Director of Migration and Settlement, Australia House, London, had "intimated" that the British Oversea Settlement Department (BOSD) had received complaints about Tasmania's lack of reception facilities.[31] Gullett's quest was aided by the press calling for a league to be formed. The Launceston *Daily Telegraph* published an extensive article on Australia's need for immigration but lamented "we have nothing in Tasmania comparable with the New Settlers' League of Australia, the Victorian division of which … is giving an inspiring account of itself."[32] Gullett visited to discuss forming a division and by mid-November branches had opened in the state's north and south.

The original letter to Western Australia contained acknowledgement that "sound progress" was already being made in that state. The Ugly Men's Voluntary Workers' Association of Western Australia, or Ugly Men's Association (UMA), had been operating since June 1917 with similar aims and objectives to those proposed for the NSL. The UMA constitution, drafted in 1917, stated that its aims were to "raise and utilise funds, volunteer labour and materials for local deserving causes and to assist

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[29] *Ibid.,* Gullett to Hughes, 17 March 1921.
[30] *Ibid.,* 21 June 1921.
[31] *Ibid.,* Draft letter to Premier of Tasmania, 15 March 1921.
[32] "New Settlers' League Wanted for Tasmania," *Daily Telegraph* (Launceston), 27 August 1921.

patriotic efforts." A letter from the UMA to the Commonwealth Department of Repatriation explains the association's origins thus:

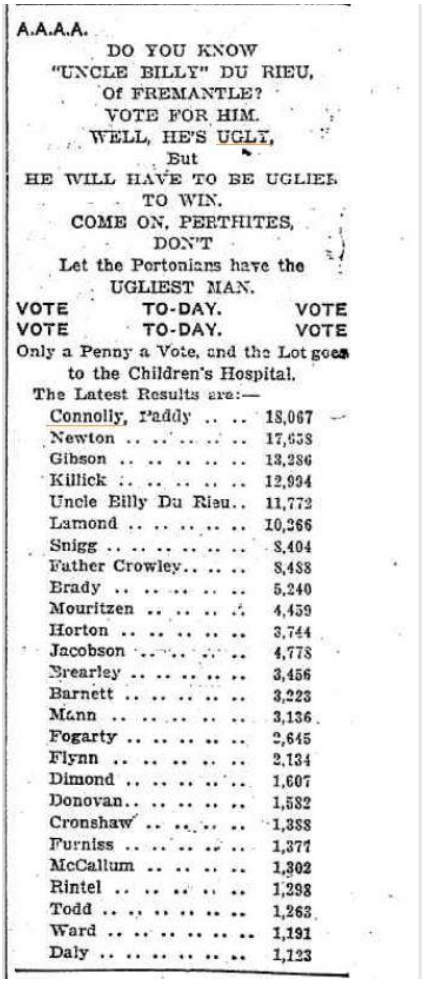
> The association in its embryo stage consisted mainly of a number of voluntary workers who banded themselves together to erect a building …. That good work … accomplished, a number of the operators … suggested that a deal might be accomplished in affording relief to the conditions under which many wives of soldiers at the front were living…. The case which originated the constitution was that of a soldier's wife residing in … North Perth… and so much good work was accomplished in two Saturdays and Sundays that it was decided to forthwith establish a constitution for the continuance of such work.[33]

Having received the letter, N C Lockyer, Department Comptroller, noted that the "title of the Association is singular, but I suppose it is intended to attract attention, and in that most desirable object it will certainly succeed."[34] Of especial note is that a consequence of the NSL being formed from the existing UMA meant that women were not included as NSL members in Western Australia.

The letter to Lockyer did not, however, go back to the event that led to the association's inception and from which its name was derived. In 1907, the Perth *Daily News* carried the story of how a man who had managed the "annual fair in a certain town" for many years recalled the great interest sparked years earlier when he announced a "prize of a gold-headed cane for the ugliest man in the district."[35] In 1916, the *West Australian* reported how Mr J Rushton, chairman of the Queen Carnival Committee, passed through Narrogin and was struck by the unusual competitions in vogue. "Residents are invited to act as judges by paying a penny a time for the privilege," he reported, including one to "decide the ugliest man in the

[33] NAA, Canberra: A2485, C/86, Ugly Man's Voluntary Workers' Association of Western Australia, 1918-1919, Ugly Men's Voluntary Workers' Association to Dept of Repatriation, 11 February 1918.
[34] *Ibid*.
[35] "Foy and Gibson's Annual Picnic," *Daily News* (Perth), Apr 11, 1907.

district."[36] The districts of Williams (touted as the first to have done so), Harvey, Broomehill, Wagin, Greenhills, Collie and others also held ugly man competitions. In May 1916, Kalgoorlie held a very successful competition in aid of the Red Cross.



A.A.A.A.

DO YOU KNOW
"UNCLE BILLY" DU RIEU,
Of FREMANTLE?
VOTE FOR HIM.
WELL, HE'S UGLY,
But
HE WILL HAVE TO BE UGLIER
TO WIN.
COME ON, PERTHITES,
DON'T
Let the Portonians have the
UGLIEST MAN.

VOTE TO-DAY. VOTE
VOTE TO-DAY. VOTE

Only a Penny a Vote, and the Lot goes to the Children's Hospital.

The Latest Results are:—

Connolly, Paddy	18,067
Newton	17,653
Gibson	13,286
Killick	12,994
Uncle Billy Du Rieu	11,772
Lamond	10,266
Snigg	8,404
Father Crowley	8,488
Brady	5,240
Mouritzen	4,459
Horton	3,744
Jacobson	4,778
Brearley	3,456
Barnett	3,223
Mann	3,136
Fogarty	2,645
Flynn	2,134
Dimond	1,607
Donovan	1,582
Cronshaw	1,388
Furniss	1,377
McCallum	1,302
Rintel	1,298
Todd	1,263
Ward	1,191
Daly	1,123

Pl.3 Advertisement for Ugly Man Competition held by East Perth Football Club as a fundraiser for the Children's Hospital showing P A Connolly, later Patron of the UMA, in first place with 18,067 votes and H W Mann, later President of the UMA, in fifteenth place with 3,136 votes. Gibson, Killick, Jacobson and Daly also went on to become founding members. With a total of 31,846 votes, Connolly went on to win the competition - which raised over £2,000 - and the honour of being the ugliest man in Perth.[37]

Early in 1917 the Children's Hospital asked East Perth Football Club to assist it by holding a fundraising activity. Seeing the success of the Kalgoorlie ugly man competition, the club decided to hold one as a fundraiser. The competition entrants

[36] "The Queen Carnival," *West Australian*, 6 April 1916.
[37] "Advertising," *Daily News*, 13 February 1917.

paid a good-humoured visit to the hospital and among them was Mr P A Connolly, who would later win and become the UMA's official Patron.[38] As the competition's popularity and success exceeded organisers' expectations, the committee decided to remain together and work on fundraising ventures with the War Patriotic Fund. By June 1917 the "Ugly Men's Association's" charitable works extended to enlisting the help of tradesmen to make improvements to a war widow's home. The men had also decided to develop the group into a movement along the lines of the Voluntary Workers' Association of New South Wales, which resulted in drafting a constitution.

As the UMA continued to receive community support it was able to continue its charitable works during the remainder of the war. In May 1918, the Commonwealth invited the UMA to become the local Repatriation Committee for Perth, which the UMA accepted. As an established, active and respected charitable organisation, the UMA lent itself as a practical means through which to establish the NSL in West Australia.[39]

Hughes informed Premier James Mitchell that the Commonwealth would study the UMA "with a view to its general application" as a NSL division, but emphasised the importance of a national organisation.[40] Gullett and Mitchell held full discussions on the matter after which Mitchell advised that his government was "prepared to heartily co-operate in the movement." This was subject to confirmation that the proposal was to "form local committees to welcome, assist and advise new arrivals," and that the Commonwealth would provide financial assistance.[41] In May Hughes

[38] "To Help the Bairns," *Daily News*, 15 February 1917.
[39] NAA: A2485, C/86, Ovington to Comptroller Repatriation, Melbourne, 18 May 1918.
[40] NAA: A458, A154/18, Hughes to Mitchell, 13 January 1921.
[41] *Ibid*. Mitchell to Hughes, 7 April 1921.

provided Mitchell with confirmation and elaborated on the assistance Western Australia could expect, in line with what had been negotiated with Victoria and New South Wales.[42] In June, Deputy Premier Hal Colebatch informed Hughes that arrangements would soon be made for the formation of a branch in Perth, followed by "sub-branches" throughout the country areas.[43] By October, the NSL was established as an arm of the UMA. Colebatch addressed a NCW meeting in June 1922 where he discussed women's contribution to the immigration campaign. While the UMA's NSL branch performed invaluable services, he remarked, it was women's organisations that would help to retain settlers by making Western Australia a home to them. The meeting concluded with Edith Cowan, MLA, commenting that she did not think the government or the NSL had given the NCW the "consideration they might have done in connection with immigration."[44]

South Australia's Premier, Henry Newman Barwell, replied on14 March that while it favoured co-operation between state and Commonwealth in cultivating favourable immigration sentiment, the state immigration minister was already considering a scheme for "securing the cooperation of the various organisations which are likely to be interested in the welfare of immigrants."[45] On 21 March Barwell telegraphed Hughes regretting a "clerical error…regarding cooperation of commonwealth and state governments" in his earlier letter. Amending his stance, Barwell declared that South Australia believed it "highly desirable that the work of forming these Committees should be left in the hands of the State Government."[46] Hughes declared that he never intended the Commonwealth to control the committees. They "should

[42] *Ibid.,* Hughes to Mitchell, 10 May 1921.
[43] *Ibid.,* Colebatch to Hughes, 1 June 1921.
[44] "Woman's Part," *West Australian*, 1 June 1922, 7.
[45] NAA: A458, A154/18, Barwell to Hughes, 14 March 1921.
[46] *Ibid*.

be purely a citizens' affair, acting as an honorary auxiliary to the Government effort" and working in close co-operation with the states.[47] He entreated Barwell to give "earnest consideration" to the report of the Melbourne NSL meeting and noted that a division was about to be established in New South Wales.[48]

Barwell, however, rejected the arrangement that would see a Federal Immigration Officer appointed as NSL board representative and general secretary. He made clear his "desire to again emphatically protest against such an appointment," seen as unnecessary when under the Joint Agreement states were responsible for immigrants upon arrival. Informing Hughes that South Australia had a "very effective chain of Agricultural Bureaux" and planned its own conference of delegates "representative of various religious, patriotic, philanthropic, and other persons likely to be interested in the welfare of immigrants," Barwell did not consider it "necessary or desirable to take any further action" towards forming an NSL division.[49]

Gullett saw George Richards Laffer, Minister for Immigration, rather than Barwell, as the greatest obstacle. Laffer "bitterly opposed" the league proposal and believed appointing a Commonwealth Immigration Officer would be an "unwarrantable intrusion upon State rights." He made it clear that if the Commonwealth persisted in its attempt, he would "start a rival State organisation."[50] South Australia, he declared, would "not tolerate the building up of a Commonwealth organisation within the State of matters that pertain distinctly to the State."[51] He further argued that the NSL might "pass resolutions and take action quite inimical to the best interests of the cause it

[47] *Ibid.,* Hughes to Barwell, 31 March 1921.
[48] *Ibid.,* Draft letter to Barwell.
[49] *Ibid.,* Barwell to Hughes, 3 June 1921.
[50] *Ibid.,* Gullett to Hughes, 21 June 1921.
[51] "Immigration," *Recorder* (Port Pirie, SA), 23 June 1921.

proposes to assist" and was "more likely to become a hindrance and a worry to a State Government than a help."[52]

Gullett, "after prolonged and vexatious negotiation with the South Australia Government," drafted what was the best and final solution he could offer.[53] Hughes explained to Barwell that a Commonwealth officer's duties would be to "meet immigrants upon arrival, to report upon shipping, and hand the new settlers over" to the State Immigration Department. Noting that South Australia was accepting few immigrants, Hughes conceded there was little need for an officer at that time but hoped immigration would soon increase enough to "justify the appointment." Hughes suggested that if South Australia would second a state immigration officer for a year to act as an NSL secretary and provide him with an office, the Commonwealth would pay his salary and expenses in addition to the financial assistance as given to other states. Reiterating the league's importance, Hughes assured Barwell the officer would remain under state control while co-operating with the Commonwealth.[54] Gullett had discussed this option with Barwell recently on a shared journey and claimed Barwell had "agreed that if this proposal is made to him he will accept it."[55] Barwell's response, however, was that the "proposed appointment of a State Officer to act as Secretary of the South Australian Division of the New Settlers' League… does not materially affect the objection previously made." As Laffer had "already taken such steps as are considered necessary and desirable" for publicity and to secure immigration nominations, no NSL division was established.[56]

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[52] *Ibid*.
[53] NAA: A458, A154/18, Gullett to Hughes, 21 June 1921.
[54] *Ibid.,* Hughes to Barwell, 23 June 1921.
[55] *Ibid.,* Barwell to Hughes, 1 August 1921.
[56] *Ibid.,* Gullett to Hughes, 21 June 1921.

The states' responses to Commonwealth approaches demonstrate that appeals to the national interest confronted staunch state allegiances. Immigration was touted as a matter of national urgency, with Gullett urging Australians to make "a national principle of immigration as we have done White Australia and defence."[57] However, though the Constitution "defined a narrow and limited set of powers for the Federal Government," the states' mistrust of the Commonwealth that elicited concessions in the Joint Agreement also led to the NSL being structured along state lines.[58] No doubt wary of any perception that the Commonwealth would attempt to wrest power from the states, Gullett's initial proposal envisaged a coalition of state-based divisions devoid of a national body. Hughes's January 1921 invitation to the premiers indicated that the proposed immigration organisation would be developed along state lines. Each state, Hughes informed them, would be "regarded as a unit for operations."[59] Shortly after, with the league being realised in several states, Hughes indicated the straddling of boundaries this presented. "The New Settlers' League was formed as an Honorary Auxiliary Movement to cooperate with the Government Work in connection with immigration," he began, and "although the care of the immigrant after arrival is a function of the States, it was considered that an organisation such as the League would be of great assistance in stimulating interest in immigration."[60]

Though the NSL did become established as a collection of state divisions, its objectives obliged it to assist federal and state governments to achieve their

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[57] "Immigration Proposals," *Register*, 25 May 1921.
[58] Department of Treasury and Finance, WA, *Discussion Paper on Commonwealth-State Relations: An Economic and Financial Assessment of How Western Australia Fares* (Perth: Department of Treasury and Finance, Western Australia, 2006), 5.
[59] NAA: A458, A154/18, Hughes to Australian State Premiers, 1921.
[60] NAA, Canberra: A458, G154/18 PART 1, Immigration Encouragement New Settlers' League Financial Part 1, 1921-1930, Hughes, 22 July 1921.

immigration goals. Asserting that everything possible was in place to attract and secure migrants at the United Kingdom end, Hughes informed parliament that Australia could "double, treble, or even quadruple the stream at any time" were it not that the states were not ready to receive them. "On that account," said Hughes:

> A new agreement has been arrived at with the States and it is hoped that this will enable us to receive that great stream of immigrants which is only waiting the opportunity to come here. The organization at the Australian end is under the control of Mr. Gullett….a most competent man…. There has been established a New Settlers' League. The movement has been taken up by representative citizens all over Australia. The object of the League is to prepare the way for settlers, to welcome them, to assure them they are not strangers in a strange land, and that they have come amongst friends, to aid them to secure employment, and generally to create in this country an atmosphere favorable to the immigrants, and to get into touch with employers, particularly those in the country districts, who need labour.[61]

The Victorian division's 1924 handbook explained that "the New Settlers' League … has been invited to work as a voluntary auxiliary to the official immigration departments."[62]

Beyond the states

While the league functioned as a federation of independent state divisions operating according to common objectives, annual interstate conferences provided a forum for sharing accomplishments and goals. With preparations underway for the first of the interstate conferences in 1921, Queensland division president, Mayor James Maxwell announced that the conference was "regarded as a big step towards infusing a

[61] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, HOR Official Hansard, no.47, 1921, Estimates 1921-22, W M Hughes, 24 November 1921, 13249.
[62] New Settlers' League of Australia, Victorian Division, *New Settlers' Handbook to Victoria* (Melbourne: New Settlers' League of Australia, 1924), 45.

national Australian character into the League's work."[63] At the 1926 conference, however, a limited federal section and an overseas division were proposed. In November 1925 Archibald Gilchrist, General-Secretary Victoria, had distributed to the state divisions topics proposed for conference discussion. Among these were "A Great Britain Division" and "Federal Publicity Section."[64] While the proposed federal section received little support, the proposed British division generated interest.

The proposal to establish a Great Britain division was mooted independently by both Stillman, General-Secretary Victoria, and Capt Lyn Maplestone, General-Secretary Queensland, and was highly approved of by Gilchrist. Maplestone, crediting Esk, Queensland, branch with the idea, first broached the topic in 1925. Esk branch had put the proposition forward at the first Queensland conference in 1922, but it was decided that the time was not then opportune for extending the league's activities beyond the Commonwealth. By 1925, however, Queensland NSL felt that conditions had changed such that a division in Great Britain would be of much assistance to Commonwealth authorities. Gilchrist expressed his belief to Maplestone that "the immediate task is to create a Federal organisation that will co-ordinate and strengthen our work in Australia and to follow it without delay with an attempt to establish a Division in Great Britain."[65]

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[63] "The New Settlers' League of Australia (Queensland Division)," *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 20 September 1921, 5.
[64] QSA: 13101, 18731, New Settlers' League Conference Papers, 1924-1936, Gilchrist to Maplestone, 19 November 1925.
[65] *Ibid*.

The proposal for the division was that Great Britain be divided into five sections, for each of which an NSL member would be responsible.[66] Maplestone contacted F J G Fleming, New South Wales General Secretary, about establishing a division in Britain. Fleming responded that his "Council is considering the matter and will communicate with you again later."[67] Vern East, Western Australia General Secretary, responded to Maplestone that such ideas had been mooted before but, as far as he could gather, "no further action was ever taken regarding the formation of a Division of the League in the Old Country, after receiving the approval of the other divisions." East offered whole-hearted support for the concept and hoped that it would succeed. Deputy Director of Migration, Lionel Hurley, however, expressed reservations and foresaw "grave difficulties" with the suggestion to use transitory NSL visitors to the United Kingdom as publicity agents. The conference decided that "Commonwealth and British Representatives" would discuss the matter, but as some league organisers and the Commonwealth Director of Immigration believed it would be difficult and unwieldy, the Great Britain division did not receive approval.[68]

First Interstate Conference (hereafter referred to as the 1921 Conference)

The NSL's inaugural interstate conference was held in Melbourne from 25 to 27 October 1921. Delegates from divisions in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland convened along with representatives from Western Australia and Tasmania, where negotiations to form a division were progressing. South Australia, unwilling to contemplate a division, sent no representative. As Gullett had been negotiating with the UMA to form a division in Western Australia he sent conference

[66] *Ibid*.
[67] QSA: 13101, 18731, Fleming to Maplestone, 16 September 1925.
[68] QSA: 13101, 18731, Conference of General Secretaries, 24-25 March 1926.

invitations to that organisation. In early October, however, Hughes received a letter from Frank Parker Stevenson, co-signed by Mary Juleff and Cowper Sutton Todd, writing as representatives of the United Settlers' Associations. The associations had combined to hold a meeting on 3 October 1921 at which they registered their protest against the process used to select delegates who would attend the conference. In August, asserted Stevenson, Gullett notified Juleff, British Immigrants' Association, that a meeting would be held in Perth to discuss forming the NSL. It had come to the combined associations' attention, however, that only the UMA had been invited to send delegates to the conference.[69] Hughes negotiated with the associations that one representative would attend, along with those from the UMA. The arrangement was agreed to and the United Settlers' Associations representative duly attended.[70]

Perhaps the first hint of a later rupture in the relationship between Gullett and Hughes surfaced in the planning for the conference. Gullett's fervent belief in the importance of the NSL and the conference was evident in his urgent request to Hughes that, as part of the conference, the Commonwealth should fund a dinner at Parliament House for delegates. Gullett reasoned that such an event would "enable delegates to meet members of Parliament, and the gathering would… be most helpful in stimulating influential opinion in favor of the immigration movement."[71] Hughes sent a terse telegram informing Gullett that "Your letter sixth October suggested dinner not approved."[72] In February 1922 an embittered Gullett resigned over disagreements with Hughes on immigration policy. Gullett repeatedly accused

[69] NAA: A458, A154/18, United Settlers' Associations to Hughes, October 1921.
[70] *Ibid.,* Hughes to Gullett, 12 October 1921.
[71] *Ibid.,* Gullett to Prime Minister's Department, 19 September 1921.
[72] *Ibid*.

Hughes, states Michael Roe, of "talking big about immigration, yet doing little."[73] Hurley, who did not have the same passion invested in the NSL, superseded Gullett. Though Hurley considered the large annual conferences unnecessary when a conference of general secretaries might suffice, he did not curtail them.[74]

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Pl.4 1921 Conference Delegates. Standing, L-R: Stillman, General-Secretary, Victoria; Maplestone, General-Secretary, Queensland; L A Saunders, NSW; W R Bagnall MLA, NSW; S E Grimwood, WA; V L East, WA; Senator Guthrie, Vic; L H Darlot, WA; C Rhodes, WA; Col C E Merrett, Vic; Councillor Berryman, WA; C F Crosby, Vic; T Rust, Vic; H J Martin, Vic; James Martyn, Vic; Rev W Thompson, Vic; C L Anderson, NSW; H S Gullett, Commonwealth Superintendent Immigration; E R B Pike, Qld; I Crawcour, Immigration Officer, WA; Daniel Jones, Qld; Mr Blyth MHR, Tas; H C Davies, Tas. Sitting, L-R: Dr Mary Booth, NSW; Mrs McCallum, NSW; Mrs Bennett, NSW; Mrs L Corrie, Qld; Ald H J Diddams CMG, Brisbane Mayor, Qld; Councillor J W Swanson, Melbourne Lord Mayor, Vic; Sir Joseph Carruthers, NSW; Canon D J Garland, Qld; Mrs Masson, Vic; Lady Mitchell, Vic.[76]

Despite the dinner not going ahead, the well-attended conference succeeded in bringing delegates together. Along with Gullett and the Governor of Victoria, George

[73] Roe, *Australia, Britain, and Migration*, 39.
[74] NAA: A458, G154/18 PART 1, Hurley to Hughes, 28 June 1922.
[75] State Library of South Australia, Searcy Collection, PRG 280/1/37/358, photograph, Delegates at a New Settlers' League Conference, 1921.
[76] "New Settlers' League of Australia," *Western Mail*, 17 November 1921.

Rous, thirty-three delegates from five states attended the conference which was opened by the Governor-General, Henry Forster, whose wife, Lady Rachel Forster, also attended, and included addresses by Hughes and Premier Lawson of Victoria. Conference "matters for discussion" distributed by Gullett covered:

- The right type of immigrant to be encouraged;
- The reception and employment, and placing upon the land of immigrants on arrival in Australia;
- The desirability of rendering every courtesy and assistance in the direction of absorbing immigrants into the industrial life of the Commonwealth as speedily as possible, and also of absorbing them into the social life of Australia, thus making them feel at home;
- The questions of strongly advocating immigration by Nomination - a quota to be laid down for each District in the Commonwealth.
- Developmental schemes for the settlement of immigrants upon the land.[77]

Developmental schemes would be crucial to immigration success as that is what would furnish employment.

A notable speaker on the topic was Sir Joseph Carruthers who promoted his "million farmers for a million farms" scheme. Carruthers perceived Australia as having vast areas of arable land that could be developed through irrigation and cultivation, roads and railways, provision of power through hydro-electric schemes, improved agricultural methods and training for rural immigrants.[78] Days before the conference, noted writer, cyclist, film producer and adventurer, Francis Birtles, declared support for Carruthers' scheme and gave his opinion that five million farms was "nearer the mark." Birtles suggested Cape York as ripe for settlement as it was "the best watered country in Australia" with "better chocolate soil than the North Coast of N.S.W." and suitable for dairying, coconuts, castor oil, peanuts, timber and paper manufacture. "There is room in that country alone for hundreds of thousands of families," he

[77] NAA: A458, A154/18, Correspondence between Gullett and Hughes, 19 September 1921.
[78] "A Big Policy," *Evening News* (Sydney), 19 July 1921.

claimed.[79] Carruthers stated to the conference that "if there was a sinner in Australia who had got his estate closed to the land-seeker it was the Government of Australia, who had 92 per cent of the country unalienated."[80] Rapid population escalation was needed in a world "moving into a topsy-turvy state very quickly," Carruthers warned, if Australia was to avoid invasion by the "yellow races [who] were awaking from their thousands of years of slumber."[81] Hughes, in his address, declared support for Carruthers' proposal.

With the conference concluded, Gullett predicted that such an unprecedented event in Australia's immigration history would generate publicity that would educate the public and promote immigration.[82] Confirming Gullett's prediction, all major newspapers and several regional ones carried reports of the conference, with Governor-General Forster's address featuring in many. Forster claimed the conference as "one of great moment and full of the possibilities of good to the whole of Australia," and enthused about "the whole community acting in concert."[83]Hughes, in his address, observed that immigration was in danger not from any opposition, for the Labor Party was in favour of immigration under the right circumstances. Rather, "lukewarm advocacy" was a danger which needed to be galvanised "into a burning passion… which would move people to action." The first priority, he declared, was to educate public opinion through the press. The second priority was to "prepare the way" by welcoming immigrants and setting them up to

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[79] "New Settlers' League," *Young Witness* (Young, NSW), 15 October 1921.
[80] A few weeks later Carruthers also cast the same accusation upon the governments of New South Wales and Queensland.
"Sydney Letter," *Kapunda Herald* (SA), 18 November 1921.
[81] "Unalienated Australia," *Albury Banner and Wodonga Express* (NSW), 1 November 1921.
[82] NAA: A458, A154/18, Gullett to Prime Minister's Department, 19 September 1921.
[83] The report in the Adelaide *Register* was printed under the title, "Immigration Policy: Is Federal Action Pending?" and pointed out that all states except South Australia were represented.
"Immigration Policy," *Register*, 25 October 1921.

succeed on the land. His hope was that the conference would result in NSL branches flourishing.[84] Following the conference, Gullett notified Hughes that the press had responded with gathering interest. "When this office [CIO] was opened less than a year ago," wrote Gullett, "the news clippings dealing with immigration were sent to each week in a small envelope. Now, each week I receive some hundreds." [85]

In presenting the 1921 Conference resolutions to Hughes, Queensland executive member, Canon David Garland, selected as leader of the delegation, declared:

> We assure you that in your policy of immigration you have behind you in the League a valuable body of assistants who are prepared to trust your leadership, and to work under you and to the best of their ability to carry out your plans. In the League there are men and women who are willing to take a share in the conduct of the League's affairs, at considerable effort to themselves, ready to give their services in an honorary capacity to this great purpose of filling up our empty spaces.[86]

Gullett was pleased to be able to report to the PMO that the league had already had a "remarkable educational effect in Australia," and that its activities had provoked an "extraordinary awakening in the Australian press" upon the subject of immigration. Further, he could boast that already there had been established seventy-four branches in Victoria, thirty-two in NSW, twenty-five in Queensland and, following his negotiations with the UMA in Western Australia, seventy branches in that state. He anticipated that there would be three hundred branches by the end of 1921 and six hundred by June 1922.[87] As an organisation without a national body, the conference ensured "the operations and aspirations of the League in all States shall be uniform."[88] Practical proposals had been arrived at and a suite of resolutions

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[84] "Aiding Immigration," *Argus*, 26 October 1921.
[85] NAA: A458, G154/18 PART 1, Gullett to Hughes, 2 November 1921.
[86] NAA: A458, A154/18, Notes of deputation, 28 October 1921.
[87] NAA: A458, G154/18 PART 1, Gullett to Hughes, 2 November 1921.
[88] NAA: A458, A154/18, Gullett to Hughes, 19 September 1921.

formulated to present to Hughes that included recommendations on what governments should do, the selection of settlers, and how the league should advise, welcome and tend to the welfare of immigrants. The conference facilitated homogeneity among divisions, lent focus to their endeavours and generated publicity that expedited its drive to saturate the country with branches.

Funding the volunteer organisation

When, after the 1921 Conference, a deputation of league members waited on Hughes in October, they were rewarded with an enthusiastic avowal of financial support. Though "it may take 50, 60 or 100 millions before we make this country safe," Hughes effused, "there is no way in which a hundred millions could be better spent, or give a better return." While conceding that funding the immigration campaign, including the league, could not be accomplished out of revenue but must rely upon loan money, he warned that if he was met at the beginning with "talk of economy" it would be clear the scheme was hamstrung. Declaring "we must stand for a policy, or else we must leave the thing alone entirely," Hughes saw "no middle course." He confidently predicted that there would be "no difficulty about money, providing we are able to satisfy people that the money is to be spent for this most necessary purpose." [89]

Money, however, was never as easily accessible for the league as Hughes proclaimed it would be and there was little precedent to offer the NSL any assurance of such. That the league received any government funding over the course of the 1920s was

[89] NAA: A458, A154/18, Notes of deputation.

unusual. This was a time, argues Melanie Oppenheimer, when governments did not provide funding for volunteer organisations.[90] Hughes never followed through with the largesse he promised; subsequent governments did not offer such extravagant promises; and league divisions constantly struggled to secure funds. Securing funds was also fraught by the complexity of changing processes and appeals to Commonwealth, state and British governments, all of which exhibited shifting levels of enthusiasm towards migration and willingness to fund the NSL.

Initial funding was arranged by the Commonwealth in May 1921 based upon recommendations from Gullett which had received ministerial approval. This funding related to initial costs incurred in establishing divisions in the various states and was limited to a three-month time frame. Gullett had planned to use honorary organisers to assist him in the work of establishing branches but soon found the arrangement unsatisfactory. He requested funding to appoint three paid organisers for three months, initially in Victoria. This request soon extended to three paid organisers for NSW and two for Queensland. Having received funding, Gullett and newly elected NSL general-secretaries, such as Stillman (Victoria) and Maplestone (Queensland), succeeded in establishing foundation divisions and branches.

By July 1921, Hughes distributed to the states details of more permanent funding arrangements. The Commonwealth undertook to be responsible for:

(a) Provision of Permanent General Secretary.
(b) Cost of hiring halls and buildings for holding meetings for organisation of the league
(c) Payment where necessary of travelling allowances of any honorary organisers or speakers appointed.

[90] Oppenheimer, interview with Kelly Fuller.

(d) Office accommodation, stationery, postage and office requisites.[91]

There was concern among some federal parliamentarians, however, about the costs associated with immigration and the NSL. Hughes replied to a query by Earle Page, Federal Country Party member for Cowper, NSW, about immigration expenses by summarising the costs incurred by the government. Of the £40,000 expended by November 1921, £6,500 went on salaries, the principal beneficiaries being Gullett at £1,500, publicity officer E N Robinson £750, Commonwealth Immigration Officer Mr Fullagar £600, the secretary and records clerk £345 and £1,300 for temporary assistants. Hughes cited a figure of £5,000 out of the £40,000 for expenses incurred in organising the NSL. The remainder consisted of £2,200 for "freights and charges on material forwarded overseas for exhibition purposes," and office requisites, travel, records, postage, telegrams, furniture, telephones, and petty cash.[92] In December Gullett requested, and Hughes consented, that the NSL's £5,000 be increased to £8,000, with the extra to be taken from the publicity and freight allocation. Of note in the expenses Hughes detailed is that Gullett's wages were covered in the immigration budget. Though the NSL consisted almost entirely of volunteers, each division retained the services of an immigration officer whose wages the Commonwealth covered, and usually one or two office staff paid out of NSL funds received from the Commonwealth.

Gullett negotiated with the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on the levels of funding required for each division. Establishing appropriate funding arrangements was complex as the different circumstances of each state necessitated individualised agreements. Western Australia's funding was notably complex as it joined the league

[91] NAA: A458, G154/18 PART 1, Hughes, 22 July 1921.
[92] HOR Official Hansard, no.47, 1921, Hughes.

under the auspices of the existing UMA. Hurley wrote to the PMO "with reference to the various items of expenditure authorised for the carrying on of the work of the League in Western Australia, it is desired to recommend that the earlier and somewhat confusing authorities be cancelled."[93] Maplestone had pleaded the case for extra funding for Queensland due to long distances necessitating more overnight stays when travelling to organise branches.[94] Hughes reassessed the viability of a instating a Commonwealth Immigration Officer in Tasmania and decided that the state should appoint an officer whose costs the Commonwealth would cover.[95]

From the league's inception in each state, almost all funding had come from the Commonwealth. The NSW division's draft constitution stated that, as well as Commonwealth funding, finances would come from members' and affiliates' fees, subscriptions and voluntary contributions.[96] These arrangements, mirrored by those of the other divisions, saw little impact as subscriptions and contributions did not amount to a significant proportion of overall funding. With over five hundred branches of the league established on the mainland alone,[97] funding the league was expensive for the Commonwealth. Hurley wrote to Hughes in June 1922 apprising him of the league's accomplishments thus far and urging that funding arrangements continue. "If the Commonwealth Government ceased to contribute to the cost of this organisation," Hurley suggested:

> The thousands of substantial people now interested in the work and who have given considerable time and thought to the operations of the League would

[93] NAA: A458, G154/18 PART 1, Hurley to Prime Minister's Department, 30 May 1922.
[94] *Ibid.,* Gullett to PM's Dept, 11 October 1921.
[95] NAA, Canberra: A458, D154/18, Immigration, New Settlers' League - Tasmania, 1921-1926, Hughes to Lee, 13 December 1921.
[96] New Settlers' League, *The New Settlers' League of Australia (New South Wales Division) Constitution, Aims and Objects*, Sydney: np, c.1921, 8.
[97] NAA: A458, G154/18 PART 1, Hurley to Hughes, 1 July 1922.

> enter a protest, and it is possible that support to the Commonwealth Government generally might be withdrawn.[98]

While Hurley's request was granted, funding changes were imminent.

Early in 1923, as Commonwealth and state governments acknowledged that the league's activities largely assisted the states, agreement was reached whereby the states would assume some financial responsibility. Percy Hunter, Director of Migration and Settlement, wrote to PM Stanley Bruce, Hughes's successor, suggesting NSL funding arrangements be revised. As the league's work now largely consisted of migrant reception and settlement, Hunter "recommended that action be taken to limit expenditure from Commonwealth funds and that the State Governments be invited to assume the main responsibility."[99] Bruce was keen to absolve the Commonwealth of any continued financial support for the league, but the states were resistant to taking up any financial responsibility. League divisions implored the Commonwealth to continue assistance. Negotiations between the NSL, Commonwealth and states eventually saw the Commonwealth commit to continue funding in conjunction with the states on a pound for pound basis. Though the arrangement remained in place, NSL divisions annually had to negotiate levels of funding from their state governments and, as the league had seen a successful expansion, upkeep was considerable.

Gathering support

As the intention of the Commonwealth and state governments was that immigrants would not stay in the populated centres of the capital cities, but be dispersed across

[98] *Ibid.,* 28 June 1922.
[99] *Ibid.,* Hunter to Bruce, 14 March 1923.

the regional and rural areas of the country, it was necessary to have branches in as many country towns as possible, no matter how large or small. Hopes for population increases ranged from conservative and realistic to wildly optimistic. Hughes, speaking to Queensland's Premier Theodore at a Premiers' conference in November 1920, stated:

> There was a man named Griffiths [sic] Taylor who said this continent would only take 50 million people. I honestly believe New South Wales could hold that many, and if you only take some parts of your State, the table land, that would take nearly 50 million, I should say.[100]

Theodore replied, "I don't doubt it." James Duhig, Catholic Archbishop of Queensland, was an avid proponent of immigration and supporter of the NSL. As a guest of the Redemptorist Fathers in New York while touring the United States in 1922, he took the opportunity to express his views on population and promote the potential of Queensland. Emphasising that Australia needed to increase its population, Duhig claimed that while Queensland had a population of less than 750,000 it had over 420,000,000 acres of land of which only about 1,000,000 were being cultivated. As Queensland could carry a population of forty to fifty million, stated Duhig, he hoped that the tide of British immigrants that had been flowing to America would start to flow to Australia.[101] Gullett stated that he anticipated Australia would receive between 16,000 and 20,000 assisted immigrants in 1921 and that within three years the figure should increase to 100,000 immigrants a year.[102] For the NSL to be able to attend to the needs of the anticipated numbers of

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[100] NAA: A458, G154/7 PART 1, Hughes to Theodore, November 1920.
[101] "Need for Population," *Queenslander*, 23 December 1922.
[102] While Gullett's estimate for 1921 was reasonably accurate, his estimate for the ensuing years was greatly inaccurate as net immigration figures (excess of arrivals over departures) for Australia were actually: 1921 - 15,654; 1922 - 38,023; 1923 - 37,540; 1924 - 43,749.
ABS, *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia, vol 18 (1925)*, comp Chas H Wickens, ed John Stonham (Melbourne: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, 1925), 904, http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/1301.01925?OpenDocument.

immigrant arrivals, a substantial volunteer force staffing a dense network of branches would be needed.

The 1921 Conference resolved that it was "desirable to take active steps, at the earliest possible moment, to obtain a large membership of the league."[103] With vast "empty spaces" to fill and "twelve million ex-service men and women and their dependants" in Britain eligible for free passage,[104] Gullett believed Australia could absorb hundreds of thousands of immigrants over the next few years.[105] Realising his vision of a league functioning as a web of branches filled with volunteers, however, required extensive and rapid promotion and proselytising zeal. Meeting with the NSL deputation after the October conference, Hughes proclaimed that while the league had "no lukewarm champion" in him, he must have the "support from the public without … whose co-operation this would be an uphill struggle."[106]

Though in 1921 there was a largely favourable attitude towards immigration among politicians and public, a significant minority felt that immigration would be more detrimental than beneficial. Such views posed a challenge to a nascent league that needed the co-operation and goodwill of the public in order to enlist members to its cause and carry out its work of integrating immigrants into communities. To co-opt the public's support, league founders needed to appeal to a sense of national interest and human kindness. The NSL set to igniting enthusiasm for immigration among the Australian public in all cities, towns and rural communities. The league addressed people's concerns by promoting the benefits of immigration and encouraging nation-

[103] "Aid for the Newcomer," *Argus*, 28 October 1921.
[104] "Immigration," *West Australian*, 11 March 1921, 7.
[105] "Immigration Proposals," *Register*, 25 May 1921.
[106] NAA: A458, A154/18, Notes of deputation.

building, for which immigration was promoted as essential. New South Wales state organiser, Mr J W A McClenaughan, urged all people who were "interested in the settlement of our unoccupied spaces by our kinsmen from over the seas to show that interest in a practical form by joining the league… and using their influence, and a little of their leisure, in the furtherance of its objects."[107] Thomas Sedgwick, travelling welfare officer attached to the British Department of Migration, exhorted Australians to embrace the benefits of migration and stated that migration alone could "help Australia to recover from her war losses and expenses without unduly burdening the survivors."[108] Gullett reasoned to a National Council of Women (NCW) meeting that though the government could attend to the administrative side of immigration, something more was needed for the scheme to succeed. That was the "personal interest" which the NSL would provide.[109] A *SMH* article detailing the league's formation and objectives reported Gullett's aspiration that, "by means of a vast decentralised organisation it will be possible to maintain that personal and friendly relationship to all new settlers which a Government department, no matter how sympathetic it may be, can never hope to achieve."[110] The approach resonated with the public sufficiently to facilitate the league's expansion. With the exception of the occasional dissenting voice, the response from cities and towns nation-wide was positive as thousands of willing volunteers, men and women, rallied to the cause. While informing the public about the league's formation and objectives was imperative, some parliamentarians also needed to be informed.

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[107] "New Settlers' League," *Western Champion* (Parkes, NSW), 2 March 1922.
[108] T E Sedgwick, "Migration Bullets," *Murray Pioneer and Australian River Record* (Renmark), 4 February 1921.
[109] "Women's Column," *SMH*, 9 June 1921.
[110] "Immigration," *SMH*, 9 June 1921.

Though immigration occupied much parliamentary discussion time in 1921, not all parliamentarians were aware of moves to establish NSL divisions. This was indicated by ALP member for Hunter Matthew Charlton's oration on 17 June 1921. Referring to the advertising campaign touting for migrants to come to Australia, Charlton questioned Acting PM Joseph Cook on its justification when the nation was still suffering the aftershocks of war and had "not yet been able to restore the whole of our returned soldiers to civil life." Citing Cook's admission that there must be organisation at the Australian end, Charlton added that it was absolutely essential that there be an up-to-date organisation and that it was in Australia's best interests that parliament should inform the public of such necessity. "Successful immigration," declared Charlton:

> Depends entirely on the development of the country. If we can develop our resources and expand our industries so that we can absorb 1,000,000 or 2,000,000 immigrants, who will object….and if the Commonwealth is charged, as it is by the agreement made at the conference with the State Premiers, with the organization abroad, and the States with the responsibility of making provision for the absorption of newcomers on their arrival, is it not fair to ask if those arrangements have yet been completed? Have the States adopted and submitted to the Commonwealth Government a fully developed scheme for the reception and absorption of immigrants?[111]

George Foley, Nationalist member for Kalgoorlie, brought to attention the role of the UMA, which had done "a remarkable amount of good….assisting the Government to settle immigrants" and suggested that if "a similar organization were operating in each of the States their activities would tend to lighten our load in the matter of providing for immigrants."[112] The 1921 Conference, which followed a few months after these statements, was an important step in bringing the league to the notice of politicians and public alike.

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[111] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, HOR Official Hansard, no.24, 1921, Adjournment (Formal), Matthew Charlton, 17 June 1921, 9142.
[112] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, HOR Official Hansard, no.39, 1921, Immigration, George Foley, 17 June 1921, 9157.

Newspapers were an essential medium for disseminating information on the NSL's existence and objectives, and appealing for support and membership. In June 1921, Swanson wrote to various Victorian newspapers inviting "cordial co-operation in the new movement." Swanson's correspondence provided a concise explication of the NSL objectives developed to "assist in every approved way the objects of the new joint Commonwealth and State Immigration Scheme," as well as nominations and assisted passages, the type of immigrant desired, and the importance and benefits of immigration to the state and nation. "To complete this voluntary work," he further explained, "it is necessary that branches of the League should be widely established throughout Victoria." As well as being distributed to newspapers, the letter was sent to every Victorian Mayor and Shire President.[113] Gullett also chose to use newspapers as a means of disseminating information on the league and its work, as well as his and the government's support and appreciation for such. Media coverage of the 1921 Conference provided impetus to the league's expansion as it informed the general public of the league's objectives and desire to expand to all country towns. An editorial discussing immigration in the *West Australian* cited and endorsed Hughes's statement made at the conference that "if you realise the need for immigration, you must educate public opinion. It is the citizens themselves who must take this work up." The writer asserted that the NSL, as a "popular, not an official, movement," was evidence of an "immigration atmosphere" that existed in the Commonwealth, and that "an earnest band of workers" was actively engaged in maintaining it.[114]

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[113] "New Settlers' League," *Traralgon Record* (Vic), 10 June 1921.
[114] "Immigration," *West Australian*, 14 December 1921.

While the NSL called for individual members of the public to join, it was an organisation which invited representation from all organisations concerned with the settlement and aftercare of immigrants. Each state division rallied as many organisations as possible that were affiliated with migration or settlement to be represented on its council and work in conjunction with the league. In his report to a meeting of the league's Victorian State Council in December 1928, General Secretary F P Mountjoy reflected on how the "State Council of the League from the outset consisted of representatives from all organised bodies and institutions interested in bringing our kith and kin from overseas to assist in the development of the Commonwealth." Such organisations included existing immigration agencies, religious bodies, welfare agencies, labour unions and farmers' organisations, women's organisations, and Commonwealth and state government representatives. When establishing a branch in a city, town or shire, however, the league's first approach was to the local council. Newspapers of the era carry a multitude of reports from councils, shires, businesses, religious and charitable organisations noting they had been invited to join the NSL. Upon accepting the invitation, representatives were nominated who would participate in league meetings. Established organisations were also requested to utilise their existing networks on the NSL's behalf to help facilitate branch establishment. At the 1922 annual congress of the Returned Soldiers' and Sailors' Imperial League of Australia (RSSILA) in Burnie, for example, members voted in favour of urging "all sub-branches to grant any assistance possible to the New Settlers' League of Australia in the work of establishing branches of that league."[115]

[115] "The Diggers' Conference," *Examiner* (Launceston), 19 June 1922.

As 1922 dawned, in his capacity as Superintendent of Immigration, Gullett distributed a letter to newspapers and all existing branches of the NSL in which he wrote, "I wish the members of your branch to know how much this office appreciates their activities in the development of the New Settlers' League. In establishing a branch of the League in your district you are doing something of first-class national importance." He also stressed that the PM strongly supported the league and regarded the "co-operation of the country branches of the New Settlers' League as indispensable to the success of the Commonwealth policy." [116] For the immigration objective to attain full potential, exhorted Gullett, it "needs the whole-hearted assistance of new and old Australians, all classes of whom it will benefit" and cited the NSL which was by now established in all states except South Australia, as "promising to prove a valuable auxiliary."[117]

While many Australians held misgivings about the impact and purported benefits of increased immigration, others saw it as a patriotic duty. Florence Francesca Fourdrinier was one. During the war Fourdrinier had written a small collection of short stories, *Pro Patria: Australian Love Stories*. With printing and production expenses "patriotically" defrayed by Gordon Vicars, the text was published in 1917 with all proceeds of the one shilling purchase price donated to the War Chest Flower Studio, a NSW comforts fund for soldiers. The book, stated Fourdrinier, was a "grateful tribute to our brave and gallant men, so many of whom I have met in happier and more peaceful days."[118] In the introduction to her glorious post-war vision Fourdrinier explained how she:

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[116] "The Federal Budget," *Mercury*, 30 September 1921.
[117] *Ibid*.
[118] Florence Francesca Fourdrinier, "Pro Patria: A Dream Picture," introduction to *Pro patria: Australian Love Stories* by Florence Francesca Fourdrinier (Sydney: William Brooks & Co, 1917), 7.

> Saw that the bonds between Australia and the Overseas would be stronger; that the Brotherhood of the English-speaking race and Our Allies would be knit as with bands of steel; that this wonderful land of Australia would be populated - her wide spaces filled; that her untold wealth still lying idle in the bowels of the earth would be worked and utilized.[119]

A few years later, with war over and Australia looking to populate its empty spaces, Fourdrinier wrote to the *SMH* regarding the "stirring practical call for peace and defence" that was Carruthers' Million Farms scheme. Offering a reminder of how readily and rapidly the nation responded to the call for defence during the war, Fourdrinier stated that Carruthers' "far-seeing vision" compelled him to be in the "vanguard to urge, to incite, and to organise" so that a mighty scheme between Britain and Australia could result in "the millions of arid acres of this glorious land" being "converted into smiling farms and homesteads." This, she claimed, would be the means of Australia's nation-building for future generations. "This rich, lonely, seagirt outpost," she exhorted, "can no longer be viewed as merely Australia for Australians, but rather as Australia Australianising."[120] For Fourdrinier, populating the country through immigration was a necessity for defence and development that entailed Australians recognising that they needed to consider immigration not as erosion of Australia's achievement and identity, but as consolidation and construction.

The importance of the league in the immigration campaign was emphasised by Gullett, who informed its growing number of members that Hughes "regards the co-operation of the country branches of the New Settlers' League as indispensable to the success of the Commonwealth policy." Hughes had stated that the immigration objective was to bring great numbers of immigrants, and that there be work or land

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[119] Fourdrinier, foreword, 5.
[120] Florence F. Fourdrinier, "To the Editor of the Herald," *SMH*, 22 Jul 1921, 10.

for all upon arrival, though immigrants should not receive preference over Australians for either land or employment. Hughes acknowledged that such a scheme necessitated the opening up of large tracts of Crown land to facilitate many large development projects which would provide employment and for housing. He also conceded that "This great national task cannot be done by officials working alone. If it is to succeed, it must be backed by the goodwill and the active help of all Australians who have at heart the safety and prosperity of their country." It was, he said, recognition of this fact that was "responsible for the foundation of the New Settlers' League," which he envisioned expanding to at least one thousand branches, and with whose help "working keenly in supporting the great Government scheme," he anticipated receiving up to 250,000 new settlers a year. "We can't run immigration on a grand scale against the apathy of the Australian public," Gullett proclaimed, "Hence the formation of the New Settlers' League."[121] Hughes was quoted as stating at the NSL's first Inter-State Conference that "If you realise the need for immigration, you must educate public opinion. It is the citizens themselves who must take this work up."[122]

In Queensland, President Maxwell sent a letter to each council and shire mayor, which was widely published in newspapers, to request they co-operate in establishing a branch in their district. Having explained the league's aims, objectives, and proposed structure, Maxwell advised that to "commence this voluntary work, which is destined … to have real effect in building up our population, it is necessary that branches … should be widely established throughout Queensland."[123] He informed the mayors what the basic functions of country branches would be, beginning with

[121] "Immigration," *Mercury*, 5 December 1921.
[122] "Immigration," *West Australian*, 14 December 1921.
[123] "New Settlers' League, Queensland Division," *Morning Bulletin*, 1 October 1921, 12.

seeking out "land or employment for new settlers according to whether they are possessed of capital or wish to engage in labour." Country branches would also be expected to "nominate and encourage the nomination of relatives and friends for free or reduced passages from the United Kingdom," to ensure members were available to meet all new settlers upon arrival and introduce them to their employers, and "generally to befriend, advise, and show true Australian hospitality to the new arrivals.[124] The Queensland division's letterhead, as did Victoria's, bore the basic objectives common across all divisions, which were:

> To welcome all new settlers;
> To assist them in securing employment;
> To afford them advice; and, generally,
> To promote their welfare and settlement.[125]

Acting to achieve these objectives constituted the league's ongoing commitment across many years and, in Queensland's case, decades.

At the New South Wales Division's Annual Conference in 1924, several notable motions were carried which indicated the difficulties facing the league and the Commonwealth and state governments regarding immigration. Among the motions were that immigration objectives were "insufficient to meet the national need" and "failed to win the approval of a majority of all classes of the Australian people." Another motion asserted that the Australian people "should organise to help the Governments to overcome the difficulties of occupying, developing, and populating this huge, empty Continent so as to secure safety, purity of race, and general prosperity by a steady campaign of organised effort."[126] That such motions were deemed necessary three years after the formation of the NSL demonstrated that the

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[124] *Ibid*.
[125] QSA: 13101, 18731, various documents.
[126] QSA: 13101, 18731, Motions carried at Annual Conference July 2nd, 1924.

task of "winning the hearts and minds" of Australians and gaining their co-operation in filling the empty spaces were tasks that needed constant tending. Accomplishing such tasks required an adequate flow of funds, yet funding was an issue that constantly bedevilled all league divisions and would eventually led to the demise, over the course of a decade or so, of all but the Queensland division. How the league, across its five state divisions, carried out its aims and objectives, the successes and failures it met with, the funding crises that forced the demise of four divisions, the longevity of the Queensland division, and the crucial importance of the contribution made by women members constitute the focus of the ensuing chapters.

CHAPTER THREE:

"Open Doors and Open Hearts"

Australians all let us rejoice,
For we are young and free,
We've golden soil and wealth for toil
Our home is girt by sea;
Our land abounds in nature's gifts
Of beauty rich and rare

These words ring out on occasions, formal and informal, local, national and international, across sporting venues, school assemblies, parliament openings, and at countless events where Australians gather to observe, commemorate or celebrate. "Advance Australia Fair," penned under the nom de plume "Amicus" (Latin for "friend") by Peter Dodds McCormick, a nineteenth-century Scottish migrant to Australia, had its first public airing on St. Andrew's Day, 1878, in Sydney. A 10,000 strong choir performed an amended version on 1 January 1901 to celebrate the inauguration of the Commonwealth of Australia. With amended lyrics, it has been sung as Australia's national anthem since 1984.[1] The lyrics extoll the country's natural resources, plentiful land, great development potential, and the need for labour to realise that potential. It also offers a clear welcome to immigrants to join with Australians in such realisation as it proclaims:

We'll toil with hearts and hands;
To make this Commonwealth of ours
Renowned of all the lands'
For those who've come across the seas
We've boundless plains to share
With courage let us all combine
To "Advance Australia Fair."[2]

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[1] Jim Fletcher, "McCormick, Peter Dodds (1834-1916)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, ANU, published first in hardcopy 1986, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mccormick-peter-dodds-7323.

[2] "Australian National Anthem," Australian Government, https://www.itsanhonour.gov.au/symbols/docs/anthem_words.pdf

Though Australia proudly refers to itself as a nation of immigrants, it sports an immigration history pitted with tensions and reluctant acceptance of the need for immigrants. The first objective of the NSL was "To welcome all new settlers."

Welcoming immigration

After the war years of repressed immigration, Hughes proselytised for immigration to resume. His stance was buoyed by writers such as Rider Haggard whom Britain had requested to conduct an exploratory tour of Australia in 1916 to assess Australia's potential for alleviating Britain's unemployment and social problems while also strengthening the empire through immigration. Haggard returned to Britain highly optimistic and widely espoused Australia's immigration potential. The state premiers were more guarded in their enthusiasm, mindful of their own state's interests. Immigration occupied only a minor part of the 1919 Premiers' Conference and while the 1920 conference focused on the issue more, it was with "fuzziness and log-rolling."[3] Having gained the states' co-operation in 1921, however, Hughes had to contend with labour movement and ALP misgivings.

Hughes emphasised the importance for the nation that immigration transcend party concerns. Warning that if Australia did not populate the country someone else would "jump our claim," he persistently insisted immigration was not a party question.[4] In this, Hughes was supported by the Anglican Synod. Canon Thomas Pughe, Honorary Director of Immigration of the Church Army Oversea Settlement Department, urged that the two problems of England's idle hands and Australia's idle lands be brought

[3] Roe, *Australia, Britain and Migration*, 19-21.
[4] "New Settlers' League," *West Australian*, 27 October 1921, 6.

together, and condemned "anything which stood for mere party feeling on these problems."[5] The labour movement and ALP still did not unreservedly welcome immigration. An ALP conference held in Brisbane in October 1921 passed a resolution that an "active anti-immigration campaign should be started overseas to prevent the further 'overcrowding' of the Australian labour market."[6] This did little to impede Hughes's determination.

In public and parliament, debates yielded frequent professions that immigration was welcome, but often with qualifications. "We should throw our arms out wide in welcome to the white races of the world," William Maloney, ALP member for Melbourne, enthused, but only if Australians were well provided with employment.[7] Matthew Charlton, ALP member for Hunter, declared that he and his party would welcome immigrants with open arms provided they could be absorbed through resource development and industry expansion.[8] Labor was concerned that, in an already "sluggish" economy, immigration would contribute to a decline in working conditions.[9]

The counter argument was that immigrants, if brought in at an appropriate rate, would stimulate development and employment. Hughes intended that immigrants would settle in rural areas with the expectation that once they had developed farming skills, or adapted their existing skills to Australian conditions, they would not only contribute to development, but become employers themselves. This also applied to

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[5] "Anglican Synod: Debate on Immigration," *West Australian*, 12 October 1921, 7.
[6] "Caucus Conference: The Agenda Paper: Remarkable Proposals," *Brisbane Courier*, 10 October 1921, 6.
[7] HOR Official Hansard, no.24, 1921, Immigration, William Maloney, 17 June 1921, 9151.
[8] *Ibid.,* Adjournment (Formal), Matthew Charlton, 9142.
[9] Michael Roe, "Interwar British Migration," in *The Australian People: An Encyclopedia of the Nation, its People and Their Origins*, ed James Jupp (Cambridge, UK: CUP, 2001), 56, 58.

some extent to women who, proposed Sir James Connolly, Agent-General for Western Australia, would make excellent poultry farmers.[10] While Hughes sought to convince doubters that immigration was of such national importance that it was beyond party politics, even those who were favourably disposed foresaw difficulties in bringing thousands of immigrants into the country. Charlton believed it could only succeed if there was a "fully developed scheme for the reception and absorption of immigrants."

Australian governments also recognised there was one element necessary for immigration to succeed that they could not provide. Governments could facilitate migration and settlement through assisted passage, boost development to foster employment, and have state-based Commonwealth Immigration Officers attend all ship arrivals to formally welcome immigrants. Official welcomes, however, were formal and impersonal and could not provide the "personal touch" immigrants needed to feel welcome, happy about their decision to migrate, and successfully settle. Immigrants needed to feel welcomed and accepted by the Australian public, particularly by those in the rural communities where they would settle. The generation of a welcoming climate was the raison d'etre for the NSL's nation-wide establishment. A stated objective of every league division was to ensure each immigrant felt welcome, and that this should begin from the first moment a migrant alighted in the country, if not sooner.

[10] "Women Migrants: Sir J. D. Conolly's Views," *Brisbane Courier*, 24 January 1923, 7.

On 6 January 1921 Gullett sent to Hughes for perusal a draft letter, intended for distribution to the state premiers, which described his vision for the "honorary body" that would soon become the league. The original draft read, in part:

> The capacity of Australia to absorb and prosper immigrants is in a great measure dependent upon the goodwill of the public. These Committees would ensure that goodwill. It would, moreover, ensure a cordial welcome to the immigrants, which would immediately be reflected in their letters to their old homes. This would in turn at once swell the stream of voluntary and nominated immigrants.[11]

A week later Gullett appealed through newspapers to the Australian public to display a positive attitude towards immigrants. Success of the immigration movement, he stressed, would largely depend upon the welcome given by individual Australians to individual immigrants.[12] Gullett and league representatives constantly reinforced this point in seeking the public's support for immigration and immigrants. Public and politicians alike, however, needed to be informed of the league and its role in welcoming settlers.

In November 1921, Percy Stewart, Country Party member for Wimmera, spoke in parliament of the difficulties immigrants faced. "Many of us who are settled here," he explained, "do not realize the feelings of those strangers arriving in a strange land; and it would be very helpful, indeed, if they found a welcome." Richard Foster, Nationalist member for Wakefield, replied that the NSL was established to that end. George Foley, Nationalist member for Kalgoorlie, added that branches had "formed all over Australia to welcome immigrants."[13] Stewart acknowledged he was aware of the league and supported the movement. League member and South Australian

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[11] NAA: A458, A154/18, New Settlers' League First Interstate Conference: Resolutions Carried, 25-27 October 1921.
[12] "Immigration: Federal and State Co-Operation: Scheme Explained," *SMH*, 15 January 1921, 12.
[13] HOR Official Hansard, no.47, 1921, Loan Appropriation Bill George Foley, Richard Foster and Percy Stewart, 23 November 1921, 13128, 13131.

Senator, Robert Guthrie, described its "scope for splendid work" while Hughes offered parliament a fulsome description of the league he had been instrumental in establishing.[14]

As an early imperative was to inform people of the NSL's existence and purpose, Hughes appealed to the public to help the immigration scheme succeed by supporting the league. All that was needed, he urged, was for people to "actively participate in the movement by the nomination and employment of immigrants, and by extending to all immigrants a cordial welcome, courtesy, and practical assistance." He endorsed the NSL's formation, describing it as "an admirable step…of incalculable help to the Government effort."[15] In June 1921, reporting on Gullett's address to the NCW, the *Sydney Stock and Station Journal* wrote how he "welcomed the assistance of such associations … because however enthusiastic government officials might be, the government welcome must necessarily be official." Gullett also stressed the importance of organisations such as the NCW whose members, even in remote localities, could co-operate with the NSL to personally welcome immigrants. A "cordial handshake" or occasional enquiry as to how they are faring, said Gullett, "made all the difference to the loneliness of the newcomer."[16]

As the NSL became more widely established, a conference for the state divisions was organised at which the Governor-General, Lord Forster, spoke of the importance of welcoming immigrants. In bringing to settlers "the sound of a friendly voice, and the touch of a friendly hand," he observed, the league did "more than it might realise"

[14] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, Sen Official Hansard, no.47, 1921, Loan Appropriation Bill, Robert Guthrie, 25 November 1921, 13260.
[15] "Immigration…Statement by Mr. Hughes," *Brisbane Courier*, 11March1921, 7.
[16] "Our Home Page," *Sydney Stock and Station Journal*, 14 June 1921, 3.

for it was in those "first lonely days" that many immigrants, feeling overwhelmed, were tempted to pack up and return home.[17] The Governor-General, in his opening address, explained that the NSL would foster friendships between Australians and immigrants, and how invaluable this would be for successful immigrant retention. Reporting on the conference, the *West Australian* cautioned readers not to dismiss settlers who returned home as not being "of the stuff of which pioneers are made." Only those "who have known what it is to be strangers in a strange land" it stated, knew the difference a friendly welcome made, and the NSL, "if it functions as its founders and wellwishers hope, will be a link between the Australian people and new arrivals, assisting to make both quickly acquainted with each other."[18] Appeals to the public, however, did not always meet with favourable sentiment as some were unconvinced that they should welcome immigrants.

While some Australians feared immigrants would exacerbate unemployment, others were reluctant to accept newcomers, even British. Roe describes an "antagonism to newcomers which has sounded throughout Australian history." He also observes that there was widespread pommy-bashing and "resentment" among Australians of "those imperial ties which had entailed war's devastation."[19] For many English immigrants, observes Jupp, life in interwar Australia was not happy. It was no longer a "working man's paradise," and it "looked down on the working-class English immigrants as unwashed, servile and a threat to employment and working conditions. The only consolation was that it looked down upon everyone else even more."[20]

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[17] "New Settlers' League: First Inter-State Conference: Address by the Governor-General," *Mercury*, 26 October 1921, 5.
[18] "The New Settlers' League" *West Australian*, 27 October 1921, 6, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article28006566.
[19] Roe, "Interwar British Migration," 58-59.
[20] James Jupp, *Immigration*, 2nd ed (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1998), 92.

In his 1919 pamphlet, *Unguarded Australia*, Gullett appealed for Australians to stop deprecating British immigrants. Lamenting that "the attitude of the Australian public as a whole" towards British immigrants had not been "a creditable one," he exhorted "those who hold the immigrant so cheap" to remember their forefathers were also "Pommies."[21] Many though had Irish forefathers who, when they migrated to Australia as either convicts or free settlers, brought anti-British sentiment with them, particularly towards the English. Some Australians held firm opinions on the quality of British workers. Mrs F Blacker, indignant that the Perth *Sunday Times* took issue with an advertisement she had placed in a rival paper for a washerwoman, with "pommies excepted," wrote:

> Thanks for reprinting my ad. You think yourself exceptionally clever…and, like the cheap Pommy labor you are helping to flood the country with, you are rather slow…. My ad. speaks for itself. I've experienced employing Pommies. Result: I want no more. I prefer my own countrywomen (Australians). There are plenty of good women in need of employment… without the wasters you champion.[22]

Gullett's pleas for acceptance, however, received support. A 1921 article, "The Pommy," in the *Sydney Stock and Station Journal* reported that at a Dubbo Farmers' meeting Mr F H Shepherd appealed to rural men to welcome immigration and be tolerant of the "much-despised 'Pommy.'" Shepherd conceded that a British migrant was awkward at first and often took time to acquire "the dexterity and confidence of the Australian bush worker, but it was not because he lacked intelligence." Rather, the problem was due to different conditions in which the migrant had been reared. If farmers would bear with the British migrant, reasoned Shepherd, they would "be

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[21] H S Gullett, "Unguarded Australia: A Plea for Immigration: Australia Must Carry 100,000,000 People," *North Western Courier* (Narrabri), 14 July 1919, 4.
[22] "'Pommies' Excepted," *Sunday Times* (Perth), 31 August 1913, 8.

rewarded by good service" from "the best of hands."[23] When the Melbourne and Metropolitan Branch of the YMCA formed in May 1921, Mr C F Crosby, President, argued "educational propaganda was necessary to remove the existing prejudice against immigrants," which extended to state schools "where Australian children spoke contemptuously of British children, and sometimes declined to associate with them."[24] At a Dubbo NSL meeting at in September, member, Brigadier-General Sydney Herring, exhorted the assemblage to drop the "tommy rot about 'pommies'" and offer immigrants a hearty welcome. After a "pommy" had been in Australia for a year or two, he added, "it was hard to tell him from the Australian born."[25]

British immigrants were often bitter about the treatment received from Australians. In 1912 the Perth *Sunday Times* carried a letter from "A Sorrowful Pommy" which read:

> What's the matter with some of you White Australians? You say you want population, and certain of your Governments spend a bit of money on assisted immigration; but when the newcomers arrive here they are received with black looks and opprobrious words…. At the round-table conference between the building contractors and their employees one of the delegates is reported to have said that "the new arrivals who claimed to be builders were the most disgraceful imitations he had ever met" …. It seems to me … that there is an illogical prejudice against the new arrival. Men of your own race and blood are contemptuously termed "pommies"… regardless of their personal qualities and the crimson thread of kinship…. Many of the Australians I have met are first-rate fellows in every way, but Australia can never hope to be a great country until it sheds its narrow provincialism.[26]

In June 1921 the *Western Mail* carried an article by a reporter who had interviewed several of nine hundred British people returning to England. While reasons for returning varied, among the passengers a "fresh-faced mother nursing a sturdy little

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[23] "The Pommy," *Sydney Stock and Station Journal*, 19 April 1921, 9.
[24] "New Settlers' League: National Value Emphasised," *Argus*, 19 May 1921, 5.
[25] "New Settlers' League: Brigadier-General Herring in Dubbo," *Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate*, 30 September 1921, 7.
[26] "A 'Pommy's' Plaint," *Sunday Times* (Perth), 29 December 1912, 8S.

baby" put forward a reason that affected female immigrants. Lack of sympathy, she stated, was her reason for leaving. "We are treated as foreigners," she explained:

> As "pommies" - people on a lower social scale. I love Australia, and it is the grandest place in which to rear children, with its free open spaces, and educational facilities; but to women convivial company and the binding tie of a complete understanding mean such a lot. Instead of being received as the mothers of Australia's future sons, we were ostracised.[27]

Confronted with antipathy towards immigrants, and to avoid any negative publicity generated in Britain, the NSL promoted immigration's benefits to Australians.

Some Australians joined the campaign to redress negative attitudes and welcome the British. "Pommy Friend" by W C Thomas was published in the Perth *Sunday Times* in May 1922:

> Pommy friend, give me your hand;
> You're welcome to our sunny land.
> And you shall find this true -
> That if you puff with us all right
> And wage the clean and manly fight
> We'll think the world of you.
>
> Pommy friend, you've left a place
> That gave to earth a sturdy race.
> And we its greatness share.
> Our forebears, strong of heart and mind,
> Left treasures just as great behind,
> For fortune ill or fair!
>
> Pommy friend, there may be times
> When happy scenes of other climes
> Will bring the wayward tear;
> Things oft may go a little wrong.
> The way seem more than ever long.
> And hope be crushed by fear.
>
> Pommy friend, there may be ties
> Of deepest love where Northern skies
> And daisied fields abide
> To which your thoughts will often turn,
> And for their cherished voices yearn,

[27] "The Ormonde Travellers," *Western Mail*, 23 June 1921, 16.

To nestle close beside.

Pommy friend, some tongue unkind
May bring the tears that scald and blind,
And make you hate us all;
But let it pass as shadows do.
The sun will surely get right through
Whatever darkness fall!

Pommy friend, remember then,
The courage of those brave old men
And be a worthy son;
And come what may, your cry shall be,
Though poor reward may come to me,
I will go smiling on![28]

The NSL hoped to further foster such sentiments.

Mrs Mary Juleff, Western Australia NCW representative on emigration and immigration since 1914, appealed to Australians' sense of kinship and reciprocal obligation. "The people who come here are our own kith and kin," she stressed:

> The Home people opened their homes and their pockets to the Australian soldier and we are now called upon to do the same for those from the Homeland. There has been a tendency up to the present to run the newcomers through a 'race,' but, now that the work is getting bigger and more and more immigrants will follow, it will be well for the Government Department that is controlling immigration to see that, whatever move is made towards helping the new arrivals… all sections of the community should have an opportunity of stepping out, and showing in a true and proper manner their sympathy and genuine desire to help.[29]

The Victoria League (VL) also challenged Australian attitudes, claiming:

> Our Empire is in troubled waters just now if we only knew it, but we don't, or our attitude toward the immigrants would be different. We would do more to welcome the immigrants who dare the 13,000 miles of restless ocean to join us….we want immigrants badly, especially for the country. Even in our thinly populated land the tide of humanity is settling townwards; and that means ruination to us all…. A few hundred immigrants come to our shores… but we have no word of welcome for them, and they want it. And the Empire depends on us standing together!!![30]

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[28] W C Thomas, "Pommy Friend," *Sunday Times* (Perth), 28 May 1922, 17.
[29] Mary Juleff, "Welfare of Immigrants: The Society's Work," *West Australian*, 15 October 1921, 7.
[30] "Gossip: The Victorian League," *Country Life Stock and Station Journal* (Sydney), 4 July 1924, 2.

The NSL had not only to convince the public that immigration was necessary, but to redress damage done by the antipathy immigrants encountered.

Public persuasion was needed to garner support for both immigration and the NSL. Newspapers and to some extent radio were vital propaganda instruments for the immigration campaign, which also saw posters, leaflets and booklets published. Propaganda overuse, however, may have dulled the campaign message and inured readers. Immigration had been promoted as an "urgent national matter demanding bipartisan support…for so long," observed the *SMH*, that the "average newspaper-reader is left entirely unimpressed."[31] Furthermore, it noted, though Australia persistently stated immigrants were urgently needed and wanted, this was no consolation if "in practical test some little outback district is coldly indifferent to his settling there." The report advocated "organised local hospitality, friendly reception, and kindly interest and assistance" in conjunction with "the most generous possible welcome" from local communities. Noting that NSL branches were formed or forming in every country town, the writer appealed to all men and women to "take pride and satisfaction in a very simple but effective civic duty."[32]

Welcoming immigrants

The 1921 Conference discussed the "desirability of rendering every courtesy and assistance in the direction of absorbing immigrants into the….social life of Australia, thus making them feel at home."[33] The resolutions were that: an official welcome, in the form of a pamphlet, be distributed on board each ship at its first port of call; that

[31] "A New Settlers' League," *SMH*, 19 May 1921, 6.
[32] *Ibid*.
[33] NAA: A458, A154/18, H S Gullett to Acting Secretary, PM's Department, 6 January 1921.

immigrants be met immediately upon arrival on shore and in the district they would settle in; that they be welcomed and shown hospitality; that NSL members ensure immigrants were introduced "into the business and social life of the district, and particularly to Churches, Clubs, Social bodies, Lodges, etc."; and that the NSL "generally take an interest in the welfare of all new settlers." Metropolitan branches would welcome immigrants upon arrival "on behalf of the League and of the Government and citizens of the State… and take an interest in the subsequent welfare of those remaining in the Metropolitan area." As the majority of immigrants would relocate to country areas, local branches would see to the "reception of new settlers, and introduce those who take up residence … to the social and religious life of the district, and assist them with friendly advice or by other means." [34]

By June 1921, the NSL in Victoria was well enough established to begin meeting immigrants at ports. Metropolitan members dispensed "hospitality in a practical way" by inviting them to a reception in a small hall in Flinders Street adjacent to the State Immigration Bureau where league ladies had refreshments and entertainment arranged and extended immigrants "many useful acts of kindness."[35] Such activities were soon replicated across all state divisions as ships called in to the larger cities' ports. In Brisbane, immigrants "had no need to cavil at their reception" for Garland and Maplestone were first on board to extend a welcome.[36] As 1922 dawned, Gullett, as Superintendent of Immigration, expressed his continued support for the league by writing to every branch:

> I wish the members of your branch to know how much this office appreciates their activities in the development of the New Settlers' League. In

[34] *Ibid.,* Draft letter on behalf of Hughes to state premiers, 6 January 1921.
[35] "Placing Immigrants," *Argus*, 11 August 1921, 6.
[36] "The Largs Bay: Arrival at Brisbane: Another Batch of Immigrants," *Brisbane Courier*, 18 February 1922, 6.

> establishing a branch of the League in your district you are doing something of first-class national importance to Australia. You need no reminder of the vital necessity of building up our population …. the Prime Minister… regards the co-operation of the country branches of the New Settlers' League as indispensable to the success of the Commonwealth policy…. New settlers are not to be brought here by false promises and left stranded upon arrival…. This great national task cannot be done by officials working alone. If it is to succeed, it must be backed by the good-will and the active help of all Australians who have at heart the safety and prosperity of their country…. When the Commonwealth … can say to prospective immigrants that in every district in rural Australia there is a branch of the New Settlers' League pledged to take a warm interest in their welfare, we shall be deluged with applicants…. The greatest of all immigration agents … is the happy letter written "Home"…. These new people seek not only wages or farms; they seek new happy homes; and in this quest their success or failure depends largely on the spirit in which they are greeted and treated by each individual Australian…. And preach always the gospel of immigration.[37]

The league's early efforts, however, did not satisfy Britain. Britain's Colonial Secretary, Winston Churchill, wrote to Hughes implying that Australia's efforts to welcome immigrants lacked zeal. Britain's disappointment at what it considered a poor performance was exacerbated by a perceived lack of concern by Australia and token gestures towards the issue. This goaded the BOSC in 1922 to establish a migrant-welfare agency in Australia and despatch a commission of enquiry to ascertain conditions for immigrants. Knowing the ALP did not entirely favour immigration, Britain included British Labour parliamentarian, James Wignall, in the delegation.[38] Having toured Australia in 1923, the delegation's 1924 report found that while the vitality of individual branches varied considerably, the NSL was carrying out valuable work "not only in introducing new settlers into the social life of the district, but in helping them through difficulties, and in particular in finding fresh employment."[39]

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[37] "Recruiting Settlers: 300 Branches of the New League," *Cairns Post*, 9 January 1922, 7.
[38] Roe, *Australia, Britain and Migration*, 45-47.
[39] Great Britain Oversea Settlement Delegation to Australia, *Report to the President of the Overseas Settlement Committee from the Delegation Appointed to Enquire into the Conditions Affecting British Settlers in Australia, May, 1924* (London: HM Stationery Office, 1924), 21-22.

By 1923, with over 600 branches established, the NSL had welcomed and cared for thousands of immigrants. Of the 233 Victorian branches, it was stated that over 7,000 immigrants had been "given a personal welcome at social gatherings" since March 1921, 4,000 of whom had been greeted in the twelve months to May 1923.[40] Gilchrist held a letter the league received from A J Ackland of Cohuna, Victoria, which read:

> This is the first time I have written to you to let you know how I am progressing in my new country. It will perhaps interest you to know that my present situation seems to apply to a remark that was made by a certain gentleman at the reception given to new settlers at the New Settlers' League in Melbourne on our arrival - "If we could only fit you into a niche we would." Well, I seem to fit into a niche in this family of two. I am treated just like a son. We have the wireless and piano which I can play any evening I like. Among the people in the district there is a fine spirit of comradeship for newcomers. If you would kindly answer this letter and any future letter I should be very pleased as I get very few letters from England.[41]

The 1924 edition of the *New Settlers' Handbook to Victoria*, describes how the NSL would provide "a cheery welcome after the arrival of each steamer," after which speeches would be delivered by "prominent citizens," refreshments handed round, informative and informal conversations conducted and letters of introduction to the league's country workers supplied.[42] When the "Euripides" from Aberdeen arrived at Albany, Western Australia, on a March afternoon in 1922, NSL members greeted almost 200 immigrants as they disembarked. The "youthful and happy band," already "greatly impressed with the beautiful climatic conditions," was treated the following morning to a welcome at the Town Hall by a party of officials and NSL representatives. Railway warrants were issued and employment positions finalised after which the newcomers moved to the Soldiers' Institute to be feted with an

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[40] "New Settlers' League Busy: 4,000 Migrants Welcomed in Year," *Argus*, 24 May 1923, 13. "Selection of Migrants: Is it Satisfactory?" *Argus*, 20 September 1923, 6.
[41] NAA, Canberra: CP211/2, 3/65, Associations - New Settlers' League - Victoria, 1927-1927, Gilchrist to Development & Migration Commission, 16 August 1927.
[42] New Settlers' League of Australia, Victorian Division, *New Settlers' Handbook to Victoria*, 45.

afternoon tea by the NSL Ladies' Welcome Committee, The immigrants offered "three rousing cheers at the conclusion" before boarding a special train transporting them to various new locations.[43]

WELCOME TO NEW SETTLERS.

Members of the women's committee of the New Settlers' League arranged a reception at the State Immigration Bureau to 462 arrivals by the Orama, Baradine, and Benalla, which berthed during the week-end. On behalf of the State Ministry, the Minister for Railways (Mr. Eggleston), who is seen under the electric light globe on the right, welcomed the new settlers, who are of a very fine type. They include 167 young farm workers. The general secretary of the league (Mr. A. Gilchrist) is standing on the extreme right.

Pl.5 A 1924 NSL Women's Committee welcome function for newly-arrived immigrants offering an indication of the scale of the welcomes as, shoulder-to-shoulder, 462 new settlers fill the room.[44]

Sometimes, however, the welcome extended was couched in cautionary tones. The West Australian division's handbook assured settlers that the "people of the State are glad to welcome the men and women of kindred blood… imbued with a desire to succeed," but it was "no place for the idler." Immigrants were informed that league officials would welcome them upon arrival with a:

> Friendly hand and the painstaking counsel of men who wish the newcomer to feel that he is in a land whose people want him, if he only wants to do his own manhood the justice of working for that independence which is the sure reward of the worker.

[43] "The Euripides Contingent: Welcome at the Town Hall," *Albany Advertiser* (WA), 11 March 1922.
[44] "Welcome to New Settlers," *Argus*, 23 December 1924, 9.

The dubiously-worded welcome further cautioned that settlers would "not be coddled," were "not encouraged to magnify the small ills that strange surroundings and novel circumstances … may induce," and, though sympathy was extended to "reduce nostalgia," the settler was "expected to have some backbone."[45] The terms kindred blood and backbone obliquely suggest just who was welcome.

Opening the 1921 Conference, Governor-General Forster stated his hope that every effort would be made to get the right class of settler. The right settler meant "the men or the women - preferably both - who are used to country life." Australia, stated Forster, did not need to "bring out unskilled men for whom it is difficult to find employment …. We want those who will bring new areas under cultivation, and add to the prosperity of the State."[46] Conference resolutions were presented to Hughes by the NSL stating that preference be given to:

(a) Primary Producers
(b) Men anxious to become Primary Producers or rural workers
(c) Retired Anglo-Indians
(d) Youths 16 to 20 years of age for rural workers (preference in these four cases to be given to ex-service men subject to suitability)
(e) Domestics for country settlers
(f) Domestics for City and Suburbs
(g) Parents with families.[47]

With "White Australia" permeating the consciousness of governments and public, the resettlement of Australian soldiers a sensitive issue, and fears of unemployment escalating, selecting large numbers of appropriate settlers was a complex issue.

[45] J C Morrison, ed, *New Settlers' Handbook to Western Australia* (Perth: Edwin R Greenfield, 1925), 23, 33.
[46] "Aiding Immigration," *Argus*, 26 October 1921, 11.
[47] NAA: A458, A154/18, Resolutions Carried.

While Australian immigration after the war was not exclusively British, they were unambiguously the preferred nationality, and the NSL's focus. Australians, stated economist James Brigden, had "chosen to confine their population as far as possible to their own race, partly for social reasons and partly to protect the standard of living."[48] Legislation precluded immigration from "low standard countries," he explained, so that Australia's standard of living could be maintained.[49] He further noted that Australia preferred not only a white but a decisively British Australia.[50] Former Western Australia Premier, Sir James Mitchell, asserted that "Keep Australia British" should be raised as a slogan on every suitable occasion. "We want Australia held inviolate for the white races," he declared, "for men and women of our own race; for the people who speak our own English language."[51]

David Walker states that "Australia developed a historically embedded sense of vulnerability towards Asia from the 1880s."[52] Defence against invasion is what Sir Joseph Carruthers, former New South Wales Premier, invoked as the basis for his "million farms for a million farmers" scheme, which governments and the NSL supported. Crucial for putting the farms into production were a million farmers who would, by Carruthers' reckoning, practically ensure a population of twenty million.[53] Newspaper articles echoed Carruther's conviction. "Unless Australia can swell her people into millions," warned the *West Australian*:

> Her position will not be secure. In nations, security lies in numbers. The danger of invasion is not the most serious aspect of the matter. The most urgent requirement of the Commonwealth is to become self-supporting. This

[48] J B Brigden, "Economic Control of Immigration," in *The Peopling of Australia*, eds P D Phillips and G L Wood (Melbourne: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1928), 286.
[49] *Ibid.,* 276.
[50] *Ibid.,* 277-78.
[51] Morrison, *New Settlers' League Handbook to Western Australia*, 10.
[52] Walker, "Re-Thinking the Asian Dimension of Australian History," 5.
[53] NAA, Canberra: A457, 1400/5 PART 2, Immigration Encouragement "Million Farms" Campaign, Sir Joseph Carruthers Scheme, 1921-1922, What it is, in a Nutshell, 1921.

> she cannot do unless she increases her populations quickly and extensively…. The vacant spaces must disappear and be changed into fruitful land. Homes and holdings must take the place of the bush.[54]

Pl.6 Carruthers' Australia, whose "unsold" areas in white he attributed to "neglect" of agricultural resources and "insufficient roads, railways and water supply." The NSL and Carruthers supported each other on their common goals of populating rural Australia.[55]

Australia's post-war fear of Japanese invasion, writes Ross Laurie, was such that in some quarters, notably the conservative press, it eclipsed hostility towards recent enemies, the Germans. Hughes also generated concern about Japan's expansionist intentions. Not only the Japanese alarmed Australians, however, for Indians, as British subjects, presented an obstacle for a white Australia. Few Indians, though,

[54] "Topics of the Day: An Infant Nation," *The West Australian*, Perth, 29 January 1923, 5.
[55] NAA: A457, 1400/5 PART 2, What it is, in a Nutshell.

tried to migrate to Australia in the 1920s, unlike migrants from southern European countries, such as Greece and Italy, who came in quite large numbers. Post-war labour shortages in some Australian industries, combined with increasing restrictions on access to the United States, made Australia attractive to migrants.[56] Preference for white British settlers dominated and was reflected in the migrant intake, though not exclusively.

The 1921 Conference resolutions on migrant selection stated that "while preference should be given to those Anglo-Saxon races, there should also be judicious encouragement to others, specially and carefully selected from other friendly white peoples," though who these were was not specified.[57] Australia in the 1920s also received some European immigrants, including Maltese who were British subjects. International pressure on Australia over restrictions on Maltese was such that by 1923, the quota was eased to allow these British subjects in.[58] Also at this time, a Danish-born, naturalised, Australian public servant, Jens Sorensen Lyng, heavily encouraged and provided after-care for Scandinavian immigrants. A founder in 1922 of the Scandinavian Progress Association, in 1923 Lyng successfully approached the Victorian government for a suitable tract of land to establish Danish immigrants upon. He then visited Denmark to promote the scheme, but, having met with little enthusiasm there he returned to Australia. In 1925, the association was converted to a branch of the NSL.[59]

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[56] Ross Laurie, "Reporting on Race: White Australia, Immigration and the Popular Press in the 1920s," *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland* 18, no.10 (2004): 422-26, http://search.informit.com.au.elibrary.jcu.edu.au/fullText;dn=200405337;res=IELAPA.
[57] NAA: A458, A154/18, Resolutions Carried.
[58] "History of Immigration from Malta," Museum Victoria, http://museumvictoria.com.au/origins/history.aspx?pid=39.
[59] John Stanley Martin, "Lyng, Jens Sorensen (1868-1941)," *ADB*, National Centre of Biography, ANU, published first in hardcopy 2005, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/lyng-jens-sorensen-13059/text23615.

Being British and white, though, was still not enough. For practical reasons, the "right type" of assisted immigrant needed to be mentally and physically fit and healthy, preferably young, marriageable and fertile. For nominated immigrants, that is, those who were migrating on the basis of having friends or family prepared to support them until they established themselves, capital was highly desirable; for independent immigrants it was vital. For those identified by governments as being suitable immigrants, assisted passage was granted. Perhaps the most significant development for Australian postwar immigration," observes Langfield "was the change in attitude of the British government to assisted immigration."[60] Prior to this, colonial and state governments had contributed to assisted passages but Britain generally did not. An agreement between Britain and Australia after the war resulted in Britain contributing for a limited time to the free or assisted passage of thousands of selected migrants, with ex-servicemen initially being selected.[61]

Economist James Brigden argued at the time that assisted passage worked against Australia's interests. Migration, he explained, was a risk-taking venture that involved chance, therefore, prudent people would only migrate if they could see an option for return should the gamble not work in their favour. Australia's vast distance from a migrants' homeland meant that factoring in the possibility of not succeeding rendered the gamble economically prohibitive. It was, claimed Brigden, the "return passage which hampers the prudent." Prudence was a desirable trait in migrants, but Australia could not appeal to any prudent migrant. To offer free or assisted passage

[60] Langfield, "Recruiting Immigrants," 63.
[61] *Ibid*.

meant Australia would appeal to the less prudent migrant who might burden rather than benefit Australia.[62]

Brigden was not alone in perceiving negative effects of migrant assistance. Langfield compares Australia's hope that a rigorous selection process would result in a fine type of immigrant, to Canada, which regarded assisted immigrants as "lacking in independence and initiative."[63] The league's commitment to promoting nomination and assisted passage provoked "Boorama Bill" of Barcaldine to write to the *Worker*. "I have before me the Constitution, Aims, and Objects of the New Settlers' League of Australia," he stated, and noting that "the Tories endeavoured to establish a branch of the league" in Barcaldine, stated the futility of encouraging immigrants to the area because of the lack of employment and the costs entailed in getting established on the land.[64] For Boorama Bill and others, assisted passage meant governments made it easier to flood small towns with unsuitable settlers.

Physically and mentally healthy immigrants were important not only for increasing Australia's population in the short term, but the hopes were that they would soon swell the population by marrying and raising families. Federal legislation allowed for immigrants who upon arrival in Australia were found to exhibit particular physical or character defects, to be designated "prohibited immigrants." Such defects included any person who was:

> (a) an idiot, feeble-minded or epileptic;
> (b) deaf and dumb, or blind and infirm;
> (c) insane or mentally deficient;
> (d) so physically defective as to render him or her liable to become a charge upon the public or any charitable institution;

[62] Brigden, "Economic Control of Immigration," 278.
[63] Langfield, "Voluntarism, Salvation, and Rescue," 87.
[64] "Million People for 100 Jobs," *Worker* (Brisbane), 15 December 1921, 18.

(e) a criminal or of immoral character;
(f) afflicted with any dangerous or other disease;
(g) not in possession of a prescribed certificate of health.[65]

Nonetheless, there were often complaints about the poor quality of immigrants selected by some agents in England. James Jupp notes that even conservative Australian supporters of immigration were sometimes dismayed at the "poor types" of migrant entering Australia.[66] Nonetheless over the course of the 1920s approximately a quarter of a million people were assisted to migrate to Australia.[67]

Closing doors

Within two years NSL divisions were well established with strong memberships, but changing circumstances saw government attitudes begin to change. With Hughes deposed as leader of the Nationalists, Stanley Melbourne Bruce became PM on 9 February 1923. In 1924 the New South Wales division, frustrated by sluggish immigration, presented Bruce with resolutions passed at the annual conference. League representative, B J Grogan, impressed upon Bruce that the NSL was positioned to contribute strongly to the immigration campaign and could "handle three or four times the volume of the work imposed … at present." If immigration languished, ventured Grogan, the "resolutions merely fell in the category … of pious hopes and expectations." He also pressed the need for hostel accommodation so "migrants might not be absolutely lost on arrival," for along with "pleasant faces and a welcome hand," immigrants needed a place "to rest by the wayside before they set out to seek their fortune." Grogan assured Bruce that whatever extra work increased

[65] New Settlers' League of Australia, Victorian Division, *New Settlers' Handbook to Victoria*, 23.
[66] Jupp, *The English in Australia*, 196.
[67] Langfield, "Voluntarism, Salvation, and Rescue," 87.

immigration might impose, the NSL "would work hand and heart to make a success of it."[68] Immigration was, however, about to face challenges again.

As the 1920s progressed, parliamentary discussions on immigration focused on Australia's rising unemployment. Nationalists accused the ALP of being antipathetic towards immigration. Debating the Development and Migration Bill in 1926, John Perkins, Nationalist member for Eden-Monaro, alleged that while Labor wanted British trade and investment, it did not welcome immigrants because it did not want to share the "high wages and short hours" enjoyed by Australian workers.[69] In 1927 Labor leader Matthew Charlton reiterated concerns the party had raised with the DMC about ensuring immigrants had definite employment positions before arrival. "When we can find employment for all our own people who are now in search of it," insisted Charlton, "when we have a scheme whereby we can absorb our brothers and sisters who arrive from oversea then let us take them by the hand and welcome them." Australia wanted immigrants, Charlton emphasised, and had "plenty of room for them," but when Australians enjoyed secure employment, Australia should welcome as many immigrants from Great Britain as could be absorbed.[70] Labor's long-championed message would soon have greater impact.

With the onset of the Great Depression, immigrant intakes were curtailed and need for NSL assistance declined, as did its government funding. By the late 1920s, straitened times in Victoria saw much less fanfare accorded to welcoming

[68] NAA: A458, A154/18, Interview between PM S M Bruce and New Settlers' League representatives, 7 November 1924.
[69] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, HOR Official Hansard, no.26, 1926, Development and Migration Bill, John Perkins, 1 July 1926, 3743-44.
[70] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, HOR Official Hansard, no.39, 1927, Supply Bill (No.2), Matthew Charlton, 29 September 1927, 94, 107.

immigrants. The division's 1929 annual report cited a large reduction in the number of welcome receptions held. "Whereas, in more prosperous years they would occur two or three times a week," it stated, "last year the number fell to 52, and this year only 29 in all have been required."[71] Worsening economic and employment conditions saw immigration virtually cease, leaving all NSL divisions bereft of people to welcome and therefore of their main purpose for existence. Only the Queensland division continued, but welcoming immigrants was no longer required. Not until after WWII would the Queensland division again receive immigrants to welcome.

With signs of WWII ending, Queensland division immediately began communicating with governments in preparation for the resumption of immigration. The post-WWII immigration campaign differed greatly, however, from that of post-WWI. Whereas the NSL was established in an era of White Australia to focus on British immigration, 1940s immigration saw acceptance of immigrants from many European nations. This change presented the NSL with issues not previously encountered, especially language and cultural differences. Speaking in July 1946 at a jubilee function to celebrate NSL Queensland's twenty-five years of continuous service, Harold Collins, Agriculture and Stock Minister, called for compulsory English language instruction for non-English-speaking immigrants. He emphasised that everything possible must be done to "encourage migration from the British Isles, America, and Europe," because Australia needed to do so for defence reasons more than ever before.[72] The message preached was the same as the 1920s, but the right type of immigrant had broadened. Though the British still migrated in large numbers,

[71] NAA: A458, C154/18, "The New Settlers' League of Australia (Victorian Division) Eighth Annual Report Welcome and Welfare Committee, July, 1929."
[72] "Compulsory Schools for Migrants Urged," *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), 20 July 1946, 3.

the NSL no longer endeavoured to convince Australians to welcome their own kith and kin. The mass dislocation of peoples in the war's aftermath saw unprecedented numbers of Europeans enter Australia. Technological advances in newspapers and radio and the advent of newsreels ensured Australians were well-informed of the war's progress, and of the nature and scale of the devastating aftermath in Europe. The world had changed. The British Empire no longer dominated and Australia's relationship with the United States meant it was not so heavily focused on Britain. Australia had also changed since the NSL's inception in 1921.

As Queensland division prepared to resume welcoming immigrants, it had to consider how its members could deal with immigrants whose language and culture were foreign to them. Queensland was soon re-joined by a revived New South Wales division. Together they endeavoured to re-implement the NSL's objectives and practices of welcoming immigrants. A new immigrant care organisation arose in the other states, the Good Neighbour Councils (GNC, also referred to as the Good Neighbour Movement), which co-operated with the NSL divisions. Queensland division, having awaited the day it could resume duties, welcomed immigrants for the latter 1940s and most of the 1950s.

Representatives resumed their practice of boarding ships as they docked to welcome immigrants, who were then formally welcomed by the State Migration Officer and other officials. As early as April 1945, NSL President Eustace Pike organised welcomes and social events for British brides of Australian service-men. Pike and his wife personally extended welcomes by hosting parties monthly at their home for evacuees (most soon returned to their homes in various parts of the world) and

immigrants. Guests reportedly enjoyed meeting with each other and "marvelled at the richness and variety of our Australian fare, especially fruit."[73] Christmas parties were held, particularly for immigrant children, which introduced immigrants to Australian ways of upholding European traditions. Christmas 1947 saw the Brisbane branch host a Christmas party for four hundred British immigrants in the grounds of "Yungaba," the State Migration Depot, at Kangaroo Point.[74] The frequent parties served not only to welcome and acculturate immigrants, but to provide introductions to organisations which could offer assistance, to potential employers, and to the prospect of ongoing friendships, "all of which create that happy atmosphere which convinces the newcomers that they are wanted."[75] Graham Thomson, Townsville branch secretary, explained that a large number of Australians attended the parties which aided the "assimilation of the newcomers" by extending their circle of friends and acquaintances, which was the "first step in drawing them into the Australian way of life." The invitations, he added, were "always extended to Continental immigrants" who were encouraged to attend and to call upon the league at any time for assistance.[76]

The New South Wales division, reformed on 20 December 1949, quickly established a Social and Reception Committee which arranged welcomes for immigrants. The committee arranged at least four social events annually in Sydney to "give a personal welcome" to all immigrants, from Britain and Europe, upon arrival. Six NSL member organisations were rostered to assist the league in preparing and hosting the parties, which were attended by four to eight hundred immigrants. Members of the

[73] "Round About," *Sunday Mail* (Brisbane), 22 April 1945, 7.
[74] "No White Christmas for Them," *Sunday Mail*, 14 December 1947, 3.
[75] "Open Doors and Open Hearts," *Queensland Country Life*, 8 January 1948, 6.
[76] (no title) *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 23 December 1950, 2.

Sydney Rotary Club, the Millions Club and the New Australian Cultural Association undertook development of the evenings' programmes and entertainment provision. The state government covered food costs. The Social and Reception Committee's reports acclaim these events as highly successful, with "bright entertainment" that included "first class artists, a good continental orchestra and colourful dances." League members and other "friendly Australians" welcomed and mingled with British and European immigrants. The committee also organised concerts, film screenings and picnics.[77] Such activities were not confined to Sydney, for dozens of reformed NSL country branches also hosted social events where various European immigrants were introduced to Australians and Australian culture and to Europeans from other nations. Bathurst, for example, established a "Continental Coffee Lounge to enable Europeans to meet each other and Australians."[78]

The magnitude of the task confronting the two NSL divisions in the 1940s eclipsed in scale and scope that seen after WWI. New South Wales division's 1953 report cited approximately 200,000 immigrants received since immigration resumed. The league, rather than being daunted by its task, was encouraged by its successes. Queensland was also pleased with its accomplishments. The 1957-1958 President's Report noted the league had been involved in numerous activities and attended many conferences. President R H Wainwright was confident the league had improved immigrants' lives significantly and that the "Australian born" population was now "better educated" about immigrants and their needs. The division now focused on public relations and established committees catering to specific immigrant needs, such as the Women's Committee, Contact Workers' Committee and Hospital

[77] New Settlers' League of NSW, *Third Annual Report of the Co-Ordinating Council* (Sydney: New Settlers' League, 1953), 5.
[78] *Ibid.,* 1-2.

Visiting Committee, which helped immigrants feel welcome and facilitated settlement and assimilation.[79] This, however, was the last NSL report as the GNC established itself in Queensland and New South Wales, incorporating the NSL into its organisation.

When Gullett first conceived the idea of a league, it was because he understood that immigrants could not succeed in Australia, so far from home and families, unless they felt welcome and accepted. The NSL enthusiastically pursued this primary objective, despite encountering significant political and civic resistance. League representatives were persuasive in enlisting members to support their cause, and in espousing the benefits of welcoming immigration and immigrants. As a volunteer-based organisation, the NSL accomplished a remarkable record in meeting the challenge of providing immigrants with the "personal touch" called for by Gullett and government. Queensland and reformed New South Wales divisions exercised a determination to adapt to the changing conditions of immigration after WWII, and though successful, the newer GNC saw the doors close on the NSL's history of welcoming immigrants.

[79] New Settlers' League Queensland, *Thirty-Seventh Annual Report, 1957-1958* (Brisbane: New Settlers' League of Queensland (in association with the Good Neighbour Movement), 1958), np.

CHAPTER FOUR:

"The Feet that Tread the Fields"

"Prosperity" asserted Sir Rider Haggard, "will follow the feet that tread the fields, rather than those which trip along the pavements."[1] An avid imperialist and recognised authority on farming, Haggard considered Australia the greatest British colony with "all that is necessary for the development of a great and powerful nation" and immense agricultural potential.[2] Hughes, sharing this view, aimed to greatly increase rural settlement and production by attracting British immigrants to rural Australia. The NSL's role was "to assist [immigrants] in securing employment" and discourage them from seeking employment in the cities. Employment was a fraught issue for governments and the NSL, however, as Australians feared that immigrants would compete for employment. Nonetheless, the league co-operated with all levels of government, farmers and industry and devised innovative initiatives in striving to fulfil the nation-building goal of a populous and productive rural Australia. The Depression's negative impact on immigration and employment, however, largely obviated the need for the NSL and facilitated the demise of all divisions but Queensland.

Under the Joint Agreement, two classes of immigrants were entitled to assisted passage, "Nominated" and "Assisted" immigrants. Nominated immigrants migrated on the provision that their nominator, an Australia resident, would ensure they did

[1] "The Country Party: A Manifesto," *West Australian*, 11 December 1919, 7.
[2] "Rider Haggard on Australia," *Warwick Examiner and Times* (Qld), 20 January 1900, 5.

not "become a burden on the State."[3] To do so, the nominator either procured work for the nominated immigrant or undertook to provide for them. Assisted immigrants were recruited by the Commonwealth through agents-general in England. Others came of their own volition bringing capital to sustain themselves until established in farming or employment. The NSL was to focus on finding rural employment for selected and independent immigrants.[4]

Rural Employment

The idea that immigration would stimulate demand, production, development and employment was generally accepted, but nervousness about unemployment persisted. With unemployment at just over 11% in 1921, the labour market was wary of introducing thousands of immigrants.[5] In October 1921, at the ALP's Ninth Commonwealth Conference, Scullin moved that "Labor oppose all further assisted immigration," which was seconded and carried.[6] The issue continued to fester, with the AWU contacting Ramsay McDonald, British Labour Party leader, early in 1923 asking him to make it widely known that Australia was "overrun with unemployed," that "immigrants mostly find themselves on relief rations," and those who find work "usually do so in agricultural pursuits at the lowest rates paid in this country."[7] The CIO responded to the AWU's action with Hurley urging the PMO to cable High

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[3] ABS, *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia, vol 15 (1922)*, comp Chas H Wickens, ed John Stonham (Melbourne: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, 1922), 1016, http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/1301.01922?OpenDocument.
[4] NAA: A458, A154/18.
[5] ABS, "A Century of Change in the Australian Labour Market" in *Year Book Australia, 2001* (Canberra: ABS, 2001), 243, http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/featurearticlesbyCatalogue/12D509E0F07F37BFCA2569DE0021ED48?OpenDocument.
[6] Australian Labor Party, *Official Report of Proceedings of the Ninth Commonwealth Conference* (Melbourne: Labor Call Print, 1921), 34.
[7] "AWU and Migration," *Argus*, 30 January 1923, 8.

Commissioner, Joseph Cook, to refute the allegations. A PMO, in a return telegraph the next day, stated it presumed Cook had refuted the claims and emphasised that "lower rates wages paid inexperienced farm workers whilst gaining experience but increased as settlers become qualified." There was, replied Cook, a persistent campaign against migration amongst British labour, which he and his officers were striving to combat along with "constantly correcting wickedly untrue statements," including that referred to in the telegram.[8] In 1926, objecting to the "dumping of a rural migrant populace as producers," the Central Queensland District Council of Agriculture also threatened to circulate periodic reports in England of poor living standards afforded dairy farmers in Australia. This, it claimed, was due to perpetuating a "crude and unorthodox system of allowing the competition of other countries to dictate the price of our butter and cheese."[9]

"The Federal Government," Hughes assured, "sets its face resolutely against bringing any one to Australia for whom employment is not found on the land." Proof of his conviction, he claimed, were his numerous cablegrams to Great Britain and communications with the states asserting that he would not bring anyone to Australia who would not settle on the land.[10] Swanson urged support for NSL endeavours, assuring the public that it was aware of unemployment difficulties and would not exacerbate them. "No business man, no professional man, no labourer," he insisted, would not benefit when Australia was a "big, populous country." He forecast that a rapid population increase would stimulate many small towns to become "big,

[8] NAA, Canberra: A458, F154/17 PART 1, 1922-1926, Immigration Encouragement Policies - Criticisms - Statements for and Against, Correspondence between Cook and Hurley, 2-6 February 1923.
[9] NAA, Canberra: A458, Q745/1/201, Central Queensland District Council of Agriculture (Immigration), 1926-1926, T Richie to S M Bruce, 13 May 1926.
[10] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, HOR Official Hansard, no.26, 1922, Supply Bill (No.1), W M Hughes, 30 June 1922, 123.

thriving centres of primary production or cities humming with industrial enterprise."[11] The NSL emphasised that though it was imperative that immigrants be guaranteed the opportunity of land or employment, they would never be given preference over Australians.[12] Australians were reassured that immigration did:

> Not mean the introduction of cheap labour. The New Settlers' League stands for discriminating immigration. It believes the new settlers should only be encouraged when there is awaiting them a clear opening as workers or upon the land. The interests of labour are best served by providing customers and consumers for its output and production. The more pairs of feet there are the more boots will be needed. The more people there are the more will be the passengers on the railway. The more families the greater will be the demand for houses…. The greater the population, the less will be the taxation per head, and the better situated the country will be for defence.[13]

576 CHAPTER XIII.—LABOUR, WAGES AND PRICES.

UNEMPLOYMENT.—AUSTRALIA, 1918 TO 1922.

Particulars.	Unions.	Membership.	Unemployed.	
			Number.	Percentage.
1918	478	299,793	17,536	5.8
1919	464	310,145	20,507	6.6
1920	447	341,967	22,105	6.5
1921	449	361,744	40,549	11.2
1922	445	380,945	35,219	9.2
1922, 1st Quarter	442	378,340	34,800	9.2
2nd „	448	373,757	35,796	9.6
3rd „	443	381,380	36,706	9.6
4th „	445	390,304	33,570	8.6

NOTE.—Similar figures for each of the four quarters of the years since 1912 will be found in the Labour Reports. The quarterly figures show the number of persons who were out of work for three days or more during a specified week in each quarter, and the annual figures the average of the four quarters; they do not include persons out of work through strikes or lockouts.

During 1921 a substantial increase occurred in the number unemployed, the highest percentage yet recorded (12.5) being reached in the second quarter of the year.

Pl.7 The table shows unemployment leapt 4.7%, from 6.5% in 1920 to 11.2% in1921. Though the rate declined slightly in 1922, uncertainty still provoked antipathy towards increased migration.[14]

[11] "Settlers' League: Development Project: Need of Population," *Daily Herald* (Adelaide), 18 October 1921, 8.
[12] Stephen Alomes, *A Nation at Last? The Changing Character of Australian Nationalism 1880-1988* (North Ryde, NSW: Angus & Robertson, 1988), 83.
[13] "New Settlers, Fortnightly News Budget No.XVI," *Chronicle and North Coast Advertiser* (Qld), 1 December 1922, 3.
[14] ABS, *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia, vol 16 (1923)*, comp Chas H Wickens, ed John Stonham, (Melbourne: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, 1923) 576, http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/1301.01923?OpenDocument.

To avoid immigrants taking positions that Australians might have, governments, the NSL, and organisations such as the Big Brother Movement (BBM) and Dreadnought Trust, focused on securing youths, as they would not vie for the same jobs as returned soldiers and family men.[15] Some Australians accepted that, even with unemployment, immigrants could contribute to national development. In a letter to the *Argus*, "Old Immigrant" wrote:

> We are not in a position to care for those who are over-sensitive regarding soiled hands or genuine effort…. If a bold scheme of clearing land and making good roads through some of our rich unoccupied areas were adopted, by which immigrants could be sure of a reasonable subsistence at the outset… after two years they should be in a position to hold their own…. The dread of unemployment is the chief obstacle to immigration, and, given the right type… no real difficulty should be experienced. As regards our own unemployed, they also would naturally share in the opportunities.[16]

How much opportunity existed for immigrants was, however, widely debated.

Using new agricultural technology in the early twentieth century, Australia increased production dramatically enough that goods surplus to requirements enabled a strong export trade to develop, with Australia becoming a leading world food exporter. Successive governments supported agricultural growth by implementing schemes that encouraged new agricultural industries. Although WWI restricted production and export, peacetime saw renewed expansion and governments again opened up new agricultural land for Australian and British soldier settlers. A fundamental objective for the immigration campaign was settlement on small-scale farms.[17] Gullett believed that Australia's industrial and financial position, though imperfect, was sound, and a

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[15] "Fields of Memories: the Scheyville Training Farm and Migrant Accommodation Centre, 1911-1939," Migration Heritage Centre, NSW, http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/exhibitions/fieldsofmemories/trainingfarm.html.
[16] "Immigration: Federal Ministry's Policy" *Argus*, 18 June 1921, 22.
[17] John Pollard, "A Hundred Years of Agriculture," in *Year Book Australia, 2000*, ed W McLennan (Canberra: ABS, 2000), 444-45, http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/94713ad445ff1425ca25682000192af2/3852d05cd2263db5ca2569de0026c588!OpenDocument.

"strong stimulant in the shape of public works expenditure…would lift the country out of its temporary state of depression and be followed by a general burst of private enterprise, increased production and prosperity." [18] Having assessed various Australian industry sectors, he concluded that though the pastoral industry was performing unsatisfactorily, conditions augured well for its recovery and potential as a major employer. He found the agricultural sector's position "remarkably good," with farmers enjoying historically low levels of mortgage commitments and an expected increase in cultivation that would strengthen labour demand. Mining's position was considered so low that it could only improve and therefore "re-employ thousands of miners." While some manufacturers were forced to shed employees, the overall position was "highly satisfactory" with many British firms having established Australian branches over the previous twelve to eighteen months. Because many manufacturers intended to compete on the international market, Gullett saw the "general prospect" pointing to "a substantial increase in the number of people employed." [19] The Depression, he felt, could "only be temporary" and if steps were taken to "obtain loan money for expenditure upon properly controlled public works, the position would immediately… be permanently improved." [20]

From 1914 to 1938, writes Ian McLean, Australia's economy was subject to a series of "external, negative shocks," such as WWI and the Depression, the severity of which saw very limited recovery. Australia had a small, open economy consisting largely of a limited range of primary commodities for export to a limited range of foreign markets, predominantly Britain. Australia, heavily enmeshed within international labour, capital and commodity markets, was vulnerable to international

[18] NAA: A458, G154/7 PART 1, Gullett to Acting Prime Minister, 14 July 1921.
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] *Ibid*.

economic trends. During this time, Australia's prosperity could not improve by relying upon domestic activity alone but needed continued foreign investment, and domestic economic activity was reliant upon immigration to boost labour supply.[21] While in 1910-1911, employment in agriculture and primary industries such as forestry, fishing or hunting constituted 26% of Australia's total employment, from that time on the rate steadily declined. Manufacturing in these years employed 21% of the workforce and was increasing, particularly after the Depression, and by the end of WWII constituted 33% of the workforce.[22] The ABS cites manufacturing growth as crucial to federal population policies after the war, and of facilitating "high rates of post-war immigration at a time when Australian rural export industries were actually shedding labour."[23]

John Pollard observes that despite the great efforts settlers put into working the land, more settlement did not equal more production. This was because "insufficient use had been made of the expert technical and scientific knowledge already developed across Australia" and because many settlers were unsuited to the tasks involved.[24] In 1928 Gordon Wood, Melbourne University Economics Lecturer, questioned the economic validity of prosperity through rural settlement. He foresaw that industrialisation would surpass agriculture in Australia's future economic development, encroaching upon the labour market as it expanded. Wood took into account post-war population redistribution within the empire and how this had affected Australia. The population redistribution had led to the 1921 Imperial

[21] Ian W McLean, *Why Australia Prospered: The Shifting Sources of Economic Growth* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 144-45.
[22] ABS, "A Century of Change in the Australian Labour Market," 244.
[23] ABS, "Manufacturing from Settlement to the Start of the New Century," in *Year Book Australia, vol 83 (2001)*, edited by Denis Trewen, ABS, 711, http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Previousproducts/1301.0Feature%20Article382001?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=1301.0&issue=2001&num=&view=.
[24] Pollard, "A Hundred Years of Agriculture," 444-45.

Conference, establishment of the OSC, and, under the 1922 Empire Settlement Act, the £34,000,000 agreement. This agreement saw money made available for Australia to borrow to settle on the land British immigrants without capital and where the Commonwealth could not afford to fund preparations to absorb a rapid immigrant influx. As Australia's demand was for farmers and rural labourers, difficulties arose because Britain did not want to lose its agricultural workers but was anxious to shed its "surplus population." This resulted in many immigrants from industrial backgrounds in English cities being placed on the land in Australia. After trying their luck, many sought to revert to their previous occupations by returning to the cities where they competed against Australians for employment.[25]

Wood noted how the increasing use of machinery and power in rural industries, and the relocation of industries involved in processing primary products from country centres to cities, decreased rural labour needs. These changes increased demands upon secondary industries such as transport and manufacturing, resulting in increased labour demand in cities.[26] He also observed that as agricultural employment such as fruit-picking or grain-harvesting was seasonal, it could not provide a viable means of working and living in rural areas.[27] The immigration drive's lack of "scientific direction with respect to *occupation*" was, he believed, its greatest deficiency. He saw policies dominated by the perceived necessity for immigrants to settle on the land without considering how immigration could be tailored to "strengthen weak places" in the industrial sector.[28]

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[25] G L Wood, "Immigration in Relation to Primary and Secondary Industries," in *The Peopling of Australia*, eds P D Phillips and G L Wood (Melbourne: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1928), 109-10.
[26] *Ibid.,* 119.
[27] *Ibid.,* 121.
[28] *Ibid.,* 119.

In 1922, S W B McGregor, Britain's Senior Trade Commissioner in Australia, had also suggested that developing secondary industries would boost Australia's torpid economy.[29] Newspaper reports echoed Wood's and McGregor's opinions and, citing the Industrial Revolution as the turning point of America's prosperity, called for Australia to adjust its industrial position. Reports stated that migration agents' experiences demonstrated that Australia would not be able to procure anywhere near the number of migrants it wanted if it would only accept them for rural placement.[30] "We are pouring people on to the land," wrote Wood, "in the hope that some will stay," without means to measure actual labour requirements or "selecting or inducing the kind of immigrants to satisfy those necessities."[31] He cautioned that the changing nature of Australia's manufacturing and agriculture constituted a "very powerful factor against which immigration schemes aiming at rural settlement have to contend."[32] As the NSL was committed to government objectives, however, it continued to seek rural employment for immigrants.

Settlement

As Australia wanted immigrants to establish themselves in rural areas for defence and development purposes, plentiful employment opportunities needed to be available beyond the cities. All NSL divisions were to dissuade immigrants from lingering in cities to seek work. Rather, immigrants were encouraged to move quickly to regional and rural areas where, it was believed, they would either secure employment or establish themselves as agriculturalists. Queensland NSL stated that

[29] Roe, *Australia, Britain, and Migration*, 50.
[30] "An Australian-Made Week: Exhibition for Bathurst," *Bathurst Times*, 10 January 1925, 4.
[31] Wood, "Immigration in Relation to Primary and Secondary Industries," 122-23.
[32] *Ibid.,* 119.

"employment is not found in the city for New Settlers." If immigrants were prepared to work hard and "rough it at the beginning," the NSL urged, rural areas offered the best chance of secure employment.

Immigrants were exhorted not to be fussy in their choice of first job, but accept the first reliable opportunity. They were advised it was most important to quickly secure rural employment and accommodation, to cheerfully and willingly work hard, "use their brains" and prove themselves. After this, a better job would be bound to "turn up." Encouraged to "make up your mind to 'stick it', to learn the ways and methods of the country and adapt yourself to them," the league cautioned immigrants not to leave a position, even if it was not what they wanted, until they had secured another.[33] "If for any reason whatsoever your first position is terminated," Western Australia cautioned, "on no account return to Perth before consulting the Local Representative of the League."[34] Such encouragement, the league hoped, would prevent immigrants returning to the cities.

Convincing politicians, labour organisations and the public that immigration was beneficial rather than detrimental to labour and industry was an ongoing task, and in the post-war climate a prime concern was that returned service personnel should not be disadvantaged in land settlements or job opportunities by preference being given to immigrants. Importantly, Hughes had gained the RSSILA's co-operation having assured it that members would not be disadvantaged. At Queensland division's first annual conference in August 1922, President Maxwell reiterated that a major league objective was to "promote immigration so far as was consistent with the interests of

[33] New Settlers' League of Australia, Victorian Division, *New Settlers' Handbook to Victoria*, 59, 61.
[34] Morrison, *New Settlers' League Handbook to Western Australia*, 45.

returned members of the A. I. F., and the maintenance of sound labour conditions for all Australian workers." He also claimed that that the NSL had "already proved beyond doubt" that there was demand for farm labour in Queensland. Maplestone submitted a report on Queensland division's first twelve months of operation, which noted that a number of English lads selected for farm work had recently arrived and, though the league made no "special effort" to procure positions for them, had received from farmers "applications sufficient to place three times the number."[35]

In Queensland, the RSSILA was concerned that "immigrants other than British" were undermining NSL efforts and disadvantaging British settlers wanting to settle in northern areas. In March 1922, the Queensland RSSILA Honorary Secretary wrote to Donald Cameron, National Party member for Brisbane, a decorated returned soldier and RSSILA supporter, rueing the influx of Italian immigrants bolstering established Italian communities in northern canefields. "In spite of the splendid efforts of the New Settlers' League," the letter lamented, "little or no provision is made for the immigrant who lands in Queensland." It cited the NSL's employment officer as stating that he had "many ex Service men on his books…on the verge of starvation." They had come to take up land but, bitterly disappointed, were forced to return to "the already overburdened labour market" of Brisbane.[36] The NSL official who met the boats, the letter continued, sighted a constant stream of Italians and other non-British immigrants, with branches in Innisfail, Cairns, and other districts witnessing an influx of such immigrants who were "becoming a menace to the Britisher … monopolising the sugar industry and gradually outnumbering the British Farmer."[37]

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[35] "New Settlers' League: Important Conference," *Brisbane Courier*, 5 August 1922, 9.
[36] NAA, Canberra: A457, Q400/2, Immigration Encouragement - nominated and assisted passages - restrictions non-British Immigrants, etc., 1922-1922, RSSILA to D C Cameron, 11 March 1922.
[37] *Ibid*.

Cameron forwarded the letter to the PMO and informed the RSSILA of Acting Commonwealth Superintendent of Immigration Hurley's advice. The Italians, he said, received no benefit above those of British settlers. Most Italian migrants paid their own way without assistance; a small number of resident Italians nominated relatives for assisted passage who, if approved by state government, received "the usual Commonwealth contribution of £12 per adult." [38] Unappeased, the RSSILA wrote again to Cameron reporting "very spirited discussion" of the matter at their meetings, resulting in a resolution that "no person other than one of British Nationality should be permitted to own land until he (or she) has been a resident in the Commonwealth for a period of at least 5 years and naturalized." [39] Unswayed, the Commonwealth responded by informing the RSSILA that the minister was "unable to see his way to recommend that any action should be taken … with a view to limiting the admission of white friendly aliens."[40]

Some years later, *Freeman's Journal* praised Italians as enterprising immigrants with agricultural skills who chose to settle in rural Australia. Italy's Consul-General for Australia, Commendatore Grossardi, offered three reasons why Italian immigrants succeeded:

> First, - Italian emigration to Australia is a natural, spontaneous, non-artificial movement. Second, - the Italians who migrate to Australia belong to the agricultural class. Third, - they are moved by a pioneering spirit, and they come out with the earnest intention to work hard and make good.[41]

Noting that neither the Italian nor Australian governments bore any costs, Grossardi stated "we have no assisted passage, no Big Brother movement, no New Settlers'

[38] *Ibid.,* D C Cameron to RSSILA, 4 April 1922.
[39] *Ibid.,* RSSILA to D C Cameron, 8 April 1922
[40] *Ibid.,* Home and Territories Department to Prime Minister's Dept, 20 May 1922.
[41] "Italian Immigration: Why it Succeeds: Probable Increase," *Argus*, 24 December 1926, 10.

League, no church scheme; in fact, no organisation at all tending to foster emigration to Australia," yet thousands of Italians were willing to come and cultivate Australia's empty rural lands.[42] Queensland appointed Royal Commissioner Ferry to conduct an inquiry into the social and economic effects of aliens in North Queensland. Ferry, according to *Freeman's*, found the Italian immigrant "very desirable" as "he is thrifty and industrious, law-abiding, and honest…. He quickly conforms to the laws of the State and the British standard of living, and without friction is absorbed in the social and economic life of the country." Reiterating the urgent need for the right type of immigrant, *Freeman's Journal* concluded "it must be admitted that a healthy-bodied, hard-working Italian who is prepared to live laborious days in the bush is preferable to a moron from Whitechapel or Soho who prefers to walk the city streets." [43]

While some NSL representatives welcomed Italians working in Australia's rural areas, notably North Queensland, others met this move with antipathy. When Orient Line head, Sir Kenneth Anderson, alleged that the Italian government was attempting to divert Italian freight and migration from British ships to Italian ships, Victorian NSL Secretary, Gilchrist, expressed concern at the influx of southern European immigrants. The *Catholic Press* reported Gilchrist's claim that pauper Italians were being brought to Australia for £9 each while Britishers paid £22. Grossardi refuted this, proffering an official statement by PM Bruce which showed that Italians paid from £37 to £41passage, and all brought significant capital with them. Asked what should be done when British were reluctant to migrate, Gilchrist replied that the NSL favoured Scandinavians and was preparing to bring out young Danes.[44] In April 1922 in Queensland, however, when the *Omar* docked in Brisbane, Maplestone greeted

[42] *Ibid*.
[43] "Italian Immigration," *Freeman's Journal* (Sydney), 13 January 1927, 31.
[44] "All About People," *Catholic Press* (Sydney), 25 December 1924, 24.

302 disembarking immigrants. Twenty-one were nominated immigrants, four being Italians nominated by compatriot residents from Rocklea, Brisbane. The remaining 281 were full fare paying Italian immigrants going to work in the canefields.[45] Italians, bound largely for Queensland, continued to arrive and be met by the NSL, but also continued to attract negative press commentary leading the NSL to clarify that "these Italians are in no way assisted by Commonwealth or State immigration authorities….they are ordinary passengers who pay full fares."[46]

Outside Queensland, Italian immigrants seemed a more novel event. A West Australian newspaper remarked that "an unusual task" had recently befallen the NSL when it was asked to place seventy Italians who had arrived. Employment was found for them all, though in the less stable field of land clearing, with "wage work being reserved for the British immigrants."[47] In New South Wales, Italian immigrants, along with Greek and Maltese, were received with reserve. Premier George Fuller emphasised that his government had not encouraged "these classes of immigrants" who were arriving of their own initiative. NSL secretary and Commonwealth immigration representative in Sydney, F J G Fleming, informed the government that the Italian Consul had advised him of the impending arrival of Italian immigrants. Fleming told the Consul it was not a good time to bring Italian immigrants into Australia, and their inability to speak English was a deterrent to farmers hiring them. Fleming had written to General Ramaciotti in July on the topic of Italian immigration to Australia and informed him that:

> The government's policy is restricted to the immigration of domestic servants, farm youths… and approved immigrants nominated by relatives and

[45] "New Settlers," *Western Star and Roma Advertiser* (Toowoomba), 22 April 1922, 4.
[46] "New Settlers' League Fortnightly News Budget No.3," *Chronicle and North Coast Advertiser*, 5 May 1922, 1.
[47] "Redressing the Balance: More Immigrants," *West Australian*, 7 December 1922, 6.

> others already residing in this State….the Government must… give preference to immigrants from Great Britain so long as supplies are available therefrom….it is regretted that no official assistance can be rendered in the cases of Italian emigrants.[48]

As the NSL had pledged to "co-operate vigorously with the … introduction to Australia of selected new settlers from approved countries, and particularly from the United Kingdom," New South Wales division did not promote Italian immigration, nor that of any nationality other than British.[49] Italian immigrants, however, proved an exemplum of successful settlement which Queensland Governor, Sir Matthew Nathan, espoused as a model for British settlers. In addressing Queensland division's 1924 Annual Conference, he advised that it would be better if British immigrants formed communal settlements in the manner that Italians had been doing for many years. For a settler to go on the land without capital and, even worse, without experience was, he stated, a sure risk of partial or absolute failure.[50]

Inexperience

For the NSL, the issue of employment entailed ensuring jobs were available and that immigrants had appropriate skills to fulfil requirements. League divisions promoted the hiring of immigrants by farmers. Victorian NSL president, Swanson, praised the calibre of immigrants arriving in 1921 and, noting how eager they were to gain Australian agricultural experience, advised farmers to be "patient with newcomers during the early stages of their employment" as a "little self-sacrifice on the part of

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[48] "Influx of Immigrants: Statement by the Premier," *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* (NSW), 21 December 1922, 5.
[49] New Settlers' League, *The New Settlers' League of Australia (New South Wales Division) Constitution, Aims and Objects*, 8.
[50] "News of the Week," *Chronicle* (Adelaide), 16 August 1924, 44.

an employer would be amply repaid."[51] A Queensland NSL "Fortnightly News Bulletin" published the cases of two immigrants - one a former Queenslander who had been resident in Ireland and the other a young British man who had paid his own passage - both of whom had applied to the NSL for employment opportunities. Through the efforts of country members, both men were quickly placed in rural positions. Noting that "farmers are constantly complaining of a lack of suitable labour," the league cited the two immigrants' experience as illustrative of "what can be done by energetic League members in regard to placing men in employment." [52]

In January 1922 Gullett reported that the immigration office had received a requisition for 5,000 farm labourers for that year. He observed that, as only a small percentage of migrants had any farming experience, the request indicated how strong farmers' demand for labour was as they were prepared to take upon themselves the responsibility of training immigrants.[53] While there was a clear demand among farmers and rural industries for migrant labour, the majority of immigrants seeking rural employment had no rural skills or experience, or had only participated in one of the training options available in Australia or Britain. The training most schemes offered was inadequate to prepare migrants for the real demands of Australian rural work. Placing under-skilled immigrants on the land often resulted in disappointment or failure for immigrants and employers, and did not augur well for the ambition of governments that immigrants would settle and further develop the land themselves and thereby present no competitive threat to Australians in the job market. Immigrants' inadequacy to forge a living on the land made it problematic for the NSL to accomplish its objective of ensuring every immigrant obtained a secure,

[51] "Immigrants and Employers," *Argus*, 17 December 1921, 24.
[52] "Fortnightly News Budget No.3," 5 May 1922.
[53] "Peopling the Land," *Argus*, 5 January 1922, 7.

prosperous rural living and not drift back to the cities to compete for work with Australians. Among NSL divisions, however, optimism, enthusiasm, commitment and sincere belief in the league's objectives abounded, and members put great efforts into fulfilling these objectives.

The NSL's task to ensure employment for every selected immigrant was difficult, particularly for men, who constituted the majority. Selected immigrants in 1923, for example, consisted of 12,458 males and 2,819 females.[54] High demand for domestics saw more opportunities for female immigrants. In a 1922 letter on migration to Hughes, Winston Churchill, British Secretary for the Colonies, extolled the benefits that would accrue from training migrants for rural work. He suggested that, along with a positive welcome, Australia should provide training.[55] By 1923, the idea was still being promoted. Albert Buckley, OSC Chairman, proposed the development of training camps where unemployed British men could gain skills that would improve their chances of being selected for emigration to Australia as farmworkers. The BOSC hoped that, as the matter had arisen during the Australian Premiers' Conference, plans would evolve for such camps in Australia. While no government undertook such arrangements, some private institutions such as Barnardos and the Salvation Army implemented training schemes, with varied success.[56]

Preparing for the 1926 Imperial Conference, the OSD considered the issue of government-organised training of industrial workers to prepare them to migrate and take up a rural life in the dominions, most notably Australia. Herbert Gepp, whom

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[54] ABS, "Assisted Immigration," in *Labour Report, 1923*, compiled by Chas H Wickens (Melbourne: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, 1924), 128, http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6101.01923?OpenDocument.
[55] Roe, *Australia, Britain, and Migration*, 50.
[56] *Ibid.,* 79.

Bruce had appointed as DMC chairman, insisted that Britain bear all costs for such a scheme, but when Britain railed at that, a compromise was reached. Britain would establish a training camp at Market Harborough for British girls to train as domestics, and Australia would contribute funds for its establishment.[57] This was short-lived however, as all funding for training ceased as the Depression set in.

To keep attracting migrants, Australian governments promoted and extolled the idea of Australia as a land abounding with opportunities to forge a prosperous rural life. The Director of Migration and Settlement commissioned a series of pamphlets which included such titles as: *Wheat and Sheep Farming*, *Dairying*, *Tropical Agriculture*, *Pastoral*, *Fruit Growing*, *Minor Agricultural Industries*, *Farm Boy*, *Domestic Girl*, *Farm Labourer*, *Best of All Countries*, *Resources and Production*, *Australia as a Home*, *Industrial Conditions*, and *Letters from Successful Settlers*.[58]Oft-stated was that the best advertisement for British settlement in Australia was the satisfied new settler. The NSL employed such sentiment as a promotional strategy by publicising extracts from letters of appreciation received from settlers. Queensland division's "Fortnightly News Budget" published in various newspapers included such settlers' quotes as:

- I am quite comfortably fixed up in my new job. I am most interested in the work, and like it very much indeed. I am grateful to you for the great kindness you have shown me since my arrival in Queensland, and I want to offer my sincere thanks.
- I have much pleasure in telling you I have a real good place and a rise in wages. I hope to be starting on my own in a few months' time in company with a mate on a bonza piece of land. Again thanking you for all past kindness.
- The people I am with are very homely, certainly I couldn't be more comfortable. With the knowledge in both dairy farming and cotton growing I get this season, I will feel confident enough to strike out for

[57] *Ibid.,* 80.
[58] Michele Langfield, *More People Imperative: Immigration to Australia, 1901-1939* (Canberra: NAA, 1999), np, http://guides.naa.gov.au/more-people-imperative/chapter3/index.aspx.

> myself. I must sincerely thank you once again for the interest taken in me.[59]

Publishing letters from successful settlers was, however, also necessary to counter publicity about settlers' negative experiences.

Jupp states it was unrealistic to bring migrants from industrial backgrounds, without agricultural experience, to take up land, often of inferior quality as most arable land was already taken up, and expect them to succeed. This was especially so at a time when rural Australia was enduring ecological devastation from prickly pear and rabbits.[60] The NSL asserted it was "constantly receiving letters from satisfied new settlers" and suggested that if branches published these it would make for more attractive coverage in the English press "in place of the usual headlines regarding droughts, strikes, dingoes and tales of woe from returned misfits." The league viewed it as "astonishing how a person who fails to make good by laziness or some other equally bad complaint immediately blames the country."[61] Some representatives recognised, however, that settlers sometimes faced problems. In correspondence to Fleming regarding twenty farm allotments in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area suitable for Dreadnought Boys to establish orchards upon, J S Cormack, Secretary Land Settlement (Overseas) Executive Committee, reminded Fleming that the 1923 Migration Agreement required that each boy have £300 at his disposal. Fleming, however, realised that if capital was needed to effect improvements, such an amount meant the "boy would have nothing to live on, and it would take up to five years

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[59] "New Settlers, Fortnightly News Budget, No.13," *Chronicle and North Coast Advertiser*, 6 October 1922, 2.
[60] Jupp, *Immigration*, 91.
[61] "New Settlers, Fortnightly News Budget, No.19," *Nambour Chronicle and North Coast Advertiser*, 26 January 1923, 7.

before their trees would come into bearing."[62] Fleming also advised farmers who wished to employ unskilled youths that experience had shown better results followed if boys were allotted in twos and threes upon adjoining farms.[63]

Opportunity and Endeavour

The 1921 Conference saw the established divisions, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, and representatives from Western Australia, Tasmania and South Australia who were still considering establishing a division, contribute suggestions for dealing with the expected immigrants. One NSL approach to kindling potential employers' interest was to publicise migrant ships' arrivals and passengers' details, and encourage farmers wanting farmhands or domestics to contact their local NSL. All country branches were to liaise with local producers and any affiliated industries to ascertain what positions they might offer immigrants.[64] Victoria, Western Australia and Queensland appointed travelling representatives to visit country branches and ascertain where employment and development opportunities existed or could be generated. Country branches were to identify employment or land available in their district and advise immigration authorities.[65] The NSL favoured developments that would generate employment and boost national productivity. Australian governments promoted the country's employment and development opportunities across Britain. PM Bruce, who coined the term "Men, Money, and

[62] NAA, Canberra: CP211/2, 73/3, Settlement - Land - Dreadnought boys, 1927-1927, Correspondence between J S Cormack, F J G Fleming, E P Fleming, 3-16 August 1927.
[63] "New Settlers' League of Australia: Little Brothers for Farmers," *Shoalhaven Telegraph* (NSW), 10 March 1926, 9.
[64] New Settlers' League Queensland, *Queensland Fruit and how to Use It* (Brisbane: New Settlers' League Queensland, 1926), 12.
[65] NAA, Canberra: CP698/9, 44, New Settlers' League of Australia, 1927-1928, Circular to Branches, 20 March 1928.

Markets," saw Britain as the source of migrants who would provide labour and capital for Australia's rural development and as a market for Australia's primary produce. Australia in return would provide a market for British manufacturing.[66]

In his foreword to the 1925 Western Australia division handbook, recent premier, Sir James Mitchell, wrote of an immigrant's prospects in the state:

> There are almost boundless opportunities in Western Australia for the emigrant from Great Britain. Just think of it! Western Australia comprises 640,000,000 acres and has a population of only 350,000 souls! Do you realise what this means to you in your over-crowded British Isles? It means that if you desire elbow-room, a clear blue sky, with glorious fresh air and sunshine; if you want to become your own master; if you want to have your own farm, your own shop, your own business, here is where your fortune lies. I say to you - Come to Western Australia and grasp the opportunities that await you![67]

Sydney held a successful Country Production Week which gave "each of the contributing districts a wide advertisement, and had been the means of obtaining new settlers who were engaging in intensive cultivation."[68] Queensland's 1925 annual conference resolved that the Commonwealth should "appoint Australian officers as Travelling Representatives of the Department of Markets and Migration in the United Kingdom for the purpose of selecting migrants and encouraging the consumption of Australian products," as well as an officer "with an intimate knowledge of Queensland." It also suggested that Australians visiting Britain should "be invited to assist in the above work … and … be supplied with helpful literature regarding Australian products for which markets are desired."[69]

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[66] Alomes, *A Nation at Last?*, 83.
[67] James Mitchell, foreword to *New Settlers' League Handbook to Western Australia*, by J C Morrison, ed, (Perth: Edwin R Greenfield, 1925), 10.
[68] "Assisting Immigrants," *Argus*, 28 April 1922, 7.
[69] NAA: A458, A154/18, Maplestone to PMO, 4 September 1925.

Queensland division saw further opportunity in extending the scope of its provision of advice and assistance to "cover the problems of marketing," as the 1925 handbook describes. As one NSL activity was corresponding with "the parents, relatives and friends in the United Kingdom of a very great number of new settlers," it decided that all such communications should include propaganda on the products which the immigrants were working to produce for export, and settlers themselves were urged to do likewise.[70] Another Queensland division innovation to assist Queensland Fruit Growers promote their products was "Fruit Week." This six-day exhibition held in Brisbane in 1926 was described as a "patriotic appeal to Brisbane citizens to eat more fruit and give preference to Queensland…products." This, the NSL believed, would support industry expansion and therefore lead to an increase in employment. For two shillings people could purchase a carton of mixed fruit from the NSL stall set up outside the Queen Street Post Office. An acrostic poem was utilised for promotion:

E stands for Empire, and eat more fruit as well.
A for the Apple made famous by William Tell.
T spells Tomatoes, is it fruit or vegetable?

M represents the Mandarin, in a few months we shall see.
O for the Orange, a kindred family.
R stands for Royalty, renowned and Ripley Queens.
E at more fruit our slogan - to Queensland - what it means

F is for the fruit above and all not mentioned here,
R for Returned Digger, remember, and revere,
U can help him - eat his fruit, a fighting chance to give.
I nsist on having Queensland fruit,
T o help the "dig" to live.[71]

In 1922, Hughes and influential business people and politicians championed cotton industry development in central Queensland. "What industry," asked Hughes "lends

[70] "Migration Budget No.11: New Settlers' League of Australia," *Cairns Post*, 31 December 1925, 8.
[71] QSA: 13101, 18731, "Fruit Week" flyer.

itself more to immigration than this?" Cotton, Hughes explained, required "relatively small rainfall" and was suited to small holdings such that "upon 30 acres a man can live, and live well."[72] Shortly after, a British Cotton Delegation arrived in Queensland to assess the industry's potential to expand and employ British settlers. The NSL welcomed the delegation, which Hurley accompanied, and "placed its organisation at the disposal of the delegation."[73] Maplestone handed a letter from President Diddams to the delegation's Mr B Crompton Wood, which read in part:

> The New Settlers' League of Australia desires to extend to the members of the British Cotton Delegation a hearty welcome to Queensland and trusts that you will be impressed with the vast possibilities for the industry in this State.
>
> Immigration and land settlement are interdependent, and this League realises that if the cotton industry can be placed upon a sound footing it will provide opportunities for a large number of our own kith and kin to join us in successfully developing the wonderful natural resources that await them in Australia.
>
> Branches of the League are established in many of the towns to be visited by you, and members will be happy to render every assistance possible in placing before you the opportunities of their respective districts.[74]

Also in Queensland, in June 1922 the Cooktown and District Progress Association informed the PMO of the great opportunities and wealth the area offered for placing British settlers on undeveloped "vast and rich agricultural lands." The area, vaunted the association, could "produce all manner of tropical fruits and products of every description" and suggested that material be obtained from the Lands Department, Brisbane, and sent to the High Commissioner in London to promote the region.[75] So too did Esk branch promote its region as suitable for immigrant settlement, with

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[72] "New Settlers, Fortnightly News Budget," *Cairns Post*, 26 June 1922, 3.
[73] "Fortnightly News Budget No.13," 6 October 1922.
[74] "New Settlers' League, Fortnightly News Budget No.14," *Chronicle and North Coast Advertiser*, 27 October 1922, 6.
[75] NAA, Canberra: A457, D400/8, Immigration Encouragement Unofficial Suggestions Part 1, 1922-1923, Cooktown and District Progress Assoc to PMO, 20 June 1922.

5,000 acres of highly-suitable fruit-growing land.[76] New South Wales Premier Fuller happily reported to Hughes that publicity in the United Kingdom led to immigrants from Kent establishing a cherry-growing community in the Young district.[77] Warragul, Victoria, branch informed local employers of immigrants available for employment by displaying lists on a noticeboard placed in the secretary's office. Warragul also determined what potential their district offered for flax, fruit, timber and dairying, and considered their district an ideal centre in which to establish factories.[78]

A 1921 Conference resolution urged the Commonwealth to commit funds, either alone or in conjunction with Britain, to extensive land developments. Developments would take advantage of existing railway lines by subdividing all large areas of land that could easily be served by them. The Commonwealth also received numerous proposals for immigrant land settlement and development from individuals and organisations. Daniel Grove, British Service Association of Australia Secretary, approached the Commonwealth with a scheme to settle immigrants in Queensland modelled on the English county system. Grove was informed that such matters "should in the first place be submitted to the Government of the State in which the proposed land is situated." The Cooktown and District Progress Association approached Hughes with a proposal for orchard development and was informed that "Crown Lands in Queensland are under the control of the State Government," therefore, the matter was to be brought under its notice.[79] The Commonwealth's

[76] *Ibid*.
[77] *Ibid*.
[78] "New Settlers' League Warragul Branch," *West Gippsland Gazette* (Vic), 19 July 1921, 3.
[79] NAA: A457, D400/8, Cooktown and District Progress Assoc to PMO, 20 June 1922.

usual response was that opening up land was a state responsibility and the relevant state government should therefore be approached for consideration of any proposal.

Pl.8 The poster produced to publicise Carruthers' "Million Farms for a Million Farmers" campaign noted that, of forty-one countries with accurate census records, Australia ranked lowest for proportion of area cultivated. The reasons cited for such underdevelopment were "simply neglect of our agricultural resources, and insufficient roads, railways and water supply."[80]

From its inception, New South Wales division championed land development and settlement as essential for any immigration scheme. At the 1921 Conference, the division presented proposals endorsing the "Million Farms Scheme, with its preliminary essentials of roads, railways and waterworks, as propounded by Sir Joseph Carruthers." The proposals, in which the league asserted that a "broad and comprehensive policy combining land settlement with such developmental works as

[80] NAA: A458, A154/18.

roads, railways and water supply works is essential to the success of any big schemes of immigration," were adopted. The league advocated utilising agricultural land adjacent to existing railways and ports for closer settlement. A league deputation presented the resolutions to Hughes who "most heartily and unreservedly accepted" them.[81] The NSL urged him to use the forthcoming Premiers' Conference to gain commitments from the states for an immediate enquiry to ascertain potential development projects and land acquisitions suitable for immigrant settlement. Hughes himself had already requested this in the lead up to the 1920 negotiations on the Joint Agreement.[82]

In 1928, economics Professor J B Brigden alleged that Australia made large claims and created high expectations about its capacity to absorb immigrants which misled Australians and created international misunderstandings.[83] Australia's capacity to absorb immigrants in the early 1920s, argued Brigden, was linked more to its borrowings than its arable lands. "The past and present absorbing capacity of Australia has been and is high," he claimed, "because of the large loan expenditure which is being used to equip the country with public works."[84] Such public works provided employment opportunities for immigrants and the extended areas of land on which immigrant farmers could settle. Brigden forecast that while construction of government-funded works continued, employment would continue. "When a road or a railway is completed," he noted, "some of the workmen who have been employed on its construction may go on the land," but "the slowness of the increase in farm workers does not suggest that the land opened up absorbs the same number of men as

[81] NAA: A458, A154/18, Notes of an NSL deputation, 28 October 1921.
[82] NAA: A458, H154/7, Immigration Encouragement Policy - Resolutions, 1922-1930.
[83] Brigden, "Economic Control of Immigration," 273.
[84] *Ibid.,* 282.

are occupied in its 'development.'"[85] Contrary to the optimism about Australia's capacity to absorb large numbers of rural workers and farmers, Brigden observed that, despite government assistance: farming in the older states showed no significant expansion; farm wages were unattractive to immigrants; immigrants who established themselves on farms did so at a loss; and many immigrants could not be induced to remain on the land, even once established.[86] Brigden's observations confirmed the misgivings more cautious people held at the outset of the 1920s immigration push.

Some state governments also expressed reservations about Carruthers' scheme. The Victorian parliament, while supportive of immigration and of Carruthers' campaign, held reservations about his assessment of the potential of some districts. Some MPs, mainly Railways Standing Committee members, believed he was ill-informed in proposing the Western Riverina as a prime area for closer settlement. Rather than conducting a personal inspection, Carruthers relied upon anecdotal evidence about the quality of the land from Wentworth to Milkengay. In 1916 the Border Railways Commission, composed of New South Wales and Victoria Railways Standing Committees, enquired into the feasibility of extending the railway into the area. It found there would be insufficient traffic to support the extension as the land was "of poor quality, supporting on the average one sheep to 20 acres."[87] The *Australasian* had earlier published an article by "H. M. S." regarding the scheme's implications for New South Wales, in which he claimed that "at the present rate of progress, there is very little chance of placing those who are eager to go into the country and become producers."[88] Bill Dunn, New South Wales Agriculture Minister, though supportive

[85] Brigden, "Economic Control of Immigration," 283.
[86] *Ibid.,* 284.
[87] "Million Farms Project," *Australasian* (Melbourne), 3 December 1921, 39.
[88] H M S, "Rural New South Wales," *Australasian*, 30 July 1921, 9.

of Carruthers' campaign, cautioned that before such a scheme could begin, provision should be made for efficient marketing of produce that would result. Neither Carruthers nor the NSL had plans for getting produce onto the market.[89] In August Joseph Cook, Australian Treasurer, had informed Carruthers that the scheme would require £30,000,000, yet he was finding it difficult to raise even £10,000,000.[90] The *Catholic Press* claimed that Carruthers' scheme seemed "little more than a pious aspiration," and warned it would have no credibility with "those who know anything of the prospect of country workers." The article cited the circumstances of orange growers in New South Wales and pineapple growers in Queensland who could not dispose of their produce on the market.[91] Despite cautions, Carruthers, the NSL and Hughes upheld the scheme's objectives.

In May 1920, as part of Joint Agreement negotiations, federal authorities requested that each state determine what lands were available for immigrant settlement and what public or private development projects could offer employment. Each state agreed to submit a definite and detailed scheme setting out the area of land it proposed to make available and the developmental work that would be necessary to make such lands viable for immigrants' immediate employment or successful development. By July the Commonwealth assured the states that it was prepared to assist by providing loans for approved land settlement and public works projects aimed at providing opportunities for immigrants.[92] Following the Joint Agreement, Gullett pressed Hughes to act quickly and cited Queensland's willingness and readiness to take action as an imperative. Queensland had requested a £2 million loan

[89] "Telegrams," *Mudgee Guardian and North-Western Representative* (NSW), 21 July 1921, 9.
[90] "The Brisbane Courier," *Brisbane Courier*, 20 August 1921, 6.
[91] "The Million Farms Slogan," *Catholic Press*, 4 August 1921, 7.
[92] Roe, *Australia, Britain, and Migration*, 21.

to construct railways in the Burnett region to facilitate agricultural development. The intention for the Burnett scheme was that 5,000 immigrant men would be settled on land as part of a closer settlement push by the Queensland government.[93] Gullett hoped that railway construction and the farmlands that would open up would provide employment opportunities for immigrants.[94] Queensland division's Country Organisation Committee worked towards having suitable agricultural land areas adjacent to existing railways opened up and developed into farms that were ready for immigrants to occupy and begin farming.[95]

In June 1921 Western Australia's Premier James Mitchell sent Hughes details of plans for placing immigrants on the land. Prior to the Joint Agreement, Western Australia had already established a group settlement system and proposed to extend this to immigrants.[96] The scheme would operate in the wet south west encompassing approximately 69,000,000 acres from Northampton to Esperance where there was "land sufficient in area and quality to make a good commercial farm." Allotments limited to 160 acres were issued free, except for survey and office fees. A group of approximately twenty heavily-timbered blocks were allocated to twenty settlers who would work under supervision to bring every block to productivity. Though wages were not paid, the settlers received cost of living allowances while working. Cash advances "sufficient to cover cost of erection of house, provision of water supply, clearing and part clearing up to 25 acres" were made. Blocks were ploughed and prepared to the point where they were ready to occupy, with necessary plant and

[93] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, HOR Official Hansard, no.31, 1923, Unemployment, Francis Forde, 2 August 1923, 2043.
[94] Roe, *Australia, Britain, and Migration*, 34.
[95] "New Settlers' League," *Brisbane Courier*, 17 August 1921, 6.
[96] NAA : A461, S349/1/5, Immigration - Encouragement scheme by Western Australia 1923 - Agreement, 1921-1926, Mitchell to Hughes, 28 June 1921.

stock. As each block was completed it was allocated to a settler by a ballot system, but all settlers had to continue working on the remaining blocks until all had been finished and allocated. With costs estimated at £800 per settler, the West Australian government sought and received Commonwealth financial assistance on condition it absorb 75,000 migrants, with 6,000 to be established on farms in five years.[97]

League handbooks warned settlers that rural life might be tough, but determination and perseverance would be rewarded. "You are not offered something for nothing," stated Victoria's handbook; "you must do your part," for an "Australian employer likes to see initiative in a man; he will always be ready to assist an earnest trier."[98] Western Australia warned that the state was "no place for the idler or the drifter." There was work to be done and, while rewards awaited the worker, "for the timid, the irresolute and the slacker Western Australia has no openings."[99] Its sentiments were clear in the handbook's poem, "No Place for the 'Waster'":

> There's a nasty dash of danger where the long-horned bullock wheels,
> And we like to live in comfort and to get our reg'lar meals.
> For to hang around the townships suits us better, you'll agree,
> And a job at washing bottles is the job for such as we.
> Let us herd into the cities, let us crush and crowd and push
> Till we lose the love of roving, and we learn to hate the bush;
> And we'll turn our aspirations to a city life and beer,
> And we'll slip across to England - it's a nicer place than here.[100]

Some immigrants, however, were not prepared for what Australian rural life offered. Migrant George Godfrey recalled of those who travelled out with him that most:

> Went straight up country to farm jobs. One boy of sixteen, the son of a Midlands boot-manufacturer, came back to Melbourne a week later. He had

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[97] *Ibid*.
[98] New Settlers' League of Australia, Victorian Division, *New Settlers' Handbook to Victoria*, 61.
[99] Morrison, *New Settlers' League Handbook to Western Australia*, 23.
[100] *Ibid.* The verse is an extract from "In Defence of the Bush: An Answer to Various Bards," by A B Patterson, which first appeared on page 2 of *The Bulletin*, 1 October 1892.

> been allotted a bed in a shed on the farm. Lifting a dirty old blanket, he was horrified to find a nest of tarantulas.[101]

In the latter 1920s the league and immigrants faced not only economic depression, but drought. A circular from Fleming to New South Wales branches stated that "droughty conditions" in some areas had forced over two hundred adult farm hands, both experienced and inexperienced, ranging in age from twenty-five to thirty-five, to leave rural areas and go to Sydney to seek work. Fleming requested branches to enquire about any employment available in their area as soon as possible, and to "treat this matter as urgent and oblige."[102] To succeed, however, immigrants needed to understand Australian conditions.

Experience

As 1922 receded, Queensland was implementing an apprenticeship scheme for British "farm lads" and promoting this to rural employers. The scheme aimed to assign British youths, under an agreement, to rural employers for a minimum of one year, but not exceeding three. The youths would receive a portion of their wages with the balance banked on their behalf by the State Immigration Department into a Government Savings Bank trust account. Rural employers wishing to participate in the scheme by employing a youth would apply through the NSL.[103] Initial demand for farm lads from across Queensland was such that the NSL could not fulfil requests. By late 1926 it was still unable to procure enough youths to fulfil

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[101] George Fuller Godfrey, interview by Mel Pratt, 15 November 1975, sound recording, Mel Pratt Collection, NAA, http://nla.gov.au/nla.oh-vn733432.
[102] NAA: CP698/9, 44, Circular to Branches: Adult Farm Hands, January 1928.
[103] "New Settlers' League Fortnightly News Budget No.18," *Nambour Chronicle and North Coast Advertiser*, 29 December 1922, 5.

demand.[104] The NSL published letters in newspapers showing the scheme's success. A youth who had been employed in Queensland for a little over six months wrote:

> I had a spell at chipping for a month and was earning £2 and tucker. Am now getting £1/10/- and tucker and have one of the best bosses a man could wish to have. You might be interested to know that I have managed to save up £25, and am hoping to make a start on my own one of these days. I am glad to say I was never in better health in my life and I have taken a thorough liking for Australia and Australians.[105]

A youth working in Kingaroy wrote that he had "nothing to complain of" and his employer treated him "like one of the family." Another from Kingaroy stated he was "doing fine" and had:

> Settled down to the life naturally. It is quite different from the old one and I intend to do my best to strike out on my own as a farmer in two or three years' time….I have met very good friends here and have been very well treated. It is a good healthy life and I should not like to give it up, even now. There are plenty of young fellows in the old country who would readily come out if they knew what it was like.[106]

In New South Wales Fleming implemented training schemes so immigrants would be better fitted to rural work and more appealing to employers. League Welfare Officers monitored the progress of youths who undertook training to gain agricultural experience by visiting each boy at his employment to obtain particulars of his progress, the experience he had received, and how much money he had saved. In 1928 Fleming provided league branches with details of forty-three boys who had "now reached manhood and are ready to take up share farming," and requested that members make farmers aware that the now experienced youths were available for employment.[107] In conjunction with the British government, the NSL agreed to receive monthly batches of 100 selected adult farm hands, aged from nineteen to

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[104] QSA: 13101, 18731, Maplestone, 1926.
[105] "New Settlers' League Fortnightly News Budget No.23," *Nambour Chronicle and North Coast Advertiser*, 20 April 1923, 1.
[106] "New Settlers' League," *Longreach Leader* (Qld), 20 April 1923, 17.
[107] NAA: CP698/9, 44, New Settlers' League of Australia (NSW Division), 20 March 1928.

twenty-five, from September 1928 to January 1929. Before departing the men underwent three months preliminary farm skills training under an experienced Australian farmer. In July, Fleming despatched letters to potential employers along with an application form to hire a man. Still trying to secure positions for the trained migrants by September, he contacted NSL branches requesting that each find a placement for one farm hand per month with a wage of 25/- to 30/- per week, plus keep.[108] Despite his efforts to see migrants receive adequate training, sometimes the results disappointed all parties.

Coonabarabran stock and station agent R J Gollan's letter to Fleming illustrates some problems with placing minimally trained immigrants:

> Mr. Thompson advises that the man sent him is inexperienced in everything, he cannot teach him in three months. He cannot milk, he can only just squeeze a little milk from the cow in a very long time so he is paying his fare back to Sydney from Coonamble on Saturday's train as he says the man is too inexperienced altogether. He had only two weeks' experience in England at milking. He says if he wasted a lot on him teaching him for three months he then has to pay him the basic wage. He says he is a nice fellow and to advise you the man seems to be of excellent character, but too inexperienced, so if you can send him to one of the Experiment Farms to gain some experience I will then try in three months to place him.[109]

The response from R Gibson, Lismore NSL district secretary, to whom Fleming had written regarding employment opportunities, also indicates training was inadequate. "Good rains have fallen here so possibly there will be an inquiry for men who can milk," wrote Gibson, but "milking will be fairly heavy so not much chance of one who has trained on a 'rubber cow' of getting on." The State Labour Exchanges'

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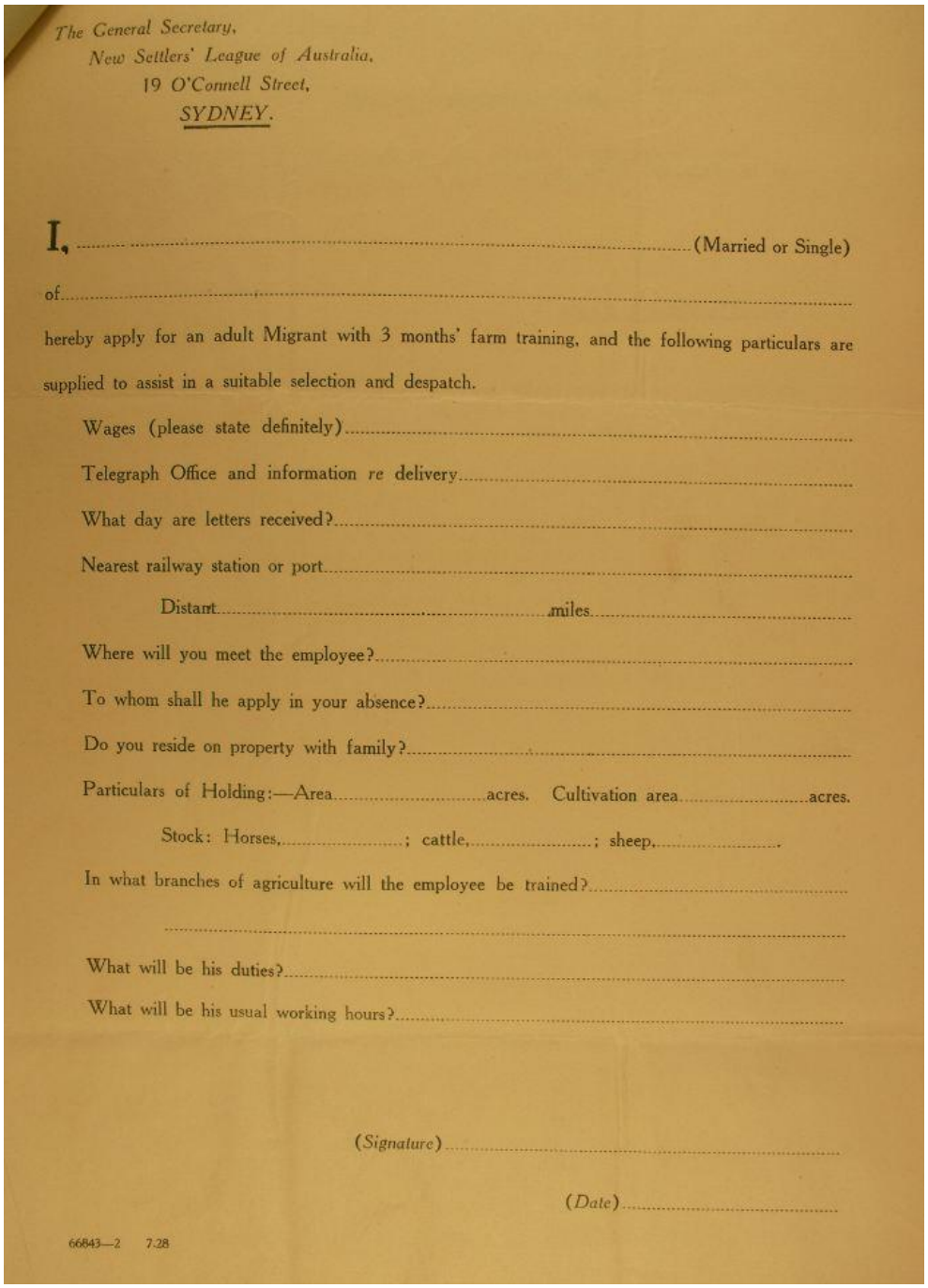
[108] NAA: CP698/9, 44, Fleming, July-September 1928.

[109] NAA, Canberra: A1, 1932/7565, Migration - Farm Workers, 1929-1930, R J Gollan to NSL, 23 January 1929.

Training Farms had been in existence in Australia since early in the 20 century, for example, the Training Farm for City Lads (1905-1910), later known as Government Agricultural Training Farm, Pitt Town (1910-1913) and then Scheyville (1911-1939) in NSW, but the migrant influx of the 1920s saw several more established, such as those at Wagga, Windsor, Arrawatta and Bathurst (NSW) Riverview and Beerburrum (Qld) and Elcho (Vic).

manager, having questioned every trained British migrant who arrived under the state's requisition, found that all had "verified a statement made by the first trainee who arrived, that there was only one cow to be milked per man for two weeks whilst in training." New South Wales' Labour and Industry Department concluded that the training did not enable migrants to become proficient in rural skills, leaving them unsatisfactory for employers.[110]

[110] NAA: A1, 1932/7565, R Gibson to F J G Fleming, 21 January 1929.



The General Secretary,
New Settlers' League of Australia,
19 O'Connell Street,
SYDNEY.

I, ...(Married or Single)

of.....

hereby apply for an adult Migrant with 3 months' farm training, and the following particulars are supplied to assist in a suitable selection and despatch.

Wages (please state definitely).....

Telegraph Office and information *re* delivery.....

What day are letters received?.....

Nearest railway station or port.....

Distant.....miles.....

Where will you meet the employee?.....

To whom shall he apply in your absence?.....

Do you reside on property with family?.....

Particulars of Holding:—Area.....acres. Cultivation area.....acres.

Stock: Horses,.....; cattle,.....; sheep,.....

In what branches of agriculture will the employee be trained?.....

.....

What will be his duties?.....

What will be his usual working hours?.....

(*Signature*).....

(*Date*).....

66843—2 7.28

Pl.9 The NSW NSL's application form to hire an adult farm hand who had trained in the United Kingdom before migrating. The NSL endeavoured to ensure a migrant was well-informed about the position he was assigned to, that the employer would further develop the migrant's skills, and that the league would monitor progress.[111]

Fleming also sought to secure positions for youths who had sufficiently progressed in their training courses and encouraged them to contact NSL branches and potential

[111] NAA: CP698/9, 44.

employers detailing their experience. Donald Cuthbert of Glen Innes did so when he wrote to Capt J H Honeyset in Canberra, stating:

> Mr Fleming of the New Settlers' League has asked me to write you, re a situation. If possible I would like to obtain one in a grocery store, as I have had three years experience, and I can supply excellent references: also a certificate of salesmanship awarded to me by Lever Bros, Ltd.[112]

Though no position was found for Cuthbert, the league sought to identify likely positions available.

Though ensuring every immigrant obtained suitable employment was one of the NSL's four main objectives, some of the difficulties confronting it were not only beyond the league's capabilities to overcome, but also beyond Australia and the world. The NSL could not battle drought or depression, nor could it restrain a labour market shifting from primary production to manufacturing. Upholding government aims of rural employment for an influx of largely unskilled immigrants saw the NSL focus largely on promoting rural developments and training schemes. Though the NSL never attained the success it aspired to in securing employment, at branch level league representatives' efforts to liaise with farmers and rural employers often resulted in successful outcomes for settlers.

[112] NAA: CP698/9, 44, Donald Cuthbert to Capt J H Honeyset, 10 April 1928.

CHAPTER FIVE:

"Energy and Thrift"

In the late 1830s, George Arden, *Port Phillip Gazette* editor, recognised that migrants to Australia needed accurate information on diverse aspects of Australian life. By 1840, through "observation and inquiry," he compiled the publication, *Latest Information with Regard to Australia Felix, the Finest Province of the Great Territory of New South Wales; Including the History, Geography, Natural Resources, Government, Commerce, and Finances of Port Phillip; Sketches of the Aboriginal Population, and Advice to Immigrants*.[1] Despite Arden's efforts, a pervasive complaint during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was that British migrants to Australia were insufficiently informed about Australia and the conditions they could expect to experience. For many British emigrants, the reality of the country upon which their fate rested bore scant resemblance to the depictions they had been given. The schism between expectation and reality was fuelled by propaganda from parties with vested interests in migration, or who were simply over-enthusiastic. Eight decades after Arden had identified the need for migrants to be accurately informed about Australia, the New Settlers' League declared its intention to do so.

Misinformation

[1] George Arden, preface to *Latest Information with Regard to Australia Felix, the Finest Province of the Great Territory of New South Wales; Including the History, Geography, Natural Resources, Government, Commerce, and Finances of Port Phillip; Sketches of the Aboriginal Population, and Advice to Immigrants*, by George Arden (1840; repr, Carlton, Vic: Queensberry Hill Press, 1977), i-ii.

Under the Joint Agreement, the Commonwealth assumed responsibility for "all publicity and propaganda in connexion with the encouragement of immigration."[2] Prior to this, the states competed for migrants and each had a migration agent in London. This led to state governments being irritated by the stream of British migrants lured to Australia by misleading information who arrived with little capital, high expectations and for whom few jobs were available. Failed immigrants often bore people's contempt and condemnation which was goaded by such as British newspaper proprietor Lord Northcliffe. Having toured Australia in 1921 and met many British immigrants, Northcliffe was "so keen" an advocate of British emigration to Australia that he promised to be "Australia's finest immigration agent." Though Northcliffe lauded successful immigrants, the less fortunate received little sympathy from him. "It appears to me," he claimed, "there has been a good deal of indiscreet immigration to Australia in the period immediately after the war, among whom were people who had not been a success at home, and had not been successful anywhere."[3] The British, Roe explains, often viewed migration as a point of shame akin to admitting failure to succeed in their own land. Some post-WWI migrants to Australia felt they were setting out as failures for an inferior life in an inferior land. British newspaper reports of immigrants' negative experiences fortified this notion.[4] Immigrants often struggled, however, because of misinformation or ignorance of the conditions they would face.

A pressing NSL objective was to ensure immigrants received timely, relevant advice about what to expect in Australia, and to provide further practical advice during their

[2] Wickens, *Year Book Australia 1924*, 944.
[3] "Lord Northcliffe Back in Sydney: More Immigration Propaganda," *Daily Herald*, 30 September 1921, 3.
[4] Roe, *Australia, Britain, and Migration*, 180-82.

settlement. The NSL established different committees, for example, women's committees, to deal with specific areas of need. Each division produced a settlers' handbook with extensive coverage of Australian society and culture. Victoria's 1924 handbook illustrates the scope of advice covered by the NSL. Along with a map, it offered details of important organisations, such as immigration authorities, churches and welfare groups, and information on government, population, production, taxation, banking, city and country transport, post and telegraph facilities, education, and marriage. There was advice about gaining experience, settling on the land, dry farming, irrigation, buying land privately, and share-farming. Housing construction advice included plans for standard, concrete, rammed-earth, and "progressive" houses that could be added to over time. How to furnish a house was also addressed.[5] Booklets also covered issues particular to establishing a home in Australia, using local products and produce, and familiarisation with Australian conditions.

Despite the NSL's efforts, claims of misinformation and stories of disillusioned returned migrants persisted, particularly as economic conditions deteriorated in the latter 1920s. In the early 1920s, roseate propaganda proliferated and claims abounded of misinformed immigrants misled by over-enthusiastic migration agents. The states blamed the migration agents in the United Kingdom, but the Agent-General held the OSC responsible.[6] Immigrants also directly blamed the agents, as William Jones's letter to David McGrath, ALP member for Ballarat, shows:

> I desire to bring under your notice the fact that I was induced to come to this country by the immigration agents of the State Government of Victoria. They held out glowing prospects to me; yet, sir I have tramped all over Victoria looking for work, and I am sorry to report that no work is procurable in this State. I consider steps should be taken to arrest the gross misrepresentation of the real state of affairs in this country. I will have to get my passage charges

[5] New Settlers' League of Australia, Victorian Division, *New Settlers' Handbook to Victoria*, 13.
[6] Roe, *Australia, Britain, and Migration*, 23-24.

> home again from my relatives in the Old Country, and when I do reach home again I will endeavour to place the state of Australia before the English public in the true light.[7]

McGrath criticised the agents who, he alleged, held lucrative positions that were a "reward for flooding this country with immigrants, who will complete with our own people for employment." [8]

Australian employers also complained about migrants being misled regarding Australian wages and conditions. Mr E Horn, Manager of Marrickville Metropolitan Knitting Company, informed the Chamber of Manufactures that one of his new employees had migrated because she had been grossly misinformed about the level of wages she could expect to receive in Australia. Horn had agreed to employ the young woman upon a request from her friend, a recent immigrant already in his employ. Upon arrival in Sydney, the woman met with Horn and when discussion turned to wages it transpired that an Australian government official in England, Dugald Michael, had misinformed her. Wages for someone with her experience, Michael had stated, would be £5.5.0 and on no account should she accept less than £4.4.0. Horn had then to inform her that he would pay the award wage of £2.11.0. The Australian government contacted Michael, who stated that he had many informal conversations about the Australian hosiery industry and when conducting interviews with potential migrants, which "as a rule … last at least half-an-hour - girls are very inquisitive, one has to be on their guard what they say to them."[9] Australia viewed

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[7] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, HOR Official Hansard, no.28, 1921,Supply (Formal), David McGrath, 14 July 1921, 10088.
[8] *Ibid.*, 10089.
[9] NAA, Canberra: A786, B61/1, Migrant Settlers General - Migrant Settlers Complaints - Misleading Information, 1927-1929, Correspondence between E Horn, Metropolitan Knitting Co, NSW Premier's Dept, and PMO, 12 January - 19 April 1928.

these instances very unfavourably, particularly when, as frequently happened, the press published the stories.

William Mahoney, ALP member for Melbourne, deplored the "suicidal" immigration policy that brought out naïve, ill-prepared immigrants, and opposed funding that would enable the "officers of the Immigration Department to indulge in a huge publicity campaign ….in Great Britain." The department, he claimed, intended to flood Great Britain with "pamphlets and give free cinematograph shows, at which Australia can be made known to the British people as a land flowing with milk and honey." Mark Brayshay and John Selwood examined propaganda, aspiration and immigrants' actual experiences in interwar Australia and found that in a "golden age of advertising" when "pamphlets, posters, newspaper and magazine advertisements, films, lantern slide shows, exhibitions and lecture tours were all pressed into service to persuade potential candidates to emigrate," many struggling British people inevitably succumbed to the allure of land ownership and prosperity.[10] Propaganda seduced even the gainfully employed. George Godfrey was a graduate teacher from Cambridge University who migrated in 1926. "In Australia House," he recalled, "I saw silent moving picture documentaries of life in Australia, mostly concerned with rural pursuits."[11] Inspired by these, he migrated to pursue a dream of becoming a boundary rider. Once in Australia, however, though a series of events prevented Godfrey going on the land to realise his dream, his apparent misfortune saw him pursue journalism and eventually become one of Australia's most distinguished

[10] Mark Brayshay and John Selwood, "Dreams, Propaganda and Harsh Realities: Landscapes of Group Settlement in the Forest Districts of Western Australia in the 1920s," *Landscape Research* 27, no.1 (2002).
[11] Godfrey, interview.

journalists.[12] Many other migrants - idealistic like Godfrey - found themselves, however, in rural Australia desperately striving to convert hopes into reality.

Nationalist Senator Josiah Thomas, New South Wales, told of meeting a young Scottish ex-serviceman in Leeton, Victoria, who had migrated believing he would be afforded the same rights to settle on the land as Australian ex-servicemen, but had been denied the opportunity to do so. "He is willing to bring his wife and four children here if he can secure land," Thomas explained, and he "was influenced to come to Australia because of the information contained in pamphlets circulated by the immigration authorities in Great Britain." Thomas claimed that Sir Joseph Carruthers, author of the "million farms" campaign, assured him there were at least two or three hundred men in similar circumstances.[13] In 1923, Andrew Lacey, ALP member for Grey, South Australia, affirmed claims that misrepresentation was enticing people to migrate. He cited a newspaper report in which Joseph Cook, High Commissioner, had held Kalgoorlie up to the British public as an example of prosperity because the town boasted 90% home ownership. "It may be a fact," stated Lacey, "that that percentage of people at Kalgoorlie do own their homes, but the statement by the High Commissioner was intended, by innuendo, to convey the idea that 90 per cent of the people generally of Australia were in that fortunate position."[14]

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[12] Alex Mitchell, "Godfrey, George Fuller (1904-1989)," *ADB*, National Centre of Biography, ANU, published first in hardcopy 2007, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/godfrey-george-fuller-12548/text22587.

[13] Sen Official Hansard, no.47, 1921, Loan Appropriation Bill, Josiah Thomas, 25 November 1921, 13259.

[14] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, HOR Official Hansard, no.10, 1923, Governor-General's Speech: Address-in-Reply, Andrew Lacey, 8 March 1923, 224.

Labor was constantly cast as anti-immigration, which it constantly denied. It was, it claimed, pro-immigration if conditions were favourable and appropriate provision was made for immigrants. In late 1921 Lou Cunningham, ALP member for Gwydir, asserting that all politicians knew migration agents were "selected because of their ability to draw beautiful word pictures of the opportunities in Australia," cautioned that this would be the cause of many disillusioned immigrants.[15] Two years later he complained that people were still "being induced, by means of highly-coloured pamphlets and specious promises, to come to Australia where thousands of men, including returned soldiers, are unable to secure employment."[16] Labor's 1924 Commonwealth Conference resolved to "protect our fellow workers from being deluded by false statements into leaving home and kindred merely to become tools of sweaters."[17]

Claims that misleading propaganda was damaging the "reputation of Australia" fuelled debate between Labor and the Bruce government. Bruce accused Labor of dragging the immigration issue into the gutter. Percy Coleman, ALP member for Reid, New South Wales, accused Bruce of dragging Australia's reputation into the "international gutter by perpetuating [a] pernicious immigration system" which saw "hundreds of immigrants dumped into Australia" without adequate employment or welfare provision. This, he claimed, led to hundreds of immigrants returning to Britain and the press carrying stories of immigrant poverty and misery. Claiming to have been lured to Australia by false promises, immigrants "condemn[ed] Australia

[15] HOR Official Hansard, no.47, 1921, Loan Appropriation Bill, Lou Cunningham, 23 November 1921, 13124.
[16] HOR Official Hansard, no.31, 1923, Budget, 1923-24, Lou Cunningham, 3 August 1923, 2114.
[17] Australian Labor Party, *Official Report of Proceedings of the Tenth Commonwealth Conference*, (Melbourne: Labor Call Print, 1924), 6.

as a land of confidence tricksters."[18] Hubert Lazzarini, ALP member for Werriwa, New South Wales, noting that Bruce intended to visit Britain on an immigration mission, cited New South Wales Premier Fuller's visit to England as a cautionary tale. Fuller, stated Lazzarini, had made statements about conditions in Australia for immigrants that he was forced to refute when Mark Gosling, ALP state member for St George, New South Wales, proved them incorrect.[19] John West, ALP member for East Sydney, cited an example of the "sort of extravagant publicity that was indulged in," having obtained:

> Copies of circulars and pamphlets issued in England as immigration propaganda, and one pamphlet contained the statements that Australian-grown oranges were as large as pumpkins, the smallest being 17 inches in circumference.[20]

Was it fair, asked Cunningham, luring unskilled British people to "surrender positions in Great Britain, where they have friends, in order to come to a new country where they will be amongst strangers, where the conditions are entirely strange to them, and where they will be required to put up with many inconveniences?"[21]

"Delusive propaganda," writes Roe, "is likely whenever anything is being sold; it is close to inevitable when that something is beyond the seas, and the potential customer is anxious to hear good reports." Though the states' agents and the OSC were accused of promulgating misleading propaganda, Roe claims they were to an extent scapegoats. Self-interested parties who stood to profit from migration, such as governments, shipping companies and businesses, also promoted propaganda.[22]

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[18] P o A, Parliamentary Debates, HOR Official Hansard, no.24, 1923, Ninth Parliament, Second Session, Governor-General's Speech: Address-in-Reply, Percy Coleman, 15 June 1923, 120.
[19] HOR Official Hansard, no.31, 1923, Imperial and Economic Conferences, Hubert Lazzarini, 30 July 1923, 1800.
[20] P o A, Parliamentary Debates, HOR Official Hansard, no.33, 1923, Loan Bill, John West, 17 August 1923, 2998.
[21] HOR Official Hansard, no.31, 1923, Budget, Lou Cunningham, 3 August 1923, 2114.
[22] Roe, *Australia, Britain, and Migration*, 192.

Shipping companies were accused of striking a deal in which migration agents in London were paid £1 for each migrant passage booked. Norman Makin, ALP member for Hindmarsh, South Australia, alleged the incentive of a cash bonus led to agents using deceptive methods to induce ill-suited people to migrate. He cited an *Industrial Australian and Mining Standard* article which stated that the inevitable result of such a practice was immigrant dissatisfaction and negative consequences for Australia's reputation. Another "regrettable feature of the immigration business," stated the article, "was the gross misrepresentation of Australian conditions as reflected in the British newspapers and from the street hoardings." Those responsible for disseminating "grossly misleading literature" which "reduced Commonwealth immigration enterprise to a farce" drew harsh condemnation.[23]

Despite its condemnation of others, the *Industrial Australian and Mining Standard* also participated in immigration propaganda, as its efforts to publish "Irrigation and Immigration" illustrate. "The question of immigration is so intimately bound up with that of irrigation," wrote the *Industrial Australian and Mining Standard*'s Ambrose Pratt to Hughes:

> That in our opinion there could be no better method of attracting a flow of population of the right sort to Australia … than by informing and instructing intending and prospective immigrants what Australia is doing to facilitate irrigation and settlement of her waste spaces.[24]

Pratt was willing for the newspaper to fully cover the substantial publication costs, but needed to secure enough orders to make it viable. The book, he suggested, would be an excellent addition to government immigration publicity and Hughes should place a definite order. He assumed Hughes "would probably need some thousands of

[23] P o A, Parliamentary Debates, HOR Official Hansard, no.33, 1923, Loan Bill, George Edwin Yates and Norman Makin, 17 August 1923, 3033, 3035-36.
[24] NAA, Canberra: A457, J532/5, Publicity - Pamphlets etc. Irrigation & Immigration, 1922-1922, Ambrose Pratt to Hughes, 28 June 1922.

copies for the use of…agents and officials" to the order of "not less than 3,000 copies." The government was interested and approving of the publication, but E N Robinson, Immigration Department Director of Publicity, cautioned that:

> The Murray River Scheme is not yet sufficiently far advanced to enable any one of the participating States [New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia] to state, even approximately, what additional acreage will be brought under irrigation by any given time. So far as I know there has been no attempt even at the formulation of any land settlement policy or scheme as the result of the increased and constant supply of water…. Until some intimation is forthcoming from the States that certain additional areas will be open to overseas settlers by a certain fixed date, and on certain terms, the Immigration Office cannot "feature" the Murray River Scheme.[25]

Robinson noted that he did not reject Pratt's scheme and considered that purchasing copies would be "adequately justified as useful general publicity" for there was "no fear of a too roseate picture being painted, because it is incontestably true that unsurpassed possibilities exist." He foresaw problems if the publication created the erroneous impression that such opportunities currently existed, for that would "retard instead of accelerate the immigration movement."[26]

Facing facts

Opinions abounded on how Australia could best attract accurately informed migrants. The 1924 BOSC Delegation found that migrants themselves often developed exaggerated ideas, irrespective of advice given. "Many settlers arrived" it stated, "with exaggerated ideas of the ease and speed wherewith wealth can be acquired. When they saw pictures of smiling homesteads, migrants were apt to overlook the hard work and discomfort preceding such prosperity."[27] *Farmer and Settler* alleged that since the Commonwealth had assumed the "privilege" of

[25] *Ibid*., E N Robinson to Acting Superintendent of Immigration, 17 July 1922.
[26] *Ibid*.
[27] "Australia's Development: Filling the Empty Spaces," *Advocate* (Burnie, Tas), 21 May 1924, 5.

advertising and promoting Australia, rather than each state managing its own as formerly, published material had become too generalised. As propaganda was prepared by publishing information on Australia "in her width and length" so as to "engender no jealousies," content was reduced to broad generalisations offering no pertinent advice about the states' varied conditions. "No immigration agent," the article concluded, "can do justice to all the States at once. He must have a particular State in his heart, and the claims and achievements, the wealth and the potentialities of that State must be his never-ending theme."[28] Michael Considine, Independent member for Barrier, New South Wales, argued that if Australian conditions were fully conducive to mass immigration, there would be no need to spend on propaganda because conditions would be "so superior to those prevailing elsewhere that the world's population will flock here in its thousands and millions."[29]

Nonetheless, governments regarded publicity expenditure as necessary to stimulate migration interest and awareness among the British. Nationalist Senator Henry Garling, South Australia, fought for ongoing publicity funding which he considered an important component of the Immigration Department's work. It would be a very grave error, he cautioned, to curtail publicity funding; a move he regarded as false economy.[30] National Party Senator James Guthrie, Victoria, also insisted that propaganda expenditure should be liberal, accompanied by provision of migrant facilities. "I am a member of the… New Settlers' League," he declared, "and I know that the great difficulty to be faced is to provide housing accommodation for

[28] "Missing the Best: Australia House and the Immigrant," *Farmer and Settler* (Sydney), 21 September 1923, 1.
[29] HOR Official Hansard, no.47, 1921, Loan Appropriation Bill, Michael Considine, 23 November 1921, 13143-4.
[30] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, Sen Official Hansard, no.39, 1922, Budget 1922-23, Henry Garling, 28 September 1922, 2828-9.

immigrants in the country districts," as well as adequate transport facilities and water distribution and conservation.[31]

The Australian public was also aware that settlers needed to be accurately informed for immigration to succeed. A letter to the *Argus* from "Practical" cites the case of "another disappointed would-be settler." The independent migrant from Ireland, a married father of five sons, in possession of £2,000 savings, arrived in Sydney in January 1921 (prior to the NSL's establishment). Having vainly sought employment and housing, he returned to Belfast and dissuaded friends and neighbours from migrating to Australia. "Practical," noting that the man's comments on "the want of preparation to meet newcomers" were of "an exceedingly pithy character," suggested "it would pay Australia to have a common-sense man and woman, not city brought-up, but knowing country life" to contact all intending settlers to "give all the practical suggestions so urgently needed."[32] A Burnie *Advocate* editorial cautioned:

> More is needed than mere boosting of Australia at banquet speeches in London, and the flooding of the country with propaganda showing what a magnificent country Australia is…. It has been said over and over again that the best immigration agent is the satisfied settler, who feels that he can advise his friends to come and share in the good things which he is enjoying in this country…. It is impossible to expect the small man to settle in the wilds without the amenities of life…. The immigration efforts of the average politician in this country do not seem to get beyond the platform stage… It might be asked if there are any plans…or is it merely a case of laying out the money in advertising.[33]

RJM, an Australian who travelled by migrant ship from England to Australia, asserted it was necessary to do more than place propaganda and literature on board for them. "After the few foreign ports of call have been left behind," stated RJM:

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[31] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, Sen Official Hansard, no.29, 1922, Governor-General's Speech: Address-in-Reply, James Guthrie, 20 July 1922, 622.
[32] "Immigration: Federal Ministry's Policy: Room for Thousands," *Argus*, 18 June 1921, 22.
[33] "Attracting Settlers," *Advocate*, 26 August 1924, 2.

> There is a long cheerless journey … where the migrants become urgent in their quest for facts and advice about the country in which they are about to venture their all. Many of these inquiries end in disappointment. A few pamphlets, dealing mainly with land settlement, are distributed occasionally, and in the ship's library may be found some books of Australian fiction and verse. But literature, even if it is well compiled, is not the method by which migrants will readily absorb facts. They crave personal conversation. They cannot ask questions of a book or a pamphlet.[34]

RJM suggested "travelling officials trained to give a fair representation of Australian life and to supply sympathetic advice" be stationed on ships, for example, an NSL travelling committee.[35]

Migrants themselves demanded informative, educative material, not least of all to alleviate the ennui of the extensive journey. After the depressed war years, shipping companies enjoyed passenger trade resurgence between Britain and Australia. In December 1921 the PMO noted that six shipping companies with a total of twenty-eight ships were conveying migrants to Australia.[36] A year earlier, approximately 330 passengers on TSS Benalla gathered on-board to voice "the great need and the complete lack of educational facilities" on the ship carrying approximately 1,000 passengers, most headed for Australia. A letter to Hughes signed by six passengers elected as representatives stated, "There is no library on board, not a single book on Australia, nor a single map available."[37] The letter received a positive response, particularly from Gullett who requested that the passengers' spokesperson, H Duncan Hall, late of Oxford University and taking up a position at Sydney University, be informed that "this matter is now receiving the attention of the Commonwealth

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[34] "Migrants at Sea: Official Neglect," *Argus*, 11 December 1926, 8.
[35] *Ibid*.
[36] NAA, Canberra: A458, B154/1, Immigration- Immigration Encouragement Immigrants - Educational Facilities for - Supply Publications for Migrants on board Ship, 1920-1924, E J Russell for PM to Premier of Victoria, 8 December 1921.
[37] *Ibid*, H Duncan Hall to PM of NSW (*sic*), 17 December 1920.

Immigration Office and that the suggestions contained in the joint letter … have been read with interest and will be fully borne in mind."[38]

At Gullett's urging, the Commonwealth requested all Premiers to supply material for migrant ships, such as year books, agricultural journals, farmers' handbooks or other suitable publications. As Australia wanted immigrants to become part of rural industry, agricultural information was imperative. South Australia's Premier Barwell informed Gullett that his state did not issue a year book, and to "supply sets of bound volumes of the Agricultural Journal would be costly." He would supply twelve copies of *South Australia for the Fruitgrower*, the *Pocket Yearbook* and, when reissued, of the State Tourist Bureau publication, *Handbook of Information*. Gullett assured Barwell that the "only object which the Commonwealth Government has in asking for these publications is to ensure that the fullest possible information concerning all States may be made available to people travelling to Australia." While reluctant to ask for more copies, wrote Gullett, the CIO could "advantageously make as many as fifty copies available in the libraries of oversea passenger steamers running to Australia." Barwell sent twenty-five copies of each title.[39]

The other states responded to Gullett's request by furnishing yearbooks and an array of titles. Among Tasmania's titles were *Views of Tasmania's Wonderland*, *Beautiful Tasmania*, *Port of Hobart, Tasmania* and the *Northern Tasmanian Fisheries Association Annual Report*. New South Wales sent copies of *Farmers' Handbook*. Along with the *Prince's Souvenir Handbook of W. A.,* Western Australia supplied an extensive list of agricultural publications, including *Descriptive Account of the Fruit*

[38] *Ibid*., Gullett to PMO, 29 March 1921.
[39] *Ibid*., Correspondences, Gullett, PMO and Premiers, 18 October to 19 December 1921.

Fly, *Flaying and Treatment of Hides*, *Care of Milk and Cream*, and *Tropical Culture in the North and North-West*. Queensland's selection included *Cultivation and Curing of Tobacco*, *Pineapple Culture in Queensland*, *Market Gardening*, and *The Pocket Queensland*.[40] The Commonwealth and state governments' promotional material was supplied to passenger ships either for their on-board libraries or for distribution to passengers. To cater for demand, the Commonwealth supplied copies of Australian year books along with publications such as *Australia, Its Opportunities and Attractions* and *Australia Unlimited*.

In 1926, the Victorian government published a booklet entitled, *Victoria the Speedway to Rural Prosperity: A Handbook for Intending Settlers*.[41] "Speedway" was a term originally used in the United States in the mid to late 1880s when some New York City residents called for a "roadway for trotters in Central Park." They desired a "path along the west side of the Park for speeding horses, and everybody who loves to drive or to see a trotter wishes they might have it."[42] Speedways were developed to facilitate unimpeded high-speed transport. By 1904, with motor vehicle numbers rising, motorists lobbied for the right to use the speedways at least one day a week.[43] "Speedway" then became a popular term for brand names for such products as motor oil, a make of car, and motor racing. In 1920s Australia, newspapers carried reports of United States speedway development in an "age of progress." Forecasts included such fantastic concepts as a "continuous aerial speedway" like a "railroad in the air" where "the speed possibility is practically

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[40] *Ibid*. This file contains correspondence between Gullett and the Victorian premier regarding the supply of publications, but does not mention what publications Victoria supplied.
[41] Department of Crown Lands and Survey, Victoria, *Victoria the Speedway to Rural Prosperity: A Handbook for Intending Settlers, Showing Methods of Acquiring Farms from the Crown* (rev ed) (Melbourne: H J Green, Government Printer, 1926), 76.
[42] "A Trotting Course in Central Park," *Sun* (New York, NY), 10 January 1888, 4.
[43] "Motorists Now Seek Speedway Privileges," *Evening World* (New York, NY), 2 February 1904, 14.

without limit, and that cars may move over it at the rate of a mile a minute, without the slightest danger to passengers."[44] For governments pursuing nation-building through industrial and agricultural development and rapid population increase, the term implied a fast track to success aligned with the emerging post-war era of modernity. The term "Speedway" connoted to settlers a safe, sure and speedy road to success.

Governments seized any opportunity for distributing advice to potential migrants. Hurley, Deputy Director of Immigration, took advantage of a visiting British fleet of seven Special Service Squadron ships to print 30,000 photographic postcards - 5,000 copies each of a view of the six state capitals - for distribution on board. Having been informed that many of the men's service would soon expire, Hurley saw a favourable opportunity to supply Australian publicity, anticipating that "the postcards will find their way into thousands of families in rural England" and constituted a "particularly valuable advertising medium." Hurley had also distributed numerous pamphlets and, with four of the ships capable of screening films, he supplied Vice Admiral Frederick Field with promotional film to screen on board.[45]

After Arrival

At the outset, the NSL vowed to fulfil its duty of facilitating immigrant settlement by providing "disinterested information and advice" and engaging "in such propaganda

[44] "A Railroad in the Air," *Warragul Guardian* (Vic), 26 November 1897, 6.
[45] NAA, Canberra: A458, J392/1, Publicity - Immigration Visiting Special Service Squadron - Publicity Through, 1924-1924, Hurley and PMO, 24 March - 8 April 1924.

and publicity as may be considered advisable."[46] In London, the Commonwealth dispensed propaganda and advice to migrants at Australia House, while upon arrival in Australia the NSL tendered "them advice upon matters regarding which they may be ignorant in their new surroundings."[47] League members, Gullett emphasised, would always "be ready to give to new settlers the best possible advice upon matters of importance to new people in a new land" and try to "safeguard them against an injudicious investment of capital."[48] In 1923, a Perth *Daily News* journalist accompanied immigration officials to Albany port for a day "with a view to see how the system for receiving immigrants operates." Isaac Crawcour, Western Australia CIO, and Vern East, Western Australia NSL secretary, were among officials who greeted 278 disembarking migrants. Crawcour and East, observed the journalist, supervised general arrangements, responded to "all manner of questions … asked on all manner of subjects," and "never wearied of giving helpful advice."[49]

Queensland's NSL intended every branch to form committees that were "prepared to give expert knowledge and advice to the settler on the many perplexing questions" that settling in a new country generated.[50] An advisory committee, it stated, was:

> Much more important than the reception committee, and it should comprise two or three bankers and two or three of the leading business men, also men who had already been successful in land settlement and any others in the position to afford advice on Australian matters generally.[51]

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[46] "New Settlers' League: Melbourne Branch Formed: Country Branches to be Established," *Portland Guardian* (Vic), 23 May 1921, 3.
"New Settlers' League: Lieut-Col. Griffiths at Coraki," *Richmond River Herald and Northern Districts Advertiser* (NSW), 4 October 1921, 4.
[47] NAA: A458, 154/18, NSL aims, 21 February 1922.
[48] Viscount Northcliffe, "The Empty Continent: Guiding Principles in Immigration," *Daily News*, 30 January 1922, 6.
[49] "Receiving Immigrants: How the System Works," *Daily News*, 31 July 1922, 5.
[50] "New Settlers' League Meeting Today," *Queensland Times* (Ipswich), 18 October 1921, 5.
[51] "New Settlers' League Rockhampton Branch," *Morning Bulletin*, 11 October 1921, 7.

When Maplestone addressed a public meeting in Rockhampton, he recalled how in the past British settlers who left their home and travelled 12,000 miles to settle in Australia received little in the way of welcome or assistance. These settlers spent much time in cities futilely "looking around" trying to establish themselves, their first months or years practically wasted. Friendless and discouraged, many opted to return. He concluded, "if a person of our own flesh and blood is willing to give up home, relations, and friends and come 12,000 miles to this country to become an Australian it is up to us to give him a helping hand," for if welcomed and given expert advice, immigrants would "make good." As strangers, he added, settlers "were not acquainted with local conditions and values." The "functions of country branches," as the 1921 Conference determined, was to welcome and advise settlers "as to the judicious investment of their capital," particularly as to the "acquisition of land, stock, implements, manures, seed, etc."[52]

Advice was crucial because many settlers arrived devoid of agricultural knowledge, let alone under Australian conditions. John Prowse, Farmers and Settlers Association (FSA) member for Swan, spoke of immigrants arriving with little concept of what they could expect. "What happens," Prowse alleged, is that:

> Immigration authorities take him by the hand, and give him some soup, and he is then sent to the Lands Office, where the officials say, "You want land? Well, here are the maps." He is then given maps of a territory 700 square miles greater than that of the United States of America. A man who was never, in his homeland, outside a district 10 miles square, is asked to study maps of a territory embracing 3,000,000 square miles![53]

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[52] "New Settlers' League Rockhampton Branch," *Morning Bulletin*, 11 October 1921, 7.
NAA: A458, A154/18, New Settlers' League of Australia First Interstate Conference, 25-27 October 1921, Resolutions Carried.
[53] HOR Official Hansard, no.47, 1921, Loan Appropriation Bill, John Prowse, 23 November 1921, 13105.

Samuel Dvoretsky, a former woodcutter from Russia who settled in Western Australia and pioneered a large, successful dairy enterprise, addressed the Fremantle Business Men's Association on the Mitchell government's ailing dairy venture known as the Peel Estate.[54] Dvoretsky blamed its decline on circumstances in which "new settlers, with no knowledge of farming, went to the estate and had to engage in a losing fight because of the lack of advice."[55]

Advice published in NSL booklets was garnered from government departments, such as the OSC, CIO and state immigration bureaux, and consisted largely of information that would enable settlers to familiarise themselves with Australia's ways and make their migration a financially successful venture.[56] As branches proliferated, the NSL informed the public that various committees being established in country branches meant every immigrant would receive "expert advice" upon all matters Australian.[57] The Victorian division, for example, published and distributed to other divisions *Outback Homes and How to Build Them*. This took settlers "through the stages from the beginner's tent, the bark hut, the pise house, to the ultimate objective, the concrete home." It contained complete specifications, detailed plans, and advice on selecting a site, sanitation and finance.[58] Victoria's NSL Housing Committee mounted an exhibition at the 1923 Melbourne Royal Agricultural Show featuring a full-size, four-room cottage equipped with furniture made from kerosene tins and cases. The cottage and furniture were built according to plans devised so that settlers or their employers could quickly construct inexpensive, comfortable housing. The

[54] Philippa O'Brien, "Skinner, Rose (1900-1979)," *ADB*, National Centre of Biography, ANU, published first in hardcopy 2002, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/skinner-rose-11707/text20925.
[55] "News and Notes," *West Australian*, 16 August 1923, 8.
[56] New Settlers' League of Australia, Victorian Division, *New Settlers' Handbook to Victoria*, 57, 59.
[57] Editorial, *Cairns Post*, 24 November 1921, 4.
[58] "Advice to Settlers," *Daily News*, 2 October 1926, 8. "Pise" refers to a rammed earth floor.

displays were constructed according to plans available in the handbooks. Kerosene case furniture on display included a "wardrobe, washstand, settee, ottoman, sideboard, bookcase, writing desk, kitchen dresser and cupboards." Kerosene tins provided the basis for "buckets, food bins, wash-up dishes, shower bath, firegrate and dust pan." Following the exhibition, preparation began for the popular 1925 booklet, *Makeshifts and Other Home-Made Furniture and Utensils*.[59]

While the NSL provided settlers with practical advice - garnered from professionals and experts who had contributed their knowledge - largely by means of publications, within the NSL membership were skilled and experienced people who could share their knowledge. Mrs O A Hicken, for example, was a member of Shepparton branch who, as the first woman in Victoria to preside at a Court of Petty Sessions, brought the benefit of her legal knowledge.[60] In December 1928, the New South Wales division's Bangalow branch held a reunion for youths who had recently come to settle in the district under the NSL's auspices. The event, which was the idea of Mr J G Snow, Bangalow Branch Honorary Secretary, was attended by over forty boys who had come from many outlying centres in the district. Councillor Armstrong, the Shire President, in addressing the gathering spoke of his experiences forty years earlier as a new settler and advised the youths to "listen to the advice of such men as Cr. Snow, who was a man whose advice was always valuable because it was the advice of a man who had gone through the mill and made good." Armstrong's own advice to the young settlers, endorsed by Snow, was that "hard, honest toil, and plain living would never kill anybody."[61]

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[59] New Settlers' League of Australia, Victorian Division, *New Settlers' Handbook to Victoria*, 131-133.
[60] "Women's Activities: Woman Justice," *Argus*, 7 February 1928, 7.
[61] "Reunion at Bangalow: A Novel Function," *Northern Star* (Lismore), 17 December 1928, 8.

Because the NSL engaged the co-operation of many organisations dealing with settlement and welfare issues, it could draw also upon their skilled members for expert advice. Mrs Murray Waller, NSL New South Wales country organiser, addressing a public meeting at Terang described the NSL as:

> A kind of parliament of nearly one hundred welfare organisations and societies, including, too, all the churches - thus proving a widely representative body to which newcomers from oversea can appeal for advice and help on arrival and during their first months in a strange land.[62]

The FSA, when invited to be represented on the New South Wales NSL, readily accepted because it believed that, as the "leading producers' organisation," a "considerable amount of good work" could be conducted in conjunction with the NSL, and their association could offer immigrants valuable assistance and advice.[63] Similarly, the Graziers' Association and the Australian Cane Growers' Association appointed representatives to the NSL.[64] Settlers also appreciated the practical and relevant advice personally contributed by individual NSL members. Immigrants in Victoria were assured by Merrett, Victorian Division Vice President, that they need never feel alone as there were over 250 branches in the state whose members were always willing to assist and offer advice."[65]

In almost all instances of NSL branch formation, local shires and councils were instrumental not only in holding branch formation meetings but, as most occupied executive positions, they were able to contribute local knowledge and expertise. The BOSC delegation, while visiting Australia, commended the NSL's work in "giving

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[62] "New Settlers' League: Meeting at Terang," *Camperdown Chronicle*, 29 March 1927, 3.
[63] "F. and S. Association Executive Meeting," *Land*, 2 December 1927 13.
[64] "Graziers' Association: The Year's Work," *Sydney Stock and Station Journal*, 2 June 1922, 17. "New Settlers' League Fortnightly News Budget," *Cairns Post*, 3 June 1922, 10.
[65] "New Settlers Welcomed: 'Success by Hard Work,'" *Argus*, 11 March 1925, 23.

new settlers the benefit of local help and advice, instead of their having to look continually to the Government departments for such," and hoped its network of branches would continue to expand.[66] League conferences at all levels also fostered collaboration with organisations who could contribute ideas, advice and assistance in settling immigrants. The attendees of the 1923 Dubbo regional conference illuminate the nature of community co-operation with the NSL. Along with Mayor J B Macdonald who presided, organisation who sent representatives included: Dubbo Progress Association; Parents and Citizens' Association; Balladoran FSA; Macquarie Shire Council Engineer; Dubbo Farmers' and Settlers' Association; Trangie Water Conservation League; Macquarie Water Conservation League; Graziers' Association; Wingadee Shire Council; Macquarie Shire Council; Timbrebongie Shire. In addition, J W Smith, Mayor of Narromine; J S Tait, Sydney *Sun* journalist; many NSL ordinary members and state organiser, Major Darcy, were also present.[67] A 1923 NSL district conference in Gloucester saw all New South Wales regional branches and organisations with interests in rural development discuss resolutions put forward by local branches for an upcoming state conference. While land development emerged as a priority, the conference urged that "before such land is classified and thrown open, men conversant with such country - local men - be afforded an opportunity of giving advice." Some regarded this as "the most important motion on the agenda paper."[68]

The NSL could not, however, rely on members and affiliates alone to furnish all the advice needed to ensure immigrants could settle successfully into work, home and

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[66] "Migration: Overseas Settlement Delegation's Report," *West Australian*, 21 May 1924, 9.
[67] "New Settlers' League Conference at Dubbo," *Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate*, 1 June 1923, 2.
[68] "New Settlers' League District Conference," *Dungog Chronicle: Durham and Gloucester Advertiser* (NSW), 5 June 1923, 4.

community. The NSL enlisted the Australian public's co-operation. Stillman informed the public through newspapers that it was "safe to say that every thoughtful citizen now recognises that immigration is a very urgent necessity." Acknowledging that dealing with immigrants required great care, he appealed to Australians to help by "giving them such information, advice, and neighbourly help as they may need."[69] League branches also encouraged recent settlers to share the knowledge they had acquired. In Western Australia, a "new settler, who arrived from England by the *Omar* some twelve months ago, and who has been 'on the land' during that period, took his fellow men into his confidence and gave them some sound advice, and useful hints."[70] When the OSC delegation completed its tour of Australia and delivered its report, it strongly favoured the NSL's efforts to provide immigrants with "the benefit of local help and advice instead of continually having to look to the Government departments."[71]

Advice and governments

From its beginning, the NSL also provided advice to governments on matters it identified as having implications for immigrant welfare and settlement. To varied extents, governments endeavoured to act to redress immigrants' lack of knowledge, for example, the Western Australia government employed an Instructor in Tropical Agriculture whose special duties were to advise settlers on agricultural methods.[72] The NSL however, was able to inform governments in detail of the practical advice

[69] "New Settlers' League: Immigration by Nomination," *Horsham Times* (Vic), 7 October 1921, 2.
[70] "Migration: Foreign Blood," *West Australian*, 24 February 1922, 7.
[71] "Migration Report," *Australasian*, 24 May 1924, 39.
[72] NAA: A458, A154/18, Draft letter to WA Premier, 28 July 1924.

most needed.[73] "The most informative official documents issued in any part of Australia," stated the Perth *Mirror*, "is the monthly publicity budget issued by the New Settlers' League," which it commended as diligently researched and within which politicians would find much of use.[74]

Following the 1921 Conference, an NSL deputation waited upon Hughes to deliver a list of "resolutions carried." Among them were issues regarding unsatisfactory conditions for settlers moving to country areas. The conference had found that lack of adequate rural accommodation, in particular for farm workers, contributed to population centralisation as it encouraged settlers to return to the cities. The NSL also advised against the system of farm workers "living in" which it claimed was "unsatisfactory both to employer and employees." The league advised government that:

> The provision of cottages for married couples with families would provide contented farm labourers, would make available growing families for farm work and domestic service in the country, would at the same time relieve the farmer's wife of a considerable amount of heavy work.[75]

The NSL advocated that the Commonwealth and state governments make loans available to settlers "on easy terms for the erection of rural labourers' cottages." For its part, the NSL resolved to make every effort to improve the condition of accommodation available to domestics and single men in rural areas.[76]

From the first deputation that waited on Hughes after the 1921 Conference, every subsequent interstate conference furnished advice for the Commonwealth and state

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[73] "News and Notes," *Western Mail*, 1 September 1921, 28.
[74] "Pertinent Paragraphs," *Mirror*, 25 August 1928, 11.
[75] NAA: A458, A154/18, New Settlers' League First Interstate Conference: Resolutions Carried, 25-27 October 1921.
[76] *Ibid*.

governments on ways the NSL felt immigration flow could be increased and on how the processes of migration and settlement could be improved. Following its 1923 annual conference, Western Australia division presented resolutions to its government recommending it "select more migrants from the country districts of Great Britain" and "appoint an Advisory Board with a view to giving helpful advice to new settlers with capital desirous of investing in Agricultural land." To ensure its advice was heeded, the West Australian Premier requested that a copy of the NSL's resolutions to the Director of Migration and Settlement at Australia House, London.[77] Queensland division urged that, in order that inquirers in the United Kingdom were "supplied with the most up-to-date information regarding the various States of the Commonwealth," the Queensland government should "arrange regular interchange of officers between Australia House and the Commonwealth." [78]

Having branches in almost every rural community and being affiliated with a diverse range of organisations enabled the NSL to convene an extensive network of expertise which could be drawn upon for advice. Such a structure also meant that affiliated organisations could utilise the NSL, with its access to governments, as a resource for raising or promoting issues of local concern with governments. The Macquarie Valley Irrigation League (MVIL), for example, recognised that a mutually beneficial relationship could result from being associated with the NSL, so readily appointed delegates to attend the NSL's May 1923 Dubbo conference. The MVIL desired to impress upon the New South Wales government the "necessity for the conservation of the waters of the Macquarie River," but was also interested in developing the area. The MVIL considered that, as it and the NSL shared the objective of promoting new

[77] *Ibid*., PMO, 10 October 1923
[78] *Ibid*., NSL to PMO, 4 September 1925.

settlement, it "would be advantageous" to affiliate because the NSL could greatly assist it to accomplish that objective.[79]

Range of advice

From mid-1921, when the NSL began welcoming immigrants, it consistently advised them to work hard and be wise with money. "Energy and thrift," they were told, were essential to succeed on the land. George Godfrey recalled the NSL's advice that "you should put aside a sum of at least £1 to purchase a good warm pair of blankets to take to the country with you." Immigrants were also advised that they each carried a "good deal of responsibility" for the reputation of settlers within Australian communities and for the success of immigration work as a whole. "With few exceptions," they were assured, they would find Australians "very friendly and ready to assist," and were advised how to interact with Australians. "Don't criticise your new surroundings or try to make out that things are better done in Britain," cautioned Victoria's handbook, for that "is not the way to get on and make friends in your new home."[80] Premier Lawson, attending the welcome given to 248 new arrivals by NSL Melbourne branch in November 1922, assured them that Victoria was:

> Most anxious to get men and women … prepared to go out into the rural districts and join with those who are roughing it…. The farmers and their wives and their sons and their daughters are working from January till December, from morning till night, to make good their holdings.[81]

Lawson advised the settlers that if they were prepared to go out and "relieve them, and help them in their labors," they too would one day enjoy the same success as

[79] "Macquarie Valley Irrigation League: Meeting at Narromine," *Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate*, 1 June 1923, 3.
[80] New Settlers' League of Australia, Victorian Division, *New Settlers' Handbook to Victoria*, 61.
[81] "Energy and Thrift: Advice to Immigrants," *Horsham Times*, 28 November 1922, 8.

those already established on the land.[82] Success often hinged, however, on using capital wisely.

The Victorian division formed committees of "men with expert knowledge of local land and stock values" to administer "disinterested" advice to immigrants wishing to establish their own farm.[83] Immigrants were advised it would be unwise to purchase any land before having spent twelve months in Australia, during which they should "study conditions and determine what class of farm work [to] take up."[84] Better-prepared settlers, reasoned the NSL, would benefit most from consulting it for advice on farming proposals and land purchases. The practice of share-farming, which governments encouraged immigrants to take up, was an issue which the NSL was frequently called upon for legal advice. Inexperienced immigrants who signed share-farming agreements without being cognisant of practical and financial obligations and expectations placed upon them could find themselves in difficult situations. The NSL strove to assist immigrants, preferably before agreements were signed, by scrutinising documents and advising on any adjustments to terms it regarded as in their best interest.

A highly desirable selection criterion for Commonwealth and state governments was a migrant's ability to bring capital. Shortly before the UMA joined with the NSL, Western Australia Premier James Mitchell informed it that Western Australia immigration officers based in London for the purpose of selecting immigrants aimed to "secure as far as possible men with money." By which, he added, he meant men

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[82] *Ibid*.
[83] Editorial, *Kilmore Free Press* (Vic), 10 August 1922, 2.
[84] "Free Legal Advice: Land Purchase Safeguards," *Argus*, 20 April 1923, 9.

with £200 and over.[85] The NSL organised for settlers who arrived with capital to receive financial advice on effective investing, rather than making ill-informed decisions that could see them impoverished, seeking work and drifting back to the cities. A 1921 Conference resolution was that:

> A pamphlet … advising new settlers not to invest money in land or a business without first obtaining competent advice through the medium of the League, be placed on board each incoming ship at the first Australian port of call, for distribution among immigrants.[86]

In Western Australia, immigrants consistently sought land settlement advice and the NSL was gratified to know it provided helpful advice that "governed the decisions of intending settlers."[87] To further assist settlers in their farming ventures, the Victorian division arranged with the Law Institute for settlers who had "entered hastily into regrettable undertakings in connection with the purchase of private lands" to access free legal advice.[88] William Brunton, Melbourne Lord Mayor and President of both NSL Victoria and the BBM, informed intending settlers through a publication distributed in England that:

> The head office of the League has been very vigilant to protect new arrivals from the wiles of unscrupulous people, and several hundred pounds have been returned to migrants through the representations of the League. Free and independent advice is given to any newcomers to whom a business or property has been offered for purchase. Migrants are very strongly urged not to invest money until they have been in the State for twelve months, and, in any case, until they have secured independent opinions, such as the New Settlers' League undertakes to procure.[89]

While being duped by unscrupulous people taking advantage of naive immigrants was a concern for NSL divisions and branches, other misfortunes also compelled immigrants to seek legal advice and help from the NSL.

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[85] "Immigration and Land Settlement," *West Australian*, 19 November 1921, 10.
[86] NAA: A458, A154/18, New Settlers' League First Interstate Conference: Resolutions Carried, 25-27 October 1921.
[87] "New Settlers' League: Report of March Meeting," *Bunbury Herald and Blackwood Express*, 13 April 1928, 2.
[88] "Free Legal Advice: Land Purchase Safeguards," *Argus*, 20 April 1923, 9.
[89] Department of Crown Lands and Survey, *Victoria the Speedway to Rural Prosperity*, 76.

The NSL offered advice to immigrants who were victims of crime or accident. Publications cautioned those who came with money, sometimes in the form of substantial amounts of cash, to be wary of thieves and confidence tricksters.[90] As early as June 1921, Swanston urged migrants to Victoria who brought cash to invest in land or small business to be wary of swindlers. He cited a case brought to the NSL of a woman who had "met with the usual ubiquitous 'agent,' by whom she had been swindled." While the case was under investigation, Swanston urged settlers not to invest in anything before they had made full enquiries and contacted the NSL for advice.[91] After only two years in operation, NSL Victoria was aware of several cases where settlers had been deceived in land purchase agreements. The NSL was determined to protect well-intentioned, enthusiastic immigrants from exploitation. In recalling his experiences, George Godfrey described how, upon disembarking:

> We received a most friendly welcome in Melbourne from members of the New Settlers' League. We were also given a pamphlet of advice which contained the caution, "Take good care of your money and property. Be most careful of your expenditure at least until settled in employment. Keep on guard with affable strangers in case they want to impose. Do not leave your luggage about uncared for.[92]

Gilchrist publicly stated how:

> Twelve months ago a case came under the notice of the league, in which an overseas settler had purchased a property without sufficient investigation, and found later that the land was incapable of showing the return which had been indicated by the vendor. He appealed to the New Settlers' League for help and it was able to obtain for him the return of the whole of the amount paid by the purchaser, namely £300. The league is at present investigating two other cases involving several hundred pounds.[93]

It was for such settlers the NSL had entered into the free legal advice arrangement offered by Law Institute.

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[90] New Settlers' League of Australia, Victorian Division, *New Settlers' Handbook to Victoria*, 57, 59.
[91] "Welcoming Immigrants," *Argus*, 3 June 1921, 4.
[92] Godfrey, interview.
[93] "Free Legal Advice: Land Purchase Safeguards," *Argus*, 20 April 1923, 9.

Women tended to consult the NSL for legal advice on more personal situations, such as those of elderly Mrs Thiselton, and young Miss Emily Kathleen Stanbury. Thiselton, who had only recently arrived from England, was disembarking from a Melbourne tram when the driver moved off before she had safely alighted. As a result she was "thrown violently to the ground and sustained a compound fracture of leg." Miss Foster, NSL Welcome and Welfare Committee secretary, visited Thiselton in hospital and considered the incident constituted a clear case of negligence against the tramway conductor. Foster strongly advised Thiselton to pursue legal action. Thiselton's son, himself a tramway employee, sought legal advice but decided not to proceed. Thiselton, however, upon being discharged from hospital visited Foster seeking advice about pursuing the matter herself. Foster again consulted the solicitors she had previously spoken to, who advised that the case was weak as there were no witnesses and if the client wished to persisted with the action an advance payment of £20 would be required. Foster, convinced the case was strong, advised Thiselton to proceed and intervened on her behalf to borrow the £20. The outcome was that the "Tramways Board … offered £100 to settle the matter out of court," which Thiselton happily accepted.[94] The NSL Victoria also provided advice to Stanbury, a domestic servant, and assisted her to take legal action over an incident of violent abuse from her former employer. In February 1927 the employer, Mrs I Sadler, had thrashed Stanbury with a riding whip.[95] Stanbury, the *Argus* reported, had agreed to terminate her employment with Sadler, but an argument arose over notice and wages, upon which:

> Mrs Sadler took a riding whip from the wall and struck plaintiff several times upon the back, face, and head. On one end of the whip was a nickel knob. She

[94] NAA: CP211/2, 3/65, Report by Foster, 17 May 1927.
[95] *Ibid*.

> had been in bed for some weeks, and had been out of employment for nine weeks. Medical evidence was given that, as a result of the assault, a small bone in Miss Stanbury's back had been broken, and there had been a gash of about 1½ in. long on her face.[96]

Following legal action, Stanbury was awarded £99 damages against Sadler.[97]

While much advice was aimed at men as the prime targets of settlement, the NSL recognised that female immigrants constituted a group that necessitated particular precautionary advice. The 1921 Conference included recommendations that "female new settlers be advised by pamphlet, leaflet, or other means" and by "immigration officers whose duty it is to advise them on all matters on which they may need advice." Immigration officers were urged to meet all incoming vessels and at the same time warn female settlers "to be careful in respect of unknown or unauthorised persons."[98] Victoria led in forming women's committees to advise females on "employment, accommodation, purchase of furniture, instruction in domestic economy, and advice and help in any other direction desired."[99] In 1925, Hurley and Senator Victor Wilson, Markets and Migration Minister, supported a scheme wherein young women were brought out in groups from selected towns and villages in Great Britain, having signed agreements and consented to serve a year in specified Australian towns across Australia. Wilson and Hurley urged them to look upon the NSL women's committees, in the towns to which they were sent, as "friends" to whom they could "go freely for advice and help in any difficulty" they may experience.[100]

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[96] "Struck with Whip: £99 Damages for Domestic Servant," *Argus*, 27 May 1927, 7.
[97] NAA: CP211/2, 3/65, Gilchrist to Fleming, 27 May 1927.
[98] NAA: A458, A154/18, New Settlers' League First Interstate Conference: Resolutions Carried, 25-27 October 1921.
[99] "Women's Activities," *Argus*, 24 April 1923, 12.
New Settlers' League of Australia, Victorian Division, *New Settlers' Handbook to Victoria*, 45.
[100] "Peopling Australia: Young Women Migrants," *Examiner*, 22 May 1925, 2.

Under Masson's leadership, Victoria division's women's committees actively kept in contact with women immigrants to advise and assist them. Masson aimed to establish centres for women to "learn something about the actual practical conditions under which they will have to work, and about the foods and appliances available for use here."[101] In 1923, at the BOSC delegation's suggestion, women's committees undertook to advise immigrants on selecting furniture to equip farm houses.[102] Women going to rural areas were advised on what goods and clothing they should take. [103] Foremost, settlers were advised to keep furniture purchases to an absolute minimum and any make any necessary purchases inexpensive, serviceable items. Members of the NSL women's section also accompanied settlers on buying trips to provincial or centres or city emporiums.[104] Numerous NSL publications contained practical advice on economically establishing a home. Vesta, Melbourne *Argus* columnist, wrote about women members in country districts whose purpose was to offer immigrants "advice and encouragement, and information when they need it." Vesta cited as an example an instance where NSL members assisted a recently-arrived young, engaged couple to arrange their wedding, which was also held at the home of an NSL member. "In a hundred other ways," continued Vesta, the NSL is able to "stand behind the new settlers, and save them disappointments, or help them to avoid difficulties, and to establish themselves in friendly association with Australians on the land."[105]

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[101] "Women to Women: Migration of Women," *Argus*, 30 May 1923, 4.
[102] The British Oversea Settlement Delegation arrived in Sydney on 9 May 1923. It toured the country extensively over several months before departing for New Zealand in late August 1923.
[103] New Settlers' League of Australia, Victorian Division, *New Settlers' Handbook to Victoria*, 59.
[104] *Ibid.,* 131.
[105] Vesta, "Women to Women: Migration Problems," *Argus*, 9 February 1927, 4.

While women's needs demanded particular attention, so too did those of young men and boys who migrated. In states who received farm learners or where the BBM or Dreadnought scheme operated, the NSL adopted a solicitous stance towards offering advice and social welfare to the inexperienced youths. Most immigrants sought some NSL aftercare or advice, but for youthful immigrants a guiding hand was imperative. In New South Wales in 1927, farm learners were arriving under the BBM and Dreadnought scheme at the rate of eighty a month. The lads, "specially selected by approved bodies in Britain," ranged in age from fifteen to eighteen years.[106] In the New South Wales division's handbook, Mr B J Stocks, "a practical New South Wales farmer with a lifelong experience on the land," had advice for a lad to get on to a station or dairy farm as soon as possible, learn Australian methods of farming, to do to the best of his ability whatever task he is set, and endeavour always to be smart and progress.[107]

Though Queensland did not participate in the BBM, as early as 1922 the government approved an intake of one hundred farm lads a month, with demand exceeding arrivals. A *Townsville Daily Bulletin* "Innisfail Notes" item stated that the NSL had advised Johnstone Shire Council that "shipments of farm learners were now arriving regularly" and the lads, who were being apprenticed to farmers, were between ten and nineteen years old.[108] When a contingent of twenty-six "little brothers" arrived in Victoria in May 1927, adding to the 420 who had arrived since the first contingent six months earlier, they were welcomed not only by Merrett and Masson, Women's Committee president, but also by George Smith Lang and Frederick Bewglass. Lang and Bewglass were two Little Brothers who had arrived in the first contingent and

[106] "Farm Learners," *Northern Star*, 17 September 1927, 4.
[107] "New Settlers' Handbook," *Country Life Stock and Station Journal*, 25 February 1925, 17.
[108] "Innisfail Notes," *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 25 September 1929, 3.

had been invited to attend the reception to offer their friendship and knowledge to the newest arrivals. In welcoming youths, Masson advised them to "make friends with the womenfolk, as they would do much to assist them."[109] The New South Wales division also emphasised women members' importance in helping youths. Informing NSL members and the public that it "wanted to enlist the co-operation of the ladies … with the object of getting those ladies to visit the lads and extend to them any little motherly advice that might suggest itself to them," the NSL urged interested women to contact young settlers in their district to assist them, and to correspond with the boys' families in Britain to advise them of their children's welfare and progress.[110]

The NSL constituted one source of advice among many for aspiring migrants who were feted with a profusion of propaganda, of variable reliability. Though the NSL could not eradicate exaggeration or misguided over-enthusiasm that could mislead migrants, it did work to ensure reliable information was supplied to migrants on board ship and that when in Australia they would have access to a wide range of expert and practical advice. The NSL, government and government departments co-operated to ascertain and supply the most needed and appropriate advice. With its extensive network of branches and substantial membership, the NSL drew upon professionals to provide advice in areas of law, building, and finances. In rural areas, it encouraged local members to share their detailed local knowledge and agricultural experience with immigrants to bolster their chances of success.

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[109] "Little Brothers Arrive: Welcome by New Settlers' League," *Argus*, 7 May 1927, 31.
[110] "New Settlers' League: Capt. Coulter at Coraki," *Richmond River Herald and Northern Districts Advertiser*, 31 October 1922, 4.

CHAPTER SIX:

"Thus to Put the Settler on His Feet"

> I cannot live any longer. It is too lonely. I have addressed my boxes to you, and would like you to make use of the few things if you can. Death is easier than life. Thank God there is no to-morrow…. I just don't want to wake up. Sally.[1]
>
> Leaving a note behind him, that he was lonely and intended to shoot himself, James Smith, a boy, 15 years of age, who came to Australia from Glasgow…shot himself in the head.[2]

So ended two young immigrants' lives as loneliness extinguished their hopes for a better life in Australia. Their experiences demonstrate the extreme despair that could afflict immigrants and the importance of support and welfare. The New Settlers' League recognised the need and all divisions established a range of welfare committees, such as Welcome and Welfare, Land Settlement, Housing and Household Advice. These committees variously arranged social activities to overcome isolation and loneliness as well as hospital visits, pre- and post-natal assistance for women and assistance immigrants with financial or accommodation difficulties.[3]

Many existing organisations co-operated with the NSL to address immigrants' diverse welfare needs. Among many others, the NSL received practical support from the Travellers' Aid Society, the VL, Bush Libraries, Girls' Friendly Society, YWCA, YMCA, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, RSSILA, and the Bush Nursing Association. Co-operation also came from associations for immigrants from

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[1] '"Thank God, There's No To-Morrow,"' *Kalgoorlie Western Argus* (WA), 5 November 1912, 35.
[2] "Lonely Migrant: Commits Suicide," *Mercury*, 3 December 1924, 4.
[3] New Settlers' League of Australia, Victorian Division, *Makeshifts and Other Home-Made Furniture and Kitchen Utensils* (Melbourne: New Settlers' League of Australia, Victorian Division, 1924), 2.

particular regions of Britain, for example, Scottish, Welsh, Cornwall and Devonian Unions.[4] Mr J Jenkins of the Cornwall and Devon Associations of New South Wales, informed settlers through newspapers of the group's aim to "promote social intercourse, and to foster the old traditions and customs of those two counties."[5] Immigrants from specific British regions could also contact each other through churches of different denominations.[6] While the NSL provided welfare assistance to settlers largely through direct contact, league handbooks also carried comprehensive lists and contact details of its many affiliated organisations and other useful contacts from whom settlers could seek assistance and perhaps establish friendships. Many NSL members also volunteered with one or more affiliated organisations, notably the CWA. The NSL's most integrated relationship, however, was with the BBM.

Youth Migration

Australian governments encouraged youth migration because they considered young people more adaptable to changed circumstances. For British and Australian governments, youth migration offered the "widest and most satisfactory field for selection" and was also the group most likely to "in a short time become real Australian citizens in the fullest sense." While unions and the ALP suggested that youth migration was advantageous to employers because wage rates for youths were lower than for older or married men, the NSL was conscious of young unaccompanied immigrants' vulnerability to exploitation. George MacKay, Nationalist member for Lilley, read a letter to parliament from Garland stating that the NSL:

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[4] New Settlers' League of Australia, Victorian Division, *New Settlers' Handbook to Victoria*, 49-57.
[5] J Jenkins, "Glorious Devon," *SMH*, 22 July 1927, 7.
[6] New Settlers' League of Australia, Victorian Division, *New Settlers' Handbook to Victoria*, 49-57.

> Was responsible as a Government organization for the welcome and placing and after-care of these youths. They are met on board the boat by the Government officials and by citizen members of the Council of the League. After arrival at the depot, visits are paid to them and friendships made. The league…prior to arrival of the boat has been in touch with employers, and as a rule situations are waiting and ready for the lads as soon as they arrive. They are followed up after they go to their situations, being kept in touch with the league generally through the 100 branches of the league in Queensland, the members of which take an interest in any lad in their neighbourhood. In other cases they are encouraged to keep in correspondence with the league office; and its travelling officer…in his journeyings through the state looks them up wherever it is possible. Every encouragement is given to the boys to work and to make good, while at the same time care is taken that there is no sweating or ill-treatment. The league holds numerous letters from the boys full of gratitude for its care.[7]

In Queensland, NSL members undertook direct responsibility for youths, while in other states responsibility devolved to the BBM.

The BBM was first established in Australia by Melbourne businessman and philanthropist, Richard Linton, in conjunction with the NSL.[8] Because the NSL and Linton both recognised "Australia's outstanding need" for people and "accepted the dictum of competent authorities that the best immigrant is the boy," the NSL supported Linton's proposal.[9] Youths were likened to young shrubs that would better succeed at transplantation because they had not developed a "big root system in [their] original situation" that would have to be severed, and would therefore readily establish themselves in a new environment. As boys were "more resourceful, adaptable and courageous than older people," the NSL reasoned, a British boy could be "quickly converted into a good Australian."[10] Linton had explained that his motivation stemmed from his own experience of arriving in Australia from New

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[7] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, HOR Official Hansard, no.34, 1924, Budget 1924-25, George Mackay, 19 August 1924, 3262.
[8] Roe, *Australia, Britain and Migration*, 73.
[9] New Settlers' League of Australia, Victorian Division, *Youth, the Invaluable Factor in Migration: the Big Brother Movement* (Melbourne: New Settlers' League of Australia, Victorian Division, [1924?]), 2.
[10] *Ibid.,* 2-3.

Zealand reassured because his older brother was already there to help him.[11] In September 1924, the movement began in Victoria and by mid-1925 was established in New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia. Described sometimes as "an off-shoot of the New Settlers' League of Australia," the movement was inaugurated under its auspices.[12]

As Linton recognised that many of the activities intended for the BBM were already being conducted by the NSL, though on a broader scale, he proposed that his movement become part of the NSL "in order to avoid overlapping, and the creation of a new organisation where one is already available to render the services required."[13] Noting that with over two hundred branches the NSL had "the ideal machinery for translating the big brother plan into practice," Linton urged every Big Brother to join the league."[14] Bruce strongly endorsed the BBM's establishment in conjunction with the NSL, offering assurance that "any movement which will tend to the satisfactory development of migration to Australia will have my warmest support." He further stated:

> In the past, much effort has been wasted through the lack of co-operation by bodies and societies interested in the work of establishing migrants from overseas in this country, and for this reason the Commonwealth Government welcomed the creation of the New Settlers' League, and provided financial support. The result has been to consolidate the efforts of those taking part in

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[11] Geoff Browne, "Linton, Sir Richard (1879-1959)," *ADB*, National Centre of Biography, ANU, published first in hardcopy 1986, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/linton-sir-richard-7203/text12461.
[12] "Big Brotherhood: Organiser Farewelled," *Examiner*, 26 October 1925, 5.
"Migration: Big Brother Movement," *Examiner*, 30 July 1925, 5.
"Boy Migrants: Citizens' Responsibility: Inauguration of Big Brother Club," *Argus*, 12 September 1924, 17.
See also: Big Brother Movement. British Executive Committee. *The Big Brother Movement Under the Auspices of the New Settlers' League of Australia in Co-operation with the Australian Government: Outline of the Scheme, a Unique Opportunity for British Boys* London: British Executive Committee. Big Brother Movement, 1926.
[13] "'Big Brother Club': The Human Touch in Migration," *Mercury*, 5 June 1924, 3.
[14] *Ibid*.

> this work, and I would suggest that your scheme might, with advantage, be taken up in co-operation with the League.[15]

Though Australia desired youthful settlers and Britain had a surplus of youthful labour, the boys' parents sometimes held misgivings about their sons' security and wellbeing. With a Big Brother awaiting each immigrant youth and undertaking to oversee his welfare, parents were more willing to relinquish their sons.[16] A Melbourne *Table Talk* article explained how:

> Landing in a strange country a youth is tossed about by the ebbing and flowing tides of humanity upon which he is but a mere speck, and the failure of many migrants is due to the fact that they have no personal relationship with the new people among whom they find themselves…. The New Settlers' League apprehending these difficulties, have adopted Mr Linton's admirable scheme, and are inaugurating the movement to extend the glad hand… to young New Chums.[17]

The BBM aimed to connect migrant youths with an older Australian male mentor (many of whom were NSL members) who would offer companionship and guidance through till adulthood.[18] The movement was open to nominated boys aged fourteen to nineteen who could provide a school leaving certificate, a reference from their schoolmaster, and one or two character references. Nominations were made in the United Kingdom by many approved organisations including the YMCA, Public Schools' Association, and churches.[19] Parents were assured the BBM would be "morally responsible" for their sons' welfare, would meet the boys upon arrival, see them off to their employment destination, ensure they went to "desirable people," and were "properly housed and fed." A Big Brother's essential qualifications,

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[15] NAA, Canberra: A436, 1945/5/2217, Big Brother Scheme, 1924-1928, PM Bruce to Richard Linton, 18 June 1924.
[16] "Boy Migrants: Citizens' Responsibility," 17.
[17] "Big Brother Movement," *Table Talk* (Melbourne), 18 September 1924, 12.
[18] *Ibid*.
[19] New Settlers' League of Australia, Victorian Division, *Youth, the Invaluable Factor in Migration*, 3-4.

explained G H Romans, BBM Secretary, were "good citizenship, patriotism, and a willingness to foster the growth and development of the boys."[20] The BBM filled the role of parent by giving advice when needed, visiting the boys in person, and checking how the employment situation was working for boys and employers.[21] In return, a boy was expected to:

- follow his Big Brother's advice to age twenty-one
- not leave his employ without his Big Brother's written permission
- always give good service to his employer
- abstain from alcohol and gambling until twenty-one
- write to his parents and Big Brother at least monthly
- save a fixed sum in a bank account every week.[22]

Upon arrival a youth was met by his "Big Brother" and required to sign an agreement which contained these conditions.

The BBM sought businessmen and professionals as members, especially those in cities where immigrant ships docked because they could meet boys immediately upon arrival. Organisers also contacted local councils requesting councillors to enrol as Big Brothers.[23] In New South Wales the BBM began with Bruce appealing to the Amalgamated Engineers to join.[24] When Bruce himself joined, the Port Pirie *Recorder* remarked "imagine having the Prime Minister of Australia for your Big Brother!"[25] The *Australian Worker* noted that the New South Wales launch was held at the Sydney Millions Club with addresses by Senator Wilson, Markets and

[20] NAA: A436, 1945/5/2217, G H Romans, "Youth, The Invaluable Factor in Migration," nd.
[21] New Settlers' League of Australia, Victorian Division, *Youth, the Invaluable Factor in Migration*, 5.
[22] *Ibid.,* 4.
[23] "Town of Sale," *Gippsland Times* (Vic), 19 March 1925, 5.
[24] "All About People: Tittle Tattle," *Catholic Press*, 2 April 1925, 24.
[25] "Big Brothers: Boy Migration," *Recorder* (Port Pirie, SA), 28 January 1925, 4.

Migration Minister, and E H Farrar, New South Wales Labour Minister, and alleged these were the "appropriate place and people to organise the influx of cheap child labor."[26]

The *Worker* was cynical of the BBM and its motives. Observing that the movement consisted of "wealthy individuals, mainly squatters, who pledge themselves to look after the welfare of youthful immigrants," it questioned the BBM's effectiveness and implied that squatters and other employers involved in the BBM gained a supply of cheap, easily-exploited labour. "Generally speaking," it alleged, "the wealthy employers of this country do not go to the trouble of banding themselves together to look after the welfare of youthful immigrants simply in order that they may get a square deal." There was "something sinister about this 'Big Brother' movement" it suggested, which had not the "ring of sincerity about it," and claimed that, "in fact, it looks suspiciously like an up-to-date scheme for fleecing immigrant workers after their arrival in this country."[27] The *Worker* offered little to support its claims beyond citing a couple of instances of low wages and bullying treatment.[28] A Big Brother's principal aim, states Sherington, was to offer "some protection from unscrupulous employers."[29] The NSL and BBM's commitment to the youths included preventing or rectifying such situations and both organisations were alert to any youth engaged in employment where he was not being properly treated.

Regardless of the *Worker's* criticism, the BBM and NSL sought to ensure immigrant lads were welcomed and cared for. The BBM, announced the *Argus*, had that

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[26] "Topical Talk," *Australian Worker* (Sydney), 29 April 1925, 10.
[27] "The 'Big Brother' Movement," *Australian Worker*, 5 August 1925, 11.
[28] "Boy Slavery," *Australian Worker*, 15 April 1925, 11.
"The Federal Parliament: What Labor Members are Saying," *Australian Worker*, 23 June 1926, 2.
[29] Sherington, "Assisted English Settlement 1918-1939," 313.

"essentially human touch which commends it to the sympathy of all who have the welfare of migration at heart," and suggested that the "very term 'Big Brother movement'" conveyed an idea of "protective friendliness" that would do much to promote migration. The BBM was commended for offering immigrant youths a "warm handgrip, the kindly welcome, the realisation that he has at least one friend in the land of his great adventure," and for offering "the lonely stranger, facing for the first time new conditions, a critical and too often unfriendly people…a different outlook on life!"[30] Sydney's *Sunday Times* explained how "a boy arriving … from overseas is practically an orphan and friendless, but a Big Brother takes charge of him in the place of parents and friends, and looks after him so that he will not be lonely and afraid."[31] Stillman exhorted Victor Cohen, BBM New South Wales honorary-secretary, to encourage Big Brothers to expand their friendship towards Little Brothers by inviting them to their home, occasionally to stay overnight, particularly when they arrive. To attain the movement's "real spirit," proposed Stillman, a Big Brother's wife and family should be included in welcoming and befriending the Little Brother and taking as keen an interest in his welfare and progress as the Big Brother. This would only be possible, Stillman believed, by having the youth spend time in the Big Brother's home.[32] Though the BBM did not manage to see all youths settled happily, observes Sherington, its efforts paid dividends as many youths under its care fared better than those who were not.[33]

Domestics

[30]Editorial, *Argus*, 24 February 1925, 10.
[31] "Big Brothers: To Keep Australia White," *Sunday Times* (Sydney), 19 April 1925, 7.
[32] NAA: A436, 1945/5/2217, W C Stillman to V Cohen, 27 April 1926.
[33] Sherington, "Assisted English Settlement 1918-1939," 313.

With high demand for domestics in rural and city areas, many young, single women migrated. Their situations could also be distressing. Domestics' employment, however, sometimes saw them integrated into the daily life of the family who employed them. This could be highly favourable to a young woman's successful settlement if circumstances were friendly but professional, and the domestic's skills and experience were fitted to the tasks for which she was employed. Columnist Vesta cautioned that many British women were peddled such a rosy picture of life in Australia that they arrived with impossible expectations and were soon disenchanted. "The bait held out to these young women" she stated, "is marriage… by reason of the preponderance of marriageable men." They were also, she lamented, promised positions where they would "live on terms of social equality with their employers," yet "it is only in rare cases that even the so-called 'lady' help is regarded by her employer as being in a position of social equality."[34]

A May 1927 letter from Gilchrist to the DMC's E P Fleming illustrates that women immigrants' employment conditions could sometimes be appalling. When brought to the NSL's attention, it would intervene and advocate on the woman's behalf. "You will be pleased to know," Gilchrist informed Fleming, "that as a result of action taken by this league, Miss Kathleen Stanbury was yesterday awarded £99 damages against her former employer, Mrs. Sadler, who thrashed her with a riding whip last February." Gilchrist cited this as exemplifying NSL services to immigrants. Vesta described the NSL's efforts towards the "reception, training, settlement, and welfare of overseas women," noting that all branches would establish a sub-committee to deal specifically with women's issues. This was clear evidence, she concluded, of

[34] Vesta, "Women to Women," *Argus*, 30 May 1923, 4.

"sincere desire on the part of those concerned to ensure that the women settlers shall be given every chance to succeed." Vesta hoped that the women's sub-committee would "have the sympathy and support of every woman...able to assist it in any way."[35] In London early in 1923 to promote migration, Masson sought educated British women who would largely pay their own way to migrate to Australia. These women were encouraged to migrate not only as domestic servants, but as home companions for country women, and to seek opportunities as "enterprising and intelligent women, with a little capital, to start small drapery shops, mending depots, tea-shops, luncheon rooms, &c."[36]

A significant event for Australia and the NSL in relation to women settlers' welfare was the 1923 visit of the British Oversea Settlement Department delegation. Britain had established the BOSD to deal with emigration generally, but established the Society for the Overseas Settlement of British Women (SOSBW) specifically to assist women.[37] The SOSBW had representatives in Australia, for example, in Queensland it was the NSL, with whom it had a long and positive association. The two organisations co-operated so that in Britain the SOSBW would identify suitable female candidates for emigration, while in Australia the NSL would attend to their after-care. In mid-1923, SOSBW members Mrs Margaret Dale and Miss Gladys Pott toured Australia to ascertain whether it could absorb female settlers, and if so, in what capacity. Pott concluded that "women would only waste their strength and energy in attempting to do the actual work of settling on the land, but as an auxiliary force to the men settlers their work would be most valuable." For a man to settle successfully on the land in Australia, she explained, "it was necessary to anchor the

[35] *Ibid*.
[36] "Home Companions" *Register*, 11 May 1923, 10.
[37] "Woman Migrants," *Register*, 25 July 1923, 11.

man to the land, and this could not be better done than by using a wife and family as the anchor."[38] For women, she observed, the "one form of work which was open… was domestic work." Pott believed a growing number of British girls "were willing to consider taking up domestic work in the Dominions….and she wished to find out whether Australian women would welcome such girls into their homes as domestic helps." Whilst most women immigrants, especially under assisted passage, intended taking up domestic service, Pott informed the 1923 NCW that she received enquiries from "women desiring to come to Australia at their own expense, such as nurses, teachers, and scientific research workers." She believed "as Australia was a growing country, there might be suitable opportunities for British women, especially those of the professional type."[39]

In 1922, Dame Meriel Talbot, SOSBW President, campaigned to reduce the disparity in numbers of men and women migrating to Australia by increasing the number of women migrating. As many arrived with little knowledge of the expectations that awaited them, Talbot also advocated a scheme to train them as domestics beforehand.[40] James Connolly, Western Australia Agent-General, endorsed her plea. He concurred that there was a great disparity in the numbers of unmarried men and women arriving in Australia which had created excess in the male population. He re-emphasised that, at the same time Britain was dealing with vast numbers of unemployed women, Australia was experiencing a dearth of domestics. Though domestic service was perceived as the most viable area of employment, Connolly noted that Western Australia afforded women opportunities to go on the land as poultry farmers and egg producers, particularly if they had worked on the land during

[38] "Immigration," *SMH*, 22 May 1923, 7.
[39] "Women Migrants," *Register*, 12.
[40] "Female Emigrants," *Daily Telegraph*, 10 May 1922, 5.

the war.[41] Within a few years a training scheme was in place in England. In February 1928, Miss Nellie Dear, and eight other young English women arrived in Brisbane under the auspices of the NSL. Dear was among the first graduates of a domestic training centre established in Leicestershire in December 1927 as a joint venture between the British and Australian governments. The course, of six to nine weeks' duration, consisted of instruction in laundry, cooking, dressmaking, needlework, general home management and other domestic skills, as well as lectures on hygiene. The centre held about forty girls under the supervision and instruction of four women, one of whom, Miss W Jolly, as an Australian was able to provide pertinent advice.

Difficulties

Across all NSL divisions, loneliness among female settlers was recognised as needing especial attention. Forster had anticipated in 1921 that for many immigrants, especially women, loneliness would not be felt until a period of time had elapsed after their arrival. "When settlers come here," said Forster:

> They settle down, and in the course of that they are so busy that they have no time to feel lonely. The real feeling of loneliness comes after they have settled. When the husband is out at work, all day, perhaps, and the wife is necessarily left to do her work at home there must be many and many a time when those who come as strangers to Australia must feel terribly lonely.[42]

Forster implored Australians to keep in touch with immigrants in a personal, friendly way. Earlier, Rev E G Petherick in an address to the Women's Service Guild in Perth entitled "Australia in the Making," spoke of Australia's duty to "help those who are developing the continent." Petherick saw combatting loneliness as critical to the

[41] "Women Migrants," *Brisbane Courier*, 24 January 1923, 7.
[42] "Friendship with Empire: Lord Forster's Eloquent Address," *Register*, 29 June 1921, 10.

settlers' wellbeing. To do so he suggested "lines of communication must be opened up and maintained: roads, railways, and airways must be provided." He also considered the loneliness endured by immigrant wives who remained in their homes alone or with their children while their husbands went to work. To mitigate their loneliness, Petherick believed telephones should be "brought within the reach of all" so they "may be able to ring up each other," and more importantly "get instant advice from a medical man even though 100 miles away."[43]

Soon after these addresses an NSL state conference followed where Western Australia Premier Mitchell strongly urged all country branches to form ladies' committees to "assist and encourage women immigrants to bear the loneliness of the first six months."[44] "It was most appalling," he lamented, "the loneliness that women immigrants suffered." Mitchell hoped that local women would "take the feminine immigrants in hand and make them feel that they were wanted."[45] Edith Cowan, a strong advocate of immigrant welfare and women's issues, spoke in the state's Legislative Assembly on the plight of immigrant women. She declared her support for increased immigration but emphasised that something had to be done to "brighten the lives and remove the terrible loneliness of the women in country areas."[46]

While women immigrants often experienced more isolation and loneliness than did men, all were vulnerable. The NSL did not expect Australians to coddle immigrants, but stressed that immigrants were strangers in a new land who needed a friend's help. Loneliness caused extreme stress to some immigrants, sometimes resulting in suicide

[43] "Australia in the Making," *Daily News*, 4 March 1922, 5.
[44] "Lonely Immigrants: Women's Committees Urged," *Register*, 8 August 1922 8.
[45] "Immigration: New Settlers' League Country Delegates Confer," *Daily News*, 7 August 1922, 5.
[46] "Legislative Assembly," *Daily News*, 10 August 1922, 3.

or mental health problems. Information in NSL handbooks regarding prohibited immigrants stated that authorities were "empowered under Federal legislation to prohibit the entry into Australia" of any person who was found on arrival to bear any of the defects specified in its list (see Chapter Two). Immigrants could also be deemed prohibited if they came "within any of the descriptions within three years of landing in Australia."[47]

Philippa Martyr examined deportation of "lunatic migrants" from Western Australia from 1924 to 1939 and found that over one hundred were deported within the specified three year period, which was later extended to five years. The time "between arrival and becoming 'a charge on the state'" was often brief, notes Martyr. She has researched whether these deportees were already unwell and encouraged to emigrate by "unscrupulous foreign governments," or whether living in an unfamiliar culture and place, combined with the onset of the economic depression, led to deteriorating mental health. "Social isolation, unemployment, alcohol, ill health from hunger, sleeping rough and subsisting on the scanty 'dole'" she suggests, all possibly contributed to "migrant mental hospital admissions."[48]

Martyr examined which immigrants were admitted and deported by using admission registers (from 1928 onwards) of Claremont Mental Hospital, the largest institution at the time, with almost all lunacy admissions sent there. Looking at deportations between 1924 and 1939 on the basis of gender revealed that 102 men and 10 women were deported. Martyr notes there were fewer women immigrants overall and, accordingly, fewer were admitted. The ratio, however, was still heavily weighted

[47] New Settlers' League of Australia, Victorian Division, *New Settlers' Handbook to Victoria*, 23.
[48] Philippa Martyr, "Having a Clean Up? Deporting Lunatic Migrants from Western Australia, 1924-1939," *History Compass* 9, no.3 (2011): 179.

towards male deportation. Male deportees, constituting 91% of the total, were between twelve and sixty-two years old, the median was thirty; 76% of working age, from twenty to thirty-nine; 76% were manual labourers; and 68% were unmarried.[49] Although the number of female migrant deportees was small, they were 21-44 years of age (the median was 28) and two were married. There were three domestics, one clerk, one nurse probationer, one cook, one housewife, with three unspecified.[50] In contrast with Australian admissions, migrant deportees were younger, more working class, and fitted the "popular perception of a migrant to Western Australia: single, male, and a charge upon the state." [51]

With around 75% of deportees diagnosed with schizophrenia and other psychotic illnesses, Martyr notes that some of these conditions have "been associated in the scientific literature with homesickness among immigrants, although potentially delayed for up to 2 or 3 years."[52] Though the percentage of immigrants diagnosed with mental illnesses then deported was small, many experienced homesickness to various extents. The importance of the welfare and after-care offered by the NSL, therefore, must be regarded as crucial for all immigrants affected by the deleterious experiences of homesickness, loneliness, unemployment, unsuitable housing, unmet dietary requirements, and medical needs.

Lord Forster observed at the 1921 Conference that "in England, there are always people within easy reach, and when settlers arrive here the strangeness and loneliness

[49] *Ibid.,* 185.
[50] *Ibid*.
[51] *Ibid*.
[52] *Ibid.,* 189-90.

of the country make them fret."[53] The VL 1922 annual meeting discussed immigration and noted that Englishwomen dreaded loneliness and isolation most of all, but "were comforted when they realized they would receive a friendly reception."[54] William Brunton, Melbourne Lord Mayor and Victorian division President, in welcoming 150 newly-arrived immigrants, admitted they "would probably feel very lonely at first, but, in comparison with the lot of the early pioneers, their lot would be a happy one, as there were many kind friends always ready to help and to give advice."[55] Charles Merrett, NSL vice-president, assured new arrivals they "need never feel lonely, as there were in Victoria 250 branches of the NSL, whose members were always ready and willing to assist" and that immigrants' employers would "take an interest in their welfare."[56]

In many rural centres, church organisations worked with the NSL to extend friendship and social opportunities to immigrants. Salvation Army Brigadier James Imrie delivered an address at the 1925 Victorian division state council meeting entitled "Immigration Work in Other States." Affirming that successful settlement was "largely dependent upon systematic after-care and welfare work," Imrie praised the work of the NSL and its affiliates.[57] Forster suggested members would greatly help lonely rural settlers by sending newspapers and books and keeping in touch through letter-writing.[58] The NSL implemented the measure of regularly posting a good supply of newspapers to lonely immigrants to foster connectedness and

[53] "Aiding Immigration: New Settlers' League," *Argus*, 26 October 1921, 11.
[54] "Victoria League: Eleventh Annual Meeting," *Register*, 28 June 1922, 9.
[55] "New Settlers Welcomed," *Argus*, 11 March 1925, 23.
[56] *Ibid*.
[57] "New Settlers' League," *Australasian*, 5 September 1925, 13.
[58] "Friendship with Empire: Lord Forster's Eloquent Address," *Register*, 29 June 1921, 10.

alleviate boredom.[59] The New South Wales VL appealed to the public for boys' books to be distributed to youths in country districts. "It is felt," said a representative:

> That a supply of reading matter can do much to alleviate the loneliness that these lads must feel at first under new conditions - sometimes in the remotest parts of this State - and the committee will be grateful for gifts of books - novels, boys' adventure stories, travel, engineering and elementary science, etc.[60]

Though reading matter could help ameliorate immigrants' boredom, it could not compensate for a lack of personal contact and relationships.

In 1924, Victoria formed committees with the purpose of focusing on the needs of women and children.[61] The women's committees assisted female settlers who took up employment in rural areas or who accompanied husbands with positions in rural areas. The women's committees also tried to procure employment for women who had immigrated to join their fiancés.[62] Domestic work was usually found somewhere close by their fiancés.[63] Many NSL branches arranged monthly reunions in the form of dances and social evenings for the young domestics. Such events were the means by which "many a lonely girl has been made contented and happy by the League's efforts."[64] The Victoria division established the "Thursday Club" for lonely migrant girls, with meetings hosted by a different branch each week in its Melbourne rooms and afternoon tea provided. Representatives from various girls' clubs attended to

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[59] "New Settlers in Victoria: More Competent Cooks Needed," *Argus*, 16 July 1925, 14.
[60] "For Lonely Lads: An Appeal for Books," *Farmer and Settler*, 19 December 1924, 14.
[61] New Settlers' League of Australia, Victorian Division, *New Settlers' Handbook to Victoria*, 45.
[62] *Ibid*.
[63] "New Settlers in Victoria: More Competent Cooks Needed," 14.
[64] "The New Settlers' League," *Land*, 9 October 1925, 2.

provide information about their clubs and extend young immigrants an invitation to join and meet Australian girls.[65]

Adaptation

Immigrants were often challenged by Australia's different conditions and many Australians, including government representatives, attributed immigrants' failures to their inability to adapt. In 1922, Barnes, Acting Director of Migration, stated that an investigation into complaints from distressed immigrants "proved that their failure was due entirely to the incompatibility of the individuals to adapt themselves to Australian conditions."[66] The NSL believed it was important to familiarise immigrants with the peculiarities of their new home. To do so, divisions published booklets such as *Queensland Fruit and How to Use It*; New Settlers' Handbook; Youth and Migration; Sharefarming; Makeshifts; Wireless Outback; and Youth, the Invaluable Factor in Migration: The Big Brother Movement. The booklets were intended to embellish immigrants' existing knowledge by familiarising them with Australia's particular conditions. The literature covered Australia's wide-ranging climate and farming conditions, the differing demands these made upon agricultural practices, different agricultural products able to grown in the Australian climate, and how these products could be used. The advice offered often applied to domestic situations as well as agricultural. The second purpose was to inform immigrants, many of whom did not arrive with much in the way of cash or assets, how to establish themselves in their new home with minimal expenditure.

[65] "Women's Activities," *Argus*, 9 July 1926, 7.
[66] "Mr. Barnes's Views," *Queenslander*, 16 December 1922, 13.

Financial distress among immigrants often demanded the NSL's immediate attention. Despite governments assisting with the cost of migrants' passages to Australia and encouraging those with cash to migrate, and despite governments and the league advising immigrants on how much cash they should ideally bring, there were always some who arrived with little or no money. This was because some had little to begin with and placed their faith on the promise of immediate employment, some spent incautiously on their journey, and some fell victim to unscrupulous fellow passengers or others on board ship. The NSL needed to provide such settlers with food, shelter and sometimes clothing, and speedily find them employment. Young migrant George Godfrey's fare was £24, of which Australia and he each bore £12, with his share borrowed in advance and repaid at £1 per month over twelve months.[67] "I had exactly £5 when I landed in Melbourne," he recalled, but noted that some of his fellow migrants "in a spirit of bravado, had decided to go ashore in Australia with nothing and had deliberately spent their last shillings on the ship."[68] Godfrey had the unfortunate shipboard experience of having his "grandfather's fob watch, a valuable old timepiece, and a silver brandy flask" stolen from him. He was more fortunate, however, than young Irishwoman Miss Forry who was travelling to Brisbane, bringing out her deceased sister's three children to try and make a new life. Miss Forry "complained of the loss of an attaché case containing £160" and important papers; the money was the proceeds from the sale of a house. She had inadvertently left the case in the saloon for no more than ten minutes during which time an unidentified man was seen taking it, leaving Miss Forry and the children penniless.[69]

[67] Godfrey, interview.
[68] *Ibid*.
[69] "Immigrant Robbed," *Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, 10 July 1925, 3.

Though the NSL informed immigrants of costs involved in establishing themselves on the land, unforeseen events meant that settlers, even when adhering to advice, could find their financial situations going awry. Brunton cited a Gippsland case of:

> An unfortunate new land settler [who] incurred debts through the long illness and subsequent death of his eldest daughter. The local women's committee in this case raised sufficient money by an American Tea to clear all debts, and were able to enlist the sympathy of neighbours, who helped to plant crops and thus to put the settler on his feet.[70]

For many other immigrants, however, the land itself, in combination with lack of knowledge and experience, proved to be their ruin. The Victorian NSL handbook suggested that, for settlers taking up land, £250 capital would sustain them during the "unproductive period." During this time, settlers were expected to clear and improve land, purchase equipment, and acquire knowledge and skills necessary to farm in Australian conditions. The state required this as security for monetary advances for further improvements. Those participating in group settlement schemes were informed it was "possible … to become established with much less capital." [71] Andrew McCormick has shown, however, that even Australians were unaware of the environmental impacts of land clearing and development in Victoria, and settlers could not have anticipated the devastating agricultural and financial disasters many experienced.

In 1924, Harry Lawson, Victorian Premier, travelled to England on a promotional tour giving lectures on the merits of farming in Victoria.[72] Many who accepted the invitation to go on the land in Victoria, however, met with disappointment and ruin. McCormick describes how Mallee settlers in particular took up land, cleared and

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[70] Department of Crown Lands and Survey, *Victoria the Speedway to Rural Prosperity*, 75.
[71] New Settlers' League of Australia, Victorian Division, *New Settlers' Handbook to Victoria*, 107.
[72] Andrew McCormick, "Drought, Dust and Despair," *Historian* 111, (Autumn, 2011): 14.

burned vegetation, planted wheat crops and sent them to Melbourne markets. Before long, the settlers' "agricultural cycle reorganised the landscape and changed the ecology of the region into an agricultural system [they] were more comfortable with than the strange looking trees, shrubs and scrub" they first faced. Though looking set for success, within a few years, the removal of native vegetation which acted as a barrier to the strong north-west winds meant nothing was left to "act as a buffer against the wind, or to hold the soil together in dry periods."[73] Eventually, many settlers were forced off the land in penury. Australians usually had little time for settlers whose ventures failed, but the Mallee immigrant settlers blamed the Victorian government for their failure and sought compensation. They claimed they had been misled and "should be absolved from any obligation to the Government, compensated for their losses and resettled."[74] A Royal Commission resulted in the Victorian government writing off immigrants' debts and offering £100 compensation whether or not immigrants had deserted their property. By May 1934:

> The majority of English migrants had taken the money, packed up, and left their allotments - leaving behind a desolate scene of abandoned homes, partially cleared fields, empty stock yards and implement sheds, fences buried under tons of sand, dry dams and thousands of hungry rabbits scurrying about the landscape searching for whatever food they could find.[75]

Despite the Victorian experience, Australian governments and the NSL still aimed to people the empty spaces and a "spirit of co-operation" existed between the NSL, the Immigration and Lands Departments and the Agricultural Bank which facilitated the "rendering of the necessary help" to immigrants.[76]

Health

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[73] *Ibid.,* 16.
[74] *Ibid.,* 18.
[75] *Ibid*.
[76] "A Year's Work," *West Australian*, 19 January 1923, 8.

For settlers enduring financial difficulties or living in isolated rural communities, medical care could be difficult to access. The NSL endeavoured to facilitate access to health care, particularly for maternity cases. Women in country areas were often too far from medical service to access appropriate maternal care, so governments and the NSL provided some assistance. Integral to the NSL's support of country women and children, was the CWA. Established first in New South Wales in April 1922 as an outcome of the Country Women's Conference, the CWA soon established itself in Queensland and gradually in all other states. The NSL approached the CWA to co-operate with it to assist immigrants settling in rural areas, and the CWA willingly accepted invitations to appoint representatives to the NSL state councils. The CWA assisted the NSL "in the selecting and placing of female domestic settlers," and carrying out NSL objectives.

Recognising the plight of rural women who required maternity services, particularly immigrants, the Queensland government pledged to assist them by offering a "definite promise to divide the rural areas of Queensland into districts, and to place maternity nurses in each of their centres." Under this scheme, "thoroughly trained and competent" maternity nurses would be stationed in "the lonely places" to assist mothers and alleviate the difficulties entailed in bearing and raising children without family or close friends to help.[77] In Victoria, the NSL arranged with local hospitals for immigrants to receive free medical advice and admission at the time of birth, and also made arrangements to care for any existing children while the mothers were "laid by."[78] The NSL ensured expectant mothers received "the most attention and

[77] "Bush Nurses," *Cairns Post*, 11 February 1922, 8.
[78] Department of Crown Lands and Survey, *Victoria the Speedway to Rural Prosperity*, 77.

[were] helped and heartened in countless ways," such as by the "Comforts Cupboard" which was "kept stocked with garments to supplement the outfits that these working women have not had leisure to complete."[79] Much of the Welcome and Welfare Committees' aid was in the form of advice "as to the making of small garments" and the supply of materials to do so, as well as "gifts of made-up clothes."[80]

Not all pregnancies were timely, however, and the NSL sometimes needed to provide extra assistance for some expectant mothers. Some married women who emigrated intending to pursue paid employment found pregnancy compelled them to give up work, leaving the couple in straitened circumstances. Another group of expectant mothers, however, were sometimes attended to less enthusiastically. Young, single women who had left England passing all medical checks, could arrive in Australia to find a shipboard liaison had foisted a radical change of plans on them when they discovered they were pregnant. The NSL provided care for these women by placing them in specialised housing. Sometimes the Victorian Welcome and Welfare committees also sought light employment for some needy mothers-to-be in order to "render the women self-supporting beforehand."[81] Miss Foster, however, noted the "plight of the married expectant mother whose husband was out of work and without means, in spite of the fact that there were numerous institutions established to help the unmarried mother."[82]

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[79] NAA, Canberra: CP211/2, 3/54, Associations - New Settlers' League - Welcome and Welfare Committee, 1927-1927, Report on Metropolitan Welcome and Welfare Committee, nd.
[80] Department of Crown Lands and Survey, *Victoria the Speedway to Rural Prosperity*, 77.
[81] *Ibid*.
[82] "Woman's Interests," *Age* (Melbourne), 12 September 1929, 12.

Governments saw ante- and post-natal care for immigrants as important because population increase could be accomplished not only through the introduction of immigrants themselves. If immigration intakes of men and women were solely relied upon, Australia's population would only slowly amble towards the hoped-for figures. The natural corollary to increasing immigration was an increase in the number of marriages and subsequently of births. The birth rate had steadily declined over many decades, going from a crude birth rate per thousand of 43.3 at its highest in 1862, to 27.2 by 1901, and 23.5 in 1919.[83] The rate of natural population increase was skewed both by First World War losses and the 1919 influenza epidemic. The Australian government wanted to redress the situation by immigration and boosting natural increase, that is, the excess of births over deaths, with immigrants intended to contribute to the increase.

Alison Mackinnon observes that Australia's early twentieth-century population policies aimed at increasing fertility while decreasing mortality. "Regarding the former," she states, "the policies were ineffectual, and this was eventually recognized as an inappropriate arena for government intervention."[84] Nevertheless, with birth rates regarded as "powerful symbols of national well-being," eventually the focus shifted to trying to reduce infant and maternal mortality. Though health care systems were put in place, improved health and wellbeing were not the primary motivation; rather, population increase was the explicit stimulus behind the programs that were implemented.[85] Along with child and maternal health clinics, financial incentives such as baby bonuses and maternity allowances were introduced. Anathema, then, to

[83] ABS, "Births," *ABS*, 5 August 2008, http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/3105.0.65.0012008?OpenDocument.
[84] Alison Mackinnon, "'Bringing the Unclothed Immigrant into the World': Population Policies and Gender in Twentieth-Century Australia," *Journal of Population Research* 17, no.2 (2000): 111.
[85] *Ibid*.

the government's aim to increase the birth rate was what Senator Lynch referred to as "this tendency in our social life to restrict the birth rate" through birth control and abortion. [86]

Hera Cook writing on women's fertility control in Australia and England from 1890 to 1970, stated that birth control use was higher among Australian than English women. Australia's higher overall use of birth control, "especially female-controlled contraceptive methods and abortion," meant they had "greater sexual and reproductive autonomy." [87] Cook also notes that though abortion was illegal in both countries, in 1935 the mortality rate of Australian women from abortion was 18.3 per thousand compared to 3.8 in England and Wales.[88] Senator Lynch gave an impassioned speech on abortion, stating:

> Since the official records show the annual number of births to be 136,000 for the Commonwealth, and according to the medical testimony stated this represents only four-fifths of the number that should have arrived, it is clear that well over 100,000 young lives have been deliberately put an end to since the Great War. And if we are to allow for the destructive work of allied causes, there has been twice the number of lives lost by this country since the war as was lost altogether in the war.[89]

While unmarried mothers were viewed unfavourably, to resort to abortion was regarded as abhorrent. The introduction of matrons on board ship, however, generally ensured the women arriving were well-regarded by governments and the NSL.[90] "A fine lot of girls" arrived under the care of Matron A S Izard. Of the fifty girls brought to Australia under her care, Izard described how "one of the girls on the voyage out had met a naval rating on his way to Australia, and by the time the vessel

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[86] Sen Official Hansard, no.39, 1922, Budget 1922-23, Patrick Lynch, 28 September 1922, 2818.
[87] Hera Cook, "Unseemly and Unwomanly Behaviour: Comparing Women's Control of Their Fertility in Australia and England from 1890 to 1970," *Journal of Population Research* 17, no.2 (2000): 125.
[88] *Ibid.,* 131.
[89] Sen Official Hansard, no.39, 1922, Lynch, 2819.
[90] NAA: CP211/2, 3/54, Welcome and Welfare Committee Annual Report, 10 June 1927.

reached Melbourne they had become engaged."[91] Such circumstances held promise both for the couple and the nation. Garland lauded female immigrants who settled on the land as domestics, married and produced children. Marvelling at the "most extraordinary thing that these girls get married quicker than some of our Queensland girls, and do not start on the business of birth control," Garland proudly remarked that "when we have our socials a couple of times a year … it is remarkable the number of babies that are brought there by these former immigrants girls."[92]

While maternity cases were of especial concern for NSL welfare committees, general medical emergencies and difficulties were also a priority. The Victorian NSL's annual meeting in Melbourne noted that member, Dr McAdam, "had given medical attention to needy migrants free of charge."[93] A Mallee area NSL secretary informed Brunton that "one migrant was helped recently to get a glass eye."[94] The Victorian NSL were pleased that a "happy understanding [had] been established between the League and the officials and staff of the public hospitals in the metropolis, from all of whom the League has experienced unfailing help and courtesy."[95] League members would regularly visit immigrants unfortunate enough to require hospitalisation and try to ensure they could convalesce easily upon discharge. Accommodation difficulties, however, sometimes posed an impediment to convalescence.

Accommodation

[91] "New Settlers: Party by Moreton Bay," *Brisbane Courier*, 26 June 1923, 15.
[92] New Settlers' League of Australia, Queensland Division, *Fifteenth Annual Conference*: *Opening Address and Notes of Proceedings* (Brisbane: New Settlers' League of Queensland, 1936), 7.
[93] "Good Work by the League," *Argus*, 1 July 1924, 14.
[94] Department of Crown Lands and Survey, *Victoria the Speedway to Rural Prosperity*, 75.
[95] *Ibid.,* 77.

Among the difficulties immigrants endured, accommodation was often most vexing. While nominated immigrants were usually accommodated by nominators, selected and voluntary immigrants frequently arrived without family or friends to assist. The problem of temporary accommodation for immigrants upon disembarking in Sydney was evident early. Gullett remarked in June 1921 that it was "impossible to house immigrants waiting for a day or two, before going to their employment in the country."[96] In parliament that November, George Foley, Nationalist member for Kalgoorlie, stated:

> Societies have been formed all over Australia to welcome immigrants….but it would be better if hostels or immigrant homes were provided in every State, so that immigrants on their arrival could be housed until land is made ready for them…. If the Commonwealth Government provides the money necessary for the foundation work of immigration, it is the duty of the States to do their part in housing immigrants on their arrival.[97]

Victorian Senator Edward Russell noted that every state provided initial accommodation for immigrants for a period of up a week or so, after which the NSL was available to offer suggestions and assistance.[98]

In Victoria, settlers were urged not to stay at an "expensive hotel" and were informed that the NSL could show them a list of boarding houses with reasonable charges.[99] In New South Wales, both the NSL and the Millions Club approached Ernest Farrar, New South Wales Minister of Labour and Industry, requesting that an immigrant hostel be erected. Farrar informed them that tenders were being called for construction of a building near the wharf where immigrants could rest and refresh

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[96] "The Outlook," *Sydney Stock and Station Journal*, 14 June 1921, 3.
[97] HOR Official Hansard, no.47, 1921, Loan Appropriation Bill, George Foley, 23 November 1921, 13131.
[98] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, Sen Official Hansard, no.48, 1921, Eighth Parliament, First Session, Loan Appropriation Bill, Edward Russell, 30 November 1921, 13371.
[99] New Settlers' League of Australia, Victorian Division, *New Settlers' Handbook to Victoria*, 45.

themselves.[100] In Queensland, Yungaba immigration hostel was available as initial accommodation. Immigrants who went to training farms were usually provided with accommodation, including family housing, prior to relocating to rural areas. Elcho Training Farm boasted that accommodation was:

> Provided for about 40 trainees and their families, each family having its own cottage. Most of the cottages have three rooms, and there are also some four-roomed cottages for trainees with larger families. The houses are supplied with every necessity, viz., furniture, bedding, and house linen, crockery, and cutlery, also with fuel, water, and lighting.[101]

Once relocated to rural areas, however, immigrants often faced difficulty securing adequate housing or accommodation, especially for families.

In a speech to parliament in July 1921, John West, ALP member for East Sydney, challenged the government on the issue of providing housing for immigrants. West claimed that to encourage immigration, the government should:

> Advocate as a first step the provision of houses ... As it is, there is an acute shortage of housing accommodation in all our big cities, and the position in country districts is even worse. An immigrant who gets work in the country has very often to live in a shed at the rear of a public-house, leaving his wife and family in a room in one of our cities…. If better housing accommodation were available in country districts more people would be encouraged to settle there.[102]

A month earlier the Benalla *North Eastern Ensign* wrote that, while immigration was desirable, the government was "doing things in the wrong way" by inviting people into Australia without making proper provision for them. There was only "one effective way" of helping immigrants, and that was for the government to reclaim suitable Crown lands and "make them habitable by the provision of houses, fences etc….and then give them to the new comers at a peppercorn rent." Such action would

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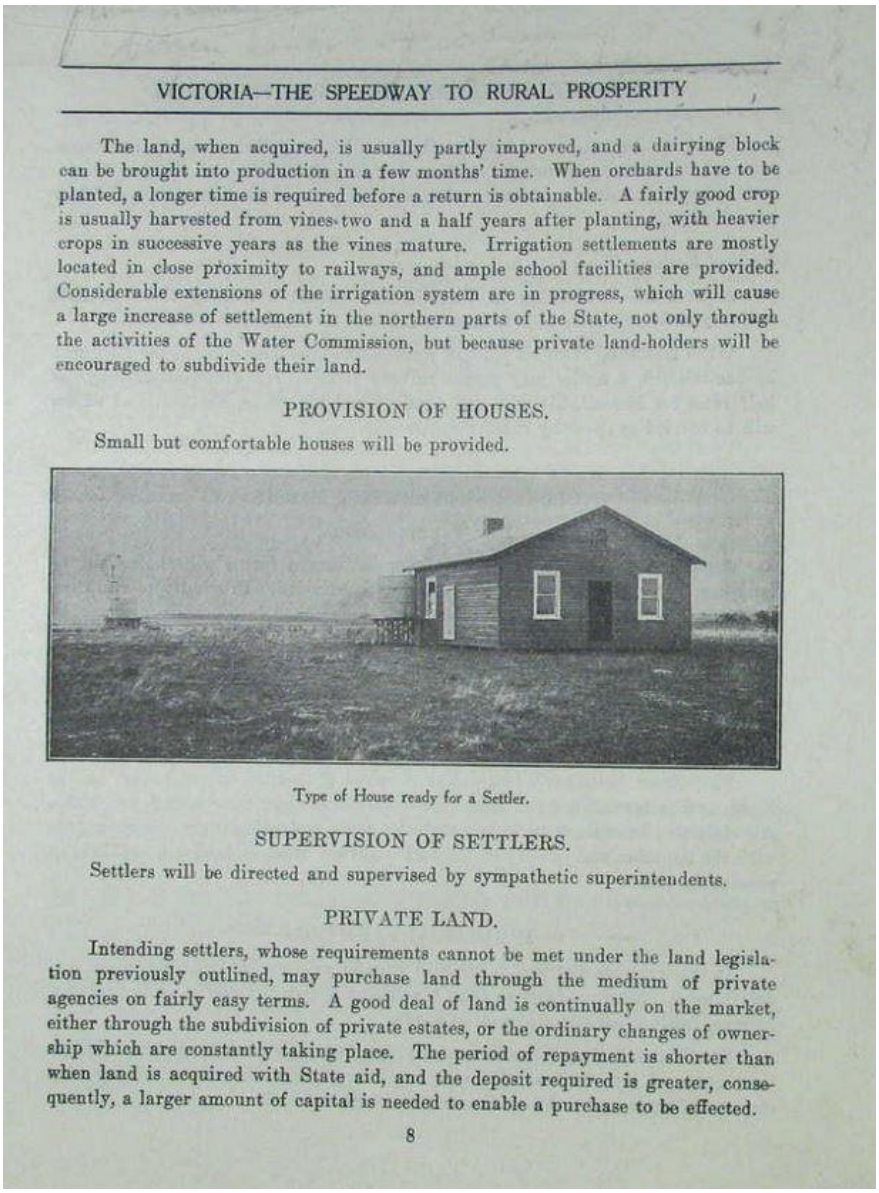
[100] "Immigration: Hostel for New Arrivals," *Mercury*, 22 March 1923, 3.
[101] Department of Crown Lands and Survey, *Victoria the Speedway to Rural Prosperity*, 47.
[102] HOR Official Hansard, no.26, 1926, Development and Migration Bill, Henry Gullett, 1 July 1926, 3712.

ensure that immigrants would not be "thrown entirely on their own resources and left eventually to starve."[103] From the outset, the Victorian NSL sought solutions to rural housing shortages. Calls were made at the 1921 Conference for government money to be made available "on easy terms" to Australian farmers so they could construct suitable workers' cottages on their farms.[104] The shortage of suitable housing for immigrants in rural areas persisted, however, and the 1925 conference adopted a resolution recommending that the government "supply farmers with money or material for the erection of cottages to assist in the absorption of families in rural areas." This was to be on the basis of a loan with interest and repayments made in accordance with terms set forth in the migration agreement.[105]

[103] "The Tides of Immigration," *North Eastern Ensign* (Benalla), 24 June 1921, 2.
[104] "New Settlers' League: Rural Housing Scheme," *Argus*, 16 July 1921, 17.
[105] "Local and General," *Adelong and Tumut Express and Tumbarumba Post* (NSW), 24 July 1925, 6.



VICTORIA—THE SPEEDWAY TO RURAL PROSPERITY

The land, when acquired, is usually partly improved, and a dairying block can be brought into production in a few months' time. When orchards have to be planted, a longer time is required before a return is obtainable. A fairly good crop is usually harvested from vines two and a half years after planting, with heavier crops in successive years as the vines mature. Irrigation settlements are mostly located in close proximity to railways, and ample school facilities are provided. Considerable extensions of the irrigation system are in progress, which will cause a large increase of settlement in the northern parts of the State, not only through the activities of the Water Commission, but because private land-holders will be encouraged to subdivide their land.

PROVISION OF HOUSES.

Small but comfortable houses will be provided.

Type of House ready for a Settler.

SUPERVISION OF SETTLERS.

Settlers will be directed and supervised by sympathetic superintendents.

PRIVATE LAND.

Intending settlers, whose requirements cannot be met under the land legislation previously outlined, may purchase land through the medium of private agencies on fairly easy terms. A good deal of land is continually on the market, either through the subdivision of private estates, or the ordinary changes of ownership which are constantly taking place. The period of repayment is shorter than when land is acquired with State aid, and the deposit required is greater, consequently, a larger amount of capital is needed to enable a purchase to be effected.

8

Pl.10 Though *Victoria the Speedway to Rural Prosperity* covered many aspects of settling on the land, information on housing and accommodation was scant and uninformative.[106]

By 1926 so vexed was Gullett - now Nationalist member for Henty - he stated in parliament that the "greatest obstacle to migration of the best kind, and one of the greatest blights on our social system, is the absence of housing accommodation for agricultural workers." Some of the "better class" stations, acknowledged Gullett, offered decent accommodation, but usually farms had nothing for a "married man

[106] Department of Crown Lands and Survey, *Victoria the Speedway to Rural Prosperity*, 8.

with a growing family."[107] Insisting that tens of thousands of workers' cottages needed to be erected across rural Australia before migration could make progress, Gullett furthered his case with the economic reasoning that providing married quarters gave the nation better value compared to the single accommodation almost universally provided. "Today only single men can be found employment in the country," he argued:

> And unmarried migrants are the most difficult and expensive of all to handle, because each individual requires a job. For every single consumer added to the community one job must be found, and that is difficult; whereas, a married migrant with a wife and five children adds seven consumers to the community for each job provided, and those seven consumers, by providing an extended market for primary and secondary products, increase employment. Thus, in effect, each married male adult immigrant makes an opening for himself.[108]

Citing lack of housing as the single biggest disincentive for rural immigration, Gullett noted that none of the states' schemes over the past few years had included housing provision.[109] The NSL deplored the lack of adequate rural housing and dismissed the "living in" system usually offered to rural workers as "unsatisfactory both to employer and employees." It could offer no suggestion to resolve the housing difficulty, however, beyond requesting state and federal governments to "make money available on easy terms for the erection of rural labourers' cottages," and pledge to make every effort to improve rural housing conditions for immigrants.[110]

The broad range of difficulties that immigrants encountered posed a substantial challenge to the NSL. It endeavoured to meet these by enlisting the assistance of its many affiliated organisations, the co-operation of existing organisations, and

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[107] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, HOR Official Hansard, no.29, 1921, Eighth First Session, War Service Homes, John West, 21 July 1921, 10452.
[108] *Ibid*.
[109] *Ibid*.
[110] NAA: A458, A154/18, Resolutions Carried.

initiating a range of projects designed to offer practical or personal support. While it was largely successful in accomplishing this, some factors, such as climate variability, immigrants' inexperience, insufficient preparation by governments, or unforeseeable misfortune meant that it could not always ensure immigrants experienced a smooth transition to settling on the land or in domestic positions.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

And Then There Was One…

> Dear Mr Lyons,
>
> It was with much pleasure that I received your letter of 17th June, conveying in very appreciated words, the thanks of yourself and of the Commonwealth Government for the services rendered by the members of this Committee in the Cause of Empire migration. I know that it has given us all keen satisfaction to be associated with the Government in this policy, hoping fervently, as we do, that the future of Australia will lie in the hands of people from the same sources that supplied her pioneers. Your letter will be read, and reported, at a farewell gathering of all our members shortly to be held: the original letter will remain as a valued possession with my own family.[1]

So responded Lady Mary Masson to a letter from PM Lyons in which he commended the commitment and effort of the soon-to-close Victorian New Settlers' League. The league began with a vision of serving a long, robust immigration campaign, but immigration slowed and eventually stalled with the onset of the Great Depression, obviating demand for NSL services. Straitening economic conditions in Britain and Australia led to the cessation of assisted passages, rendering immigration less attractive or possible for many. The depressed economy exacerbated the league's always difficult funding negotiations with governments, and the governments of Victoria, New South Wales, Western Australia and Tasmania ceased funding. Though Western Australia resolved to source its own funds and did continue operating for a time, being deprived of purpose and funding saw the four divisions fold. As will be recounted in chapter nine, only in Queensland did the league operate continuously during the Depression and beyond. The New South Wales division did reform during the post-WWII immigration campaign, however, and operated for over a decade before being subsumed by the Good Neighbour Council.

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[1] NAA: A458, C154/18, Lady Masson to PM Lyons, 22 June 1932.

This chapter will examine three factors that affected the NSL's viability in Victoria, New South Wales, Western Australia and Tasmania, and those divisions' subsequent demise. How assisted passage influenced immigration rates, and therefore demand for NSL services, will be considered first. Next considered is the detrimental effect of Commonwealth-state tensions. Formed as a nation-wide organisation pursuing national ideals, the league's state-based structure rendered it vulnerable to Commonwealth-state tensions, particularly where funding was concerned. The third factor examined is how changing attitudes towards immigration during the Depression affected the league.

Assisted passage

Though Australia needed population, immigration passage costs were expensive. Without subsidies, many aspiring immigrants were unable to migrate. As far back as the 1820s it was argued that, without assisted passage, migrants who could not or would not pay the expensive passage to Australia would opt for Canada or the United States.[2] After WWI, the British government pledged to provide free passage for approved ex-servicemen and their families, and approved ex-service women, until 31 December 1921.[3] In Australia, the Joint Agreement saw the Commonwealth agree to contribute towards passage fares. As David Pope observes, this enabled it to "influence the number of applications for assistance and … volume of immigration." While the Commonwealth was responsible for advertising and promotion, the states held the right to specify and approve who they would receive. This occasionally resulted in embarrassment for the Commonwealth, as when the New South Wales

[2] Jupp, "Immigration to Australia," 8.
[3] While approved persons must have had their applications for free passage approved by 31 December 1921, they could choose to travel to Australia any time during 1922.

government in 1927 decided that an adverse outlook in the wheat belt was sufficient cause to cancel at short notice its requisition for immigrants. The previous year the Commonwealth had also been embarrassed by a surfeit of hundreds of approved applicants which prompted the Deputy Director of Migration in London to cable a request for Victoria and Western Australia to increase their requisitions. The states were prepared to assert their right to control the type and numbers of immigrants they would accept and "there was clearly a limit to the ability of the commonwealth to push numbers… beyond the tolerance of the states."[4]

With Gullett and Hughes respectively citing annual immigration numbers of 80,000 to 100,000, based on Australia's pre-war capacity to absorb immigrants, and assisted passage for approved adult immigrants at £12, potential costs were contentious.[5] In 1921 Matthew Charlton made known that he particularly objected to proposed expenditure of £162,000 for assisted passages.[6] David McGrath, ALP member for Ballarat, believed assisted passage provided an incentive that artificially boosted the attractiveness of migrating to Australia. "If people want to come here," he argued, "let them do so of their own accord [for] they will come very quickly if the Government make things…right."[7] While neither he nor his party were opposed to immigration, argued McGrath, they were opposed to assisted immigration.[8] The Commonwealth, nonetheless, continued to fund assisted passages, while the 1922

[4] Pope, "Assisted Immigration and Federal-State Relations," 27-28.
[5] *Ibid.,* 25-29.
[6] HOR Official Hansard, no.47, 1921, Loan Appropriation Bill, Matthew Charlton, 23 November 1921, 13102.
[7] HOR Official Hansard, no.28, 1921, McGrath, 10088.
[8] *Ibid*. See also "Australian Labor Party, *Official Report of Proceedings of the Ninth Commonwealth Conference*, 1921, 34.

Empire Settlement Act saw an agreement that Britain and Australia would contribute equally to assisted passages.[9]

The NSL valued assisted passage as a means of boosting immigration by making the journey affordable. The New South Wales division's 1924 conference called for greater assistance, suggesting the "cost of passage be borne one-third by Commonwealth Government, one-third by British Government and one-third by Migrant." Queensland and Western Australia divisions also supported increased assistance. Queensland proposed a resolution for the 1924 national conference that the Commonwealth contribute more to the cost of passage, "particularly in the cases of lads of ages between fifteen and eighteen years."[10] Migrants eligible for assisted passage were either those nominated by friends or family in Australia who undertook to obtain employment for them, or those deemed suitable and selected by the Australian government, such as rural workers, domestics or farm-lads. Of the total assisted passages, nominations accounted for upwards of two-thirds.[11]

On 8 April 1925, as a result of a British delegation's visit to Australia to assess its potential to absorb immigrants, Australia and Britain entered into a landmark £34,000,000 Agreement. The agreement, which presented Australia an opportunity to substantially increase its migrant intake, proposed:

[9] Pope, "Australia's Development Strategy," 219.
[10] QSA: 13101, 18731, NSL Queensland, 30 May 1924.
[11] Pope, "Assisted Immigration and Federal-State Relations," 27.

> To make available to the Governments of the various States, loan moneys at a very low rate of interest…. The maximum amount of loan moneys provided for in the agreement is £34,000,000. It is provided that for every principal sum of £75 issued to a State Government under the agreement, one assisted migrant shall sail direct from the United Kingdom and be received into and satisfactorily settled in the State concerned. If full advantage is taken of the offer of loan moneys contained in the agreement, 450,000 new settlers must be absorbed over a period of ten years.[12]

Following the 1925 agreement, Queensland general-secretary Maplestone urged Gilchrist to elevate the issue of reduced fares from Great Britain to first item on the 1926 interstate conference agenda. This was largely in response to the threat posed to the attractiveness of migrating to Australia by greatly reduced fares to Canada and other destinations.[13] At approximately one quarter the cost, assisted passage to Canada was substantially cheaper for British migrants than to Australia. Nevertheless, while the Canadian Immigration Committee cited 39,000 assisted migrants for 1927, Australia received over 30,000.[14]

The onset of the Depression, however, severely impacted Australia's immigration programme. Australia was "not justified in incurring any considerable expense to obtain migrants," argued Nationalist Senator Walter Duncan, "rather should we strive to maintain a steady stream of young men and women with sufficient capital to establish themselves satisfactorily in this country." [15] In 1930, Mrs Grierson-Brown of Queensland division's standing committee on migration expressed concern at the decreasing number of immigrants arriving under the assisted passage scheme due to restrictions placed upon assistance.[16] Decreasing immigration meant decreasing

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[12] ABS, *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia, vol 19 (1926)*, comp Chas H Wickens, ed John Stonham, (Melbourne: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, 1926), 894-95, http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/1301.01926?OpenDocument.
[13] QSA: 13101, 18731, Correspondence between Maplestone and Gilchrist, February 1926.
[14] "New Settlers' League of Australia WA Division," *Wickepin Argus* (WA), 28 June 1928, 4.
[15] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, Sen Official Hansard, no.7, 1929, Governor-General's Speech: Address in Reply, Walter L Duncan, 13 February 1929, 163.
[16] "National Council of Women," *Queenslander*, 4 September 1930, 49.

demand for the NSL's services. Labor's James Scullin, elected PM in October 1929, quickly curtailed assisted passages, reducing them from almost 13,000 in 1929 to only twenty-five in 1933.[17] Soon all assistance was suspended and not reinstated until 1936.[18] With nominated immigration also essentially ceasing, so too did all NSL divisions but Queensland cease, particularly as funding also stopped.

The number of assisted immigrants for the years 1914 to 1926 and the total from the earliest years up to the end of 1926 are given in the following table :—

ASSISTED IMMIGRATION.—1914 TO 1926, AND UP TO THE END OF 1926.

Persons.	N.S.W.	Victoria.	Q'land.	S. Aust.	W. Aust.	Tas.	Total.
No. Assisted during 1914	6,655	7,496	4,096	644	1,729	185	20,805
,, ,, ,, 1915	1,695	1,724	1,599	79	635	64	5,796
,, ,, ,, 1916	649	327	300	..	103	18	1,397
,, ,, ,, 1917	239	146	91	..	26	2	504
,, ,, ,, 1918	199	101	100	..	26	..	426
,, ,, ,, 1919	67	139	39	..	..	..	245
,, ,, ,, 1920	3,211	2,763	1,272	..	1,499	314	9,059
,, ,, ,, 1921	4,980	3,987	1,147	572	3,381	615	14,682
,, ,, ,, 1922	7,087	9,145	1,711	1,531	4,373	411	24,258
,, ,, ,, 1923	5,005	9,504	2,377	1,711	7,654	394	26,645
,, ,, ,, 1924	6,211	8,721	1,788	1,375	6,715	226	25,036
,, ,, ,, 1925	8,788	8,589	2,318	1,292	3,701	139	24,827
,, ,, ,, 1926	12,830	8,586	3,669	1,993	4,030	152	31,260
Total from earliest years to end of 1926 ..	320,113	238,189	228,468	111,181	73,174	24,434	995,559

Pl.11 The above table shows that as the £34,000,000 Agreement took effect, a substantial increase occurred in the number of immigrants who arrived in Australia under the assisted passage scheme. The total of 31,260 for 1926 was an increase of 6,433 on the previous year, and the highest recorded since before the war.[19]

[17] Richard Allsop, "History as if Policy Mattered: On Tariffs and Immigration, Party Reputations Don't Match Their Records," *Institute of Public Affairs Review* 60, no.1 (March 2008): 22.
[18] Jupp, "Immigration to Australia," 8.
[19] ABS, *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia, vol 20 (1927)*, comp Chas H Wickens, ed John Stonham, (Melbourne: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, 1927), 897, http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/1301.01927?OpenDocument.

4. Results of Assisted Immigration.—The number of assisted immigrants for the years 1927 to 1929 and the total from the earliest years up to the end of 1929 are given in the following table :—

ASSISTED IMMIGRATION.—1927 TO 1929, AND UP TO THE END OF 1929.

Persons.	N.S.W.	Victoria.	Q'land.	S. Aust.	W. Aust.	Tas.	F.C. Terr.	Total.
No. Assisted during 1927	10,260	8,847	3,604	2,420	4,879	189	24	30,123
,, ,, ,, 1928	8,732	5,149	2,178	1,623	4,485	203	24	22,394
,, ,, ,, 1929	5,431	2,604	1,292	526	2,976	101	13	12,943
Total from earliest years to end of 1929 ..	344,536	254,789	235,442	115,750	85,514	24,927	61	1,061,019

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3. Results of Assisted Immigration.—The number of assisted immigrants for the years 1929 to 1933 and the total from the earliest years up to the end of 1933 are given in the following table :—

ASSISTED IMMIGRATION.—NUMBER.

Persons.	N.S.W.	Victoria.	Q'land.	S. Aust.	W. Aust.	Tas.	F.C. Terr.	Total.
No. Assisted during 1929	5,431	2,604	1,292	526	2,976	101	13	12,943
,, ,, ,, 1930	1,174	468	484	61	471	20	5	2,683
,, ,, ,, 1931	76	45	43	6	99	5	1	275
,, ,, ,, 1932	21	3	23	..	123	5	..	175
,, ,, ,, 1933	11	3	1	1	9	..	..	25
Total from earliest years to end of 1933 ..	345,818	255,308	235,993	115,818	86,216	24,957	67	1,064,177

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Pl.12 The two tables above show how the deteriorating economic environment adversely affected the flow of assisted passages. From the high of 1926, numbers decreased each year until by 1933 only twenty-five were recorded.

Commonwealth, states and funding

The NSL, though instituted as a nation-wide organisation to pursue a national objective, was structured as a collective of state divisions without a national body. This, in conjunction with the Joint Agreement, meant state preferences could prevail over national, as evident when South Australia abstained from joining. The state bias and vulnerability inherent in each division was most evident with funding, particularly when the Commonwealth insisted the states accept joint funding

[20] ABS, *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia, vol 23 (1930)*, comp Chas H Wickens, ed John Stonham, (Canberra: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, 1930), 683, http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/1301.01930?OpenDocument.
[21] ABS, *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia, vol 27 (1934)*, comp E T McPhee, (Canberra: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, 1934), 781, http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/1301.01934?OpenDocument.

responsibility. Initially, the Commonwealth undertook to fund all NSL divisions. Speaking at the inaugural NSL meeting, Commonwealth treasurer, Joseph Cook pledged "no cavilling" over economy. "If you want money you can have it," he incautiously proclaimed "as much as you want to have for an efficient organisation…. We are giving the States practically a blank cheque so far as immigration is concerned."[22] Such largesse, however, never eventuated.

To carry out its objectives, the NSL required significant annual funding. In April 1921 Gullett assured the league, operating only in Victoria at this stage, that the Commonwealth would cover its basic expenditures. Gullett considered employment of a permanent general-secretary as a necessary expenditure. Hughes agreed but insisted it be a Commonwealth Immigration Officer. The Commonwealth would bear the general-secretary's "office accommodation, stationery, postage and office requisites" costs, while the general-secretary would be advanced £100 for hiring meeting halls and for honorary speakers or appointed organisers' travel allowances.[23] As divisions arose in other states, their funding developed along the same lines Gullett had outlined for Victoria. Commonwealth funding at branch level covered the reception and entertainment of settlers, costs of delegates attending state council meetings, annual conferences and other league meetings, stationery and postage requirements.[24]

With branches rapidly spreading across five states, Gullett requested further financial assistance. Hughes approved Gullett's requests for temporary organisers in Victoria,

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[22] NAA: A458, G154/18 PART 1, Excerpt from Official Report of a Meeting to Inaugurate the New Settlers' League, Melbourne, 9 March 1921.
[23] *Ibid.,* Correspondence between Gullett and Hughes, 18-19 April 1921.
[24] New Settlers' League, *The New Settlers' League of Australia (New South Wales Division) Constitution, Aims and Objects*, 10-11.

New South Wales and Queensland at up to £600 for each state. Gullett also requested that, as the number of branches in each state neared 100, a travelling inspector and clerk be appointed to assist each division's general-secretary. An inspector's annual salary would be £400 and a clerk's £260. Hughes agreed, provided the appointments did not exceed £3,000 of the £5,000 allocated for the NSL that financial year.[25] He did so, however, noting that £1,112/17/8 had already been expended, with an additional £2,630 of approvals. In December Gullett wrote to Hughes requesting authority to increase expenditure from £5,000 to £8,000, suggesting the extra be transferred in equal parts from "money allotted for the preparation of publicity material and for freight and charges on material forwarded overseas for exhibition purposes." His original request, noted Gullett, had been for £8,000 but, "under pressure from the Treasury this sum was reduced to £5,000." In light of the NSL's excellent work and development, Gullett argued, the increase was necessary. Hughes agreed.[26]

A few weeks later, however, to Hughes's surprise, Gullett resigned. Claiming he was unable to carry out his responsibilities properly, Gullett cited Hughes's inaction on immigration and lack of "clear, intelligible policy" as the cause of his resignation.[27] In the months leading up to Gullett's resignation, parliament had seen accusations of inaction and lack of clear policy, and that the states were not doing enough towards accepting immigrants. In November 1921 Earle Page, Country Party member for Cowper, demanded Hughes explain how the immigration budget was to be expended. After a brief reminder of the Joint Agreement, Hughes lamented that migrant numbers the states had "expressed their willingness to receive was so disappointing

[25] NAA: A458, G154/18 PART 1, Gullett and Hughes, 2-14 November 1921.
[26] *Ibid.,* Gullett and PM's Department, 19-23 December 1921.
[27] "No Immigration Policy," *Argus*, 25 February 1922, 21.

that the Commonwealth felt it their duty to point out the need for doing something more." Hughes praised the re-organisation that had occurred in the United Kingdom whereby the states' six immigration agents had been replaced by one authority representing Australia as a whole. "The work of immigration has been carried on well," he stated, and praised the work being done by Gullett and the NSL.[28]

Upon resigning, however, Gullett cited the events of the November conference of Commonwealth and state ministers as an example of disarray. The states were asked to submit land development schemes for which the Commonwealth, if it approved all or any, would raise the necessary funds to lend the states. Noting that only Western Australia and Queensland had responded, Gullett alleged the "abstention of the other States was due to lack of confidence in the Commonwealth's intentions and the failure of the Commonwealth to make clear the terms on which it was prepared to do business." He blamed this upon Hughes, claiming that but for his inaction "the States would by now have been embarked on great reproductive nation-building schemes of land development."[29] Gullett also lambasted Hughes for his failure to communicate effectively with the states. Referring to the land development schemes submitted by Queensland and Western Australia, he pointed out that only the one from Western Australia's Nationalist Premier James Mitchell was taken up. Gullett argued that had Hughes suggested to all states that he would, "irrespective of the political complexion of their Government, advance them large sums of money, on certain conditions, and pay part of the interest," as he had negotiated with Western Australia, all states could have had schemes operating.[30] Despite the hoped-for co-operation

[28] HOR Official Hansard, no.47, 1921, Estimates 1921-22, Earle Page and Hughes, 24 November 1921, 13248-50.
[29] "No Immigration Policy," *Argus*, 21.
[30] "Immigration Controversy," *Argus*, 2 March 1922, 7.

between Commonwealth and states launched with the Joint Agreement, Gullett revealed a discord that carried implications for the NSL.

The Commonwealth's disposition towards the states and its controlling position with funding variously affected league divisions' operational effectiveness. While Hurley, acting as Gullett's successor as Superintendent of Migration, proclaimed the NSL "easily the finest citizens' movement he had ever come into contact with," he observed differences in the divisions' operations and effectiveness.[31] Continuing funding negotiations with Western Australia begun by Gullett, Hurley observed to Hughes that "the Western Australian organisation is doing more effective work at a lower cost than the establishments in the Eastern States," but he feared that delays in dealing with funding recommendations would have a negative effect and "lose to [Western Australia] a lot of valuable voluntary effort."[32] Correspondence to Hughes from Acting Premier H P Colebatch over negotiations regarding Western Australia's immigration officer, Isaac Crawcour, further illustrates that Commonwealth / state relations affected the NSL. Colebatch bristled at Hughes making presumptions which had never been considered by his government or Gullett. "We have carried out our side of the agreement," warned Colebatch, "and there is no reason so far as I can see, if your Government desires to vary the agreement, that it should not be terminated."[33] While in this instance the threat prompted Hughes to act on negotiations that had languished for almost two months, instances arose across all divisions to spark tension between Commonwealth and states.

[31] "Immigration," *Daily Telegraph*, 5 May 1922, 5.
[32] NAA: A458, G154/18 PART 1, Hurley and PM's Department, 22 March 1922.
[33] *Ibid.,* Colebatch to Hughes, 13 March 1922.

From the outset, the Commonwealth wholly financed the five NSL divisions. In January 1923, however, Percy Hunter, Director of Migration, broached with Hughes the possibility of the states contributing financially. Hunter included a note with the league's quarterly funding request despatched to Hughes stating he would consider during the forthcoming quarter "the question of approaching the State Governments with a view to relieving the Commonwealth Government of some of the financial responsibility connected with the League." Hunter reasoned that the nature of the NSL's work meant it was largely performing a state function.[34] He corresponded more comprehensively on the issue in March to new Nationalist PM, Stanley Bruce. Observing that the NSL's responsibilities were by then "very largely devoted to the reception and settlement of migrants," Hunter recommended that "action be taken to limit expenditure from Commonwealth funds and that the State Governments be invited to assume the main responsibility." [35]

The "chief object" in establishing the NSL, claimed Hunter, had been to "create a healthy public opinion" on the need for immigration and to advocate nominations. Conceding that the league had "performed a good service" towards both objectives, he stated that the Commonwealth had expended £12,500 creating and developing 600 branches and funded the NSL at £8,200 per annum. He recommended that, as Commonwealth Immigration Officers acted as General Secretaries in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, those governments "be invited to contribute towards the cost of the League and to exercise any control they might think fit." The Commonwealth would contribute £500 for a twelve-month period. In Tasmania, where the Commonwealth paid £240 annually towards state immigration officers'

[34] *Ibid.,* Hunter to Hughes, 24 January 1923.
[35] *Ibid.,* Hunter to Bruce, 14 March 1923.

salaries, it proposed to offer a twelve-month grant of £250. Western Australia would continue to receive £156 for its state immigration officer. Due to Western Australia's circumstances, however, where existing UMA facilities and migrant placement services were utilised, Hunter recommended a £1,500 payment be continued. As the new scheme, if accepted, would begin on 30 April and existing arrangements were current till 31 March, Hunter suggested they be extended for April.[36] The new arrangements would be reviewed after twelve months.

Hunter had provided Bruce with draft letters inviting each premier to participate in the new proposal which Bruce signed and dispatched on 27 March. Victoria's General-Secretary, Gilchrist, having heard new arrangements mooted, raised the issue with the NSL executive. On 26 March Gilchrist had written to Bruce seeking a private interview and noting that the NSL's principal task was still "to help fulfil Australia's obligation to the Imperial Government by creating an atmosphere favourable to the reception and retention of oversea folk in our rural districts." He referred to Cook's funding pledges in the speech made at the NSL inauguration.[37] Bruce agreed and on 13 April met with Gilchrist, Masson, Sir James Barrett, Charles Crosby, Gullett and Senator Guthrie.

Victoria's NSL tried to dissuade Bruce from cutting Commonwealth contributions by convincing him that seeking state funding was not viable. Crosby, NSL treasurer, began the meeting by giving Bruce an overview of work being conducted by the league and proffering evidence of its effectiveness and importance. Masson argued that funding should be a Commonwealth responsibility because in Britain

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[36] *Ibid*.
[37] *Ibid.,* Gilchrist and PM's Department, 26 March - 9 April 1923.

immigration was "regarded as a matter concerning Australia as a whole and not the different parts." As immigration was regarded as a national issue, reasoned Masson, the NSL's work should be regarded as a national issue. Gullett pointed out that it was "he who had been responsible for recommending [the] organisation and carrying it into effect," and though he and Hughes recognised that a substantial part of the NSL's work was technically "straight out State work," he and Hughes regarded it as "national work."[38] If the Commonwealth had not borne full funding responsibility, Gullett contended, the NSL would have been a "piecemeal body" taken up in some states but not others and would have been nowhere near as successful as it was. "Queensland would not subsidise the League," he explained, "Tasmania would not come into the scheme. New South Wales was quite doubtful." Even in Victoria, he emphasised, the current state immigration officer was not optimistic about the NSL. In Gullett's view, should the states be relied upon for funding, it would be doubtful if the league could continue. For the NSL to remain viable across the nation, it was imperative that the Commonwealth continue its funding commitment. James Guthrie, National Party Senator and NSL member, also contended that though the NSL's work was in part for the states, it should be viewed in a broad national way. He urged Bruce to continue funding the NSL so it could "carry on its good work, especially as there were only a few paltry thousands a year involved."[39]

Bruce assured the deputation that his government was fully apprised of the league's valuable work and it was not because it found it wanting in any way that he proposed the states assume funding responsibility. Nor was it because of the amount of money involved. The reason, Bruce explained, was that every practical aspect of the NSL's

[38] *Ibid.,* Notes of an NSL deputation to Bruce, 13 April 1923.
[39] *Ibid*.

work was a state function as each state was fully responsible for migrants upon arrival. "It is the State that has to handle the migrant, after he has arrived here," Bruce asserted, "and it is the State that should subsidise your organisation." Unless the states realised their responsibilities, Bruce warned, the whole organisation would break down. He stated clearly that his government wanted no more responsibility but wanted it completely taken over by the states.[40] This proposal elicited disparate state responses. Western Australia, agreed Mitchell, should assume some responsibility, but not that the Commonwealth reduce or abandon its contribution.[41] No decision had been reached, replied Charles Oakes, New South Wales Acting Premier, as many aspects needed to be considered and it would not be practicable to arrive at a decision by the desired date of 30 April.[42] Tasmania did not respond until Bruce sent a telegraph on 10 May, to which Tasmania responded that it was considering the matter.[43]

Queensland division president, H J Diddams, Mayor of Brisbane, protested to Bruce "in the strongest method possible against the proposal that the control of the League be handed over to the State." A vague threat to the Commonwealth seemed implied when Diddams added, for Bruce's information, that "the League and the State Government having worked in the closest co-operation it would not be desirable to make an alteration which would eliminate Commonwealth influence."[44] Diddams and Maplestone canvassed support from Queensland's Nationalist MPs, such as Donald Cameron, representative for Brisbane, G H MacKay, representative for Lilley, Edward Corser, representative for Wide Bay, and Queensland senators

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[40] *Ibid*.
[41] *Ibid.,* Mitchell to Bruce, 10 April 1923.
[42] *Ibid.,* Oakes to Bruce, 20 April 1923.
[43] *Ibid.,* Prime Ministerial document, May 1923.
[44] *Ibid.,* Diddams to Bruce, 7 April 1923.

Thomas W Glasgow and William G Thompson. While most acted on the NSL's requests by appealing to Bruce, most influential was Littleton Groom, Attorney General and representative for Darling Downs, renowned for espousing broad extensions of Commonwealth responsibilities and control.

Neither Bruce nor Hunter, Commonwealth Immigration Office Director, was easily won over by the states' pleas. Queensland's tactic drew the response from Hunter that Diddams and Maplestone had in no way proved that funding responsibility changes would jeopardise the NSL's work. Bruce's deadline having elapsed, he pressed the states for final decisions. Victoria stated it was "not prepared to accept any financial responsibility with regard to the [league's] future operations."[45] For Hunter this demonstrated that Victoria did "not regard the League's activities as of any value." He exhorted Bruce to maintain his position and inform all NSL divisions that the decision previously conveyed to them would not alter.[46] In May, with all divisions' funding due to cease, a proposal emerged from a premiers' conference that the states assume responsibility for the NSL and the Commonwealth and states should "contribute on a £ for £ basis for twelve months," after which the position would be reviewed." This arrangement would take effect from 1 July 1923.[47]

Victoria and New South Wales promptly agreed and Western Australia retained its original cooperative stance. Bruce declared that "in the absence of objection from other States" he would assume they concurred. Queensland subsequently agreed and, eventually, so did Tasmania. Some confusion occurred in Western Australia, however, when Acting Premier Henry Maley, seemingly unaware of premiers'

[45] *Ibid.,* Acting Premier of Victoria to Bruce, 2 May 1923.
[46] *Ibid.,* Hunter to Bruce, 17 May 1923.
[47] *Ibid.,* Prime Minister's office, 29 May 1923.

conference discussions and ensuing correspondence, telegraphed Bruce stating his "state already has agreement with commonwealth regarding New Settlers' League; propose adhere to this."[48] Though Bruce acquainted Maley with the new arrangements, on 16 June Mitchell telegraphed Bruce insisting the Commonwealth had agreed to continue his state's existing funding arrangements for 1923, after which time the new arrangement would take effect.[49] Hurley affirmed that Bruce had written to Mitchell on 27 March agreeing to continue funding and the agreement should therefore be upheld. The resulting NSL funding agreements between Commonwealth and states were that Western Australia would receive an annual grant of £1,500 from 1 May 1923, and the Commonwealth would share costs on a pound for pound basis with the Victorian, New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmanian governments from 1 July 1923.[50] The new arrangements proceeded and remained in place for several years, though not without complications.

The NSL funding difficulties drove Gilchrist to approach the British government in 1926 for financial assistance. He asked William Bankes-Amery, British Government Representative in Australia, for Britain to contribute funding for additional welfare officers. Gilchrist suggested that as the Commonwealth and states were funding the NSL to the extent of almost £10,000 annually, Britain could contribute an Imperial grant of similar magnitude. The grant's allocation, he suggested, should be "at the discretion of Mr Bankes-Amery according to the requirement of the several States." As Gilchrist, with his accompanying deputation, had contacted Bankes-Amery of his own volition, he acknowledged they were "without authority to speak for the whole" of the NSL in Australia. Maplestone favoured seeking British support, so contacted

[48] *Ibid.,* Maley to Bruce, 11 June 1923.
[49] *Ibid.,* Mitchell to Bruce, 16 June 1923.
[50] *Ibid.,* Communications between Commonwealth and states, June - July 1923.

Bankes-Amery on behalf of Queensland division to endorse Gilchrist's request.[51] Hurley cautioned that as "responsibility for reception and aftercare in Australia is on the shoulders of the Commonwealth and State authorities solely," he believed it was "unreasonable to expect the British government to contribute."[52] Bankes-Amery, having put the NSL's request to his government, responded that, though there was a "high opinion in regard to the great value of the work performed by the New Settlers' League … the maintenance and extension of this work is, in accordance with the Agreement, the responsibility of Governments in Australia." [53] Hence, the NSL continued to rely upon the Commonwealth and state shared funding arrangements, with most divisions experiencing various levels of difficulty.

Burford Sampson, Launceston NSL branch secretary, Tasmanian Nationalist Senator and former immigration officer, expressed his frustration with funding delays for the Tasmanian division. "The root cause of all the humbugging delay we experience," he asserted, was:

> Through dual control, both State & Commonwealth Governments being concerned. The former were never any good to us and in my opinion never will be, but when the Commonwealth alone were concerned, there was no delay and they were out to assist us all the time. It is to be sincerely hoped that the Development & Migration commission will recognize that any system of dual control or financial responsibility must be a failure. What we want is a straight out grant, made available without red tape or stupid conditions.[54]

Sampson wrote letters to several Tasmanian newspapers in March and April 1927 deploring the state government's failure to provide its share of NSL funding for over

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[51] QSA: 13101, 18731, Correspondence between Gilchrist, Maplestone and Bankes-Amery, January 1926.
[52] *Ibid.,* Hurley to Maplestone, 28 January 1926.
[53] *Ibid.,* Bankes-Amery to Gilchrist, April 1926.
The Agreement referred to is the 1925 £34,000,000 Agreement between Great Britain and Australia.
[54] NAA, Canberra: CP211/2, 3/47, Associations - New Settlers' League - Tasmania, 1927-1927, Sampson to Newton, 18 May 1927.

two years.[55] New South Wales division found the pound for pound agreement led to delays in receiving finances. With claims sent on a monthly basis, first to the state then to the Commonwealth, lags inevitably occurred.[56] When Victoria and New South Wales divisions criticised official treatment of immigrants, their state governments responded with funding cuts.[57] In Western Australia, which had struck the generous deal with the Commonwealth, the NSL's account-keeping practices were questioned with accusations of sloppiness and financial claims "not being supported by receipts."[58] Despite the difficulties shared funding arrangements caused, all divisions continued providing migrant services until, as the end of the decade approached, economic strains began to significantly affect the league.

Despite funding reluctance, Commonwealth and state governments largely approved of the NSL's immigrant services. As the Depression took hold, however, any negative criticism of the NSL further diminished government willingness to fund divisions. When DMC Chairman, Herbert Gepp, received word of British dissatisfaction with migrant treatment in Australia, he appointed public servant Tom Garrett to conduct a review in 1927-28 of voluntary immigration organisations.[59] Garrett's findings were highly critical of the NSL such that he recommended the Commonwealth cease its funding.[60] Also at this time, the Italian Commissary-General of Emigration reporting on Australian migration noted that "even for British migration the services which have been organised are very meagre and economical, and appear to have for their object the limitation and not the increase of British

[55] Burford Sampson, "Letters to Editor," *Examiner*, 28 March 1927, 10; *Mercury*, 13 April 1927, 7.
[56] NAA: A458, G154/18 PART 1, Cochrane and Rowse, 13 August 1923.
[57] Roe, *Australia, Britain, and Migration*, 247.
[58] NAA: A458, G154/18 PART 1, Prime Minister's Office, 21 July 1923.
[59] Roe, *Australia, Britain, and Migration*, 247.
[60] Ian Carnell, "Garrett, Thomas Hugh (Tom) (1890-1943)," *ADB*, National Centre of Biography, ANU, published first in hardcopy 1996, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/garrett-thomas-hugh-tom-10280.

migrants."[61] In 1930 Ernest Crutchley, British Government Representative in Australia, "affirmed the League's continuing inanition." Funding difficulties and negative reports of the NSL left it vulnerable to further pressures.

As unemployment worsened, arguments over immigration revived and the NSL attracted negative publicity. "Anyone who at this juncture advocates bringing millions of Britain's unemployed to this country is an enemy of Australia" charged Senator Duncan.[62] "Thousands of Australians are tramping the city pavements and the country roads searching in vain for work," claimed Edward Grayndler, Australian Workers' Union general-secretary, "while jobs which belong to them by natural right are filled by new arrivals." It was "bodies such as the New Settlers' League, acting in connivance with the migration authorities," he alleged, that were "throwing large bodies of men on our labour markets, without the slightest regard for established standards of living, or the needs of our own population." By the late 1920s, when Australia and Britain faced "economic torpor in general and unemployment more particularly," all NSL divisions but Queensland faced insurmountable difficulties.[63]

Tasmania

During federation debates the *Argus*'s Tasmanian correspondent reported that the topical issue had "only awakened a faint interest" in Tasmania where people "lack altogether the fiery national element which exists in Queensland, New South Wales, and to some extent in Victoria."[64] Similar sentiments could be applied to Tasmania's

[61] "Migration: Italian Report," *SMH*, 3 September 1927, 15.
[62] Sen Official Hansard, no.7, 1929, Duncan, 163.
[63] Roe, *Australia, Britain, and Migration*, 107.
[64] "Tasmania," *Argus*, 14 February 1890, 11.

uptake of the NSL and its immigration work. Though Tasmania agreed in mid-November 1921 to join the NSL (the last of the states to do so) not until late June 1922 did it begin work, and it was never as active as other divisions.[65] Writing in 1928 about the NSL's partner organisation, the CWA, *Mercury* columnist "Cornelia" lamented that the "banding together of country women for concerted action in Tasmania lags far behind… the other Australian States."[66] From the beginning the Tasmanian government did little to enhance the NSL's effectiveness. Funding was always contentious and this intensified when the Commonwealth demanded the states contribute. League activities were "curtailed by the Tasmanian Government's decision to encourage only the nominated system of immigration after 1925."[67] The division then lapsed into such inactivity that by January 1926 Gilchrist spoke of efforts to "establish" the NSL in Tasmania.[68] Late in 1928, T A Newton, NSL secretary, and Burford Sampson informed Mulvany, Crutchley and F E Skevington, British treasury official, that the NSL was "moribund on account of absolute lack of funds."[69] The Tasmanian division's demise occurred with barely a whisper around 1929-30. Though there was a move to revive it in early 1939, the onset of WWII curtailed this. The GNC began in Tasmania in late 1949.

Western Australia

As the NSL in Western Australia had begun as an extension of the existing UMA, funding negotiations always made allowance for this which resulted in higher levels

[65] NAA: A458, G154/18 PART 1, Hurley to Hughes, 28 June 1922.
[66] Cornelia, "A Woman to Women," *Mercury*, 5 January 1928, 3.
[67] "Tasmania's Heritage," on Linc Tasmania, http://www.linc.tas.gov.au/tasmaniasheritage/search/guides/freeimmigration/1887-1946 .
[68] QSA: 13101, 18731, Gilchrist to Bankes-Amery, 6 January 1926.
[69] "New Settlers," *Examiner*, 26 November 1928, 6.

of Commonwealth funding than other states received. The Commonwealth, however, was not always satisfied with the service the NSL/UMA provided. In 1928 the DMC conducted an investigation of its activities, with scathing assessments in the resulting report. A prime finding was that the Commonwealth had not received anything approaching good value for its expenditure. The state government, found the report, received some value because the league assisted in job placements for farm workers the government introduced. Public interest, it found, was minimal and no financial contribution had been made by the public. Meetings received poor attendance by members and the expensive secretariat's salaries did not justify results obtained. The NSL had not acted, as intended, as "a clearing house for the migration expression of the bodies associated with it." The country organisation, which sought employment for rural workers, was the only area that could be seen as effective.[70] The DMC recommended dispensing with the secretariat, saving £1,000 per annum; appointing a State Immigration Officer as General-secretary to consolidate the NSL as a state government instrument; and accommodating the NSL in state government premises. Such actions, the report noted, were already underway in Victoria.[71]

Shortly after the report's release the Western Australia division called a meeting, with DMC representatives present, so that "Members of the League might meet Members of the Commission." The division's president affirmed the importance of NSL objectives and profiled the "extremely hard work" being performed. Also discussed was the blurring of responsibility for immigrants occurring between the government and NSL, and detrimental effects for immigrants should the government "absorb the League into one of its Departments." At the DMC's suggestion, the NSL

[70] NAA, Canberra: CP211/2, 3/85, Associations - New Settlers' League - Extra Copies, 1921-1930, DMC Report on NSL WA Division, 1 June 1928.
[71] *Ibid*.

resolved to meet with Commonwealth and state representatives to discuss the NSL's role.[72] In June 1929 the Commonwealth informed the Western Australia division of its funding decisions for the coming financial year. Though the Commonwealth had continued contributing greater funds to Western Australia than to other divisions, "on account of the adverse financial position and the decline in migration" it regretted that its contribution for 1929/30 would be reduced from £1,250 to £750. The Commonwealth supported DMC recommendations that the Western Australia government "reorganise the methods at present employed … in the reception, settlement and after-care of assisted migrants." The reorganisation entailed handing all employment matters to the Immigration Department, as well as all NSL secretarial work. Such was the case, noted Bruce, in Victoria and Queensland.[73]

On 1 April 1930 the DMC's Edward Mulvany informed the Commonwealth that the Western Australia Under-Secretary for Lands and Immigration had telegrammed regarding an NSL funding decision. "Subsidy to New Settlers' League," it read, "withdrawn from today." The Western Australia government had decided the Immigration Department should take over the league's work. Mulvany noted that the Commonwealth's contribution was "contingent upon the Government of Western Australia paying an equal amount," and as the state would cease its contribution, he "recommended that … no further contribution from Commonwealth funds be made towards the maintenance of the activities of the Western Australia Division of the New Settlers' League."[74] Western Australia division was determined to continue "with or without financial support" and vowed that if necessary it would "endeavour

[72] *Ibid.,* Transcript of NSL WA Division Meeting, 11 June 1928.
[73] NAA: A458, G154/18 PART 1, PM's Dept to Premier Philip Collier, 18 June 1929.
[74] NAA: A458, G154/18 PART 1, Mulvany to PM's Dept, 1 April 1930.

to raise funds from citizens." By July 1932, however, it had ceased to operate. A GNC was formed in December 1949.

Victoria

In Victoria, where the NSL had originated with high aspirations, several years of decreasing financial support and immigration forced it to cease operating on 30 June 1932. Victoria experienced several years of devastating bushfires, with those of 1926 causing sixty deaths.[75] During the course of 1927, British newspaper reports of natural disasters in Australia negatively affected migration applications.[76] Dwindling immigration due to "adverse seasonal conditions" forced reorganisation within the NSL.[77] As country branches fell idle, the division decided to dissolve its Country Care Committee. As elements of the committee's work had "merged into the newly formed Country Women's Association" under President Lady Mitchell, also NSL vice-president, the move was considered prudent. A sub-committee was appointed in its stead to work with the CWA overseeing country representatives and welfare.[78] The division's annual reports record the decreases in funding and migration with a "serious falling off" in migration numbers discernible from 1927, when Victoria received 8,847 assisted migrants, to only 836 in the twelve months to 31 March 1929.[79] In 1927, the Victorian government ceased funding, though it provided "free

[75] "Bushfire History," Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries, http://www.depi.vic.gov.au/fire-and-emergencies/managing-risk-and-learning-about-managing-fire/bushfire-history.
[76] "Historical Impacts Along the East Coast," Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology, http://www.bom.gov.au/cyclone/history/eastern.shtml.
[77] NAA: CP211/2, 3/85, New Settlers' League of Australia (Victorian division) State Council Meeting, 19 October 1928.
[78] *Ibid*.
[79] New Settlers' League of Australia (Victorian Division), *State Council, 1929 Personnel and Notes with Eighth Annual Report Welcome and Welfare Committee* (Melbourne: New Settlers' League of Australia, 1929), 31-32.

accommodation to the League at the Exhibition building, together with free lighting, heating and cleaning," and made an immigration officer available as general-secretary.[80] When state funding ceased, the Commonwealth resumed responsibility. From 1 July 1928 to 31 October 1930, the Victorian division relied solely upon Commonwealth funding.[81]

Not only were immigration and funding dwindling, the division observed a "marked shrinkage in communications" within a dwindling NSL, and a dwindling of "general understanding by the public of the service being rendered."[82] Dedicated members, such as Masson and chairman, Charles Merrett, worked assiduously to maintain the NSL's viability by convincing public and politicians alike of its continued relevance. They publicised detailed accounts of its activities and in 1930 Merrett outlined the NSL's activities to Scullin. Emphasising that the NSL remained "an efficient welfare organisation" whose substantial number of voluntary workers had "not relaxed their efforts," Merrett beseeched Scullin to afford the NSL "opportunity for further representations" at the forthcoming premiers' conference before making any final decisions.[83]

In June 1930 Merrett informed Crutchley that "unless some definite assurance of Financial support for the League is forthcoming before the 30th inst., the League will cease operations on that date."[84] Crutchley contacted Senator John Daly, the minister responsible for development and migration, about the "apparent withdrawal of the

[80] NAA: A458, G154/18 PART 1, Mulvany to Prime Minister's Department, 1 April 1930.
[81] NAA: CP211/2, 3/85, "New Settlers' League of Australia (Victorian division) State Council Meeting," 19 October 1928.
[82] New Settlers' League of Australia (Victorian Division), *State Council, 1929*, 5.
[83] NAA: A458, C154/18, Merrett to Scullin, 12 February 1930.
[84] *Ibid.,* Merrett to Crutchley, 20 June 1930.

State grant to the New Settlers' League." He pointed out that "the maintenance of a proper welfare organisation is one of the fundamental obligations under the £34,000,000 Agreement," and encouraged the Commonwealth to act urgently to persuade the Victorian government to co-operate on the matter of the league.[85] Daly insisted that immigrant after-care was a state function and the agreement with the states only obliged the Commonwealth to co-contribute as long as the state was contributing. The Commonwealth was "not justified in continuing to subsidise this body if it loses its State recognition," Daly claimed, however, "having regard to the fact that the New Settlers' League has been in existence in Victoria for over 9 years, and that during such period voluntary workers have rendered valuable service to new arrivals" it would be unjust to "summarily terminate their operations."[86] Appeals by Acting PM, J E Fenton, to Premier Hogan to honour the £34,000,000 Agreement by continuing to support the NSL were eventually successful. While the negotiations enabled the NSL to continue for the coming twelve months, as economic conditions and immigration did not improve, the reprieve did not last.

In August 1931, Hogan remonstrated with Scullin over the terms of his previous concession to provide NSL funding. Hogan understood that his government would provide for 1930-1931, after which it would cease responsibility. He also pointed out that many of the immigrants the NSL was caring for had been in Victoria for four years or more and insisted that twelve months' after-care was ample. "It was never contemplated," he asserted, "that this State would be under an obligation to provide employment and re-employment, time after time, for the same individuals," and

[85] *Ibid.,* Crutchley to Daly, 23 June 1930.
[86] *Ibid.,* Memorandum, Daly, 5 July 1930.

noted that "similar conditions apply to other phases of the League's work."[87] Crutchley believed Hogan's views on after-care were too narrow, particularly where juveniles were concerned, so entreated him to continue funding the NSL and its subsidiary, the BBM. With the terms of the £34,000,000 agreement under review, Crutchley ensured the NSL received some funds, at least to pay the secretary's wage. Miss Foster had not received any wages for some time due to the funding crisis.[88]

With economic and migration changes, the terms of the £34,000,000 agreement rendered it unworkable. A new agreement emerged, effective 1 May 1932 till 30 June 1934, wherein Britain would contribute half the cost of after-care organisations, with Commonwealth or states meeting the remainder. Previously, Commonwealth and states met all costs, but when the Victoria and New South Wales governments ended funding, Britain established a British Settlers' Welfare Committee (BSWC) in New South Wales and contributed £250 towards the Victorian NSL in June 1932.[89] Continuing immigration decline, however, made it increasingly difficult for the NSL to prosecute its case for existence. The NSL was established to support governments' immigration objectives, but declining immigration obviated the need for the NSL.

The looming reality facing the Victorian NSL was that after 30 June 1932 no funding would be forthcoming from any source, making closure inevitable. Lyons, who had succeeded Scullin on 6 January, wrote to Merrett and Masson stating his regret that economic conditions necessitated the suspension of immigration. He expressed his gratitude personally and on behalf of the government for the work performed by the

[87] *Ibid.,* Hogan to Crutchley, 25 August 1930.
[88] *Ibid.,* Crutchley to PM's Dept, 18 September 1931.
[89] NAA, Canberra: A436, 46/5/2896, New Settlers' League Victoria, 1929-1933, Memorandum, 23 February 1923.

NSL and hoped that "with the return of normal conditions, resumption will be possible, and that the Commonwealth Government will be able to enlist your co-operation again in welcoming and assisting our kinsfolk from the Homeland." [90] This was not, however, to be, for here also a GNC was established in 1950.

New South Wales

In New South Wales the league operated for a decade before ceasing in June 1931. By April 1931 many newspapers described the NSL as defunct. It was, however, still securing employment for farm lads who had lost their positions.[91] The reports were prompted by the BSWC's formation. Whereas in the few previous years the NSL had provided aftercare for the thousands of youths who arrived, this became the BSWC's role. With funds dwindling and responsibilities eroding, the NSL faced a further threat from deteriorating relationships with some of its representative organisations, and internal disharmony.

Mabs Fawkner, *Land* columnist, wrote of the friction that existed between the NSL and the Empire Service Club of which she was a member. The NSL received a government subsidy and "took all the limelight," she complained, "but left the Empire Service Club to do all the work."[92] Relations had soured with office bearer, Dr Mary Booth, who transferred her allegiance to the BSWC. Booth asserted there was "no sorrier reading in the history of New South Wales than the tale of wasted migration effort in the past few years." In July 1931 she noted that the NSL, "now

[90] NAA: A458, C154/18, Lyons to Merrett and Masson, 17 June 1932.
[91] "New Settlers' League," *Mullumbimby Star* (NSW), 7 May 1931, 4.
[92] "A Woman's Letter," *Land*, 10 July 1931, 7.

happily dead," had been found unsatisfactory by people in Australia and Britain.[93] The *Australian Worker* proclaimed the NSL "as defunct as a dodo."[94] Uniquely among divisions, however, the New South Wales division was revived over eighteen years later.

The large-scale post-WWII immigration resumption saw renewed interest in the immigrant experience, which resulted in the NSL being revived. In December 1949, Joshua Arthur, New South Wales Tourist Activities and Immigration Minister, announced his plan for a large-scale media campaign to "break down the dislike which many Australians have for migrants." As Catholic Immigration Committee secretary, Fr G M Crenan, had observed, "many migrants would ask a Chaplain questions that they would hesitate to put to an immigration officer."[95] Though a Migration After-Care and Welfare Advisory Committee was operating, Arthur wanted this disbanded and replaced with the NSL. He scheduled December meetings with Arthur Calwell, Australia's first Immigration Minister, following which he announced the imminent closure of the advisory committee, to be superseded by a New Settlers' League with representatives from sixty-three organisations.[96]

The nature of the NSL's work and membership had, however, changed. Alfred Poninski, for example, Polish diplomat and journalist, migrated to Australia in December 1946 and settled in Sydney. He quickly became involved in organisations with objectives to "forge links with European migrants," such as the United Council of Migrants, Australian Council for International Social Service, New Australians'

[93] "Anzac Fellowship," *SMH*, 1 July 1931, 5.
[94] "Boys and Settlement," *Australian Worker*, 29 April 1931, 13.
[95] "League Planned to Help New Settlers," *SMH*, 26 November 1949, 11.
[96] "Next Year's State Settlers Will Have a Warmer Welcome," *Sunday Herald* (Sydney), 18 December 1949, 7.

Cultural Association, the Australian Institute of International Affairs, and the NSL.[97] Countering antipathy towards immigrants was again difficult for the NSL, however, and was exacerbated by the post-war influx of European immigrants. To kindle acceptance, in 1954 the NSL arranged a migrants' conference, the first of its kind, in which immigrants could share their experiences with the league and the Australian public. Mr M Rosentool spoke of the "'often vociferous' section of the community" who openly displayed their antagonism towards immigrants. The hostility of the "noisy minority," he explained, made it difficult for many immigrants to "settle down happily in Australia." Rosentool noted also that immigrants experienced condescension which, even when good-natured, was "tactless and out of place." The immigration program was, he believed, a success, but not an unqualified success.[98]

Though issues somewhat reflected those the original NSL confronted, post-WWII immigration differed, as the 1955 conference recognised. Discussion at NSL state conferences focused heavily on how negative public attitudes affected immigrants, particularly their ability to secure housing and employment. As the conference concluded, a delegate suggested changing the organisation's name from New Settlers' League to "Good Neighbour Council of N.S.W.," which aroused much interest. Many delegates favoured the name change as they believed it reflected more accurately the nature of their work. [99] This contrasted with discussion of the issue four years earlier when members preferred the "New Settlers' League" and suggested that "as the League in Queensland had been functioning for 29 years, other States

[97] Bogumila Zongollowicz, "Poninski, Alfred Emeryk (1896-1968)," *ADB*, National Centre of Biography, ANU, published first in hardcopy 2002, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/poninski-alfred-emeryk-11443/text20395.
[98] "'Often Hostility' to Migrants," *Advocate*, 18 October 1954, 4.
[99] New Settlers' League of NSW, *Report of the Second State Conference* (Sydney: New Settlers' League of NSW, 1955), 24.

might consider coming into line with the pioneer State."[100] John Massey, GNC Commonwealth Co-ordinator, noted at the 1955 conference that "the name 'New Settlers' League' was used in Queensland" and informed delegates that:

> There had existed in Queensland an organisation known as the New Settlers League since just after the First World War. Because of the long tradition of service this organisation was reluctant to alter its original name…. New South Wales had adopted the name "New Settlers' League" following the Queensland pattern but in the other four States the title "Good Neighbour Council" was preferred and had been adopted.[101]

Though a simplification of the situation, Massey's explanation won favour and a formal resolution was passed in favour of changing to the Good Neighbour Council of New South Wales.[102] The passing of that resolution witnessed the final passing of the New South Wales New Settlers' League.

By the late 1920s the NSL had developed into a widespread civic organisation sustained in its efforts by an extensive and committed volunteer force, but most divisions could not prevail against deteriorating economic conditions. Dwindling immigration during the Depression years obviated the need for the NSL's services, and reduced funding made it practically impossible to provide services anyway. Instituted to assist Commonwealth and state governments in their immigration objectives, and almost entirely reliant upon their funding, the NSL could only be viable while governments viewed immigration, and therefore the league's services, as desirable. Tasmania, where the NSL had never cultivated or received the same level of support as mainland divisions, ceased to operate with little outcry. Western Australia, Victoria, and New South Wales divisions fought determinedly but unsuccessfully to remain operational. This determination reflects the devotion to the

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[100] NAA, Canberra: A445, 112/4/16, New Settlers' League - NSW Minutes of Meeting, 1951-1953, New Settlers' League NSW Minutes of Meeting, 3 April 1951.
[101] New Settlers' League of NSW, *Report of the Second State Conference*, 24.
[102] *Ibid*.

NSL and its objectives held by members across all divisions, including Tasmania, and will be further explored in the final chapter. Of especial interest is why the Queensland division was able to operate continuously for almost four decades.

CHAPTER EIGHT:

No Quitters in Queensland

"One commonly held view," begins a paper on "brand" Queensland, "is that immigration and patterns of settlement, together with climate and topography, have affected economic and political development and the character of Queenslanders."[1] So too, though, have Queensland's climate and topography and its people's character affected immigration and settlement. Though all governments feared the so-called covetous nations, Queensland, being geographically closer to any incursion from the north and with abundant empty space, was more perturbed than most. This concern was a factor in successive governments' support for the Queensland NSL, through even the Depression and WWII years. The NSL's longevity was also attributable to the determination and commitment of its members, particularly of those who contributed many decades of service. In the post-war immigration environment, however, though the league adapted to try and meet changing conditions, alongside the new Good Neighbour Council sweeping across Australia, the NSL was an anachronistic vestige of post-WWI ideals and could not prevail.

This chapter explores why and how NSL Queensland operated successfully for nearly forty years and what led to its demise. It examines the role the empty north and population sparsity played, how Queensland differed from other divisions and what facilitated state government support. Also considered is how the NSL structure worked favourably for Queensland when funding responsibility devolved to the

[1] Harry Akers, Michael Foley and Pauline Ford, "'Remember Who We Are': An Analysis of Brand Queensland," *Queensland History Journal* 22, no.6 (2014): 495.

states. The chapter concludes by examining the impact of the changed nature of post-WWII immigration on the division and the rise of the Good Neighbour Council.

Northern perils

The empty north, writes David Walker, was "a constant reminder of the vulnerability of white Australia."[2] After WWI, Queensland - close to Asia and with far sparser population than southern states - felt that it was vulnerable to invasion unless it could populate its empty spaces, particularly the underdeveloped north. Japan's actions after the war, in making a bid for racial equality at the Paris Peace Conference, strengthened fears. Premier Theodore contended that thousands of Japanese "went to New Caledonia as reservists during the Manchurian war," and posed a distinct threat to Australia. As New Caledonia was "only two days from Queensland," Japan's possession of a "comfortable stepping-stone between Tokyo and Thursday Island is like the heel of Achilles to Australia."[3] He implored the labour movement to accept increased immigration as necessary, as "Asiatics" posed a danger recognised by too few and the only solution was to fill the empty spaces.[4]

The NSL, explained Garland, sought to populate the country "with men of our own kith and kin" and noted "it was unnecessary to point out the imperative need of filling the empty spaces of Australia, and particularly North Queensland, the gate to the Pacific."[5] A 1930 *Townsville Daily Bulletin* article reported Garland's warning that "if Australia was not more largely populated the League of Nations or some

[2] Walker, "Survivalist Anxieties," 325.
[3] "What Mr. Theodore Thinks," *Daily News*, 19 February 1921, 4.
[4] "Mr Theodore on Public Questions," *Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser*, 3 February 1921, 2.
[5] "Helping Immigrants," *Brisbane Courier*, 27 June 1923, 19.

other responsible body would fill its empty spaces."[6] Garland's exhortations were not well-received by all. "Lexicon," noting Garland's warning that if Australia didn't fill its empty spaces somebody else would, submitted the poem "Those Vacant Blocks" to the *West Australian*:

> Ah once more we've got the office, 'tis a clergyman who speaks it,
> We must fill our empty spaces, we must populate our land
> Before the League of Nations or some hungry people sneaks it,
> Fills it up with teeming millions from some overcrowded strand.
> So you'd best take up a holding, bright and breezy, in the mulga,
> Spend your time begetting children that you can't afford to keep
> Or alas give up your birthright to some pushing chap and vulgar,
> Some foreigner who'll labour while' you waste your time in sleep.
>
> You must fill your empty spaces: it's an ancient tale and hoary
> And they've told it us so often that we know it through and through
> But, when we come to try it it's a very different story —
> With six bushels to the acre and the price at two and two.
> Still we went out to the dry land, where we scarcely found a neighbour,
> And we cleared and ploughed and sowed it and we worked it with a will
> But the blessing of the parson didn't seem to help our labour
> For the banks have got our holdings and the land is empty still.
>
> And beyond that is the desert, where the spinifex is growing
> And there's little else to greet you twixt the burning sand and sky,
> And, if the League of Nations really thinks it worth the sowing,
> Well, I don't see much objection to their giving it a fly.
> Yet perhaps there is a menace to Australia's empty spaces
> But it's not the sand-plain country nor the salt-bush that I dread,
> It's the area untenanted behind the vacant faces
> Of the men who give advice to us from out an empty head.[7]

Along with Garland, Lexicon's men with empty heads perhaps included Brisbane's Anglican Lord Archbishop John Wand, recently arrived from Britain, who addressed the 1936 NSL state conference. Disclaiming expert knowledge, Wand admitted he did not "know the conditions of the country so well and so completely as you who are assembled in such numbers here," yet offered his "valuable and perhaps interesting" opinions from "one who… desire[d] whole-heartedly to see progress in

[6] *Brisbane Courier*, 8 March 1930, 19.
[7] Lexicon, *West Australian*, 23 November 1935, 5.

this country." Though not wishing to advocate filling the "vast open spaces as if every inch could provide adequate support for a family," in flying and driving across the land, said Wand, he had observed vast resources entirely untapped. He advocated opening vast tracts of land for development, establishing secondary industries and expanding the road network. Wand envisioned Australia's six million people would extend to sixty million, at least.[8]

Western Australia, though also sparsely populated and close to Asia, held the Commonwealth responsible for northern security. Adelaide's *Observer* also saw "facilitating the early peopling of the North" as Commonwealth responsibility.[9] The *West Australian*, urged its government to "invoke the aid of the Commonwealth and the Imperial Governments in the work of settling people on the land." There were "manifold hazards to the Commonwealth," it cautioned, so "let Mr Hughes assist us."[10] Premier Collier claimed "an obligation devolve[ed] upon the Commonwealth Government to assist Western Australia financially" to develop the north. He called for the introduction of Senator Pearce's proposed scheme which "conceded the principle that the Commonwealth's assumption of responsibility for developing the Northern Territory should apply equally to the North and North-West of this State."[11]

Queensland, however, was not content to wait for Commonwealth action as it felt that southern governments did not comprehend the degree of peril. Maxwell, NSL President, assured Queenslanders who were concerned about unemployment that

[8] New Settlers' League of Australia, Queensland Division, *Fifteenth Annual Conference*, 2.
[9] Walker, "Survivalist Anxieties," 325.
[10] Editorial, *West Australian*, 20 April 1922, 6.
[11] "The Unpeopled North," *Western Mail*, 22 January 1925, 19.

"only such things as the yellow peril had to be guarded against."[12] Garland warned of an "imperative need of filling the empty spaces of Australia, and particularly North Queensland, the gate to the Pacific."[13] Northern grazier, John MacIntyre, asserted that "the curse of the empty North of Australia has been the getting of men into authority in the different Governments of the South who know not Australia or Australian temperament, and care not one jot about it nationally or patriotically."[14] Brisbane's *Courier* concurred on the issue of southern politicians' ignorance of the north. "How few people there are in the south," the *Courier* alleged, "who know anything about Townsville, which, for wealth of export trade, is the first port of Queensland, and third of the Commonwealth!" The southerners the *Courier* referred to included Queensland governments. The *Courier* suggested that if Commonwealth and state governments "really want to do something big, they will concentrate their energies on the empty North, encouraging settlement by our own people and also by immigrants."[15] "The Empty North," a poem by "Guy," illustrates prevailing sentiments:

> Australia, awake! and stay the coming doom.
> Your empty North is crying out for men
> The fields for cotton culture are now looming….
> Australia! your civil servants must arise
> And shoulder their fair share of gruel and woe,
> The awful duds which carry on the service
> Must be updoing or receive their blow….
> They say the politician is without honour,
> So God help us and our empty North.[16]

[12] "New Settlers' League Launched in Brisbane," *Cairns Post*, 21 July 1921, 3.
[13] "Helping Immigrants: Church's Activities," *Brisbane Courier*, 27 June 1923, 19.
[14] J N MacIntyre, *White Australia: The Empty North, the Reasons and the Remedy* (Sydney: Penfold, 1920), 195.
[15] "The Empty Undeveloped North," *Brisbane Courier*, 3 September 1920, 6.
[16] Guy, "The Empty North," *Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, 21 November 1922, 1.

For many, however, "the question whether the white man can colonize and live permanently in the tropics" was at issue. A suitable climate was one in which a white man could "live permanently himself," and "beget offspring who will go on living there and who will in turn raise up healthy and vigorous future generations there." Strictly applied, found the *British Medical Journal*, the answer to whether the white man could succeed in the tropics was "no."[17] It cited Dr Hewetson, who found the "influence of the actinic rays on the blood and on the nerves" debilitating for whites, and denounced:

> The dangerous effects of using galvanized iron for roofs and walls, for by them were produced abnormally high temperatures, which caused general weakness, cardiac distress, and paved the way for definite diseases. In addition to these physical effects there are the psychological … the monotony of always seeing the sun, the constant desire for stimulants "to buck one up," the cocktail before dinner to give one an appetite, and so on indefinitely…. The main factor still remains - the excessive heat - and it is this the white person cannot contend against.[18]

As the issue of white survival in tropical Australia constituted a high priority national issue, the Australasian Medical Congress convened to discuss this in 1920. Research by the Townsville-based Australian Institute of Tropical Medicine, however, found that though white people might need to make adjustments to live in the north - in diet, clothing and housing, for example - there were no substantial impediments to successful settlement.[19] Theodore was satisfied that, with adequate infrastructure, "the country south of the Gulf of Carpentaria would easily sustain a white population of several hundreds of thousands."[20]

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[17] "The Place of the White Man in the Tropics," *British Medical Journal* 2, no.3227 (1922): 885.
[18] *Ibid.,* 886.
[19] Warwick Anderson, *The Cultivation of Whiteness: Science, Health and Racial Destiny in Australia* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002), 139.
[20] "The Empty North," *Observer* (Adelaide), 7 January 1922, 28.

The Commonwealth and Queensland governments, and people such as Garland, were spurred to dispel any perception of Australia as a niggardly nation undeservedly reserving a large portion of the world's land and resources for a privileged few. They attempted to increase population density through British settlement, even in the tropics. When the Dean of Canterbury, Dr Hewlett Johnson, suggested that if Australia could not colonise its northern districts it should relinquish them to the Japanese, Lyons, Queensland Premier, William Forgan Smith, and Garland all reacted swiftly to rebuff his suggestion. Lyons insisted Australia was capable of fully developing the north "with the white race." Forgan Smith accused Johnson of knowing nothing of Australia and of having devised a scheme capable of "smashing the British Commonwealth of Nations."[21] Garland emphasised that Johnson:

> Certainly has not had my 47 years' experience of [Australia], and if there is one thing for which we in Australia have a passion it is for a White Australia. That is no mere selfishness. It is loyalty to our own kith and kin. We are in the unique position of being 97 per cent of British stock…. It is not that we wish to exclude any other race, but we do wish to keep our own race pure.[22]

As Garland's views aligned with those of the state government, he successfully gained the government's confidence.

"Differential population pressure" described the phenomenon of uneven population distribution across the world which saw some areas supporting very high density populations while other areas were extremely low or virtually empty. Differential population pressure was identified as a potential cause of world conflict.[23] Russell McGregor describes how Australia's anxieties over its empty spaces drew a "multitude of extravagant proposals," with Hughes's call to fill Australia with

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[21] "Smashing Blow to Empire," *Brisbane Courier*, 7 July 1933, 13.
[22] *Ibid*.
[23] Russell McGregor, "A Dog in the Manger: White Australia and its Vast Empty Spaces," *Australian Historical Studies* 43, no.2 (2012): 157.

millions of British immigrants being one such response. Other responses were a call for the relaxation of the White Australia policy, and promotion of the fact that the Australian continent was not capable of ever sustaining a high density population.[24] Garland pushed hard during the Depression years for farming land, especially in the north, to be made affordable for unemployed immigrants so that, at the very least, they would be able to grow their own food. "It could not be forgotten," he cautioned, "that unless Australians occupied North Queensland, others would do it for them."[25]

Queensland quirks

Queensland is often described as possessing a political and social culture quite different from the rest of Australia, and this is largely attributed to the influence of place. Queensland itself claims to be different because its people have had to deal with "a harsher climate, more isolation and greater distances."[26] Queensland has always been the most decentralised state with its economy "disproportionately" vested in pastoral, agricultural and mining industries.[27] Though abundant land has attracted migrants since the colony began, the land's harshness demanded that settlers be "industrious and ingenious to survive and succeed."[28] Cultivating prosperity and a viable social and political fabric out of such harshness forged tenacious people and political attitudes, particularly when arguing to secure state rights and benefits. This was evident during federation debates when Queensland felt its interests would be overshadowed by the larger states. Though acceding to

[24] *Ibid.,* 172.
[25] *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 30 August 1932, 4.
[26] Lyndon Megarrity, "The Queensland Legend," *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 10, no.2 (2008): 123.
[27] Paul D Williams, "Leaders and Political Culture: The Development of the Queensland Premiership, 1859-2009," *Queensland Review* 16, no.1 (2009): 15.
[28] Akers, Foley and Ford, "'Remember Who We Are,'" 497.

federation, it was "keen to bolster its prestige and power within the new nation." Since federation, Queensland's "elites" have frequently made claims of special status for Queensland due to its "unique position in Australian national life."[29]

Paul Williams proposes that five characteristics have defined and differentiated Queensland political culture. These traits are: a history of strong leadership; pragmatism; regionalism; state development and what he terms "Queensland chauvinism."[30] The strong sense of regionalism fitted neatly with the inter-war immigration objective of placing people on the land. Williams notes that Premiers Theodore and Forgan Smith hailed from rural seats while Ned Hanlon was a "city bushman" from Ithaca who staunchly advocated rural interests. Reinforcing the proclivity towards regionalism was a penchant for infrastructure development, such as railways, roads, bridges and dams.[31] Queensland chauvinism, however, elucidates in part why the Queensland NSL division survived when others fell. "A deep reverence for all things Queensland" is how Williams describes Queensland chauvinism. This, he argues, has enabled successive premiers to appeal "positively to Queenslanders' patriotism," and generate a sense of unity against outside threats. In 1927, for example, Queensland jeopardised negotiations on the crucial £34,000,000 agreement by threatening to withdraw. Dissatisfied with DMC stalling on a major development and settlement project planned for the Dawson region, McCormack stood firm until an arrangement he found acceptable was implemented. Herbert Gepp, DMC Chairman, informed the BOSC that its objective was "to make a very

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[29] Megarrity, "The Queensland Legend," 133-34.
[30] Williams, "Leaders and Political Culture," 15.
The term "Queensland chauvinism" did not originate with Williams. A few earlier examples of its use appear, such as that by the Queensland Liberal Member for Salisbury, Rosemary Kyburz, in parliament in 1981 - see, Rosemary Kyburz, *Hansard*, 26 March 1981, Queensland Parliamentary Debates, Address in Reply, 551.
[31] Williams, "Leaders and Political Culture" 26-27.

necessary gesture to Queensland under the £34,000,000 Agreement without delay…. Our deferment of the Dawson Valley scheme … may lead the Queensland Government to play strong anti-migration card in connection with the forthcoming Federal and state elections."[32] Queensland was placated and any threat staved off.

Hughes experienced Theodore's Queensland chauvinism when the Commonwealth sought ways to implement the Joint Agreement by early 1921. When Hughes asked states to nominate development projects, Theodore pushed the Burnett scheme which would provide abundant farming opportunities, but only if the Commonwealth provided a substantial loan to develop railways. Railway construction and the planned butter factories would also provide immigrants employment, while planned towns would service domestic and social needs. In November 1920, Hughes replied:

> In regard to your request that the Commonwealth Government should grant your State a loan of £2,000,000 for the purpose of opening up the Northern Burnett and Callide Valley districts for the settlement of immigrants, I desire to inform you that Mr. H. S. Gullett will … inspect the areas in question early next year. As soon as I receive a report on the matter I shall give your request for financial assistance full consideration.[33]

Gullett favoured the development and encouraged Hughes to consider it, but Hughes disregarded it. He again invited the states to submit schemes to support immigration, and again Theodore proposed the Burnett scheme. Again, Hughes ignored it. When Hughes remarked in January 1921 that no state other than Western Australia had submitted a viable proposal, he incurred Theodore's wrath, who demanded it was time to stop talking and start providing money for projects.[34] The Commonwealth

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[32] Roe, *Australia, Britain and Migration*, 112-113.
[33] NAA, Canberra: A461, M349/1/5, Immigration Encouragement - Early Government Schemes - Upper Burnett and Callide Railway Proposal - Queensland, 1920-1924, Hughes to Theodore, 25 November 1920.
[34] *Ibid*.

denied Theodore's claim that loan money had been promised.[35] When Hughes further accused Theodore of not submitting a definite scheme, Theodore responded to the "colossal impudence" by detailing the plans submitted to Hughes, whom he accused of perpetrating "the grossest piece of political dishonesty he had ever encountered." Theodore vowed to raise money elsewhere, notably the United States, to fund the development and successfully followed through his intention.[36] Gullett resigned only weeks later citing Hughes's lack of response to Theodore's proposal as evidence that he lacked commitment to the immigration cause.[37] Theodore, however, in a state characterised by distance and isolation, was committed to increasing population through immigration and saw a volunteer support organisation with branches in all rural and regional areas as indispensable.

League members also exhibited Queensland chauvinism in their avid pursuit of NSL objectives on behalf of Queensland and Australia, with Garland being a prime example. This, combined with Queensland's "country-mindedness" which maintained a positive attitude towards placing and retaining immigrants on the land, placed Queensland in a favourable position when the other four NSL divisions fell. Williams describes this "country-mindedness" as "a heightened sense that farmers and rural dwellers were the backbone of both economy and society, with the rural classes feeling entitled to special privileges such as state aid."[38] Queensland division was prepared to resist pressure by other state divisions to conform if it believed it had a superior method or approach. A 1925 Queensland NSL council meeting decided that it would not adopt the BBM because, as Maplestone told Gilchrist, "it would be

[35] "The New Settlers' League," *Brisbane Courier*, 28 June 1921, 6.
[36] "Burnett Scheme: Premiers' Allegations," *Brisbane Courier*, 25 January 1922, 7.
[37] Roe, *Australia, Britain and Migration*, 23, 34, 39.
[38] Williams, "Leaders and Political Culture," 16-17.

very undesirable to adopt it here, with the result that there would undoubtedly be overlapping and confusion." This was because Queensland Immigration Department had already entrusted the NSL with "placement and after-care of all lads." For three years the NSL had already been carrying out such duties as were being carried out by the BBM in other states.[39] Maplestone explained to East, of Western Australia, that Queensland already had in place "a Scheme for the introduction of 100 British lads monthly which is working most satisfactorily." The NSL conducted activities the BBM carried out in other states, "with the exception that we are not allotting a lad to a big brother." Personally, Maplestone regarded securing volunteers to commit themselves to "the lads" as a BBM weakness because it created extra difficulty.[40]

In conjunction with support from various quarters, Queensland NSL's viability was bolstered by its members' innovation and enthusiasm. Mrs McInerny, a Victorian division foundation member, visited Queensland in 1925 and "admitted that the Queensland division was doing much more practical work in the placement of migrants than was Victoria, and on a considerably smaller subsidy." Commonwealth Welfare Officer Thomas Sedgwick, whose interest was juvenile migration, had investigated systems adopted throughout the empire and found Queensland's "surpassed any other." He found the NSL's welfare and follow-up methods for juvenile immigrants to be unique, and so effective that he intended to promote the model to other states.[41]

The NSL promoted Queensland's distinctiveness as beneficial for development. Events such as Fruit Week, first held over a week-long period in March 1926, were

[39] QSA: 13101, 18731, Gilchrist circular, 6 January 1926.
[40] QSA: 13101, 18731, Letter from Maplestone to East, 17 December 1925.
[41] "New Settlers' League," *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 7 March 1925, 8.

staged to promote rural industries in hopes of attracting migrants to rural areas.[42] Queensland government representatives in Britain also promoted Queensland as an ideal migrant destination. When the BOSC's 1926 handbook expressed reservations about British immigrants pursuing tropical agriculture, Queensland's Agent-General swiftly refuted such doubts and extolled Queensland agricultural industries.[43] The NSL Fruit Week committee, particularly organiser, Jack Collum, and president, William Jolly, worked with the Committee of the Direction of Fruit Marketing to organise and promote Fruit Week.

FRUIT WEEK.—Prize-winners in the Fruit Week Essay competition. They are:—Class V., senior, Chas. Butterworth and Betty Patterson; Class IV., junior, Bertie Mahaffery and Nellie Broney; with Mr. W. Robson, president of the Brisbane Fruit Merchants' Association.

Pl.13 Brisbane's "Fruit Week," 1926, deemed highly successful in promoting fruit consumption, and thereby agricultural pursuits and settlement, through means such as the schoolchildren's essay competition.[44]

When Jolly asked city traders to make their shop windows available for exhibits, over thirty firms responded and also donated their window-dressers' services for the

[42] QSA: 13101, 18731, "Fruit Week" flyer.
[43] Roe, *Australia, Britain and Migration*, 200-201.
[44] *Daily Mail*, 15 March 1926, 13.

event. Many window-dressers, however, found their efforts had to be redone as the hot March weather caused much of the displayed fruit to rot by mid-week.[45] Grocers were asked to display Queensland manufactured jams and preserves in their stores, with State Canneries offering a prize for the most attractive display. School children were encouraged to submit essays on the topic of, "The Fruit Industry: what it means to the health and prosperity of Queensland," with prizes donated by Queensland fruit markets.[46] At the prize presentation, Maplestone reminded Queenslanders that while Queensland's population density was two per square mile, Japan's last census saw over seven hundred per square mile.[47]

In July 1921 at a point during volatile discussions on the importance of developing various iron and steel industries for Australia's future defence, Senator Duncan flippantly exclaimed, "bananas are not essential to the future greatness of this country and to enable us to reach nationhood. It is not with bananas we defend ourselves."[48] Queensland though, foresaw stronger defence through fruit. With fruit industry expansion more immigrants could settle empty spaces, thus strengthening defences and further justifying Australia's hold on the land. If Queenslanders ate more fruit, demand would stimulate production then employment, allowing increased immigrant settlement of empty spaces.[49] Queensland had "soil, climate and condition second to none for the production of a very wide range of fruits" but needed to generate a market.[50] Fruit Week aimed "to give the city dweller a better knowledge

[45] "Fruit Week, City Window Displays," *Brisbane Courier*, 4 March 1926, 18.
[46] "Essay Competition," *Brisbane Courier*, 25 February 1926, 11.
[47] "Fruit Week Essays: Presentation of Prizes," *Brisbane Courier*, 15 March 1926, 19.
[48] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, Sen Official Hansard, no.28, 1921, Customs Tariff Bill, Walter L Duncan, 14 July 1921, 10058.
[49] "Fruit Week: Problem of Markets: Encouragement to New Settlers" *Brisbane Courier*, 3 March 1926, 9.
[50] *Ibid*.

of one of the State's important industries [and] encourage a greater consumption of locally grown fruit and Queensland jams and preserves."

The NSL was "working up a market." As the *Brisbane Courier* explained:

> It is not generally known that the New Settlers' League, in addition to welcoming and assisting new arrivals, is actively interesting itself in the finding of new, and extending existing, markets for the products of Queensland suppliers. This small effort on behalf of the fruit industry will, it is hoped, be the means of bringing before the public the value of the fruit industry to Queensland, and help to create a greater demand for locally grown fruit.[51]

The NSL requested that districts supplying exhibits furnish: approximate numbers of fruit-growers employed in their district; employees supported directly by the fruit industry; quantity of fruit (each variety particularised) distributed for home and overseas markets, canneries and such; average annual cash return for crops; local industry particulars; general remarks on nature of land and soils; rainfall; and all pertinent information about the district and industry.[52] The Women's Committee compiled a one-shilling booklet, *Queensland Fruit and how to Use It*, with recipes for jams, chutneys and puddings, dietary advice, cooking hints, and quirkier recipes such as Grape Mint Tonic, Pawpaw Soup, Tomato Figs, Bananas as a Substitute for Potatoes, and Dry Mock Ginger. Queensland Agriculture Minister William Forgan Smith's Foreword stated that "anything that will tend to popularise the use of fruit in any form and help to create a demand for all classes of fruit must naturally prove of benefit to the fruitgrower" and foster a healthier population.[53]

By April 1932, despite the Great Depression's impact on Australia's economy and immigration, the NSL still promoted Queensland's distinctive geography as an

[51] "Fruit Week," *Brisbane Courier*, 24 February 1926, 11.
[52] "Queensland Fruit Week," *Nambour Chronicle and North Coast Advertiser*, 12 February 1926, 4.
[53] New Settlers' League Queensland, *Queensland Fruit and how to Use It*, 42.

inducement for settlement. Daniel Jones, Queensland NSL council member, calling for an assessment of agricultural areas, stated:

> We have a unique opportunity of developing many industries of a tropical character… new openings can be developed in which new settlers can profit…. We have imported from Asiatic countries fully six millions worth of products all of which with a moderate degree of protection can be raised profitably in … our own State…. Products for which we pay the Asiatic trader could be saved for our own unemployed or assist any new settler to establish himself comfortably in one or other of our manless areas in tropical Australia.[54]

Jones's proposal would not only provide settlers employment, it would see Australia less reliant on the "Asiatics" it was endeavouring to keep at bay.

Queensland government

Concern over the vast, scarcely-populated north led to ongoing co-operation with the NSL by successive Queensland governments. Though Theodore initially considered it "madness to bring immigrants to this country unless provision was made for their absorption,"[55] he was soon in favoured when he saw there would be opportunities to secure development money. By1921he welcomed immigration and the NSL. Ensuing Labor premier William Gillies exhorted all Australians to join and assist the NSL in its "splendid work."[56] Labor's William McCormack, premier when immigration declined preceding the Depression, and Arthur Moore, Country Party premier during the worst years of 1929 to 1932, both supported the NSL and continued its funding. McCormack congratulated the NSL - the Queensland division in particular - for helping Australia's progress "along sane, practical and systematic lines."[57]

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[54] QSA: 13101, 18731, NSL report, 20 April 1932.
[55] "New Settlers' League," *Daily Herald*, 14 June 1921, 7.
[56] "New Settlers' League," *Morning Bulletin*, 11 August 1925, 8.
[57] W McCormack, foreword to *1928 New Settler's Handbook for Queensland*, by J A Collum, comp and ed, (Brisbane: New Settlers' League, 1928), 5.

Labor's Forgan Smith took office in 1932 and navigated Queensland through the early war years to 1942. During this period, as the Depression eased migration resumed briefly before declining again when WWII erupted. Like his predecessors, Forgan Smith continued funding the NSL whose membership, though diminished, remained active and ready to resume duties. Not only world events tried the NSL in these years though, for Garland died, still holding office as president, on 9 October 1939 just weeks after the war began.[58] Vice-president William Myers-King, in his eighties, assumed the presidency until his death in 1942.[59] Foundation member Eustace Pike became president and found co-operation from new ALP premier, Frank Cooper. Cooper's addresses at NSL annual meetings during the war's latter years, however, indicated that the NSL would need to shift focus when immigration resumed. "Britain would need all her young men and women," he informed the 1944 meeting. He informed the 1945 meeting that Queensland no longer needed farmers, but "tradesmen and skilled workers who could develop the secondary industry potential of the State."[60]

Post-war Queensland premiers also supported immigration and the NSL's role. Hanlon, believing "people were the best defence of a country," supported the NSL objective.[61] Hanlon's successor, Vince Gair, ALP, also espoused immigration for development and defence and emphasised that there was plenty of room for settlers. "One has only to travel through Queensland to see what remains to be done," he

[58] John A Moses and George F Davis, *Anzac Day Origins: Canon D J Garland and Trans-Tasman Commemoration*, (Canberra: Barton Books, 2013), 359.
[59] "Mr. W. Myers King Dead," *Courier-Mail*, 14 November 1942, 5.
[60] "Must Absorb Migrants, Says Premier," *Courier-Mail*, 28 October 1944, 4.
"Tradesmen Most Needed," *Courier-Mail*, 1 December 1945, 1.
[61] Editorial, *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 9 June 1951, 2.

stated at the NSL's 1952 annual meeting. The league's continuous welfare and after-care efforts even during difficult periods saw Queensland have far fewer immigrants return than other states, as Gair noted.[62] Premier Frank Nicklin, Country Party, also supported the NSL. Shortly after taking office, Nicklin and NSL President, R H Wainwright, co-operated in the Queensland Immigration Week campaign, which ran from 6 to 12 October 1957.[63] Though the GNC subsumed the NSL during Nicklin's time, each premier's support, from Theodore on, contributed to the division's longevity.

Cordial relationships with governments and constant espousal of Queensland's particular needs fostered the division's success. The formation meeting for the first NSL branch in Brisbane on 19 July 1921, conducted by Maxwell (elected president) elicited support from Theodore and Harry Coyne, Minister for Lands, who readily accepted invitations for seats on the State Council.[64] Thirty-six years later, Garland, noting "relations with the State Immigration Department are of a happy and cordial nature," vowed there would be "nothing lacking on our part to render assistance to the Department, and to maintain the existing cordial relations."[65] Though activity and branches had been substantially curtailed for much of the fifteen years until the end of WWII, Queensland NSL never languished. This was largely because of the long-term devotion of figures such as Garland, whose fervour often irritated departments dealing with migration. Some British government officials held misgivings about his tendency to bypass red tape by directly approaching United Kingdom migration committees and viewed Garland as an interfering busybody with whom they did not

[62] "Problem of Australia to People Country," *Cairns Post*, 27 September 1952, 1.
[63] NAA, Sydney: C3939, N1957/75103, Immigration - New Settlers' League - Brisbane Immigration Week 1957 (Box 81), 1957 - 1957, Immigration Week Queensland, 6-12 October 1957.
[64] "New Settlers' League," *Queenslander*, 13 August 1921, 9.
[65] QSA: 13101, 18731, NSL report, 1930.

like to deal. Garland dealt more effectively with Queensland government, however, especially in bringing to attention the state's vulnerability in retaining large tracts of empty spaces when the world was hungry for arable and inhabitable land. The government support pivotal to the division's longevity resulted from presidents and members impressing the NSL's value upon each government through successful initiatives and consistently executing its objectives.

Queensland division took advantage of every interstate conference to press its requirements. The division submitted core resolutions for discussion to the 1924 Conference, one being:

> To promote the maintenance of a White Australia and as a vital means to that end to encourage settlement in Australia above the twentyfifth degree of latitude [around Bundaberg]. The Conference considers that immigrants who before embarkation declare their intention of residing or settling in the Northern Part of Australia should be granted the full amount of their passage money.

Another suggested that to encourage:

> Those already residing in the North there should be some concession in taxation made to them by both the Commonwealth and the representative State Governments because of the higher cost of living.[66]

Garland believed every move that helped "to fill the empty spaces of this continent with people of British blood" would bolster Australia's defence, and the NSL would accomplish this.[67]

As the newly-formed Queensland division set about establishing branches in every town, Maxwell forecast that with NSL representatives visiting all country districts to form branches there would be "at least eighty established in Queensland before the

[66] QSA: 13101, 18731, Correspondence from NSLQ to NSL NSW, 30 May 1924.
[67] "Personal and Anecdotal," *Sunday Mail*, 8 May 1932, 2.

end of the year."[68] Townsville branch was formed on 11 October at a "well attended and representative" meeting presided over by Deputy-Mayor, Thomas Melrose, who stressed that increased settlement was "a matter of vital importance" in the north. Though northern coastal district populations were beginning to increase, "in the mineral and pastoral areas the population was dwindling" and to harness its vast resources the north had to boost population.[69] Cairns Mayor John Hoare convened a meeting on 22 November at which W T Blake, NSL North Queensland organiser, spoke.[70] Both were "keen advocates for the peopling of the north" and foresaw abundant opportunities for migrants to settle on the land.[71] The *Cairns Post* extolled the region's potential for immigrants to settle the land. "Everything that is produced from the soil can be produced here," it claimed, "so who can doubt our capacity to carry with ease and prosperity a population of millions?" The NSL was described as "a noble work for noble hearts" in which "a field is offered for those who are alive to its great importance."[72]

With Queensland's government and NSL both alive to immigration's importance, when the Depression eased but the Commonwealth had not resumed immigration, Garland accused it of being an impediment to accomplishing its own objectives. He was frustrated with the Commonwealth's decision not to resume immigration until all states declared their readiness. He questioned why Queensland, which he saw as a leader in many fields and which could set the example on immigration, should be held back by states he regarded as slow, timid or selfish.[73] This, he argued, meant

[68] "New Settlers' League Queensland Division," *Cairns Post*, 4 October 1921, 7.
[69] "New Settlers' League: Townsville Branch Formed," *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 13 October 1921, 4.
[70] Advertisement, *Cairns Post*, 18 November 1921, 4.
[71] "New Settlers' League… Local Committee Formed," *Cairns Post*, 23 November 1921, 5.
[72] Editorial, *Cairns Post*, 24 November 1921, 4.
[73] New Settlers' League of Australia, Queensland Division, *Fifteenth Annual Conference*, 6.

"that any one State can hold up the vital matter of increasing our population." Why should Queensland, he asked, with its "increased prosperity and consequent openings for immigrants, have to wait until every other State chooses to write to the Federal Government." [74] Garland's conviction of immigration's importance suffused Queensland division from its inception. Garland died just as WWII was underway, but his eighteen years of NSL service had established a spirit of determination for Queensland immigration to succeed. Determination was a crucial factor in the division's fight for funding that enabled its longevity.

Funding

In 1929 Garland related the NSL's history at the division's eighth annual conference. It was founded by Hughes, he recalled, but when the Bruce-Page government took office, "they gave the league six months' notice of dismissal." Theodore "had saved the situation by making an arrangement under which the State Government paid half the subsidy with the Federal Government," which led to the other states following a similar course.[75] Garland's account, tinged with "Queensland chauvinism," attests to the cordial relationship between Queensland governments and the NSL that saw continued funding. Queensland's NSL funding constituted a fairly minor component of the immigration budget. Of the 1926/1927 financial year's £13,333 expenditure, Premier William McCormack cited NSL costs as £992, with £3,896 expended on immigration agents' salaries.[76] As the Depression set in Commonwealth authorities notified Garland of funding reductions, but Premier Moore hoped that "the League

[74] QSA: 13101, 18731, New Settlers' League of Queensland President's Report to Fifteenth Annual Conference, 9 October 1936.
[75] "New Settlers' League," *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 28 October 1929, 6.
[76] "Formal Business," *Queensland Times*, 7 October 1927, 8.

would continue its welfare and after-care work" and assured it Queensland would continue funding.[77]

With economic deterioration, in 1929 Queensland's Auditor General investigated state accounting practices and found them wanting. When General Secretary Collum was required to explain "irregularities in the Petty Cash," Garland acted swiftly by requesting and accepting his resignation.[78] The DMC informed Queensland Under-Chief Secretary, G Watson, the occasion was opportune to review the NSL's work, due to "persistent adverse reports" about immigrant employment and welfare.[79] Watson had already arranged for an NSL inspection. The DMC further informed Watson that they felt:

> In co-operation with yourself, it will be possible to adapt the activities of the League to the needs of the present, whilst at the same time maintaining its efficiency and making it possible to substantially reduce the joint subsidy of the Commonwealth and State Governments.[80]

The DMC recommended several changes to reduce NSL financial needs while still enabling it to operate competently. It suggested that the General Secretary position left vacant by Collum's resignation be filled by a state immigration officer, as it was in Victoria and New South Wales. It also suggested that, "for the present at least, the work of the League should be confined almost entirely to welcome and welfare" with the Women's Committee responsible for placing domestics, and the immigration agent for farm lads.[81] The report following the review included an overview of the NSL's current state. Discussions with Garland had disclosed that due to immigration restrictions the NSL had ceased publicity and propaganda. It now focused on the

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[77] "New Settlers' League," *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 28 October 1929, 6.
[78] NAA, Canberra: A436, 1946/5/3681, New Settlers' League Queensland - Subsidy, 1929-1938, Garland to Secretary DMC, 12 March 1929.
[79] *Ibid.,* DMC to Under-Chief Secretary Watson, 9 March 1929.
[80] *Ibid.,* 11 March 1929.
[81] *Ibid*.

Queensland Government British Farm Lads Scheme - a 1910 initiative of Garland's, lapsed during the war but revived in 1925 - with the NSL responsible for finding employment. The report found that because Garland had focused the NSL so heavily on his scheme, this had "been the means of the New Settlers' League losing sight of its true functions and … precluded a concentration on one of the most important phases of any Migration Policy - welfare and after-care."[82]

When the Depression eased and immigration looked set to resume, Garland pressured the British government to contribute more than just passage money for immigrants to Australia. "It is not enough to embark an emigrant on a ship in London, pay part of his passage money, and regard him no longer a concern of Great Britain," he asserted, and suggested Britain provide financial aid to the Queensland government - pointedly not the Commonwealth - so immigrants could be trained before settling on the land. This would, he contended, be more economical for Britain than "continuing to pay unemployment doles running into many hundreds of millions of pounds." As Australia was relieving Britain of surplus population, he added, it was not unreasonable for it to contribute as he suggested.[83]

Garland was soon gratified when a new arrangement was agreed upon. During the Depression both Britain and Australia had acknowledged that it was not possible to adhere to the £34,000,000 agreement terms. A new agreement enabled continued immigrant after-care until 30 June 1934 and for "the keeping in existence until that date of certain voluntary organizations including the New Settlers' League

[82] *Ibid.,* Queensland Chief Clerk to Watson, 8 April 1929.
[83] QSA: 13101, 18731, New Settlers' League of Australia (Queensland Division) President's Report to Twelfth Annual Meeting, 29 September 1933.

(Queensland Division)."[84] Whereas funding had been on a 50-50 basis between the Commonwealth and Queensland governments, the new arrangement was for funding by the British, Commonwealth and Queensland governments on a 50-25-25 basis.[85] Though British officials bristled at Garland, whom they regarded as annoying, of the £700 the NSL received jointly from the British, Commonwealth and Queensland governments, all agreed that Garland receive £300 annual allowance, which he did until his death in 1939.[86]

Days before Garland's death, PM Robert Menzies informed Forgan Smith that assisted passages would cease immediately, "except for exceptionally hard cases of family reunion." Forgan Smith, considering the NSL's future, suggested that "as the after-care of the migrants who have arrived in this State during the past year will still be the responsibility of the League, the present subsidy arrangements be continued at least until the 31st December next." After that date, he recommended, consideration should be given to whether the work should fall to Queensland's Immigration Agent, or the NSL continue with a reduced subsidy. Forgan Smith wrote to inform Menzies of Garland's death and recommend that, given the NSL's reduced activities, a successor be appointed in an honorary capacity as the "cessation of the President's allowance [would] effect a considerable reduction in the League's expenditure over the balance of this financial year."[87]

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[84] NAA, Canberra: A436, 1945/5/81 PART 1, New Settlers' League - Qld, 1933-1944, Memorandum re continuance of NSL subsidy, 24 July 1935.
[85] NAA: A436, 1946/5/3681, Correspondence from T H Garrett re terms of 1933/34subsidy, 12 October 1933.
[86] NAA: A436, 1945/5/81 PART 1, Memorandum re continuance of NSL subsidy, 24 July 1935.
[87] NAA, Canberra: A461, C349/1/11 PART 1, New Settlers' League Queensland, 1931-1942, Forgan Smith to Menzies, 3 October 1939.

In 1940 the grant to the NSL was halved to £350, still on the basis of 50-25-25, but the NSL was able to continue its work under this arrangement, which remained in place at least until 1942.[88] In June Forgan Smith forwarded the NSL's detailed 1940-1941 policy to the Commonwealth and informed it he was in favour of continuing funding. He wrote again in October stating that the virtual cessation of immigration meant Queensland's office had practically ceased operation. He informed Menzies that though NSL activity was affected, it continued to conduct "social and general welfare activities in respect of those migrants who are already in Queensland, and to the keeping of accounts of approximately forty-eight farm lads."[89] Queensland closed its immigration office but continued to support the NSL and its war-time initiatives, as did the Commonwealth and Britain.

By1942, however, the Commonwealth, under PM Arthur Fadden, doubted whether there was enough work to justify its continued contribution and noted that Britain had also expressed its doubts. Fadden informed Forgan Smith that "perhaps the best course would be to allow the New Settlers' League to pass out of existence and to build an entirely new organization at an appropriate time in the future." [90] Though NSL Queensland continued, Fadden's words were a harbinger of what its future held. At its May meeting, the letter holding the prime ministerial suggestions for its future was read at the NSL State Council. "Members of the league," wrote Myers King to the PMO:

> Were unanimous in their expressions that it would be a calamity to disband the League in view of the work accomplished during the past twenty-one

[88] NAUK: DO 35 687/1, Communications between Australia and the UK, New Settlers' League, Queensland, August 1939 - July 1942, October - December 1939.
NAUK: DO 35 686/8, Communications between Australia and the UK, Aftercare Australia, July 1937 - September 1939, New Settlers' League.
[89] NAA: A461, C349/1/11 PART 1, Forgan Smith to Menzies, 25 June and 11 October 1940.
[90] *Ibid.,* Fadden to Forgan Smith, 20 April 1942.

> years, and in the conviction that there was ample scope for the league for further valuable voluntary assistance to the Governments of the British Empire.[91]

Forgan Smith responded to Fadden's suggestion with staunch support for the NSL and a pledge to continue funding and urged the Commonwealth and United Kingdom to do likewise.[92]

League vice-president, Eustace Pike, followed up with a letter to W Garnett at the Office of the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom in Canberra to point out how disbanding the NSL would lead to the dissolution of the harmonious co-operation it had fostered over the decades between numerous organisations associated with immigration and after-care. "Should the league be disbanded," he cautioned, "great difficulty would be experienced in forming another organisation which will incorporate the wide influence, harmony and enthusiasm which has permeated the work of this organisation during the past twenty one years."[93] Enclosing a copy of Pike's letter, Garnett wrote to T H Garrett at the Department of the Interior and commented that he "was not much impressed with the importance of maintaining the League intact…. But they certainly appear to be doing useful work for evacuees." As the evacuees constituted those for whom both the Commonwealth and United Kingdom governments bore responsibility, Garnett wondered whether this constituted "sufficient justification for continued assistance."[94] By 24 June the Commonwealth had acceded to the NSL's request with the proviso that Queensland and the United Kingdom continue to contribute 25% and 50% respectively, which

[91] *Ibid.,* Myers King to Fadden, 15 May 1942.
[92] *Ibid.,* Forgan Smith to Fadden, 21 May 1942.
[93] NAA: A436, 1945/5/81 PART 1, E R B Pike to Garrett, 29 May 1942.
[94] *Ibid.,* Garnett to Garrett, 3 June 1942.

they did.[95] Though Garland was no longer there to fight for the NSL, his successors Myers-King and Pike emulated his fiercely determined approach and their efforts were gratified.

In 1943, new Queensland premier Frank Cooper negotiated with the Commonwealth and United Kingdom for continued funding. The three-way arrangement was limited to £350 but, at £489/11/2, the NSL's expenses substantially overreached that limit. Cooper unhesitatingly accepted responsibility for the excess.[96] The Commonwealth and United Kingdom agreed to maintain existing funding arrangements for the 1943/1944 year.[97] Commonwealth support for the NSL was still evident in 1948 when Immigration Minister Calwell contacted the Commonwealth Immigration Officer in Brisbane in response to an invitation from the NSL to attend its annual general meeting. "Please convey to meeting ministers," telegrammed Calwell, "personal appreciation of their excellent contribution to the important task of assimmulating (*sic*) new arrivals and helping them to become good Australian citizens." Calwell also extended "best wishes for continued success of league's activities and whole hearted cooperation by himself and his department." [98] Commonwealth support no longer extended, however, to funds. Premier Hanlon's request to the Commonwealth for continued NSL funds for 1948-49 met with the response that:

> His request has received due consideration, but in view of the fact that the reception of migrants on arrival and their after-care are responsibilities which the respective State Governments have accepted, the Commonwealth

[95] *Ibid.,* PM's Dept to Forgan Smith, 26 June 1942.
[96] *Ibid.,* Cooper to Curtain, 14 June 1943.
[97] *Ibid.,* PM's Dept, 12 August 1943.
[98] NAA, Brisbane: J25, 1950/7601, Good Neighbour Councils and New Settlers' League, 1948-1952, Calwell to E A Bird, Commonwealth Immigration Officer, Brisbane, 31 August 1948.

> Government is not prepared to contribute financially in respect of the New Settlers' League, Queensland, for 1948-1949 and future years.[99]

Though now dependent solely on state government funding, the NSL tenaciously continued its work for another decade.

Pursuing objectives

While enthusiasm was common to all divisions at their inception, the Queensland response to the NSL was noticeably keen. Organisers set about ensuring Queensland could cope with the expected volume of immigrants by concertedly campaigning to establish branches in every town. As Maplestone travelled Queensland organising branches, he took the opportunity to promote the importance of nominations and assisted passages. By December 1921, forty branches were established and the number was expected to increase to one hundred by year's end.[100] After attending the Queensland division's first annual conference in August 1922, Hurley reported to Hughes that:

> Delegates in attendance numbered about 100 and they represented practically all the main rural centres and industries. Earnest endeavour and solid work on the part of the delegates made the conference the most successful yet held in any state, and this will have an important effect on future operations.[101]

Hurley's forecast was rendered credible by Queensland division's longevity. By mid-1923 Queensland had established over one hundred branches.[102]

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[99] *Ibid.,* T H E Heyes, PM's Dept, to Dept of Immigration, Canberra, 20 December 1948.
[100] "New Settlers' League," *Queenslander*, 10 December 1921, 40.
[101] NAA: A458, A154/18, Visit to New South Wales and Queensland by the Acting Superintendent of Immigration, 11 August 1922.
[102] "New Settlers' League Conference," *Brisbane Courier*, 4 August 1923, 6.

With a solid network established, the NSL began promoting the assisted passage scheme to encourage nominations among Queenslanders. In travelling to promote branch formation, Maplestone informed Queenslanders of the NSL's objective:

> To make known as widely as possible in Queensland the terms of the free and reduced passages offered to British nominated new settlers, and to encourage the nomination of these people by their relatives and friends in Queensland.[103]

In December 1921, with the free passage scheme for nominated British ex-service men and women due to end that month, Maplestone urged Queenslanders to take advantage while the scheme was still available. The division also constantly pushed the Commonwealth to make migrant passages more affordable by increasing subsidy rates. Viewing assisted passage and nominations as key elements of the immigration campaign, Queensland division unceasingly encouraged them, particularly for domestics and farm lads. The division sent new settlers letters enquiring about their welfare and encouraging them to nominate friends and relatives to come to Queensland. They read, in part:

> You have been settled for some little time now in Queensland, and have had an opportunity to form some idea of your new life. You will also have realised the necessity for populating this country and the reason we wish to keep it British.
> I hope you are still as ambitious as when you arrived and that you will presently assist us in the work of introducing more Britishers to Australia…. We look to you to help us in these matters and in return ask you to remember that we as a League will always be ready to help you in any way possible.[104]

Governments continued to offer varied levels of assistance until curtailed by the pressure of the Depression.

By early 1929, only the Labor governments of Western Australia and Queensland were still nominating immigrants, basically confined to domestic servants and farm

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[103] "New Settlers' League," *Morning Bulletin*, 11 October 1921, 7.
[104] QSA: 13101, 18731, Standard letter.

boys.[105] As the Depression took effect, government severely curtailed migration. Even the definition of "family" was narrowed to tighten the family reunion scheme so that each state was allowed no more than thirty reunions a month. Although this was an Australian government ruling, at the end of 1930 New South Wales denied even family reunions.[106] Queensland soon followed New South Wales's lead. Coupled with the reduction in migration, was an increase in return migration with over 34,000 migrants returning to Britain from Australia between 1929 and 1931.[107] Under these circumstances, NSL Queensland convinced the state government that, even if new migrants were no longer arriving, it was vital that aftercare of existing settlers should continue to prevent the drift of people back to Britain.

Commenting on "the future" at the 1931state conference, Garland argued that a temporary immigration decline did not mean that existing immigrants should be neglected. During difficult times, he emphasised, it was more important than ever that settlers should feel there was "an organisation of friends who are willing to show them sympathy, encouragement, and where possible practical help." He believed that if the NSL continued to provide care for settled immigrants they would become "by their reports to England advance agents for a revival of immigration." He stated the NSL's aim as being:

> to take such care of those who already are here that they may become advance agents for the revival of immigration which is imperative if Australia is to be kept white and British. We desire to keep our organisation in such a state of activity, even though reduced, that it will be quite ready to go full steam ahead when a stream of immigrants shall begin to flow again from the Motherland as must happen, unless in the future we are prepared to acquiesce in other nationals filling our empty spaces.[108]

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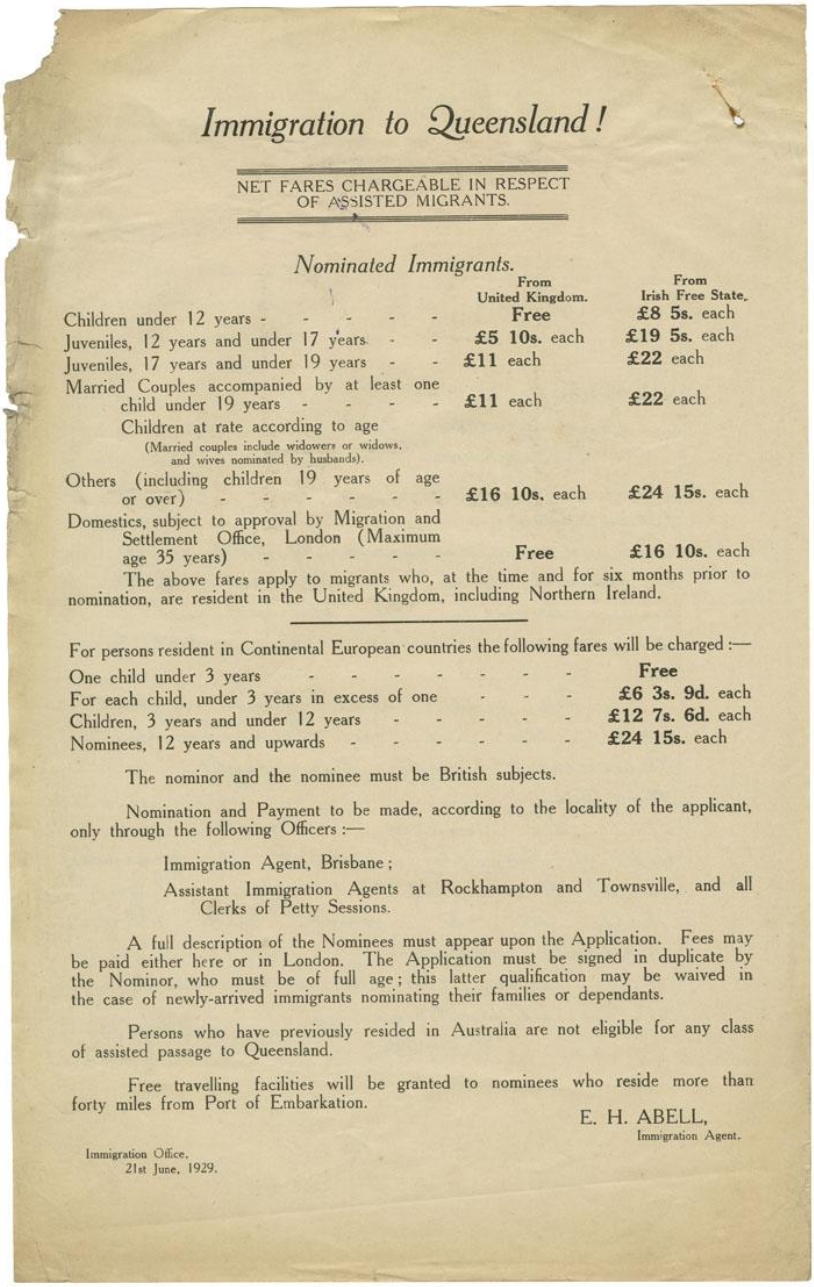
[105] P of A, Parliamentary Debates, Sen Official Hansard, no.12, 1929, Supply Bill (No.1) 1929-30, George Pearce, 19 March 1929, 1419.
[106] Roe, *Australia, Britain and Migration*, 150-151.
[107] *Ibid.,* 151.
[108] QSA: 13101, 18731, President's Report, 31 August 1934.

To support his stance he cited a request by E T Crutchley, the British Representative, that Australian governments strive to "keep in being" those organisations that had cared for immigrants "so magnificently in the past." Garland also argued that the NSL needed to remain in a state of activity and readiness, though the extent may be curtailed, so that it would "be quite ready to go full steam ahead when a stream of immigrants, quite necessary to our existence as a State shall again begin to flow from the Motherland."[109]

As the Depression receded, Garland pushed for the resumption of assisted passage particularly for "farm lads, domestics and nominees" and made known his view that the British government could do more towards helping migrants with assisted passages.[110] Though assisted passage did resume by 1938, its reinstatement was short-lived as, with the world again at war, migration again halted. By early 1947 Australia and the United Kingdom resumed migration discussions that included assisted passage. Pike was delighted to know "that ex-servicemen and women would receive free passages. While the United Kingdom resumed its former practice of contributing to free and assisted passages, Australia instigated the scheme under which adult migrants could purchase a £10 passage, with children aged fourteen to eighteen able to travel for £5. The condition placed upon adults was that they remain in the country for a minimum of two years.[111] Queensland NSL's first preference was nominated migrants for whom work could be found immediately and for whom accommodation was available with relatives or friends."[112] By April 1949, the Commonwealth was anticipating at least 8,000 British migrants departing for

[109] QSA: 13101, 18731, NSL report, 1931.
[110] "New Settlers' League," *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 29 October 1936, 4.
[111] Sherington, *Australia's Immigrants, 1788-1978*, 129-31.
[112] "New Settlers' League's 25 Years Service," *Queensland Times*, 15 March 1947, 3.

Australia under the scheme, which saw 400,000 applications lodged at Australia House in London.[113] With immigrant numbers set to boom again, the NSL was keen to resume its role welcoming and caring for immigrants as it had after WWI.



Immigration to Queensland!

NET FARES CHARGEABLE IN RESPECT OF ASSISTED MIGRANTS.

Nominated Immigrants.

	From United Kingdom.	From Irish Free State.
Children under 12 years	**Free**	**£8 5s.** each
Juveniles, 12 years and under 17 years	**£5 10s.** each	**£19 5s.** each
Juveniles, 17 years and under 19 years	**£11** each	**£22** each
Married Couples accompanied by at least one child under 19 years	**£11** each	**£22** each
Children at rate according to age (Married couples include widowers or widows, and wives nominated by husbands).		
Others (including children 19 years of age or over)	**£16 10s.** each	**£24 15s.** each
Domestics, subject to approval by Migration and Settlement Office, London (Maximum age 35 years)	**Free**	**£16 10s.** each

The above fares apply to migrants who, at the time and for six months prior to nomination, are resident in the United Kingdom, including Northern Ireland.

For persons resident in Continental European countries the following fares will be charged :—

One child under 3 years	**Free**
For each child, under 3 years in excess of one	**£6 3s. 9d.** each
Children, 3 years and under 12 years	**£12 7s. 6d.** each
Nominees, 12 years and upwards	**£24 15s.** each

The nominor and the nominee must be British subjects.

Nomination and Payment to be made, according to the locality of the applicant, only through the following Officers :—

Immigration Agent, Brisbane ;

Assistant Immigration Agents at Rockhampton and Townsville, and all Clerks of Petty Sessions.

A full description of the Nominees must appear upon the Application. Fees may be paid either here or in London. The Application must be signed in duplicate by the Nominor, who must be of full age ; this latter qualification may be waived in the case of newly-arrived immigrants nominating their families or dependants.

Persons who have previously resided in Australia are not eligible for any class of assisted passage to Queensland.

Free travelling facilities will be granted to nominees who reside more than forty miles from Port of Embarkation.

E. H. ABELL,
Immigration Agent.

Immigration Office,
21st June, 1929.

Pl.14 Though the economy was coming under strain by 1929, Queensland continued to try to attract immigrants by offering free or reduced passages. Notable is that domestics from the United Kingdom, up to the age of thirty-five, were eligible for free passage.[114]

[113] "Shipping for More Migrants," *Courier-Mail*, 22 April 1949, 3.

Queensland NSL's viability was enhanced by support from the DMC and other migrant organisations. Queensland's Catholic Immigration Society had been declining for some time until an address delivered on 5 August 1929 by E J Mulvany of the DMC inspired them to reorganise their society. Mulvany was delighted and "satisfied that [the society would] now take an active part in migration." However, he refused their request for £100 funding, recommending instead that they "link up … with the New Settlers' League" which was where the Commonwealth preferred to direct its financial support for the aftercare of immigrants.[115]

When immigration and funding decreased during the war years, as it had during the Depression, the NSL turned its focus on continuing to care for existing immigrants - most of whom were youths - and maintaining a state of readiness for the resumption of immigration. The NSL's policy drafted for the war years of 1940-1941 states that during the period of migration inactivity its intent was, in part:

> To establish continuity by keeping together the representatives of the various organisations which form the State Council of the League; to retain interest in migration and fulfil the obligations undertaken in looking after young migrants who have come to Queensland under the nomination of the New Settlers' League. This responsibility includes keeping in touch with employees and employers and safe-guarding the interests and welfare of [migrants].[116]

During WWII, however, the NSL encountered a different type of new settler, the evacuee.

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[114] QSA: 5368, 1397614, Immigration Notice listing the fares charged for Nominated Immigrants assisted passage to Queensland, 21 June 1929, Digital image.
[115] NAA, Canberra: A1, 1932/7421, Catholic Immigration Queensland, 1929-1929, E J Mulvany, DMC Melbourne, to Catholic Immigration Society of Queensland, Brisbane, 26 August 1929.
[116] NAA: A461, C349/1/11 PART 1, New Settlers' League (Queensland Division) Policy for Year 1940-1941.

In 1943 *Courier-Mail* journalist Winifred Moore wrote that evacuees from many countries found in the NSL a welcome, and centre for friendship where help was always available. Moore described how the NSL's "comfortable chairs and cushions, attractive pictures, facilities for writing and for tea making, heighten the cheerful club atmosphere," and how national groups gathered at the NSL office at different times to "talk over their life in the old land, to borrow magazines and exchange patterns, and also to do some war work for the Australian Comforts Fund."[117] Following an approach from Pike in October 1943 regarding the NSL's future, William Riordan, ALP member for Kennedy, wrote to External Affairs Minister Herbert Evatt. Though originally constituted to assist immigrants, Riordan explained, the NSL was assisting evacuees from the "Far East" who had come to Queensland since the outbreak of war with Japan. Riordan requested Evatt "give consideration to the inclusion of the League in any scheme for Post-War migration."[118]

Pl.15 Yungaba Immigration Centre, beside the river at Kangaroo Point, Brisbane, where the NSL was based for many years. Here the NSL held receptions for newly-arrived settlers, provided temporary accommodation, and hosted numerous teas and social events.[119]

[117] Winifred Moore, "New Settlers' League Friendship Centre," *Courier-Mail*, 22 February 1943, 5.
[118] NAA: A436, 1945/5/81 PART 1, Riordan to Evatt, 14 October 1943.
[119] QSA: 1588, 1084398, "Yungaba" Immigration Centre, Kangaroo Point, September 1950, Digital Image.

Pike also had informed Senator Joseph Collings, Interior Minister, of the NSL's readiness to recommence activities when immigration resumed. Pike informed Collings of three resolutions carried at the league's 1943 annual meeting. The first was for migration to be resumed as early as possible and to plan for "settlement of a large number of people, preferably of British stock." The second was for information to be made available on what had been done already and what was proposed, and that "every effort being made to arouse public sentiment in favour of migration." The third called for the resolutions to "be conveyed to the appropriate authorities [of] the United Kingdom, Commonwealth and State Governments."[120] Noticeably, the resolutions continued the NSL's original objective of attracting British immigrants.

Pike, however, in his "Notes on Migration" in the 1943 NSL annual report, a copy of which he sent Collings, evidenced awareness that Australia needed to accommodate a great change in immigration. Noting that "for a long while many of us have wondered about the White Australia Policy," he suggested it was:

> Well to remember that we are part of an Empire which includes people of all colour and all religion; that these people together with our Allies are not only fighting for us but are fighting with us, and that they will be entitled to receive a good deal of consideration when the final washing up comes.[121]

Pike also contended that "the original idea that all the people who came here … should go on the land, and that Australia should be a great country of primary industry, the secondary ones to be maintained in England has gone, gone completely."[122] Pike later received a request for a copy of the report from Joseph Carrodus, Department of Interior Secretary, because the information it contained was

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[120] NAA: A436, 1945/5/81 PART 1, Pike to Collings, 25 October 1943.
[121] *Ibid.*, New Settlers' League of Australia (Queensland Division) Report of Twenty-Second Annual Meeting, 15 October 1943.
[122] *Ibid*.

of "special interest to the Inter-departmental Committee recently appointed to consider questions relating to post-war immigration." [123]

Post-WWII

As war ended and migration gradually resumed, Queensland NSL responded quickly. The basis of all migration schemes, reminded Winifred Fison, Women's Committee President, at the 1945 annual meeting, was the "ultimate conversion of migrants into happy and contented citizens of Australia."[124] While the NSL continued its pre-war strategies of providing welfare assistance, advice and social opportunities, post-WWII immigration confronted it with significant challenges regarding those to whom its services were directed and the nature of the services it needed to provide. Post-war immigration demanded it broaden its services, and understanding, to cover the needs of non-British immigrants. The shift in focus towards European immigrants challenged one of the NSL's basic precepts. In the 1920's, immigrants were overwhelming British, and Australian culture was rooted in Britishness. As European immigrants did not share the common denominator of Britishness, the NSL's welfare and assistance tasks became more complex.

The NSL now needed to acquaint immigrants from many cultural backgrounds with their new environment and the British-Australian culture. In 1949, Townsville received a group of 176 settlers, 170 of whom were British. The next group consisted of 89 Yugoslavian, Latvian, Estonian, Lithuanian, Bulgarian, Romanian, Polish, or

[123] *Ibid.*, Carrodus to Pike, 6 January 1944.
[124] NAA, Canberra: A445, 112/4/10, New Settlers' League Queensland Part 1, 1944-1947, New Settlers' League of Australia (Queensland Division) Report of Twenty-Fourth Annual Meeting, 30 November 1945.

Czech immigrants. "Life for these people is not easy," stated a newspaper article; they had "the hardest burdens to bear," for they had been driven back and forth across Europe, some for over ten years. They now wanted to live their lives in peace. Whereas, it continued, Britishers:

> Come to a country where in the towns at least, life is not so different from that to which they are accustomed. Language is the same; Australians preserve the English way of life; and perhaps most important are very proud of their British heritage.[125]

Adapting the NSL's original objective of almost exclusively British immigration was a major shift that was not formally addressed until January 1950 with the first Australian Citizenship Convention. In conjunction with convention co-ordinator John Massey, it was decided that the NSL would "also cater for foreign migrants." Queensland's migration officer was concerned, however, that this could jeopardise NSL's funding "on the ground that it paid the League to carry out for British migrants the functions for which the State was responsible." A new plan was devised to address state and Commonwealth responsibilities. The Commonwealth would supply the NSL "with officers to carry out for foreign migrants functions similar to those performed on its behalf by the State's officers."[126] Despite misgivings that this could generate competition for resources within the NSL, the plan proceeded effectively. The NSL's annual report stated that:

> The Constitution of the League covers all new settlers to Queensland no matter from whence they come, and the League has extended its direct assistance to an increasing number of Non-British Migrants….action is being taken to endeavour to give to Non-British new settlers similar personalised attention to that given to British new settlers.[127]

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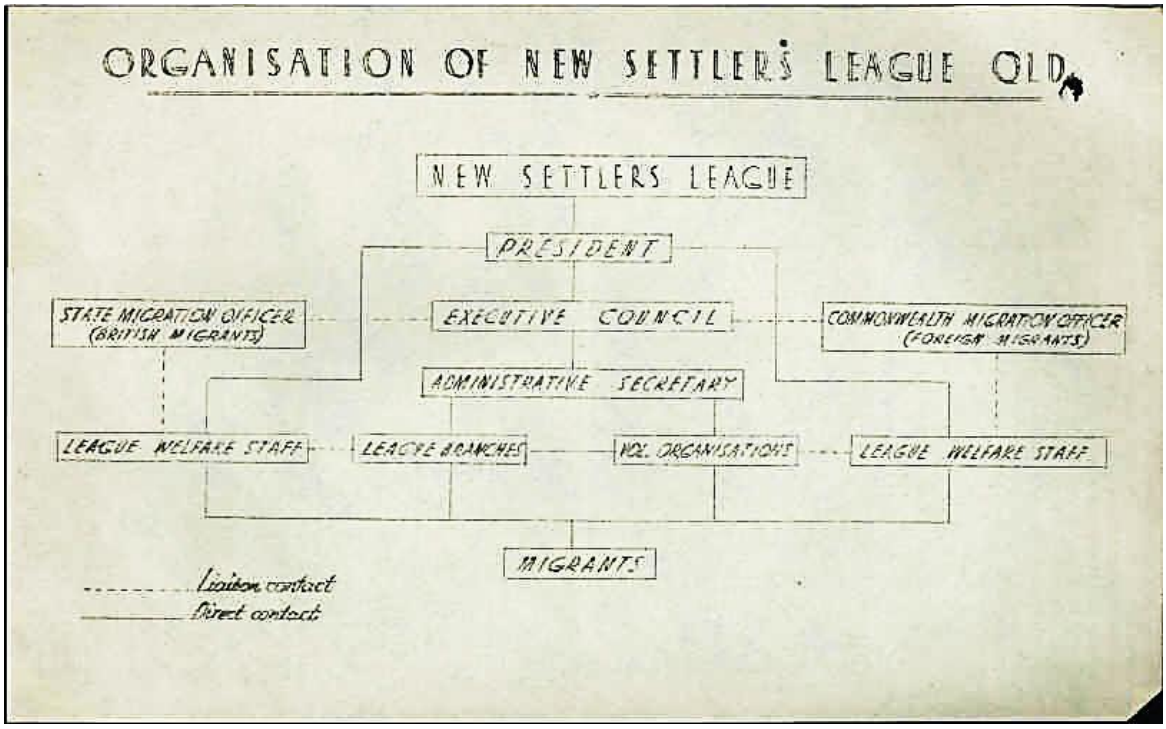
[125] "New Australians at Home in Townsville," *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 10 January 1950, 4.
[126] NAA: J25, 1950/7601, J Cliffe to Dept of Immigration, 18 July 1950.
[127] *Ibid.,* New Settlers' League President's Report, 1950.

In actuality, the NSL had been adapting its role and tending to all immigrants for some time. A late 1940s NSL recipe book, *Hands Across the Table: Recipes from New and Old Australians*, illustrates NSL efforts to adapt to the changing nature of its work.[128] All former NSL publications, such as *Queensland Fruit and How to Use It*, were for immigrants to learn about Australian culture, whereas this book offered information contributed by immigrants about their food and culture from which Australians could learn.



Pl.16 July 1950 organisational chart depicting the NSL structure and relationships - either through liaison (dotted lines) or direct contact (solid lines) - with Commonwealth and state governments, volunteer organisations, branches and members. As it was prior to WWI, funding was still shared between Commonwealth and state, but, as well as British migrants, the league's structure now incorporated care for foreign migrants.[129]

Neither the government nor the NSL, however, completely relinquished their British focus. The Immigration Department reassured the Returned Servicemen's League

[128] New Settlers' League of Queensland Ipswich Branch, *Hands Across the Table: Recipes from New and Old Australians* (Ipswich, Qld: New Settlers' League Queensland, [1940s]).
[129] *Ibid.,* New Settlers' League organisational chart.

that the Commonwealth's immigration policy focus was firmly based on a preference for British settlers.[130] In 1952, Brigadier Lemaire, Townsville Immigration Centre Director, informed his superiors in Canberra of the activities being conducted for immigrants' entertainment. These included dances, Christmas and New Year parties, travel talks, and film screenings. Lemaire stressed the interest the films received weekly from the Film Library in Canberra generated. He praised their extraordinarily high standard and contribution to "an atmosphere that we are endeavouring to create at Stuart, namely one of intense British pride."[131]

British pride represents one factor that led to NSL Queensland's demise. The NSL had become an anachronism, conceived in an era of empire, Britishness and white Australia, which were now outdated ways to promote immigration. As an August 1956 newsletter illustrates, the NSL strove to remain relevant. Noting the Immigration Department's recent declaration about the term "White Australia," the NSL stated:

> White Australia policy has no official basis and it is regarded as being offensive to non-Europeans. The use of this misleading expression has been largely responsible for the misconception that has arisen in regard to Australia's established policy as it relates to non-Europeans. "White Australia Policy" as a term, does not appear in any legislation and its use is discouraged at every opportunity.[132]

Though the NSL eschewed white Australia and earnestly tended to the great influx of non-British migrants, it bore the mark of its birth. Good Neighbour Councils by contrast, were fresh, of their time and unencumbered by a legacy of 1920s-Australia attitudes.

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[130] "Choice of Migrants," *West Australian*, 3 February 1950, 16.
[131] NAA: J25, 1950/7601, L H Lemaire to Dept of Immigration, 11 November 1952.
[132] New Setters' League Queensland "Department's Views on 'White Australia Policy,'" *New Settlers' League Queensland Newsletter*, August 1956, 6.

David Wadham, NSL secretary, compiled a discussion paper for the 1958 Seventh Regional Conference convened to focus on assimilation and its difficulties. It listed the difficulties as mainly housing, employment, language, inter-group relationships, prejudice and social difficulties.[133] While earlier years saw housing and employment as two major areas of NSL's immigrant assistance, by 1958 Queensland adopted the position that these issues, though "at the root of assimilation" could "fairly be said to be outside the competence of this organization and to be the responsibility of Government."[134] The discussion paper presented the question of whether immigrants should be assisted to secure housing and employment, or whether this constituted favourable treatment that would disadvantage the "native Australian."[135]

The NSL needed to implement processes to assist large numbers of immigrants with limited or no ability to communicate in English. When NSL representative H C Moore travelled Queensland establishing branches in 1921, he informed people how important it was to attract the "desirable type" of immigrant. He cautioned against the United States' example which was "perplexed with serious problems, arising out of the fact that they had a mixed population." The country was, he claimed, "having trouble with the Slavs, the Italians, etc., simply because she had a polyglot population."[136] Addressing Queensland division's 1936 fifteenth annual conference, Fison lauded Australia's monolingual character (unmindful of Aboriginal languages) as a strength and an attraction for British migrants. "By peaceful settlement," she stated "we own a continent nearly as large as Europe, and from North to South and

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[133] David Wadham, *As They Affect the Good Neighbour Movement - What are the Major Problems of Migrant Assimilation and How Can They Be Overcome?* (Brisbane: New Settlers' League Queensland, 1958), 1.
[134] *Ibid*.
[135] *Ibid*.
[136] "New Settlers' League of Australia," *Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser*, 6 October 1921, 6.

East to West you hear the one language spoken." Comparing Australia's situation to Europe with its multiple languages, Fison submitted that Australia's forefathers had forged a legacy that should be protected and that "we should do our level best to keep it white."[137] Post-war, however, the NSL had to relinquish its precept of British whiteness and language as the standard for the right type of immigrant.

Queensland implemented a migrant education scheme which provided English-speaking classes by correspondence or through radio. Immigrants did not, however, take advantage of these as enthusiastically as government and the NSL hoped. As successful uptake depended upon "the degree of literacy in the migrant, his trade occupation, location and incentive," government conceded the classes were often unsuitable. Also noted was that many male immigrants were engaged in heavy manual work leaving them "too tired at the end of a day's labour to go out to classes."[138] Language differences meant that, to assist immigrants, NSL members, and the public, must also seek to understand them.

Reminiscent of the 1920s when Australians were asked to cease using "Pommy," in August 1949 Calwell appealed to the public to cease applying terms such as "Balts," "displaced persons," and "D. P.s" to European immigrants. He was supported by Gair, Queensland's Labour and Industry Minister, who stressed that Australia had "invited these people here, we need them, and we should do everything we can to help them to absorb the Australian way of life." Calwell, having banned such terms in his department, advocated that the "innocent victims of the war who had been displaced from their homes in Europe, be known as New Australians, new settlers, or

[137] New Settlers' League of Australia, Queensland Division, *Fifteenth Annual Conference*, 8.
[138] Wadham, *As They Affect the Good Neighbour Movement*, 2-3.

newcomers." Gair reminded Queenslanders that the NSL had been established by government to care for British immigrants, and that these immigrants preferred to be known as "New Settlers." He saw no reason why the courtesy should not be extended to European immigrants.[139] A letter to the editor of the *Courier-Mail* from "New Australian," a German immigrant who had come to Australia under the International Refugee Organisation scheme, spoke of the distress such terms had provoked when used against him and others in Germany. "When I came to Australia," he wrote:

> I hoped to get away from all this stuff for good. These were not pleasant things to remember…. I hardly need to say that I was disappointed when I found out that this undesirable title… from which I was fleeing was already here before me. I hardly can feel myself very much at home among Australians as long as I am called by an un-Australian name, just as a stranger among strangers. And I so much would like to be at home once again after all this being a foreigner.[140]

A second problem reminiscent of the 1920s confronted the NSL - the "tremendous, sometimes overpowering loneliness" among immigrants, which was causing mental health issues for some. In the post-WWII migration boom, loneliness was much greater among the non-British, non-English-speaking, especially women. Non-English-speaking male immigrants could find interaction at work or socialising afterwards, and immigrant children established social contacts at school. However, the social interaction immigrant men experienced at work was often minimal or superficial and insufficient to foster a sense of wellbeing and settlement. Some men claimed that there was little opportunity for them to develop social relationships with Australians beyond the workplace, which led to feelings of isolation and loneliness, especially for single males. The NSL was concerned by this situation for it

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[139] "Supports Plea for New Name," *Courier-Mail*, 15 August 1949, 5.
[140] *Ibid*.

considered that this was evidence of a gap in their "programme of social integration that [could] have a delaying effect on ultimate assimilation."[141]

Women faced greater difficulties "because of their being isolated in the home and because of the attitude of some nationalities towards the relationship of the wife with outside influences." Cultural attitudes often saw a husband discourage "any social intercourse between his wife and any but the closest of friends and neighbours," leaving a migrant woman "almost completely cut off from the life of the community about her."[142] The NSL's 1958 discussion paper, noting that the "more vigorous, equalititave (*sic*) atmosphere of the sexes" in Australia could "confuse and bewilder the newcomer," considered women immigrants' problems. It asked:

> Are the problems of British and non-British the same?
> If different, how? Are separate methods needed?
> Is this a sphere only for women's organizations?
> Are we doing enough in this field?
> Can we hope to change the attitude of adults to accept more readily our own standards? [143]

Helen Heney, former United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration welfare officer who had worked in European refugee camps, informed Australians about immigrants' hardships, including loneliness. Heney urged Queenslanders to be aware of immigrants in need of assistance or companionship, and to support the NSL's efforts. With the "cooperation of the churches and welfare agencies in the community, [and] good relations with state and Commonwealth immigration departments," she said, the league had "many years' experience helping British Migrants to adjust."[144]

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[141] Wadham, *As They Affect the Good Neighbour Movement*, 5.
[142] *Ibid.,* 3-6.
[143] *Ibid.,* 5.
[144] Helen Heney, "Queensland and the New Migrant," *Central Queensland Herald* (Rockhampton), 5 August 1948, 21.

The NSL's 1958 report also detailed concerns about the NSL's future that had been hovering for almost a decade. At Australia's first Citizenship Convention in January 1950, the recently formed Good Neighbour Council was formally launched. As the NSL had been in 1921, the GNC was a Commonwealth initiative. With the NSL still operating in Queensland, and New South Wales where it had been revived several years earlier, the GNC began operations in all other states and the Australian Capital Territory. The New South Wales NSL yielded to the GNC in 1955, but Queensland was determined to retain its name and identity. While Queensland NSL remained independent, it co-operated with the GNC's Commonwealth-appointed national co-ordinator, John Massey. Massey was appointed in October 1949 to organise the first Citizenship Convention and expedite the "formation of local Committees throughout the Commonwealth to assist in the assimilation of newcomers to Australia."[145] In April 1950, Massey accepted Constance Clayton's invitation to visit the NSL, after which a joint meeting of the NSL and GNC's was convened. Both organisations continued in this manner for several years.[146]

The GNC's roles differed, however, from the NSL's original objectives. "The Good Neighbour Movement," stated the handbook, "is a nation-wide, voluntary organisation formed with the basic objective of assisting the satisfactory assimilation of every migrant into the national family." For the GNC's purposes assimilation was defined as "the process of introducing new settlers into the local population so that the benefits may be mutual." Members were to facilitate assimilation through "mutual understanding, consideration, tolerance and goodwill" and by minimising

[145] NAA: J25, 1950/7601, T H E Heyes, Dept of Immigration to CIO Brisbane, 12 October 1949.
[146] *Ibid.*, Correspondence between Dept of Immigration and CIO Brisbane, April - May 1950.

"personal prejudices or fears" between Australians and immigrants, and between immigrant groups. They should help solve immigrants' personal difficulties; allow "consideration for [their] spiritual, moral, educational, vocational and cultural needs"; and encourage all, "British and non-British, to understand their rights and responsibilities as Australians and to the non-British to accept the privileges and obligations of citizenship."[147]

Indications of the NSL's impending demise as an independent organisation were clear, however, by 1958. Though Wainwright stated in the 1957-58 report that he felt assured the NSL was "working along the lines envisaged when the Good Neighbour Movement was established," the year saw a new constitution drafted and passed. The "principles of the organisation remain … unaltered," stated Wainwright, but "methods and procedures" were streamlined. Insecurity was evident as Wainwright addressed criticism of the NSL's organisation and participation in multiple conferences. Arguing these were important for bringing people together, informing them, building good will and generating ideas, he held up the NSL's accomplishment of its objectives as justification. "The only genuine test of our effectiveness" he advanced:

> Is whether we can feel with justice, at the close of a year's operations that the lot of the new settler in the community has been improved, the Australian born part of our population is better educated and that the many varied elements that make up the Australian people have drawn more closely together.[148]

[147] Commonwealth Dept of Immigration, *A Handbook of the Good Neighbour Movement: To Assist People Interested in the Assimilation of Migrants* (Melbourne: Commonwealth Dept of Immigration, c.1955), np.
[148] New Settlers' League Queensland, *Thirty-Seventh Annual Report 1957-1958*, np.

Though not claiming to have completely attained these objectives, Wainwright felt confident that the NSL had come nearer than ever to doing so. In concluding the report, he addressed NSL members and associates:

> We are all part of a Movement that is…helping Australia to move along the road towards the maturity of Nationhood. Know as you work that the tasks we are performing are infinitely worth while and…we can get nothing from it…but the sure and certain knowledge that we shall hand on to future generations of Australians a great tradition of service to the community, the Nation and to humanity.[149]

Wadham, NSL general-secretary, had written in 1958 that the vital importance of assimilating immigrants made obvious the "necessity for an organisation such as ours." He attested to great satisfaction with members' contributions, and noted that the NSL worked as "a full and respected partner" with governments. "It's a successful partnership," he affirmed, "it works because we want it to. This must surely augur well for the future."[150] Despite their efforts, 1959 witnessed the NSL, if more in name than practice, pass out of existence, subsumed by the GNC.

Pl.17 Having begun in Victoria in March 1921, by 1959 the NSL existed no more. Good Neighbour Councils now fulfilled the role across Australia, including Queensland.[151]

[149] *Ibid*.
[150] *Ibid*.
[151] NAA, Brisbane: J25, 1961/9500, 1) Assimilation - 2) New Settlers' League - 3) General Policy, 1952-1965, GNC Queensland letterhead, September 1959.

Having worked alongside the GNC for nine years, the NSL could no longer resist pressure to fall in with the organisation operating in all other states. In 1960 Wainwright opened a GNC of Queensland conference, declaring "our Good Neighbour Council this year is having its 40th Birthday." "Originally as you know," he continued:

> It was the New Settlers' League, and now in very recent times has taken over the Commonwealth name of the Good Neighbour Council, but we in Queensland, have been continuously engaged in constitutional work of promoting migration and the welfare of the migrant for virtually an unbroken 40 years.[152]

On 1 May 1959, Queensland NSL officially changed its name.[153] In perhaps another instance of the Queensland chauvinism his NSL predecessors exhibited, Wainwright claimed the NSL had appropriated for itself the Good Neighbour Council title and declared the NSL's continued existence under the new title. Despite its singular longevity, all mention of NSL Queensland did eventually fade.

The longevity of the NSL's Queensland division resulted from a combination of factors that distinguished it from other state divisions. Queensland's geographical location meant any threat of invasion confronted it more immediately than most other states. This strongly motivated it to fill its empty spaces, particularly the north. Queensland's distance and isolation had developed in its people and government a distinctively determined character forged by survival in a harsh, extensively-tropical environment. This generated a cordial relationship between the NSL and successive state governments conducive to the league receiving continued financial support. Queensland's emptiness and tropical location, however, were also promoted as an

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[152] Wainwright, in "The Good Neighbour Council of Queensland Conference Report," 1960.
[153] "Change of Name for Q'ld. League," *Good Neighbour*, 1 April 1959, 8.

attraction to migrants. The contribution made by individual members and office bearers was pivotal to Queensland division's success. Queensland benefited from the tenacity, commitment and notable contribution of members such as Garland, Pike and Clayton, whose roles will be explored in the following chapter.

CHAPTER NINE:

"A Fine Worker"

Lady Eliza Mitchell's obituary in the *Argus* on 2 October 1948 described her as "always a fine worker for charity."[1] Listed among many organisations she devoted herself to, was the New Settlers' League. Mitchell was one of thousands who, over many years, assisted immigrants through the NSL and its affiliated organisations. Aspiring to establish a thousand branches across Australia, the league needed to acquire an extensive membership to conduct its operations. In all five states where it operated, the league's appeal for members drew a positive response.[2] Though a few league members who were integral to its operations received some remuneration, the overwhelming majority were volunteers. Exact membership figures are difficult to ascertain but as there were over six hundred league branches at its peak, membership would have numbered in the thousands. Historical records for most members and their contributions are scarce, but sufficient records exist for many of the league's more noted figures to provide a meaningful account of league members' work. This chapter establishes how the league recruited members, who responded and why. In so doing, it reveals the significance for the league of women and their contributions.

Recruitment

When Britain joined the war, Australia's Defence Minister, Edward Millen, declared Australia would support and "unite with her in the preservation of the common traditions and the joint inheritance." Australia, "proceeding with a strong and

[1] "Obituary," *Argus*, 2 October 1948, 5.
[2] "League of Help," *Brisbane Courier*, 14 June 1921, 8.

vigorous nationhood within the Empire," supported the "liberty-loving Empire" of which it formed part. Millen, boasting that Australia was "blessed with sunny skies and natural resources, such as few parts of the Empire possess," declared support for the "fight for freedom."[3] After the war, Australia resolved to defend the nation and its ideals - for which soldiers had fought and died and civilians had volunteered incalculable hours - through nation-building and strengthening the British Empire. Following an extensive tour of Australia, the Prince of Wales delivered an address in London in 1920 in which he exhorted Australians to support immigration to shore up nation and empire. "Every nation of the Empire," he urged, "should pull together with the true spirit of comradeship and co-operation" to support the cause of empire, particularly migration. He called for co-operation to welcome migrants "as friends and comrades the moment they arrive, and make them feel at home." In concluding he asserted this was the duty of "the present generation, who have fought and won the great victory, that their work shall not be in vain."[4] Three months later the NSL was established and organisers appealed to Australians to support the nation-building immigration campaign.

The link between supporting immigration as a patriotic duty, and honouring those who had fought, was strengthened when the RSSILA endorsed the league. At an RSSILA meeting in Rockhampton in October 1921, "co-operation with the New Settlers' League was unanimously and enthusiastically pledged."[5] At a civic reception in Perth for Hughes, who had just returned from an Imperial Conference, RSSILA Western Australia president, H E Bolton, hailed him as "the best friend the diggers had in Australia." Hughes, effused Bolton, "loved Australia and the Empire,

[3] "Ready - Aye, Ready," *Argus*, 6 August 1914, 8.
[4] "Prince of Wales," *Australasian*, 11 December 1920, 46.
[5] "New Settlers' League," *Morning Bulletin*, 14 October 1921, 7.

and would do the best he could" for both. Amid tumultuous applause Hughes rose to speak of Australia's primary need - more people. More people would reduce the £400,000,000 war debt which was a justifiable "price to pay for liberty." In speaking of the horrors Australians had escaped due to the "valour of the Australian soldiers who fought" for them, Hughes explained that the "burden of war debt is the price you are paying for liberty, and for escaping scathless (*sic*)" from the greatest war the world had seen. The most dangerous time, he warned, was when, "the battle won, the garrison lays itself down on the field, supposing all is well." Insisting that if it was to defend itself, Australia needed strengthening, Hughes offered British immigration as the solution to maintaining the free, prosperous Australia so many had "fought and bled for."[6]

To attract volunteers across the nation, Gullett and NSL organisers emphasised the patriotic nature of the league's work. Queensland organiser Herbert Moore informed the public that the league aimed to settle British people in Australia to "increase production and form a garrison against possible invasion." The campaign was crucial, he stressed, for national prosperity, national debt and the "freedom of Australia."[7] Moore was impressed that people in Roma took the initiative to form a branch before he had even visited to assist. His address to the townspeople, "characterised by marked enthusiasm throughout," inspired more to join.[8] As citizens of Wellington, New South Wales, assembled to form a branch, league organiser, Mr McClenaughan, assured them it mattered not "if the meeting was only attended by eight or ten. There were plenty of branches which started with only a few, who have

[6] "Civic Reception in Perth," *West Australian*, 23 September 1921, 7-8.
[7] "New Settlers' League of Australia," *Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser*, 6 October 1921, 6.
[8] "New Settlers' League of Australia," *Western Star and Roma Advertiser*, 23 November 1921, 2.

now over 100 members. The great thing was to get started."[9] In Coraki, New South Wales, organiser Lieutenant-Colonel Griffiths advised an assembly that the "primary object of his visit was to solicit their sympathy and active co-operation in the objects of the New Settlers' League."[10] When the Primary Producers' Parliament met in Western Australia in August 1922, president, Alexander Monger, encouraged the group to realise that vigorous immigration was "imperative if Australia was to continue to enjoy the freedom and liberty she now possessed," and entreated that everything be done to aid the NSL's success.[11]

Along with public rallies and meetings, propaganda material was considered an effective method of informing the public about the league and of enlisting support. Gullett advised Hughes that, to facilitate branch establishment, promotional leaflets and copies of state divisions' constitutions should be printed for distribution across numerous locations. It would also "be necessary to insert advertisements in the various country newspapers giving publicity to the inaugural branch meetings."[12] Gullett wrote to Hughes in November expressing uncertainty about whether to proceed with forming large numbers of branches before a steady stream of immigrants was established and public interest aroused. He "feared that if this happened the branches of the League might collapse for lack of employment," public opinion might be alienated, and interest in the league might wane. With public interest and branch numbers growing rapidly, however, Gullett forged ahead with the organising and propaganda.[13]

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[9] "New Settlers' League," *Wellington Times* (NSW), 17 November 1921, 2.
[10] "New Settlers' League," *Richmond River Herald and Northern Districts Advertiser*, 4 October 1921, 4.
[11] "Producers' Parliament," *West Australian*, 9 August 1922, 7.
[12] NAA: A458, G154/18 PART 1, Gullett and PM's Department, 12 July 1921.
[13] *Ibid.,* Gullett to Hughes, 25 May 1922.

Though Gullett and the travelling representatives generated a substantial league membership base, as an umbrella organisation the league was also supported by its affiliated organisations' members. In Victoria, for example, the VL, under President Lady Mitchell, unhesitatingly offered its services to the NSL. Mitchell held executive roles in and was a foundation member of the VL, the NSL's Victorian division, and many other volunteer-based organisations.[14] As such, she fostered broad co-operation with the NSL. In May 1921 she was confident that as NSL branches formed across the country, VL members would serve on its local committees. Because many VL members lived in country areas, Mitchell believed the NSL could "count on them for much sympathy, understanding of local conditions, and practical help."[15] Across all divisions, the NSL received strong, wide-ranging support from many organisations. Numerous women's clubs and groups, such as the VL, Women's Reform League, and the newly-formed Country Women's Association (CWA), readily co-operated with the NSL.

The league described itself as a "non-political and non-sectarian" organisation which knew "neither class nor party, neither sect nor politics."[16] League members were "drawn from all sections of the community, representing all classes of industry and country work," effused C F Crosby, Victorian division treasurer.[17] In actuality, however, a large number of male league representatives were businessmen and politicians from all levels of government. Men usually occupied the majority of

[14] Elise B Histed, "Mitchell, Lady Eliza Fraser (1864-1948)," *ADB*, National Centre of Biography, ANU, published first in hardcopy 1986, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mitchell-lady-eliza-fraser-7798/text13281.
[15] "Helping New Settlers: League Looks to Women," *Daily Herald*, 23 May 1921, 4.
[16] "New Settlers' League," *Gundagai Times and Tumut, Adelong and Murrumbidgee District Advertiser* (NSW), 7 October 1921, 2.
"New Settlers' League," *Eastern Districts Chronicle* (York, WA), 21 October 1921, 5.
[17] NAA: A458, G154/18 PART 1, Notes of an NSL deputation to Bruce, 13 April 1923.

league executive positions. Michael Roe observes of the Victorian division that, while "Lady Masson and Lady Mitchell endorsed the NSL and their sex sustained it, the professional organiser in Victoria was one Archibald Gilchrist."[18] Though women constituted the vast majority of ordinary members, some did hold executive positions. A decade after the NSL began, the NCW's executive meeting extolled the virtue of its work and noted that "half the [NSL] executive consisted of women."[19] Women who held executive positions were often well educated and single or wives of professional or notable figures.

During his recruitment campaign Gullett appealed to all women, married or single, particularly those in rural areas, to join the league. Sydney columnist "Urbania" supported the call for country women to interest themselves in immigration because, for them, it could mean companionship, "possible sweethearts," and domestic help.[20] Gullett sought to recruit women volunteers by addressing meetings such as those of the NCW branch. Alex Clydesdale, Western Australia's NSL President, implored women to join the league and form Women's Committees to address the "appalling" loneliness felt by many migrant women.[21] Ladies' Committees were duly established within NSL divisions to attend particularly to women immigrants' needs and to welfare activities more broadly. Though Urbania's recommendations for joining the NSL possibly appealed to some women, motives for volunteering were more complex than just companionship or domestic expediency. Many Australian women had recently gained experiences beyond the traditional scope of domesticity through

[18] Roe, *Australia, Britain, and Migration*, 247.
[19] "National Council of Women," *SMH*, 10 August 1931, 3.
[20] Urbania, "Our Home Page," *Sydney Stock and Station Journal*, 14 June 1921, 3.
[21] "New Settlers' League Conference: Address by Premier," *West Australian*, 8 August 1922, 7.

wartime employment; joining the league afforded opportunities to continue making a meaningful and constructive civic contribution.

Motives for volunteering

The ABS furnishes information which, albeit drawn from contemporary society, provides insights into motives for volunteering. The 2006 report shows participants' responses to "Reasons for being a volunteer" condensed into altruistic and personal reasons. Reasons given were: to be active, for social contact, or, to use skills and experience. Reasons cited most frequently were: to help others or the community, for personal satisfaction, or, to do something worthwhile, with the oldest age groups citing the latter reason as particularly important. [22] Sara Dolnicar and Melanie Randle ascribe the combination of the three motives as characteristic of "classic volunteers," one of six "psychographic segments of volunteers in Australia" (the other five being: dedicated, personally involved, volunteers for personal satisfaction, altruists, and niche volunteers).[23] Their findings reveal that classic volunteers are usually among the older groups, with over 50% being past forty-five, and over 20% being past sixty. Of these, the great majority are Australian-born; over one third are not employed; they readily incur high expenses related to volunteering; and most volunteer very actively with almost 50% giving over 140 hours annually.[24] The classic volunteer profile is recognisable in many NSL members and, as over time immigrants also became volunteers, they would fit the "personally involved" psychographic segment.

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[22] "Voluntary Work Australia," ABS, 2006, 10-11, http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/C52862862C082577CA25731000198615/$File/44410_2006.pdf.
[23] Sara Dolnicar and Melanie Randle, "What Motivates Which Volunteers? Psychographic Heterogeneity Among Volunteers in Australia," *Voluntas* 18, (2007): 135.
[24] *Ibid.,* 146.

A 2007 study found that, consistently over time, there were two demographic factors associated with volunteering - older age and higher education levels.[25] Research conducted in the United States showed that loss of social roles as people age can prompt them to volunteer and that "attitudinal expressions of compassion and good will toward others can also serve as expressions of generativity that promote meaningfulness and well-being."[26] Cora Baldock's limited, late-1980s study revealed that, traditionally, volunteers involved in day-to-day service delivery were predominantly women. While men and women were represented roughly equally in administrative or co-ordinator roles, women were underrepresented on formal boards. The study also found that women were typically older, and a large minority were unmarried.[27] Oppenheimer notes that, historically, women volunteers were mostly educated, articulate middle- and upper-class leaders "concerned with the position of women and reform in a range of social, political and economic arenas."[28] This is borne out among female NSL volunteers, many of whom had extensive volunteering backgrounds, were from well-to-do families, well-educated, and not involved in child-rearing at the time of volunteering.

Historically, devoting time or resources to volunteer work was difficult for women raising children. Hera Cook, among others, noted that "the demands of reproduction shaped…the working lives of the vast majority of women before the 1960s."[29] The

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[25] Edward Helmes and Anita Govindan, "Differences between Older Adult Volunteers and Non-Volunteers in Depression and Self-Efficacy," *Australian Journal on Volunteering* 12, no.2, (2007): 31.
[26] Eva Kahana et al, "Altruism, Helping, and Volunteering: Pathways to Well-Being in Late Life," *Journal of Aging and Health* 25, no.1 (2013): 160.
[27] Cora Vellekoop Baldock, *Volunteers in Welfare* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1990), 28, 43. Baldock's study was restricted to welfare organisations in WA.
[28] Oppenheimer, "Voluntary Work."
[29] Cook, "Unseemly and Unwomanly Behaviour," 125.

"ideal of women as both refined and refining was dominant during the nineteenth century and early twentieth century," states James Walter. Ideologically, women were tied firmly to the home where their task as wives was to "provide a nurturing, elevated environment to soften the rigours of the public world their husbands inhabited." As mothers, it was their duty "to bear and raise virtuous children to populate the nation state with white citizens." He further adds, "accommodations reached between labour and capital in the early Commonwealth period marginalised women."[30] The NSL was established at a time when women had been encouraged to participate in the workforce during war, but lost their wartime employment when returned soldiers resumed positions and war-related endeavours, such as munitions factories, ceased.

Australian women in the aftermath of war's social upheaval were largely denied opportunities to find meaningful occupation or contribute to nation-building through employment. In 1919 James Hitchins, Western Australia State Labour Bureau Secretary, made "interesting comments on the invasion by women of avenues of employment once sacred to men," in which he argued that:

> Men following clerical work who are out of employment have been finding it very difficult to obtain suitable positions.…. The difficulty… is probably accounted for by the large number of females engaged at present.... To an impartial observer, it does not seem just that these female employees should be holding well paid positions while men whose proper sphere is office work … are … unemployed. The whole effect of this upon young women is that domestic duties, which, after all, are their proper sphere, become a matter of minor importance.… The tendency of office life and good salaries for young women is to weaken their desire for domestic life, and even marriage.[31]

[30] James Walter, *What Were They Thinking?: The Politics of Ideas in Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press Ltd, 2010), 162-163.
[31] "Women and Office Work: Weakened Desire for Marriage: Depriving Married Men of Employment: Government Officer's Outspoken Comments," *West Australian*, 9 August 1919, 8.

Many women with dependants who could not "leave their homes for more than a few hours daily," wrote the *SMH*, were "thrown out of employment," and the Government Employment Bureau stated there was no demand for them.[32] In 2007 Mark Hearn, discussing "liberal citizenship in post-Federation Australia," in relation to female workers found that a "meaningful sense of citizenship required economic rights and economic independence as a basis for participation in the public sphere, a civic participation offered to men but denied to women."[33] Oppenheimer observes that "voluntary work has always been important for women and they continue to dominate the volunteering statistics in Australia."[34]

In 1922 Harry Colebatch, Western Australia Education Minister and Acting Premier, accepted an NCW invitation to address their annual meeting upon the assigned topic, "Woman's Place in the Development of the Country." Colebatch claimed that "the highest expression of womanhood was conveyed in the one word 'home' [and] a woman was doing her greatest service to the State when she was making her surroundings like home." Colebatch, contemplating a potential gender imbalance that could result for Britain and Australia from Australia's preference for farm workers, emphasised the importance of bringing out families. He believed the most valuable contribution Australian women could make to the state was to work with immigrant women by extending to "the newcomer the hospitality of her house and the encouragement of her smile."[35] For women, encouraged to stay out of the workforce and do their best to welcome immigrants, the NSL afforded an opportunity to contribute to civic life.

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[32] "Unemployment," *SMH*, 19 February 1919, 12.
[33] Mark Hearn, "Making Liberal Citizens: Justice Higgins and His Witnesses," *Labour History* 93 (November 2007): 57.
[34] Oppenheimer, "Voluntary Work."
[35] "Woman's Part: Speech by Acting Premier," *West Australian*, 1 June 1922, 7.

For unmarried women - aberrations of the ideal woman construct - the NSL offered opportunities to be innovative, productive members of society and a very few were fortunate to secure paid positions. Miss Lillian Foster was employed for eight years as the Victorian Welcome and Welfare Committee Secretary. Foster had served during the war in France for four years as a Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) Commandant, in Constantinople with the Russian relief effort, and on relief work in Lemnos, Greece. Her sense of civic duty and commitment were evident when, during fiscal uncertainty in 1931-1932, she worked without remuneration for over seven months until Masson intervened on her behalf to secure payment of her wages owed. In Queensland, twenty-five year old Miss Constance "Connie" Clayton began work as a remunerated clerk-typist on 21 July 1921, the division's first day of operation. From 1929 to 1951she was league secretary, after which she accepted the position of Senior Welfare Officer with the State Migration Office. During her thirty years' NSL service, Clayton worked never less than 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, organising social events and entertainment for new settlers, offering practical advice, comfort, and a sympathetic ear. The SOSBW's 1931 report noted immigrants often singled out Clayton and remarked upon her "numberless kindnesses."[36]

Feasibly, Foster's war service inclined her to join the NSL. Research in the United States has demonstrated links between military service and volunteering. As "volunteering takes resources, such as time, money, and participatory skills," the research confirmed that people in higher socio-economic groups, with higher income and education levels, are more likely to volunteer. Military service, however, is a

[36] Una Monk, *New Horizons: A Hundred Years of Women's Migration*, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1963), 135.

"venue for developing the skills and acquiring the resources necessary for volunteering."[37] League documents that furnish an indication of membership, such as handbooks' lists of branch contacts, show that in the post-war climate many NSL men were ex-servicemen. Some, such as Gilchrist, Collum, Lieutenant-Colonel J S Denton, Western Australia general-secretary, and Maplestone offered distinguished service in the war, with Maplestone being awarded a Military Cross for Gallantry in the Field.[38]

Several key NSL figures, including women, for whom military service was not an option, had served during the war in alternative ways. Garland served as Chaplain in Egypt and Palestine during 1918-19.[39] At Defence Minister George Pearce's request, Garland went to investigate the burying of Australian casualties. Whilst there, alarmed at soldiers instigating a riot in Cairo after they had been robbed while utilising brothel services, he investigated how soldiers spent their leisure time.[40] In 1915, Gullett accepted an appointment as Australia's official correspondent with the British and French armies. He returned to Australia in 1916 and enlisted as a gunner but in 1917 Charles Bean selected him to command the Australian War Records sub-section in Egypt. In 1918, he again came to official attention when the AIF in Palestine requested Gullett for the position of Australian war correspondent.[41] Though Charles Merrett was disappointed not to serve overseas during the war, he led a distinguished military life having served the St Kilda Rifles from 1880 until

[37] Rebecca Nesbit and David A Reingold, "Soldiers to Citizens: The Link between Military Service and Volunteering," *Public Administration Review* 71, no.1 (2011): 74.
[38] "Gallantry in the Field," *Argus*, 24 May 1918, 9.
[39] "Personal and Anecdotal," *Sunday Mail*, 8 May 1932, 2.
[40] Moses and Davis, *Anzac Day Origins*, 178.
[41] Hill, "Gullett, Sir Henry Somer."

retiring as Colonel in 1920.[42] Captain Eustace Pike also led a long military life and saw active service during the war. He continued serving upon return until "placed on the retired list" in December 1941.[43] Several female NSL members contributed to the war through volunteer services or as VADs. Oppenheimer cites the two world wars as landmarks for Australian women and volunteer work. With gender restrictions on WWI military service, women focused on a diversity of volunteer work.[44] As the voluntary sector was traditionally where women were most able to participate in the public arena, they had long proved a valuable resource, but volunteering could also serve a personal purpose.[45]

Galvanising grief

The plethora of twenty-first century grief and healing websites offer some explanation of grieving people's motives for volunteering. "At some point," most sites suggest, "you may feel the need to channel your pain…time and energy…into something productive and meaningful - through the gift of volunteering."[46] Volunteering, found Ruben Flores, can be a "means of regaining meaning, structure and belonging after experiences of social dislocation such as retirement and bereavement."[47] World War One wreaked devastating social dislocation and bereavement upon Australians. With 416,809 enlistments from a population of

[42] Margaret Vines, "Merrett, Sir Charles Edward (1863-1948)," *ADB*, National Centre of Biography, ANU, published first in hardcopy 1986, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/merrett-sir-charles-edward-7560.
[43] NAA, Brisbane: J1795, 3/328, Pike Eustace Royston Baum, 1903-1943, Military Officer's record of service.
[44] Oppenheimer, "Voluntary Work."
[45] Oppenheimer, "Lady Helen Munro Ferguson," 275.
[46] For example, "Healing Grief through the Gift of Volunteering," Grief Healing, http://www.griefhealingblog.com/2010/11/healing-grief-through-gift-of.html.
[47] Ruben Flores, "From Personal Troubles to Public Compassion: Charity Shop Volunteering as a Practice of Care," *Sociological Review* 62, no.2, 2014: 384.

around five million, embarkations totalled 331,781, with 215,585 reported casualties.[48] Having sustained more than 60,000 deaths and over 150,000 injured, few families remained untouched by tragedy, grief or trauma. The major assault Australia sustained on its male population saw the country bearing an unprecedented legacy of grief.

Bruno Cabanes describes the generalised mourning after the war using concentric "social circles of grief" that begin with soldiers on battlefields. The second circle consists of soldiers' immediate and extended family and the third is that of friends. Additionally, all social structures and institutions, for example, sporting teams, universities and churches, became communities of mourning, with personal and public grief inevitably intertwining. As countries sought to honour and remember those who served, collective and individual grief generated a profusion of rituals and memorials.[49] Australia, too, established public and private rituals and memorials to honour its dead. Garland is credited with being instrumental in establishing Anzac Day ceremonies and rituals.[50] Charles Bean, Australia's Official First World War Historian, originally conceived the idea for the Australian War Memorial - which opened in 1941- during the war.[51]

"In Memoriam" notices in newspapers enabled the bereaved to share their personal grief, incurred for a national cause, in a public forum. The notices were so abundant

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[48] Ernest Scott, "Appendix No.5," in "Australia During the War," in *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Vol XI*, 7th ed, (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1941), 874.
[49] Bruno Cabanes, "The Great War, Grief, and Memory" (lecture presented at Yale University, New Haven, United States, 31 October 2007), http://oyc.yale.edu/transcript/370/hist-276.
[50] Wendy Mansfield, "Garland, David John (1864-1939)," *ADB*, National Centre of Biography, ANU, published first in hardcopy 1981, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/garland-david-john-6278.
[51] "Origins of the Australian War Memorial," Australian War Memorial, https://www.awm.gov.au/about/origins/.

that in August 1919 the Perth *Sunday Times* published an article on the phenomenon. "These In Memoriam notices," it suggested:

> Provide an interesting study of a somewhat melancholy cast. In some cases there is an obvious attempt to work in a little self-advertisement at the expense of the dead soldier. But for the most part the advertisements embody love and sorrow, more or less deeply felt, and if the expression is sometimes clumsy the emotion is real [and] leaps from the heart.[52]

Quoted were some poignant notices inserted by young widows, many with children. Jen Hawksley ascertained, though, that over 80% of those who served on battlefields in the war were young, unmarried men. Of those enlisted, over half were younger than twenty-four and by 1918 the median age was twenty. This meant the "burden of bereavement fell mainly on the shoulders of ageing parents."[53]

Acknowledged as having borne tremendous burdens during and after the war, with family members killed or injured, and losing war-time employment, women strove to remould and rebuild their lives and families. During the war, observes Joy Damousi, "women bonded in a collective identity" born of grief and loss.[54] Despite the return to some semblance of peacetime normality with war's end, the loss remained. In her ALP Women's Central Committee *Labor Call* column, Miss Jean Daley wrote:

> Peace has returned to a sorrowing world, but peace is not going to bring healing and contentment to the sore hearts of the mothers, wives, and sweethearts of the men who forever sleep in distant France or Gallipoli… now the thunder of the guns is silenced… we can hear clearly that which we knew was underneath the din and clash of arms, the groans and wailings of the women… mothers who have seen their sons march away in the glorious youth for which they had labored, and who will never see those sons again; wives shorn of the men who should have been their buckler and shield… sweethearts robbed in their springtime of the mates who could have taught them the splendour and glory of full womanhood.[55]

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[52] "In Memoriam: Pathos and Bathos," *Sunday Times* (Perth), 17 August 1919, 1.
[53] Jen Hawksley, "'In the Shadow of War': Australian Parents and the Legacy of Loss, 1915-1935," *Journal of Australian Studies* 33, no.2, (2009): 181.
[54] Joy Damousi, *The Labour of Loss: Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement in Australia* (Cambridge, UK: CUP, 1999), 23.
[55] Jean Daley, "We Women," *Labor Call* (Melbourne), 5 December 1918, 9.

Daley's public expression of how bereft war had left women also indicated that peace alone could not restore their sense of purpose and wellbeing. For many women at this time, identity, purpose and time centred on their roles as wives and mothers. War left many women bereft of spouses or sons, and of purpose, meaning and occupation. "The notion that motherhood was the only authentic occupation for women," Katie Holmes explains:

> Was consistently reinforced by public discussions, not only in women's magazines and in the information booklets distributed by the infant and maternal welfare movement, but also in the short stories carried by newspapers and magazines.[56]

As children grew up and left home, women's workloads often lightened and allowed them more leisure time.[57] For some, this could result in a void; for women who lost adult children during the war, loss of purpose and self-affirmation could be profound.

Canadian historian, Christine Bourchier, wrote that the "suppression of mourning from 1914-1918 acted to delay outpourings of grief but ultimately could not deny their emergence, in various forms, in the post-war period."[58] During and immediately after the war, mothers' grief meshed with patriotism and nation-building aspirations, as Constance Gittins's poem, "To Our Australian Mothers" shows:

> Oh! Mothers whose hearts are aching
> For mothers whose grief is new,
> Will you give, as they gave, unstinting,
> As women who love can do?
> Their all? For the Homeland's glory,
> Their all? for a hero's grave,
> For the courage that makes our nation
> Reflects in its womanhood brave.

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[56] Katie Holmes, *Spaces in Her Day: Australian Women's Diaries 1920s-1930s* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1995), 79.
[57] *Ibid.,* 82.
[58] Christine Bourchier, "Rituals of Mourning: Bereavement, Grief and Mourning in the First World War," *Gateway* 4 (Spring 2003): np, http://homepage.usask.ca/~jgz816/archive13.html.

> Ay! give of your best, such riches
> As women to women can give,
> Not only your gold and silver
> Will help another to live,
> Love, borne of a common suffering,
> A common sorrow may heal,
> And peace - as the incense of prayer,
> War stricken mothers may feel.
>
> Ay! give of your best - such comfort
> As you in deep need have known,
> Such prayer as wrung from the anguished hearts
> Of mothers whose grief is one;
> For one in our call to duty,
> And one in our strength to bear,
> May we succour the noble sons
> And the mothers who've done their share![59]

At the time, explains Stephen Garton, nationalist discourses were emerging in British settler dominions and nationalism was the "ideological glue that held settlers societies together in the immediate postwar years." Nationalism in Australia "became a means of both acknowledging the contribution of veterans in making the nation and tying veterans back into the civil society."[60] Grief was soon ignored in Australia, writes Damousi, and "mourning was channelled into various activities, such as political agitation, social networks, and shaping new identities."[61]

To suppress grief and work instead to build a strong nation was encouraged. In 1920 F A Wells wrote of:

> A new and splendid spirit of progress among Australian women; combined with a determination - born of the sacrifice made by Australia's sixty-thousand gallant dead now lying in foreign lands - to lock up in private mental cupboards, personal griefs and, at times, almost overwhelming sense of loss of their greatly beloved and for the sake of Australia's sons and daughters, now growing up; take a hand in, and forge ahead with, the

[59] Constance Gittins, "To Our Australian Mothers," *Brisbane Courier*, 17 August 1914, 7.
[60] Stephen Garton, "Demobilization and Empire: Empire Nationalism and Soldier Citizenship in Australia After the First World War - in Dominion Context," *Journal of Contemporary History* 50, no.1, (2015): 124.
[61] Damousi, *The Labour of Loss*, 1.

> important work awaiting us - the development of our nation's great resources.[62]

Gittins, in her poem, also refers to collective grief and support. Collectivity among grieving women was also evident in civil institutions reliant upon volunteers to rebuild post-war Australia, such as the NSL. Oppenheimer has observed that a precedent for women's volunteerism had been set during the war when women "dealt with the uncertainty … by involving themselves in a range of patriotic funds and volunteer work."[63] After the war, voluntary work continued to appeal to women. It was promoted as both a salve for grief and a means of validating the sacrifices made by the men.

A *SMH* article published a few days after the declaration of peace in November 1918, reflected upon women's roles during the war and stated:

> When the history of the war is written it will not be enough to devote a chapter to the efforts of the women; their work is part of the warp and woof of the whole…. The theory that 'men must work and women must weep' has lost currency since 1914. The women have stifled their tears and found something to do beyond repining.[64]

War's deleterious effects on women arose not only from the deaths of loved ones, but also from anxiety at having loved ones fighting far from home. At a Rockhampton Anzac Commemoration in 1920, Capt F Rhodes stated that "no man could realize what it had meant to … women to send their loved ones while they themselves remained at home waiting patiently for the mails and anxiously watching the casualty lists."[65] At the Charters Towers Anzac Memorial Service of 1920, Adjutant Collett of the Salvation Army acknowledged the pain and grief of women who had lost sons or

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[62] F A Wells, "Australia-Building," *Western Mail*, 30 September 1920, 33.
[63] Melanie Oppenheimer, *Australian Women and War* (Canberra: Dept of Veterans' Affairs, 2008), 39.
[64] "Women and the War," *SMH*, 16 November 1918, 12.
[65] "Anzac Day," *Morning Bulletin*, 28 April 1920, 10.

husbands, but emphasised that the day should also be their proudest "because their giving had been the greatest and because they had the task of building anew from the chaos."[66] For women in a position to do so, constructive occupation through volunteering could ameliorate loss. Many such women found working within the NSL to ensure the immigration programme's success meant that they too served country and empire, ennobled the sacrifice of their men, and assuaged grief and loss as they contributed to the process of nation-building.

Women's Work

Tamar Mayar, editor of *Gender Ironies of Nationalism: Sexing the Nation*, asserts that "while it is men who claim the prerogatives of nation and nation-building it is for the most part women who actually tend to accept the obligation."[67] Mrs Emma Styant-Browne was a Tasmania Division founding member who also championed women, empire and nation-building. In 1910 she received third place in a Royal South Street Society essay competition on the topic, "Woman, a Factor in Moulding the National Character."[68] Styant-Browne wrote in a 1913 *Examiner* piece entitled "Patriotism":

> Of all the emotions that animate the breast of man, there are surely few of a more exalted kind than that we call patriotism. Patriotism is an essence, half divine in its nature, and nearly akin to Mother Love, in as much as it is … capable of heroism, endurance, and self-sacrifice.[69]

Even before the war, in which her four sons fought, Styant-Browne argued that "with the ideal of universal peace before her, Australia…needs her patriots - men patriots,

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[66] "Anzac Day: Commemoration Services," *Northern Miner* (Charters Towers), 26 April 1920, 3.
[67] Tamar Mayar, "Gender Ironies of Nationalism: Setting the Stage," in *Gender Ironies of Nationalism: Sexing the Nation*, ed Tamar Mayar (London: Routledge, 2002), 2.
[68] "Competition Results," Royal South Street Society, http://results.royalsouthstreet.com.au/essays/1910/october/27.
[69] Emma Styant-Browne, "Patriotism," *Examiner*, 7 June 1913, 9.

women patriots, political, social, and religious…to make her a great name and a great nation among all the nations of the world."[70] Four years into the war, Styant-Browne advised women they could help win it with their vote. "Never before," she urged "have women been called upon to decide a question of such urgency and import" as bringing the war to a speedy and victorious conclusion. She implored women to regard their vote as a "sacred obligation and privilege" they could wield to shape Australia's future.[71] The broad range of activities and initiatives implemented by NSL women attests to Mayar's claim. Women such as Styant-Browne highly valued the British Empire and were keen to participate in the building of fledgling Australia.

From the NSL's inception, it was recognised that women would be vital to success. With Australian men mostly engaged in the workforce, the league could not have accomplished its broad range of functions without women. In his opening address at the 1921 Conference, Governor-General Forster stated he was "glad to see ladies present, for their co-operation is vital to the success of the cause."[72] In recruiting members, Mitchell urged women to participate and, outlining the duties members could expect to perform, stressed it was "to the women to a great extent that we must look for help."[73] At public meetings to inaugurate branches, organisers such as Tasmania's state organiser, Frank Foster, pointedly asked women to attend.[74] A 1922 newspaper editorial on the league noted that the Victorian division "included a little army of women."[75]

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[70] *Ibid*.
[71] Emma Styant-Browne, "A Woman to Women," *Examiner*, 1 May 1917, 4.
[72] "Aiding Immigration," *Argus*, 26 October 1921, 11.
[73] "Helping New Settlers: League Looks to Women," *Daily Herald*, 23 May 1921, 4.
[74] "Burnie," *Advocate*, 9 August 1922, 4.
[75] Editorial, *Kilmore Free Press*, 10 August 1922, 2.

Though NSL women were active in offering a range of assistance to all immigrants, their focus on women's needs was particularly valuable. As Australia exhibited an insatiable demand for domestics, it was a prime destination for British female migrants. When Winston Churchill, Secretary of State for the Colonies and OSC President, sent a copy of the OSC's 1921 report to Governor-General Forster in February 1922, there were key observations with implications for the NSL, in particular, how it would cater to female immigrants' needs. Section Four, entitled "Women," cited 1921 census figures for England and Wales which showed "an excess of women over men of 1,702,802 (of whom about half are between the ages of 15 and 45) corresponding to a ratio of 1,095 women to every 1,000 men." The figures, it claimed, made clear the desirability of encouraging female emigration to dominions where employment could be found, but emphasised that "difficulties attendant on the migration of women are greater than in the case of men or children."[76] Arguing for continued Commonwealth funding for the NSL in 1923, Swanson apprised Bruce of the Women's section formed to deal with women and child immigrants that would see Women's Committees and female correspondents appointed for every country branch. Their work, he claimed, would be of great importance in "inducing a large inflow of desirable women to Australia by giving assurance that they will be sympathetically met and followed."[77] League treasurer, C F Crosby, informed Bruce that "the ladies" were untiring in welcoming newcomers and providing them with refreshments upon arrival.[78]

[76] NAA, Canberra: A11804, 1922/512, Oversea Settlement Committee, 1919-1922, "Report of the Oversea Settlement Committee for the year ended 31st December, 1921."
[77] NAA: A458, G154/18 PART 1, Swanson to Bruce, 11 May 1923.
[78] *Ibid.*, Notes of an NSL deputation to Bruce, 13 April 1923.

Mitchell, in particular, pursued the task of catering for immigrant women's needs. As the 1921 Conference discussed rural housing shortages, she emphasised that adequate housing was extremely important from a woman immigrant's perspective.[79] She spoke on radio about "How women can help women in the country."[80] In 1923 she proposed to the Victorian NSL council that an honorary committee of women be formed that would be "officially recognised by the Government as responsible to it for all arrangements in connection with the reception, placing in employment and subsequent welfare work for women settlers."[81] Accepting the proposal, the council stated that it was:

> Of the utmost importance that the services and sympathy of women … be utilised to a greater extent than has hitherto been the case on local committees throughout the State, and it is desirable with this end in view that the appointment of a woman organiser should receive … consideration.

By May the Women's Standing Committee was formed with Mitchell as Chair.[82]

Her call for a woman organiser, however, prompted wider debate within the league on gender roles that prompted the Labor Party women's section to disaffiliate from the NSL. Mrs A O'Brien, ALP women's section secretary, stated the action was because the party, in conjunction with the Trades Hall Council, was preparing its own immigration project. The ALP, however, had objected to appointing "a woman organiser at a 'sweating wage.'" Gilchrist responded that the league had no such intention and had "agreed to a motion that in the event of the appointment of a woman the principle of equal pay for equal work should be observed."[83] Despite this,

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[79] "New Settlers' League," *Australasian*, 29 October 1921, 12.
[80] "Today's Broadcasting," *Register*, 9 August 1926, 12.
[81] NAA: A458, G154/18 PART 1, New Settlers' League of Australia (Victorian Division) State Council Meeting, 21 March 1923.
[82] *Ibid*.
Mitchell also held a place on the board along with seven other women and thirty-five men.
[83] "Rural Topics," *Argus*, 20 August 1923, 3.

by 1927 Mitchell reported to the migration commissioner that, "in pursuance of its objects the committee has established over 40 committees of women or women representatives in various parts of the State." [84] That year, the committee underwent a restructure which saw Mrs Murray Waller appointed as secretary and Country Care Committee organiser.

In an interview with the *West Australian*, Waller described the role of women in the Victorian division. The league had divided the responsibilities that fell to women members into metropolitan and country care. Masson attended to metropolitan matters, such as tending to the needs of newly-arrived migrants, with the assistance of "sixty volunteer workers from the suburbs of Melbourne." The Country Care Committee, under its president, Mitchell, provided care for settlers on the land "by establishing branches throughout the country, working for the provision of schools and bush nursing hospitals, and linking every migrant out-back family with the league through their adoption by wealthy branches." As well as attention to housing and other important concerns, immigrants all received regular packages containing Australian periodicals and comics, "outgrown clothing," and a Christmas present for every migrant child.[85]

Waller, Mitchell and Masson fitted the profile of female volunteers, as discussed above, in that they were older, well-to-do and well-educated. At the time of her interview, Waller, an English woman, had herself only been in Australia for three years but had made "migration work…her hobby and every phase of effort in the

[84] NAA: CP211/2, 3/54, New Settlers' League of Australia (Victorian Division) Country Care Committee, 1927.
[85] "Mrs Waller Interviewed," *West Australian*, 2 September 1927, 8.

way of after-care for immigrant settlers command[ed] her interest."[86] In England, Waller had assisted her father in the management of his large fruit-growing property, managing up to 150 employees, and was a Women's Agricultural Council member. She returned to England in 1928-29 to work as a conservative party organiser. Upon returning to Australia she undertook the Victorian CWA state secretary position, an organisation affiliated with the NSL and of major importance in assisting it to carry out its objectives.[87]

Masson exemplifies the enthusiasm women brought to the NSL. Elected as the first Victorian division vice president in April 1921, she continued in the role until the division's demise in 1932. With her children all grown adults, Masson brought to the league an enthusiasm driven by a strong intellect and strong social and organisational skills. When the NSL was first established in Melbourne, Masson embarked upon a personal campaign to inform women in every suburb of the Welcome and Welfare committee's work and engage their service. The result of many drawing-room meetings "in the houses of prominent citizens" across the city was that committees were initially established in twelve suburbs. Masson also supported her friend, Mitchell, to persuade the Victorian state council to form the NSL's women's section, known as "Lady Mitchell's Committee," to which women's organisations were invited to appoint delegates. Her persuasive powers were such that the majority accepted.

The committee was such a success that, to better cater to demand, several sub-committees emerged. These sub-committees, such as hospitality, correspondence,

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[86] *Ibid*.
[87] "Woman's Realm," *Argus*, 25 February 1932, 3.

after-care and housing, assisted the state government in tending to women immigrants' needs. There was urgency particularly in finding housing for the wives and families of immigrant men who had travelled farther afield in search of suitable land to purchase for farming. The NSL women would "cheer up" homesick, lonely wives and offer advice on domestic economy, purchasing furniture, and "any direction desired."[88] Masson also sought opportunities to promote the work league women were doing by, for example, accepting speaking engagements. In July 1925 she addressed the Housewives Association's monthly meeting on the work the NSL was conducting in both Australia and England.[89] In 1926 she spoke on prime time Hobart radio about "The New Settlers' League and its Problems."[90] Masson both promoted and worked tirelessly for the league, and initiated many projects that involved the league's women in collaborative and social activities to aid the successful settlement of immigrant women and their families. Though she felt keenly disappointed when the Depression forced the Victorian Division to close, Masson's work was valuable for the NSL and Australia, and the NSL offered an intelligent and capable woman a means to put her skills and talents to productive use.

Though the Depression and WWII largely extinguished the NSL, the Queensland division, supported by a strong base of long-term female members, provided an enviable example for the reforming New South Wales division to emulate. "When the N. S. W. New Settlers' League swings into action," began an article in the *Farmer and Settler*:

> Women in country districts of the State will play a major part in helping migrants settle happily into the Australian way of life. This new organisation

[88] "Melbourne Letter," *Western Mail*, 29 May 1924, 36.
[89] "Women's Activities," *Argus*, 28 July 1925, 14.
[90] "Broadcasting: Today's Programmes," *Mercury*, 14 June 1926, 4.

> will be patterned on the Queensland League which has a Women's Committee solving problems for hundreds of women migrants each year.[91]

When the division revived, it did so with Mrs Margaret Watts as a staunch member who continued to serve the immigration cause even after the GNC subsumed the NSL. Watts had learned and benefited from interactions with the band of women who had sustained the Queensland division for almost forty years, among whom was Connie Clayton.

Clayton's help for immigrant women and families that arrived in Queensland encompassed a variety of circumstances. As the NSL representative for the SOSBW in Australia, she oversaw the Australian end of a loan scheme run by the society to assist immigrants. This she did with understanding and compassion for their sometimes difficult circumstances. In August 1934 the SOSBW wrote a letter of introduction to Clayton on behalf of Mrs Violet Phillips, who was proceeding to Brisbane with her two children to join her husband George. George Phillips had been able to save around £50 to bring his family out to Australia, but needed £81 plus on-board expenses. The SOSBW arranged for him to pay £48 and they would lend him the balance plus contribute to the expenses. By August 1936, Phillips wrote to Clayton stating:

> Please find enclosed money order for 3£11 (*sic*) being the balance re Mrs Phillips passage loan, this naturally is quite a relief, and thank you so much for your kind and prompt attention, I also greatly appreciate the wonderful opportunity afforded to me by the society. We are all doing fine.[92]

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[91] "Country Women's Interests," *Farmer and Settler*, 20 January 1950, 14.
[92] QSA: 13072, 18439, New Settlers' League Correspondence with Immigrants: Pearson, Maggie and Peaarson, Ethel, 1/1/1929-31/12/1947, Correspondence between SOSBW, George Phillips and Constance Clayton, 1934-36.

Phillips had at times incurred difficulty meeting his repayments and was extremely grateful that Clayton had advocated on his behalf, allowing him to avoid having to call upon his loan guarantors to repay the debt.[93]

Clayton was renowned and loved for her concern, assistance and friendship rendered towards immigrants, particularly the single young women migrating to take up jobs as domestics. Always in demand in the cities, domestics were also in great demand from country women, particularly those raising children. Circumstances in which the young immigrants found themselves, however, could occasionally be difficult and delicate. Clayton was often called upon to try and negotiate a mutually beneficial solution for all parties. In 1933 she dealt with a situation in which a Mackay woman in need of a domestic took exception to the vivacious nineteen-year-old, Miss Jessie I Piggie, sent to her household. An interchange of letters reveals how Clayton resolved the issue to the satisfaction of all. Miss Piggie wrote to Clayton about her new position, informing her that:

> Everything has worked out like the fairy tales, alright - now maybe we'll live happily ever after. Thank you so much for the trouble you have taken …. The boss here on Sunday asked me "how I liked them" so I said they didn't seem too bad at which he told me I'd better make myself like them and stop with them. They're both rough and ready types but quite nice if you humour them and it's quite a nice place here [Redcliffe]. With many thanks for your kindness Miss Clayton, Believe me.[94]

"Dear Miss Piggy," Miss Clayton replied, "I was delighted to hear the job is permanent…. I was able to send a middle-aged woman to Mrs Heaton Ellis." For her part, Piggie had decided that she would grow her hair and wear a bun when she needed to behave as though forty, and would reserve her curls for when safe to be

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[93] *Ibid*.
[94] *Ibid.*, Correspondence between Clayton and Jessie I Piggie, September to October 1933.

nineteen.[95] For her efforts, genuine concern and friendship, Clayton attracted an abundance of well-wishes and tributes not only from immigrants, but from fellow members, associated organisations and governments.

Pl.18 In its penultimate year of existence, 1958, the Queensland league was planning a programme for immigrants as part of the state's 1959 Centenary Celebrations. Although now a State Migration Department employee, the league's former secretary, Connie Clayton, maintained a close affiliation and interest. She is seen here with, L - R: Florian Sferco, representing the Italian community; C J McPherson, State Premier's Department Under-Secretary and Centenary celebrations organiser; and Mr Rudder, NSL.[96]

In early 1953 the *Courier-Mail* ran a fanciful article entitled "If Women Ran Queensland." Observing that "this sounds like a feminist's fantastic New Year's Eve dream," it named a Cabinet of women in which Clayton was the Immigration Minister. The justification for choosing her for the role was that:

[95] *Ibid*.
[96] NAA, Canberra: A12111, 1/1958/17/30, Immigration - Ethnic festivals, arts and crafts in Australia, 1958-1958, photograph.

> No other woman but Miss Constance Clayton could be considered for this. There can scarcely be a migrant in Queensland who does not know her. For many years secretary to the New Settlers' League, she is now senior Welfare Officer in the State Migration office.[97]

Though a novelty nomination, it attested to the important role Clayton had occupied and the respect she earned in carrying out her duties. The next week's issue carried a follow-up article, "Women Have Come a Long Way," in which the women offered brief outlines of what they would do in their assigned fantasy roles. Clayton's response revealed her observations earned from decades of experience dealing with immigrants. She wrote:

> As the satisfactory settlement of migrants, particularly family units, is mainly in the hands of womenfolk, I would stress the importance and desirability of having adequate representation by women on all boards and committees dealing with the planning, settlement and welfare of migrants.[98]

Clayton was awarded a Member Order of the British Empire in 1953, which was presented in February 1954. Following the presentation, the *Courier-Mail* published a letter from British wartime evacuee, Mrs H Sykes, who wrote:

> I should like to congratulate our dearest friend Miss Constance Clayton…. Miss Clayton deserves this very much after her long, very hard and patient work for the people whom she met. She has time for everybody at all times – she shares our sorrow and our joy and never refuses to help anybody with good advice and help…. I heartily wish Miss Clayton a long, long life.[99]

Clayton continued to work as Senior Welfare Officer for the State Migration Office until retiring in June 1961 at sixty-five, after which she continued to work in a voluntary capacity as GNC contacts committee convenor.[100]

The social upheaval of WWI created conditions favourable for the establishment of the NSL as a nation-wide volunteer organisation. The war years had seen hundreds

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[97] "If Women Ran Queensland," *Courier-Mail*, 5 January 1953, 6.
[98] "Women Have Come a Long Way," *Courier-Mail*, 12 January 1953, 6.
[99] "Women Should Register Disapproval of 'Horror Bomb'," *Courier-Mail*, 29 March 1954, 2.
[100] "In Queensland This Week," *Canberra Times*, 6 July 1961, 2. "Queensland Good Neighbours," *Good Neighbour*, 1 September 1962, 4.

of thousands of Australian men serve overseas, with many killed or injured, while women filled employment vacancies, worked for charitable organisations, and worried about or grieved for serving family and friends. In the war's aftermath a heightened sense of loyalty to empire and country prevailed which was further fostered by politicians and immigration proponents. This, when combined with defence fears, nation-building aspirations, and a grief-induced desire to honour the cause for which men had fought and died, led to an enthusiastic response to the call for NSL volunteers. While men such as Gullett, Gilchrist and Garland established the league and guided it to widespread and sustained success, the nation benefited immeasurably from the thousands of women who volunteered their time and energy to conduct the league's core welcome and welfare work. The league women exhibited a keen sensitivity to immigrants' experiences - their dislocation and isolation - and endeavoured to ensure their settlement experience was safe, satisfying and successful. To do so, they devoted long hours, devised and implemented schemes to facilitate migrant transition into Australian society, and made personal and emotional investments in the wellbeing of thousands of immigrants.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this thesis has been to appraise the role of the New Settlers' League in Australia's immigration history. The approach has been to explore the NSL through its four main objectives of welcoming immigrants, assisting them with employment, offering advice, and promoting their welfare and settlement. In so doing, the thesis has ranged across issues that were significant for the NSL's establishment, functioning and demise. While defence and development were key issues for the NSL's establishment, as an institution of civil society fostered by government to assist governments, Commonwealth and state relations and policy decisions influenced its activities and effectiveness. Also conspicuous in relation to the NSL were the atmosphere of fear and grief after WWI, the White Australia preference, public attitudes to immigration, volunteerism, the role of women, and the advent of post-WWII immigration.

The NSL emerged from post-WWI concerns about invasion and war debt for which the Commonwealth saw immigration as a solution because boosting population would strengthen Australia's hold on the land and stimulate development and wealth. As immigration on the scale envisioned could not succeed without public acceptance and assistance, Hughes accepted Gullett's proposal for a nation-wide volunteer organisation to assist governments by welcoming migrants and providing aftercare. In establishing the NSL the Commonwealth aimed to ensure immigrants would not settle in cities, or return home, but settle productively and comfortably into rural jobs, homes and communities. For this to succeed, newcomers would need to feel welcome and supported not only officially but personally. As governments could not

provide the friendly touch, a legion of willing volunteers was required. The NSL was inaugurated to offer new settlers help and friendship.

Gullett's successful approach to establishing branches was to enlist the co-operation of local government heads. Beginning with Melbourne Lord Mayor Swanston, the movement quickly gathered momentum as league representatives embarked on a campaign that saw hundreds of branches established. As the NSL's viability would depend on filling branches with volunteers, league officials needed to foster public support for immigration and the NSL's work to procure thousands of individuals as members. In a post- war climate of fear and grief, promoting immigration as a nation-building strategy and invoking war's cost in lives sacrificed or compromised attracted a groundswell of volunteers to the NSL. With the exception of Western Australia where the NSL evolved from an existing men's organisation, women played a substantial role in the NSL's success for, as was acknowledged at the time, they administered most of the fundamental welcome and welfare work.

The NSL's main objectives were to welcome immigrants, assist them to secure employment, afford them advice and promote their welfare and settlement. All NSL divisions ensured that a settler's welcome began as soon as they alighted, or sooner. Receptions were organised at which migrants received an official welcome, followed by informal gatherings where along with assistance with accommodation, transport, and employment, migrants were feted with food and entertainment. A harder task for the NSL was to ensure immigrants were accepted and welcomed by the broader public. To do so, the NSL and governments promoted the desirability of immigrants

by exhorting the public to remember their British roots and accept immigrants as kith and kin.

Procuring employment for immigrants proved the most problematic of the NSL's objectives. Gaining the public's acceptance of immigrants who might displace them in the job market required persuasive argument, particularly when labour organisations decried the immigrant influx. Assuring Australians that their jobs were not threatened demanded that opportunities be created for immigrants. With varying levels of enthusiasm and effectiveness, NSL divisions sought to procure employment opportunities for immigrants as soon after their arrival as possible, or even prior to it. While individual employment positions were sought by requesting farmers and rural employers to notify the NSL of opportunities available, the league also liaised with governments to identify rural developments that offered employment potential. Immigrants were also encouraged to take up land and become rural producers themselves. A major impediment to the success of the government's immigration programme, however, was a widespread lack of rural knowledge, particularly about Australian conditions, or experience among immigrants. While the NSL, and other organisations, sought to redress the issue by implementing training schemes both in Britain and Australia, many immigrants failed to make a success of rural life and many returned to the city or Britain.

The NSL objectives of offering advice and looking after immigrants' general welfare were often concomitant with employment issues. The NSL's advice for immigrants centred on familiarisation with Australian conditions - especially in relation to agricultural pursuits - and customs, and on how to protect their capital from theft or

unwise investment. Welfare issues arose for employees, particularly vulnerable domestics or youths, due to unfair employment conditions, inadequate housing, and the practical and social difficulties of rural and social isolation. The NSL attempted to ameliorate difficult circumstances by providing legal assistance or advocacy if warranted, by practical assistance if immigrants experienced financial or medical difficulties, and by facilitating social interaction and events. Correspondence from settlers to the NSL, and appreciative acclamations of the league's work in newspapers from settlers and a variety of organisations, demonstrate that despite the challenges it confronted, the NSL met with success in accomplishing its objectives. Being dependent upon government funding, however, proved to be one of the NSL's major challenges.

The sharing of immigration responsibilities ushered in by the 1921 Commonwealth and States Joint Immigration Agreement paved the way for the NSL's establishment, but also saw it structured along state lines. The absence of a national body resulted in varied approaches and levels of support from the states with Queensland's division enjoying decades of solid support, while Tasmania struggled from the outset and, notably, there was no division in South Australia. The state-based structure meant that though immigration was a high Commonwealth priority, as each state retained control over which and how many immigrants they accepted, each NSL division's fate was yoked to state priorities, especially once the Commonwealth assigned full funding responsibility to the states. The NSL divisions' varied levels of activity and longevity therefore largely reflect states' immigration prioritisation and commitment to existing immigrants, particularly during the economically troubled years of the Depression. The Depression's negative impact on immigration desirability and

numbers inevitably led to a decline in NSL funding, with the continued decline eventually depriving the NSL of any purpose. A structural quirk was that in Queensland the government's exceptional support enabled the NSL to continue into the second half of the twentieth century.

While the NSL's prevalence and longevity alone qualify it to occupy a significant position in Australia's immigration history, this thesis identifies several reasons for which it merits recognition. The NSL provides an example of a sustained cooperative venture between a civil society organisation, Commonwealth and state governments, and the successes, strains and failures attendant upon that venture. Had this not been undertaken, the large-scale immigration programme could not have proceeded as governments had neither resources nor finances to carry out the necessary work performed by the NSL and its volunteers. The NSL's work of extending welcomes and aftercare to immigrants and fostering greater acceptance of immigrants by the Australian public constitutes an important element of Australia's development and acknowledgement of itself as a nation of immigrants. Though the NSL's work was severely curtailed by the Depression, and for Queensland division, WWII, the league was the precursor that provided the model for the Good Neighbour Council, which operated across Australia until the late 1970s catering to a greatly diversified range of immigrants.

Much is different in the immigration field of early twenty-first century Australia. After WWI, Australia desired immigrants - preferably white Britishers - to boost the economy through rural development and as a bulwark against the invasion of unoccupied areas. Almost a century after the NSL was established, Australia no

longer expresses an urgent need to increase population through immigration, and while development remains essential, agriculture is no longer the immigration focus. In 2015, the Australian Parliament website stated that the focus had "evolved over the years from … attracting migrants for the purpose of increasing Australia's population to … attracting skilled migrants in order to meet the labour needs of the economy."[1] In a poll conducted by Jill Sheppard in April 2015, however, almost a third of respondents still viewed immigrants as a threat to jobs for Australians. In the 1920s the NSL sought to persuade Australians of immigration's benefits. Sheppard's poll found Australians "overwhelmingly believe immigrants make positive contributions to the economic and cultural life of the country."[2] Gwenda Tavan cautions, however, that the Abbott government's July 2015 subsuming of the Immigration Department into Customs and Border Protection Services is an "intensification of immigration securitisation at the expense of nation-building and social capital investment." In the past, notes Tavan, "new settlers - including refugees - were viewed as potential citizens and contributors to the common wealth." This was linked to a "strong commitment … to keeping the Australian people on side with immigration," and questions "why the government wants to overturn initiatives that have worked so well in the past."[3] The immigration history Tavan alludes to is one that the New Settlers' League of Australia played an integral role in developing,

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[1] Harriet Spinks and Elsa Koleth, "Population Growth: What Role Does Immigration Play?" P of A, http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BriefingBook43p/populationgrowth.

[2] Jill Sheppard, "Australian Attitudes towards National Identity: Citizenship, Immigration and Tradition," ANUPoll, April 2015. http://politicsir.cass.anu.edu.au/research/projects/electoral-surveys/anupoll/national-dentity.

[3] Gwenda Tavan, "Remembering the 'Old' Department of Immigration's Nation-Building Traditions," *The Conversation*, 14 July 2015. https://theconversation.com/remembering-the-old-department-of-immigrations-nation-building-traditions-43616?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=The+Weekend+Conversation+-+3120&utm_content=The+Weekend+Conversation+-+3120+CID_868ebfe29cea4f42c0eb6f271f4c944b&utm_source=campaign_monitor&utm_term=Remembering%20the%20old%20Department%20of%20Immigrations%20nation-building%20traditions.

where new settlers were valued for their nation-building contribution and regarded as so important to the nation as to warrant an organisation of Australian citizens to see to their welfare and success, and welcome them with smiling faces.

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