

# **"The Right Stamp of Migrant"**

Assisted Migration from Britain to Tasmania  
in the 1920's and 1930's

**Yvonne Furneaux-Young**

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of Master  
Humanities at the University of Tasmania.

Hobart 1992.

Dedicated to the memory of

John Sutherland, Mary Stokes, Ernest West, Jack  
Shepherd and Edward Brooker.

# Contents

## Acknowledgements

<b>Introduction . . . . .</b>	<b>1</b>
-------------------------------	----------

<b>Chapter 1</b>	
Why Come? . . . . .	3

<b>Chapter 2</b>	
The Ex-Servicemen . . . . .	6

<b>Chapter 3</b>	
Nominated Migrants . . . . .	15

<b>Chapter 4</b>	
The Hon. Thomas Murdoch, Agent for the British Dominions Emigration Society . . . . .	26

<b>Chapter 5</b>	
The Farm Boy Learners . . . . .	37

<b>Chapter 6</b>	
The Young Family - A success story . . . . .	48

<b>Conclusion . . . . .</b>	<b>52</b>
-----------------------------	-----------

<b>Bibliography . . . . .</b>	<b>55</b>
-------------------------------	-----------

<b>Foreword to Appendix . . . . .</b>	<b>57</b>
---------------------------------------	-----------

## Appendix

## Acknowledgements

Thanks are due, first and foremost to Professor Michael Roe, for his consistent support, scholarly advice and human understanding.

Thanks also go to the following migrants or families of migrants who gave me an insight that I could not have gained anywhere else.

Edward Brooker

Jim Cadel

Sally Douglas

Bill Kallend

Patricia Pitman

Molly Shelley

Nita Shepherd

Albert Smith

John Young

Bill Young

I'm also indebted to:

Walter Pless, Dorothy Russell, Susan Hughes, Alan Hyland, Judy Tierney, Anne Burnett, and Simon Harris.

Much of my research was done at the Archives Office of Tasmania, and the Tasmaniana, and Parliamentary libraries. Thanks go to their cheerful and efficient staff for making the many hours spent there more pleasant.

Lastly, to all my family. In particular my father-in-law John Young who inspired and provided the material for Chapter 6, my parents who encouraged me as always, though from afar, and most of all my husband for his practical and moral support.

## INTRODUCTION

During the 1920's and 1930's in Tasmania as in the other Australian states the "Right Stamp of Migrant" was unquestionably British. The idea of imperial migration had a strong appeal to many in the post Great War period. Sir Joseph Cook, High Commissioner for Australia, stated that

"The Empire was greatly under-populated and a scientific readjustment of the population of the Empire opened up vistas of happiness and prosperity for millions of still unborn men as well as for those now struggling against adversity and unemployment in Great Britain."<sup>1</sup>

Others saw it differently and suggested that Britain was using migration to solve the problems that the post Great War depression had created. The following extract from the editorial of a Tasmanian Labor Party newspaper typified this view.

"Australian Labor . . . does not want to see misery in any part of the globe if there is a way to prevent it. But Australian Labor does not want merely to transfer the unemployed problem of England out here and that is what the migration schemes of Nationalism mean."<sup>2</sup>

The Assisted Migration Scheme which was designed to attract people to come from Britain and settle in Australia by subsidising the cost of their passage, was embodied in the Empire Settlement Act of 1922. There was an initial influx of migrants in 1921 and 1922 when British ex-servicemen received free passages. Migration continued steadily throughout the 1920's and then faded to a trickle in the 1930's. There were two types of migrants - nominated and selected. In Tasmania, the majority who came were "nominated"; that is, somebody in Tasmania agreed to take responsibility for the new-comer by meeting them and having accommodation and employment pre-arranged. "Selected" migrants were chosen in Britain by representatives of the Australian Government on the basis of requisitions by the various states. Schemes such as the "Farm Boy Learners" and the "Girl Domestic" were designed to cater for perceived demand in those specific areas of employment.

---

1 The Mercury. June 2nd, 1923, p7. Reporting on meeting at Mansion House, London, organised by the British Dominions Emigration Society.

2 The World. Saturday, May 5th, 1923 Editorial.

This essay emphasises the early 1920's and will involve an examination of the patterns of experience of migrants rather than the development of policy.<sup>3</sup> It is a story of who came, why they came and what happened after they came. Underpinning this simplicity is a complex interplay involving political, social and economic factors, some of which are difficult to define or measure and the complete spectrum of human characteristics. We see despair but also determination, small mindedness but also magnanimity, tragedy but also occasional triumph. This is a story of struggle but it contains all that is quintessentially human.

---

3 Thesis, Marie Ellison.

## CHAPTER ONE

### WHY COME?

Political leaders were attracted to the idea of imperial migration. To translate ideology into practical reality necessitated not just government schemes, but the willingness of large numbers of British people to make the decision, pack up and come. Why did they? In this there are three major, discernible factors, that is, the economic climate in Britain, publicity material and personal circumstances.

In the aftermath of the first World War, Britain was in an economic depression. Soldiers came back and had no jobs to go to. Desperation and disillusion were rife. Few jobs were secure. Mr S who came to Tasmania in 1923<sup>1</sup> received the following reference.

16 March 1921  
Humberstone  
Pawnbroker Jeweller  
& General Salesman

"Mr Henry Stokes of 67H Dalenby Road has been employed here for many years. He is very willing and obliging and a very capable salesman. He would, I consider, make an excellent traveller. He is leaving solely on account of trade depression and the very pressing necessity of cutting down expenses."<sup>2</sup>

Termination of employment because of economic circumstances would have been a common occurrence. Many people felt trapped in a hopeless situation. Somewhere, somehow life had to be better than this. Often there was an element of negative choice as it wasn't what they were going to that mattered, more important was what they were leaving behind.

Migrants once here made many references to being misled or misinformed whilst still in Britain. Some admitted that they were so caught up in the idea of coming that they failed to find out clearly what the cost of living was and what their prospects were. Many bitterly accused officials at Australia House of being misleading. Others claimed that official pamphlets contained misinformation and

---

1 Mr Henry Stokes, SW D4, M/9/279.

2 Reference given to me by Mr Henry Stokes' daughter, Mrs Molly Shelley.

that they were in a sense victims of a slick media campaign. The effect of publicity was an integral part of the migrant experience and a theme that will recur. However, as an initial generalisation it is fair to state that there were elements of both misinformation and of people being vulnerable to suggestion. Natural human optimism dictated that the romantic alternative vision dominate thereby obscuring practical considerations. Sixty years or so on, migrants can still remember attractive slides which were shown at cinemas or town halls. Mr C who came to New South Wales in 1926 and was then seventeen can clearly recall these. "They showed rows and rows of orange groves it looked like paradise".<sup>3</sup> His mother was told at Australia House to fit out her Farm Boy Learner son with gaiters. She must have had visions of him strutting around the orange groves in true gentleman farmer style. He didn't see any luscious orange groves and later while he was "humping his bluey 'round" and working for share farmers who couldn't afford to buy their children shoes, he threw away his expensive but embarrassing gaiters.<sup>4</sup>

At migrant recruiting meetings and also at employment exchanges throughout Britain publicity brochures were distributed. Mr Sm remembers his mother keeping a pamphlet about Tasmania in the kitchen drawer for weeks, "All I can remember is the picture of an orchard on the front, she'd often sit down and look at it."<sup>5</sup> It could have been Tasmania for the Tourist and Settler of which there were many editions and in which the weather always received much praise. "Nothing like the dull grey lowering weather so common in England is known in Tasmania, nor has the rain the effect it has at home of making the ground sodden, but even after heavy rain the roads are soon dry."<sup>6</sup>

Tasmania was portrayed as a kind of antipodean sanatorium. "Invariably the newcomer finds as a result of living in a pure atmosphere, rich in ozone, that the appetite becomes sharpened and the body gains in weight."<sup>7</sup>

Such descriptive passages were bound to appeal. Mr Sm's mother sitting in her tiny gloomy kitchen on a dull foggy night in the East End of London surrounded by a large family and a restless, unemployed Ex-Serviceman husband yearned to believe that coming to Tasmania would be the answer to all her problems. Visions

---

3 Interview with Mr Jim Cadel, June 1992.

4 Ibid.

5 Interview with Mr Albert Smith, May 1992.

6 Tasmania for the Tourist and Settler, circa 1925, Hobart P14.

7 Ibid.



of a beautiful place with a pleasant climate would conjure up images of happy prosperous family life with well fed children romping on sunny beaches.

Often, very personal circumstances operating against the background of depression and publicity were the catalyst which prompted the decision to come. Mr C was seventeen years old, had been unemployed since leaving his public school and felt that he was perhaps a burden on his widowed mother. After attending a migrant recruiting meeting he decided to become a Farm Boy Learner in Australia. The scheme seemed to offer opportunities for independence, travel and adventure. Initially, his mother was hesitant about sending her only son off to the other side of the world but after studying pamphlets and speaking to officials at Australia House she gave her approval. Mr C, now eighty five years old, remembers being caught up in the excitement of it all as he boarded the ship at Tilbury. In retrospect, he feels that he was in fact naive about what he was undertaking, particularly since he had no concept of distance. Once in Australia and off the ship, reality set in and he realised his remoteness from family, friends and familiarities.<sup>8</sup>

Mrs S didn't even intend coming to Australia. It seemed to Mrs S that there was no secure future for her large family in Britain. Hopefully, a fresh start in another country would provide that and so, with relatives in Canada she was on the waiting list to migrate there. Having made the decision to migrate and particularly since she was pregnant she was anxious to get going. Like many intending migrants, though, she enjoyed some aspects of the planning involved in migration; since it gave a sense of doing something active and positive. After being told that she could leave for Tasmania in just six weeks, she abandoned plans to go to Canada and came to Tasmania instead. Officials told her that "Tasmania is like Texas. It has big open spaces and you can get rich there quickly."<sup>9</sup> Mrs S and her family left Britain at the end of 1922 and were at the tail end of the initial Ex-Servicemen families influx of 1921 and 1922. What did her family and others experience once in Tasmania?

---

8 Interview with Mr Jim Cadel, June 1992.

9 Interview with Mrs Molly Shelley, June 1992.

## Chapter 2

### The Ex-Servicemen

In 1921 and 1922 British Ex-Servicemen were a granted free passage. This resulted in an influx of assisted migrants to Tasmania<sup>1</sup>. They were not the first ex-servicemen to come. There was a scheme to encourage elite army officers to settle in Tasmania. They arrived towards the end of 1919 and during 1920<sup>2</sup>. In this chapter the emphasis is on the experiences of the Ex-Servicemen who left Britain during 1921 and 1922. It seems that it was this category of migrant who endured the hardest struggle. Their story is characterised by a distinctive type of vulnerability rooted in a complex blend of factors.

One factor was the inability to settle back into civilian life in Britain, so often displayed by returning soldiers. The families of these migrants described their fathers' restlessness. "He just couldn't settle, he remained very tense and found it so difficult to adapt to being at home,"<sup>3</sup> is a typical comment. Grim as the realities of the war had been, these men had become accustomed to bursts of adrenalin and accompanying intense emotions. Even in stalemate trenches they were part of a team and a purposeful plan. Back home they felt dislocated, inactive and insignificant. The social significance of these behavioural characteristics displayed en masse was recognised and perhaps exaggerated by those in political power. The idea of unemployed ex-servicemen roaming the streets alarmed many.

Both the British and Australian Labor parties were cynical about the motivation underlying official advocacy of imperial migration. A Tasmanian Labor party newspaper of 1923 saw it in the following way.

"The ranks of the unemployed have grown in an alarming fashion and with British trade diminishing there is little prospect of betterment. A million and a half men and women are walking the streets in search of work. They have to be fed whether they work or not and press heavily on the British tax-payer. Moreover, they are getting discontented with the miserable unemployment doles that are only giving them half a

- 
- 1 According to figures given in the Victorian Legislative Council, 621 assisted migrants arrived in Tasmania during 1921 and 1922.
  - 2 Ellison, Marie, Thesis.
  - 3 Interview Mr Albert Smith, May 1992.

living and an army of discontented men raise another and more dangerous problem than that of pacifying the tax-payer."<sup>4</sup>

Sending these men to fill the empty spaces of the empire seemed to provide the solution to two problems. The Labor party was critical of Australian political leaders' eagerness to follow Britain's lead and encourage migration. In describing Australian Premiers' visits to London a Labor party newspaper commented that "All these good Nationalists true to the interests they represent are falling over each other to supply Australia with surplus labour, while the Tories of England clap their hands in applause."<sup>5</sup>

Ex-servicemen from a great range of social backgrounds responded to the call of the Empire. The free passage meant that the intending migrant could be unemployed, practically penniless and be accompanied only by high expectations and a large dependant family. Alternatively, he could be reasonably well off in Britain but see migration as a chance to leave the depression of Post War Britain and make a new, exciting start elsewhere. The restlessness of the unemployed working class ex-servicemen had its echoes further up the social scale. Irrespective of his social position he frequently displayed a degree of physical, psychological and emotional vulnerability which rendered him unprepared and reduced his ability to cope with his new life in Tasmania. This unpreparedness had its parallel in a Tasmanian bureaucracy not yet sufficiently in place or experienced to cope with an influx of migrants. An influx of migrants was viewed as a solution yet the influx in itself created its own set of problems. Many migrants who were part of that first influx would find the following comments made in the Victorian Parliament a touch ironic.

"There is no country in the world that needs population more than this great continent of ours and in every way we should encourage a proper system of immigration. There is no country too that offers greater inducement to industrious settlers than Australia and we should offer the greatest possible inducement to industrious men, women and lads to settle here. Many of the problems which confront us will be solved as a result of a large influx of people. Therefore we should make proper preparation for them."<sup>6</sup>

---

4 The World Saturday May 5th, 1923. Editorial.

5 Ibid.

6 Victorian Parliamentary Debate 1923-24 Vol 164 P7.

The Tasmanian officials who actually had to cope with this influx would have contended that there was no "proper system of immigration," thus intensifying their difficulties. Migrants often found that there was no proper preparation for them.

In 1921 the Ex-Servicemen didn't have to be nominated. The task fell on officials to meet them and help find them employment. They didn't see it as their responsibility; it was just that there was nobody else to do it. Indeed, there was often bureaucratic resentment providing comments such as "This immigration work takes up a lot of my time for which I get nothing"<sup>7</sup>. There was no formal mechanism for finding migrants jobs and with Tasmania in a depression and suffering from high unemployment it was a difficult task. The usual procedure was an initial query like this.

"Dear Sir,

This will be handed to you by Mr Smith who is a painter, but has a knowledge of concreting and other building construction works. Mr Smith is married and a recent arrival in this state, and I shall be glad if you could find him a position in your works.

Mr Smith has a family of seven children.

Yours faithfully

Immigration Officer"<sup>8</sup>

Mr Smith did in fact get a job there but it was only temporary as was the case with many jobs. Officials realised only too well their reliance on the goodwill of employers and men with influence. Often, the following type of letter was sent.

"Dear Sir,

Without the co-operation and help of men of standing like your good self, it will be a difficult task to place new arrivals. I should therefore be grateful for your able assistance in this case, should you know of an opening for Mr Powell and also if you could put me in touch with farmers, orchardists and others in your district willing and able to take on new arrivals from the old country."<sup>9</sup>

Such an informal mechanism had limitations.

---

7 SWD4 M/9/284 Letter.

8 SWD4 M/1/277 Letter 11th Oct, 1921.

9 SWD4 M/1/48 Letter.

Simple things like meeting migrants off the ship sometimes went wrong. There were cases of migrants wandering the streets of Hobart, looking for somewhere to stay. A letter describing such a situation was printed in The Mercury and it was stated that the family had eventually found accommodation at the YMCA. A spokesman for the YMCA said that this was not an unusual occurrence and that in the last 12 months forty migrants had come in desperation.<sup>10</sup> The official response was that they had come off the train from Launceston and there had been a mix-up with the times.<sup>11</sup> An office was established in Launceston which did help. Another frequent complaint was loss of baggage or excess charging of baggage. Sometimes, valuable tools were lost. In one extreme case a man's tools went missing for three years.<sup>12</sup> Officials noticed the excess charging, prompting the following comments from Sampson, the Immigration Officer.

"I am pleased to know that Mr Sloane's baggage has turned up, and that you intend taking the question of transfer of baggage from Melbourne to Launceston up with the Federal authorities."

The present arrangements are unsatisfactory and costly. Agents at both ends get a cut making total charges far too excessive."<sup>13</sup>

If Sampson thought such arrangements unsatisfactory and exploitative, the migrants themselves must have been very unhappy. It may seem a trifling point but such difficulties would have a significant psychological impact. First impressions are important. A feeling that your precious goods have been handled with a lack of care and worse still that you have been effectively cheated wouldn't make for a happy start. There were problems like this throughout the period but they were most acute in these early years.

Undertaking such a major upheaval as migration was even more stressful for men who had just suffered the physical and emotional strain of war. Whilst still in Britain physical weakness was often displayed. The medical personnel concerned often passed them fit when they were in fact unfit.<sup>14</sup> The underlying motive was an honourable one in that they often knew the man and his family and didn't want to obstruct his quest for happiness and a new life on the other side of the world.

---

10 The Mercury 1st June, 1921.

11 PDI Vol 371 55/5/22.

12 SWD4 M/9/273 Letter.

13 SWD4 M/9/97 Letter 25th March, 1922.

14 PDI 55/4/22

Later, medicals would become more stringent. In the story of the Tasmanian Ex-Servicemen migrants there are echoes of Marilyn Lake's study of soldier settlement in Victoria, in that there was a distinct element of physical and sometimes mental unfitness.<sup>15</sup> Immigration officials did notice this and one who had been an army man himself observed,

"This man gives me the impression he has not yet recovered fully from war strain and service. He appears altogether unfitted to hustle round and make a place for himself."<sup>16</sup>

Marilyn Lake suggests that the medical profession did not at that stage fully understand the long term effects of shelling and gassing.<sup>17</sup> Often the only work available was farm work and so ex-servicemen who pre-war had been clerks and factory workers now found themselves in a totally alien occupation which they would have found difficult even if they had been completely fit. One man working on a farm who came on medical advice that the Tasmanian climate would suit him wrote to the immigration Officer stating "The position which you so courteously helped me to procure here with Mr Hopwood is in reality far beyond my ability to fill, necessitating as it does the labours of a veritable Hercules, I find myself utterly incompetent to do justice to it."<sup>18</sup> Indeed, Mr Sm attributes the bad reputation of those early Pommy farm workers to the fact that "they were square pegs put in round holes".<sup>19</sup> Success or failure often depended on just how quickly they could move back into what suited their experience and ability.

Those who came with professional qualifications or money to invest in land settlement and who seemed to have particularly high expectations felt the most acute sense of being in the wrong place. Sometimes they became dependent on charity or lived in desperate hand-to-mouth situations. Their difficulties were intensified by their strong sense of status deprivation. They had been people of standing, but now they were just failed migrants and easy targets for ridicule. It is from this group that the most bitter attacks on publicity are made. A typical example is that of a man who complained that he had been misled by an official publication and stated that "I have been wilfully misled by the Tasmanian Government into believing that properties suitable to my requirements are available

---

15 M Lake The Limits of Hope Soldier Settlement in Victoria 1915-38, Melbourne (1987).

16 SWD4 M/1/188

17 M Lake op cit. p60.

18 SWD4 M/1/135 Letter

19 Interview Mr Albert Smith, May 1992.

for settlement and in that belief I broke up my home and brought my wife and four young children to Tasmania."<sup>20</sup>

Others cited clearly verbal information given by officials in London. Often it was the Agent General himself who was criticised. One man who was qualified as a pharmacist and came with 130 pounds soon found himself living on charity because he couldn't get permanent work. The man in question Mr Wa had spoken to the Agent General Mr Ashbolt and had a letter of introduction to the Manager of VDL Co Burnie. His employment there was for only 14 days. Mr Wa felt that he had been misinformed because he was under the impression that he would get land under the closer settlement scheme.<sup>21</sup> He also thought that he could initially go onto a State farm but he couldn't because he had a family. In fact, his large step-family must have made the situation even more acute. Post war there were many re-marriages and combined families. These people faced all these migrant hardships underpinned by the psycho-emotional strain of the family situation. Surely, here is an element of hidden toll.

In his desperation Mr Wa wrote back to the Agent General in London and mentioned being misled by pamphlets about the cost of rent. "The cheapest accommodation we could find cost 6 pounds a week, things are not so prosperous as described in pamphlets given to us in England."<sup>22</sup> The Agent General in London then wrote to the Premier. Officials in Tasmania didn't regard Mr Wa's case in a very sympathetic light. Interestingly, they seemed least sympathetic or responsive to the status-deprived migrants.

The ordinary young ex-soldier who found himself in a difficult situation sometimes did get a sympathetic and effective response. The following letter was written by a young ex-soldier.

"Dear Sir,

Just a few lines to let you know that I am not getting on at all well with this job for several reasons. One is because since I have been here I have only received half of the usual wages due to me and I do not stand any hope of getting any more, as what I can see of it he is in debt to everyone. He has a nice farm here but will not work it only when he feels like it which is not often. The food is bad all we get

---

20 SWD4 M/1/267 Letter

21 PDI Vol 371 55/25/22

22 Ibid: Letter

is meat and sometimes not that with no variety. Sometimes we get better and other times we go without, what bit of money I have got is going on providing my wife with food which she can eat. So sir, I have kept at this job as long as I possibly can so am writing to you to see if you can help me in any way. I hear they are wanting men for railway work both constructional and otherwise and as this is the work I came out here for I was wondering if you could get me a job on same but failing that any kind of job so I can get away from this place. What is more my wife is in a certain condition and will in two or three months become a mother so you see sir I am up to me neck in trouble trusting you will help me."<sup>23</sup>

This young ex-soldier had come with 50 pounds in money. The immigration officer concerned, Major Sampson, had already hear rumours that this man was not being treated fairly. He responded quickly and sent the unfortunate man a railway pass and arranged for him to work on the railways. Another young ex-soldier was very unhappy and wanted to return home but the immigration officer alerted neighbours to his plight and when they showed some interest in him he changed his mind about going home.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, in this category of migrant as in all the other the friendliness or supportiveness of ordinary people was often instrumental in the successful assimilation of migrants. As a report of the Overseas settlement Committee stated:

". . . it is impossible to over-emphasise the importance of the personal and human element. It makes all the difference to the spirit and adaptability of a new arrival and of his family if they feel they are welcomed as fellow citizens and not merely accepted as more or less useful labourers. This is, no doubt, a matter in which the sphere of Government activity is limited and in which reliance must be placed, in the main, upon the initiative of private organisations and on the general goodwill and sympathy of the public."<sup>25</sup>

Generally, bureaucratic responses were not as sympathetic in the earlier years as they were later. Perhaps because it was in the early period of migration, a clear pattern of failure had not emerged. Weaknesses of the system had not yet been exposed, accordingly blame was placed on the migrants themselves rather than the

---

23 SWD4 M/1/199 Letter

24 SWD4 M/1/64

25 PDI Vol 371 55/14/22 Report of Overseas Settlement Committee for year 1921.



system. The World suggested that "Immigrants at present in Australia who report their failure are being jeered at by the immigration advocates as ne'er-do-wells, but if the schemes come into operation they will be too numerous not to be believed - when it is too late."<sup>26</sup>

Mr L is an example of an Ex-Serviceman who didn't receive a sympathetic bureaucratic response and who didn't seem to assimilate easily into the community either. He experienced such an unfortunate combination of the many negative elements of the Ex-Servicemen migrant experience that he wanted to return to Britain.<sup>27</sup> He thought that he had a good case because he had been so misled in Britain. Mr L stated that "I am probably only one of a considerable number who find that the information and advice obtained in London regarding the possibilities here are only a delusion, and most of them would no doubt return if they had the means to do so."<sup>28</sup> This man had made an unsuccessful attempt to make a living at fruit growing. In fact many claim that the Agent General was very optimistic about fruit growing in particular. Mr L seemed to have acted sensibly once here by asking for official guidance and taking the government Inspector's advice. The farm he took had been neglected and so there was no hope of profit for years. To avoid debt, Mr L left the farm. His previous occupation in England was that of a clerk, but difficulty with his eyesight after the war made that unsuitable. Mr L applied for the position of state school master "having the necessary qualifications and being informed that they were needed, but this application was refused no reason being given."<sup>29</sup> Comments such as "there being no opening in this state for any but Tasmanians"<sup>30</sup> display his bitterness towards the Tasmanian community. Mr L had requested to be pensioned by the Department in Britain but then asked to be reappointed. A request for financial help in returning to Britain seemed to him entirely justifiable because "the whole difficulty has arisen in consequence of the misleading representations of those whose business it is to encourage emigration".<sup>31</sup> Despite two letters he didn't succeed in his request and received a short official denial. For that man like many others immigration had been a total failure.

There was a positive element in this, though, in that a few did prosper despite the great potential for failure. There were some like Captain K who was in his son's words "seduced into orcharding by the Agent General" and was totally unsuited to

---

26 The World Saturday May 5th, 1923. Editorial.

27 SWD4 M/1/362

28 Ibid., Letter from migrant to Immigration Officer, 18th February, 1922.

29 Ibid.; Letter from migrant to Immigration Officer, 2nd February, 1922.

30 Ibid.; Letter from migrant to Immigration Officer, 18th February, 1922.

31 Ibid.

this.<sup>32</sup> He did make a genuine attempt but fortunately managed to secure a more suitable position fairly quickly. Captain K and his wife became superintendents of the Kennerly Children's Home and excelled in this role. Others followed a similar pattern of an initial but unsuccessful foray into farming followed by success in finding more apt employment and consequently their right niche in society.

The great success story of this category of migrant is Edward Brooker who too followed this pattern: A mechanical engineer in Britain, he worked on a farm at St Marys for a year and then started work at Cadburys, where he remained until he entered politics in 1934.<sup>33</sup> In 1921 he arrived with no job to go to, knowing no-one and with a wife and baby son in arms.<sup>34</sup> He went on to become Premier of the State albeit for a short time.<sup>35</sup> Edward Brooker's success doesn't diminish the fact that this is a story of intense hardship and struggle. One man's achievement cannot compensate for the suffering of so many men and their families, but at least it does bring a degree of light to an otherwise gloomy and depressing story.

---

32 Interview with Mr Bill Kallend, May 1922.

33 SWD4 M/1/201

34 Interview with Mr Edward Brooker (Jnr). June 1992. Mr Edward Brooker (Jnr) was the "babe in arms".

35 Scott and Barbara Bennett, Biographical Register of the Tasmanian Parliament 1851-1960 Canberra ANU Press, 1980, p21.

## Chapter 3

### Nominated Migrants

The majority of migrants who came to Tasmania were nominated. The responsibilities of the nominator were clear.

"... the nominator will make adequate provision for the maintenance of and will use his utmost endeavours to provide remunerative work for the nominated passenger(s) after arrival in Tasmania and the nominator admits that neither the Government nor any department thereof or officer thereof shall be deemed to be responsible for the maintenance of or providing work for such passenger(s)".<sup>1</sup>

Nomination was bureaucratic buck passing. As one immigration official stated, "The whole idea of the nomination system is to relieve the government of all responsibility in finding employment for nominees and nominators must realise that it is incumbent upon them to stand up to the obligation."<sup>2</sup> There were numerous cases of nominators failing in their obligations. Usually the intention to help was present but finding permanent work was difficult for officials who, much to their annoyance, had to try and succeed where the nominator had failed. As one official stated "It is well nigh hopeless to find work for unskilled men in this town".<sup>3</sup> For nominators who were often recently arrived migrants themselves with few connections it was often impossible. When a nominator failed in his obligations, destitution was sometimes the result. One man in such a position prompted the following remark from the Launceston City Mission "It is unfortunate that a stranger so recently in our midst should be in such distress".<sup>4</sup>

Even when the newly arrived migrant did find employment there was often a financial struggle to pay their government loan towards their passage costs.<sup>5</sup> There are many cases of great difficulty in repaying loans. Often the amount involved was impossibly high from a family budget point of view. A typical example would be Mr N's family<sup>6</sup>. Mr N came out first to work at an engineering firm and he nominated his wife and four young children. With the arrival of his family came a debt of 64 pounds for the government loan part of the assisted

---

1 SWD4 M/9/147 Standard statement on Nomination Form.

2 SWD4 M/9/284.

3 SWD4 M/9/146.

4 *Ibid.*

5 From 1922-5 everyone over 17 paid 22 pounds towards the passage, 12-16 years old paid 16/10/-. From 1925 17 - 18 year olds had only 11 pounds to repay, 12-16 year olds 5/10/-.

6 SWD4 M/9/353.

passage fare. Unfortunately, Mr N just missed out on free passage for children under 12 years. Sampson the official concerned was very sympathetic and realising the enormity of the financial burden he suggested that the government waive the fares of the children. This attempt to reduce the debt was unsuccessful but Sampson was supportive since he believed that "This man appears to be a decent fellow, steady and honest and has I believe every intention of fulfilling his obligation to the Commonwealth and British Governments<sup>7</sup>".

Mr N himself explained his situation quite clearly in a letter.

2-7-25

Dear Mr Reynolds,

I am not trying to evade my obligation. I am doing my level best to make headway and I consider it a great struggle undoubtedly the hardest pull of our married life. I didn't expect when I came to Australia to live in affluence but I most certainly didn't expect the rough spin I have had. This debt I agree was entirely of my own making because on arriving in Hobart it was almost my first mission to have my family out, without even enquiring the cost of living etc which I know was a big mistake, I don't submit this sir in the complaining sense, we are all quite happy here and like Tasmania well, since landing in Tasmania I have had constant employment at my trade. Although I have hardly lost a minute's work, all my wage is condemned just to live. I trust I don't bore you by asking you to look over my average fortnightly expenditure which I submit in all honesty for family of six.

	P	s	d
Rent	2	15	0
Grocer	3	0	0
Butcher	1	0	0
Vegetables		10	0
Baker		14	0
Wood		12	0
School Fees		10	0
E Light		5	0
Gas		2	0
Boots Repairs		6	0
Clothing etc		5	0
	9	19	0

7 Ibid: letter from Sampson to Director Migration and Settlement, 10 July 1924.

Average Pay	10	14	0
	<u>9</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>0</u>
		<u>15</u>	<u>0</u>

I think that you will agree sir that there is very little margin for family sickness or other emergencies which should be provided for.

Trusting you will give my case your earnest consideration, I am truly yours."<sup>8</sup>

The family involved in the above letter struggled on making small and infrequent payments. Sometimes they managed 10s a month though they were supposed to pay 2 pounds. State officials remained sympathetic but the Federal Authorities started to put pressure on them. After 2 years and practically no reduction of their debt they moved to Canberra due to the mother's health and lack of job security so there is no way of knowing if and when they repaid their debt of 60 pounds.

Banks nowadays are sometimes criticised for encouraging families of limited means to take on large mortgages thereby incurring debt which is difficult to remove. Similarly criticism of Federal officials in the 1920's and 1930s is justified. By any standard of common sense the levels of debt were often unrealistic. There was a failure to anticipate the ensuing financial difficulties. Many personal files bristle with requests for payment and at a Federal level no concessions were made. Migrants had debt hanging over their heads for years.<sup>9</sup>

Mr N did admit that the very natural human desire to reunite with his family caused him to take on debt without considering the implications fully. Some migrants once here did claim that they did consider carefully the cost of living etc but that they had been misled by official publications. Consistent references are made to the cost of living in particular rental costs, by disillusioned migrants. Unfortunately, I have been unable to locate any pamphlets giving details of cost of living. The Labor party newspaper The World did strongly criticise in 1923 information given to intending migrants.

"The World has in its possession a small handbook which is being distributed in England by the Government purporting to give general information to Immigrants and visitors about to come to Tasmania. The information may be truly termed general because there is not a phase of this country's history

---

8 SWD4 M/9/353

9 There are many files like that. A few examples are M/9/148, M/9/242, M/9/250, M/9/343

natural or otherwise and its possibilities that have not been touched upon. This book has no doubt been designed with the object of inducing migrants to come out from England to these shores. After having read the book Tasmania must appear to these people as a sort of Paradise - a land flowing with milk and honey: but it is only when the man from the other side of the world arrives that his dream disappears in the mists of reality."<sup>10</sup>

The above article is headed "Deluding Immigrants" and goes on to concede that the description of the State's climate and the houses may be materially correct. However, the writer of the article complains strongly that the pamphlet grossly underestimates the cost of rental housing in Hobart. A detailed account of rents is given and it is compared with the rents cited in the pamphlet. The writer quotes the pamphlet "At the capital the normal rental of superior cottages containing five or six living rooms with outbuildings ranges from 12/- to 16/- per week."<sup>11</sup> Then goes on to describe this as "obviously misleading and false. Nowhere in the city or even in the country, could a house of the dimensions mentioned be obtained at the rentals detailed."<sup>12</sup> Many examples are given, such as

"The immigrant is told that to get a present day average it would be necessary to add 25 per cent of the above figures quoted. Even if this were done the calculations would fall a long way short of the rentals now obtaining here. As is well known the ordinary workmen's cottage cannot be rented under 25/- per week and many four-roomed cottages are let at 2 pounds a week; but he is told that they can be got from 9/- to 12/- a week. As to the six-roomed house if the immigrant succeeds in getting one at 35/- per week he can count himself as numbered among the lucky ones." The booklet further states that villa residences from 6 to 7 rooms can be obtained from 15/- to 23/6 a week, from 7 to 10 rooms 18/- to 35/- a week; and larger houses with grounds attached from 85 pounds per annum. Furnished houses can usually be rented from 30/- to 40/- per week for cottages and from 3/3/- to 6/6/- for houses with seven to ten rooms."<sup>13</sup>

The above article is convincing because of the precise detail it contains and must surely leave the reader with the impression that the "whole of the figures are entirely misleading."<sup>14</sup> Migrants reading an official document would expect it to contain accurate information. If as

---

10 The World, Friday June 1st 1923.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

the article suggests such documents contained "absurdly false statements"<sup>15</sup> it is a severe indictment of the officials involved. There is no reason to believe that the figures quoted in the article are invalid.

It seems that insufficient care was taken in the preparation of pamphlets. Examination of personal files also suggests that insufficient care was taken in considering nominations. I found no case of nomination being refused except on medical grounds by medical examination of the intended migrant in Britain. This may have been because papers were not filed in such cases, although nomination forms seemed to be given a file no. and retained when the nominator refused or changed his mind about nominating. It could be that consideration was made of the nominator's ability or motivation to fulfil his or her obligation and that the evidence does not remain. However, what does remain are examples of cases where nominations might have been questioned. One example is that of Mr B and family. Mr B came out initially followed by his wife and family. There was difficulty in paying the costs of the assisted passages of his wife and family. Mr and Mrs B separated and Mrs B was left trying to pay off the debts. Aware that her eldest son still in England, was unemployed and with his own family to support, she then nominated him and his family. This despite the fact that she was still in debt herself. An official visiting her to discuss repayment of loans discovered that she was in hospital. She had been doing two jobs in an effort to pay off the debt and the mental and physical strain had affected her health.<sup>16</sup>

It was likely that there was an element of emotional strain underlying the physical stress she endured. Stephen Constantine suggests that in tight-knit British communities the depression strengthened mutual support and in fact was what prevented people leaving the community.<sup>17</sup> Once here Mrs B would likely have felt isolated in her struggle and misery, at the very least she was denied the support of her own mother. Migrants who joined the existing Tasmanian community network such as churches, sport and social organisations did often fare better. The majority of letters in the files describing financial difficulties are written by men but of course behind them would be a wife struggling with the practical realities. Many women tried to supplement their income by working at home. Mrs Sh can recall her mother sewing sheets for extra income.

---

15 Ibid.

16 SWD4 M/9/39 "I consider this nomination should not have been accepted" Letter from B Douglas to Director of Labor and State Immigration, May 7th, 1925.

17 "It was the tight-knit cultural and social environment built up by the industrial working class in the nineteenth century which now controlled and sustained them. Chapel, club and trade union did survive. . . . Organisations to help the unemployed grew from local roots. If anything especially in small towns, the more severe the depression the closer the community grew, unemployment was a shared experience and the financial and moral support of family, friends and local institutions persuaded many to stay." S Constantine Unemployment in Britain between the Wars. Longmans Group Ltd, 1980, p22.

"As soon as we left for school out came the sewing machine. As she hemmed the sheet she didn't fold it but threw the finished ones over her shoulder. When we came home from school mother was still there surrounded by a sea of white sheets."<sup>18</sup>

Mrs St like many other migrant women was strong, determined, resourceful and managed to keep her family together.

One might expect that the closer the family connection between the nominator and the nominated the more likely that the migrant would succeed. This was not always true. Married sisters particularly would nominate their siblings' families and then be unable to fulfil their obligation. In one case a professional man nominated by his sister failed to find work of any kind and wrote bitterly to the migration officer from Melbourne complaining about his sister's failure to help him.<sup>19</sup> Sometimes there were unrealistic expectations on the part of both the nominator and the nominees.

One recently widowed lady with a large property to run nominated her also widowed sister-in-law and large family. The lady in question thought her nephews and nieces would assist in running the farm. Her nominees, the Sv Family, were uncomfortable about the notion of assisted passage, as was reflected in their objection to the term "migrant". They complained that on board the ship there was a distinction made between assisted and unassisted migrants. Their nominator wrote to officials complaining that the arrival of her nominees was announced in the local paper. In fact, there was only a routine anonymous announcement of arrivals but as the nominator pointed out in a small community it was easy to work out who was being referred to. Apparently to the St family the term "migrant" was undesirable because it implied low social status. It seems the newly arrived family thought they were coming to be colonial lady and gentleman and had no intention of undertaking menial labor. The nominator realised her mistake and was so desperate to be rid of them that within a year she paid all their fares back to England stating that unless she did so she would have a nervous breakdown. Clearly in this instance assisted migration was a failure.<sup>20</sup>

Sometimes nominated migration did work. Mr W and his family were friends of their nominators (themselves recent migrants). Mrs W had a baby only a few weeks before they sailed for Tasmania. She called the baby James Finnigan W in honour of his nominator

---

18 Interview Molly Shelley, June 1992.

19 SWD4 M/9/118.

20 SWD4 M/9/400.



James Finnigan.<sup>21</sup> Indeed James Finnigan was worthy of this honour, since he housed them and found them employment for Mr W. The two families remained friends and the Finnigans continued to be supportive. Sometimes when nominations worked they worked so well that families remained life-long friends.

Not all migrants were so fortunate. Understandably, recently arrived migrants not yet integrated into the community were attracted to the idea of nominating friends since in a sense it was importing their own social circle. Therefore, chain migration was prevalent and often resulted in concentration of migrants in particular workplaces. There were official industrial nominations, that is firms like Kelsall and Kemp<sup>22</sup> and Patons and Baldwin<sup>23</sup>, who nominated large numbers of families.

Cadbury Fry Pascall Limited were an English firm who established a factory in Claremont which became operational in 1922. One might have expected large numbers of workers to be brought out by them. In fact, this was not the case. Prior to the establishment of the factory 15 or 20 men and 3 or 4 women "specialists" from England were sent to Tasmania.<sup>24</sup> These were the people with the necessary expertise to lead the various sections. Mr H, a Tasmanian who began work at Cadbury's in 1923, saw these migrants as essential since nobody in Tasmania had a knowledge or experience of milk chocolate processing.<sup>25</sup> Other than these section foremen mainly local labour was employed. As a Cadbury executive pointed out there was little point in migration for factory workers as real wages were much the same and Australian conditions "so considerably inferior to those prevailing in this country in regard to such things as organised recreation and amusement."<sup>26</sup> Mr H confirms this view and is of the opinion that preference was not given to English workers over local labor. "If an Englishman applied he would be considered but he was on the same footing as other applicants."<sup>27</sup> Cadburys employed not just people in the immediate vicinity but provided buses for workers from Glenlusk, Kempton and Bagdad as well as trains for workers from the Hobart area.<sup>28</sup> Mr H also confirms the official Cadbury company view that there were "no major upsets".<sup>29</sup> "The factory has run smoothly from the start and difficulties with English personnel have never been due to an inability to work with and over Australian labor," declared the Cadbury executive. "This is true both in the factory and especially on the social

---

21 SWD4 M/9/179

22 Kelsall and Kemp, Victoria Museum, Launceston.

23 Patons and Baldwin. Victorian Museum, Launceston.

24 DO 57/110 letter from Cadbury to Plant 19/4/29.

25 Interview Alan Hyland, November 1992.

26 DO 57/110 letter from Cadbury to Plant 26/9/29.

27 Interview Alan Hyland, November 1992.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

side."<sup>30</sup> Indeed, active social recreation was established. There was soccer, cricket, hockey and football teams plus youth clubs, a ladies' circle and a St John Ambulance section.

Cadbury's management though, had a sensitivity about being an English firm. This is reflected in their reaction to a routine announcement in The Mercury about migrant arrivals. It was simply stated that a family who arrived on the Loongana were going to take up work at the factory."<sup>31</sup> Cadbury's director EH Collyshaw wrote to the State Immigration Officer saying that "We desire to state we have no knowledge of such emigrants. All the necessary experts arrived prior to the starting up of the factory."<sup>32</sup> It transpired that the family in question had been nominated by a lady who worked at Cadbury's and had given her work address.<sup>33</sup> The fact that they saw the need for explanation is significant. —

The very active sporting life of Cadbury employees must have had an effect on Tasmanian sport in general. Tasmanian soccer was not well established until the next wave of migration in the 1950's but there were beginnings in the 20's. There was a series of soccer matches between Tasmania and China in 1923. One match was reported in the following way by The Mercury.

"The crowd was very quiet throughout mainly because it did not understand the game. It was very appreciative of the good play by both teams at the conclusion.

Captain Kallend the referee handled the game well and gave a good exhibition."<sup>34</sup>

Indeed, Captain Kallend was an assisted migrant who came in 1921.<sup>35</sup> The Chinese soccer team also enjoyed a visit to Cadburys.<sup>36</sup>

One nominated migrant who came in 1921 was Victor Tuting who went on to become "the doyen of Tasmanian Soccer Administrators."<sup>37</sup> Mr Tuting in later life acknowledged the difficulties of being a migrant. He said that it wasn't just a question of being called a pom, "it permeated into everyday life".<sup>38</sup> Although it seemed that Ex-Servicemen had the hardest

30 DO 57/108 letter from Cadbury to Plant 8/6/29.

31 The Mercury 19/10/1923.

32 Letter from EH Collyshaw, Director Cadburys to State Immigration Officer 19/10/23.

33 Letter from State Immigration to Cadbury 24/10/23.

34 The Mercury 15/10/23.

35 Interview Bill Kallend, June 1992.

36 The Mercury 16/10/23.

37 Interview Walter Pless, Sports Writer of The Mercury, November 1992.

38 Interview Walter Pless interviewing V Tuting, Sept 1990.

struggle, Mr Tuting talked of discrimination against non-ex-servicemen's children in gaining jobs (Mr Tuting's father had come to help establish Kelsall-Kemp). This echoes Cadbury's view that "the attitude of Australians to immigrants seems to be a matter of mass psychology and is full of contradictions".<sup>39</sup> Other migrants, particularly those who were children when they came speak of their inability to understand some of the attitudes they encountered. Sometimes it seemed that those who spoke loudest and longest about Britain and the glory of the Empire were those who were most derisory in their attitude towards British migrants.

The Labor party view was that they welcomed migrants as long as they didn't reduce the standards of living of workers in Australia. In a time of depression and high unemployment an influx of migrants was easily perceived as a threat. The Labor party was criticised for being anti-migrant. However, they often replied to such criticism in the following way:

"It has been stated, not only by the Premier in London, but by many others, that one of the reasons why immigration is not a success in Australia generally and in Victoria in particular, is that the immigrants are received with hostility by organised labor which it is said misunderstands the position, and is opposed to all forms of immigration. This is entirely false. Organised Labor does not object to people coming to Australia from any part of the world provided they are ready to observe our economic conditions and live accordingly, but what it does say is that we should not offer facilities to strangers to come here when we are not willing to adequately provide for those already living in our midst."<sup>40</sup>

Perhaps the sensitivity of the Cadbury management towards the employment of migrants is a reflection of the response of organised labor.

Given the economic situation and the prevalence of chain migration which created concentrations of migrants in some localities it does seem plausible that conflicts developed between local and migrant labor. Miss H was the daughter of a miner and came with her family in 1928. Her family were nominated by another mining family who were then working at Southport. The Southport mine closed so Miss H and her family moved to Cornwall Mining Company with other migrant families. She remembers as a child being physically and mentally abused because her father was working in the mine. In retrospect she thinks it was because her father was seen as a "scab" for working during a strike. Apparently, the migrant miners worked while the Tasmanian workers went on strike.<sup>41</sup> The

---

39 DO 57/110 letter from Cadbury to Plant 13/8/29.

40 Victorian Parliamentary Debates Legislative Council Vol 164, p498. The Hon WS Beckett.

41 Interview Mrs Hughes, November 1992.

Cornwall Coal Company was dogged with strikes. "There was a two-week strike in March 1929"<sup>42</sup> and "Between 1930 and 1940 strikes caused many difficulties. In 1937 20 weeks were lost in one stoppage."<sup>43</sup> The industrial trouble in 1937-1938 caused a slight drop in production.<sup>44</sup> Certainly, industrial troubles rendered the poorly established migrant yet more vulnerable.

The nomination system with its underlying philosophy that giving the individual and the community responsibility for the welfare of the migrant best promoted natural assimilation, did sometimes work and on occasion it worked well. However, if it failed the results were tragic. It seems inhuman that basic economic survival was left to chance. If the system failed there was no safety net, in the absence of the welfare state there was only destitution or receipt of charity. Failure also involved a degree of psychological and emotional suffering intensified still further by the contradictory attitudes of the local people. Paralleling the existence of seemingly contradictory attitudes among Australians, was the essential ambiguity of the migrants' position. Mostly, they didn't desire sympathy, yet the very nature of their position often prompted such a response. Migrants themselves would undoubtedly have agreed with the following comments by the Lord Mayor of Leeds who in an interview with the Yorkshire Post said

"Australia is a wonderful country with reserves scarcely touched but the settlers should be strong and healthy and should be told what they had to face. It makes a wonderful difference if a man finds friends there."<sup>45</sup>

Many of the nominated migrants who came to Tasmania were not strong and healthy and were not told what they had to face and worst of all did not find a friend.

---

42 Cornwall Coal Company Centenary 1886-1986 Pub 1986.

43 Ibid.

44 CA Bacon Tasmanian Department of Resources. Energy Division of Mines and Mineral Resources 1991 Hobart, p41.

45 The Mercury 17th October, 1923. Report of interview with Alderman Fountain, Lord Mayor of Leeds.

## Chapter 4

### **The Hon. Thomas Murdoch, Agent for the British Dominions Emigration Society,**

**"The responsibility of this honorary position is more than an ordinary citizen should accept."**

The Hon. Thomas Murdoch was no ordinary citizen. He was, among other things, member of the Legislative Council from 1914-44, four times president of the Hobart Chamber of Commerce, four times Master Warden of the Hobart Marine Board and an honorary agent for the British Dominions Emigration Society.<sup>1</sup>

The British Dominions Emigration Society was a philanthropic society based in London which helped intending migrants of limited means. There were other philanthropic societies involved in migration such as the Salvation Army and Dr Barnardos, though they didn't send migrants to Tasmania. In this chapter it is proposed to examine the role of one particular voluntary agency and its Tasmanian agent. The main emphasis will be on this role as it is reflected in the experiences of those families who came to Tasmania under their auspices. Accordingly, the initial focus is on one family's experiences as described by a daughter of the family and based on the recollections of her mother.<sup>2</sup>

Mrs St was on the waiting list to go to Canada but "out of the blue"<sup>3</sup> she received a letter from the British Dominions Emigration Society saying that her family could leave for Tasmania in just six weeks. Her husband was an Ex-Serviceman so it was a free passage. In 1922, Ex-Servicemen required to be nominated and officials told her that this would be done by Hon. Thomas Murdoch, an upstanding citizen of Hobart, who would provide the family with housing and employment. Mrs St was dubious since it all seemed such a rush, but with a baby on the way, Mrs St was keen to get going and so, six weeks later, left for Tasmania. For Mrs St, most of the journey was spent in the ship's hospital with her nine-year-old son. He contracted scarlet fever which subsequently developed into rheumatic fever and St. Vitus' Dance. On docking at Melbourne, doctors advised them to admit the sick child to a hospital there. Mr and Mrs St knew nobody in Melbourne, had very little money and didn't want to leave their son alone in Melbourne. They thought that since arrangements had been made for them in Hobart it would be better if the family continued on to Hobart. An ambulance met the ship. On arrival in Hobart they expected to be met by Mr Murdoch. In fact, nobody met

---

1 Australian Dictionary of Biography Vol 10 Melbourne 1986 p628

2 Interview with Molly Shelley, June 1992

3 Ibid.

them. The hospital found them temporary accommodation. In Britain they had sold jewellery and furniture. The £25 proceeds from this sale had been transferred to a bank account in Hobart. The family had arrived on Regatta Day and the bank was closed. The next day, on visiting the bank, Mrs St was told that the money was not there and had been withdrawn by Mr Murdoch their nominator. Mrs St asked Mr Murdoch for the money and was told that it was a commission for him, for having nominated them. Mrs St was in a desperate position having no money, a sick child, a baby due in a few weeks, an unemployed husband and only temporary accommodation. Mr Murdoch said he had no job for Mr St - no accommodation, but under pressure he gave Mrs St the money. Fortunately, Mr St did find work and accommodation. He walked up Elizabeth street looking for work and Mr B, a notable businessman, on hearing Mr St's story offered him both a job and accommodation.

The St family file revealed that all the main facts as told by Mrs Shelley were correct.<sup>4</sup> Mr Murdoch was their nominator, £25 had been put into a bank in Hobart<sup>5</sup> and there was a cable asking an ambulance to meet the ship. However, there was no record of what happened to the £25. There was one odd letter though, from the clerk at the Office of Immigration in Hobart to the State Immigration Officer in Launceston.

Major Sampson

"I attach hereto a letter 17/6/24 handed to me by Mrs H Stokes GPO, Hobart, with a request that I ask the British Dominions Emigration Society to stop issuing a summons for the recovery of the amount due by her husband and self which they intend to pay, and would have paid it by now, only sickness in the family and other disabilities have prevented such being effected.

The Hon. Thomas Murdoch M.L.C., referred Mrs Stokes to me and I at once made inquiries and found that Stokes is a returned soldier and is giving excellent satisfaction with his present employer, Messrs W E Best and Co Drapers, Hobart. Mr Best told me personally that Stokes was a fine stamp of man and he would like to see more of that class migrate to Australia. Stokes' daughter is also being employed by this firm.

---

4 SWD4 M/9/279

5 Ibid.; Letter from Mr R Culver Sec of British Dominions Emigration Society to Mr Murdoch 29th November 1922 "re Harry Stokes wife and 5 children. By the SS "Ballarat" leaving on December 14th the above family are leaving for Tasmania. You will remember that I wrote to you fully about them on March 30th last, and you have since cabled a nomination for them. They will have £25 to their credit at the Bank in Tasmania for landing money.

Mrs Stokes appears to be, also, the right stamp of migrant and is a hard-working woman.

I suggested that she endeavour to pay something regularly, however small, so as to show her willingness to reduce the debt and in this connection she will commence to pay 2/6d per week starting on and from 12th inst.

Can you help in this matter please?"<sup>6</sup>

There is no copy of Mrs St's letter on file, so no indication of the reason for, or amount of, debt.—The State Immigration Officer did reply in the following way,

Re Harry Stokes and Family Ex-Ballarat 6/2/23

". . . . They were granted an Ex-Service passage (free) under the scheme for Ex-Servicemen, so that I am at a loss to know what the account in question is. I can only assume that they were made a loan by the Society and apparently the amount has been placed with the Hall-Gibbs Mercantile Agency Ltd, Brisbane, Queensland, for collection, but why placed in the hands of a Queensland firm by Mr Culver, I cannot understand. Surely there must have been previous correspondence between the Secretary of the BDES and Mr Stokes, concerning the matter. This Society, I understood, is a purely voluntary organisation and not connected with the British Government in any way, and the matter is one between them and Mr Stokes."<sup>7</sup>

Indeed, the above letters are hard to explain. Underlying Mrs Shelley's story are three issues. Firstly, the role of the BDES in Britain and their method of recruitment. According to Mrs Shelley, her family was on the waiting list to go to Canada when she was informed by letter that she could go to Tasmania. Two years after Mrs St's family left for Tasmania in September 1924, the Australian Passenger Conference withdrew the shipping agent licence of the BDES. The Secretary of the BDES, Mr Robert Culvert, then wrote to the Overseas Settlement Committee expressing his dissatisfaction that their name had been struck off the list of agencies and asked that the OSC use their influence to have it reinstated.<sup>8</sup> The OSC in fact did argue in favour of the BDES being reinstated. It was argued that voluntary societies were on "a different plane to ordinary agents as they are not in the business for money".<sup>9</sup> It

---

6 Ibid; Letter from Clerk in Immigration Office Hobart to State Immigration Officer July 2nd 1924.

7 Ibid; Letter from B Sampson State Immigration Officer to Chief Clerk Agricultural - Stock Dept Hobart 3rd July 1924.

8 CO/721/99 1859 10th September 1924.

9 Ibid; Letter from Mr Plant to Australian Passenger Conference 9th December 1924.

was argued that the commission they received enabled them to send more settlers out. D. Algar Bailey of the Overseas League provided a counter argument. "The acceptance by philanthropic societies of commissions on the booking of passages is open to the objection that it brings them into migration on a business footing and tends to weaken their chief claim to public support namely that they are philanthropic and activated by the loftiest motives."<sup>10</sup> D Algar Bailey cited Mrs Robson of the Canadian Government Department of Immigration in her evidence before the Committee in March 1920 noting that she "laid stress on the fact that the settlement work of philanthropic societies tends to deteriorate when they receive commissions on bookings".<sup>11</sup> Mr Bailey also stated that the committee had at times been embarrassed that the competition of the philanthropic societies in the business of passage broking aroused the jealousy and hostility of the ordinary passage brokers agent. Mr Bailey's arguments were frustrating from the philanthropic societies view in that whilst against societies receiving commissions he didn't support financial assistance from the Government to compensate for the lack of commission. The reasons stated were that government funds would be open to claims from societies which were hard to check and that it would be against the societies interests in that it would deprive them of their philanthropic character. They would become "too much entangled in the Government machine".<sup>12</sup>

It does seem likely, that, in 1922 when Mrs St's family left Britain, as the BDES were shipping agents receiving commission they promoted their interests by filling up spaces on ships with people on waiting lists to other places. In a letter to Mr Murdoch, Mr R Culver speaking of a prospective nominee commented that "At first this man made up his mind to go to Queen Charlotte Islands where he thought that he would like the hard pioneering life there. We, however, thought that these people were much too good to be buried there, and have recommended them to go to you in Tasmania."<sup>13</sup> There was then, orchestration involved, in filling up the empty spaces of the empire in order to fill empty spaces in wallets, albeit philanthropic ones.

The second issue is the role of Mr Murdoch in his position of Honorary Agent for the BDES. Nine files of nominated families are in the Collection of personal files. For research purposes they have been numbered from 1 to 9. The St family is No 9 since they were last to arrive. The files were examined to establish whether Mr Murdoch provided his nominees with jobs. Out of the nine cases, in six cases there is evidence that the Immigration Department and not Mr Murdoch found employment for the nominees. In two cases there is no clear evidence and in one notable case (family no 8) there is disagreement over whether or not employment

---

10 CO/721/100 Paper on the Booking of Passages by Philanthropic Societies by D Algar Bailey.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 PDI Vol 371 Letter from Mr Culver to Mr Murdoch 21st March 1922.



was offered. A best case scenario then would be that in three out of the nine cases Mr Murdoch fulfilled his obligations as nominator and found employment for his nominees. It is also possible that in fact there was no instance of him obtaining employment.

As with ordinary nomination, Mr Murdoch as nominator failing in his obligation resulted in hardship for the families concerned. In case no 9, the St family, magnanimity stepped in, in the shape of Mr B. Other families were not so lucky. Family no 6 (The Bu family) did not even know that Mr Murdoch was their nominator and as Mr Bu failed to obtain employment they went interstate.<sup>14</sup> Mr Bu told his story to the Immigration Officer in Melbourne and the following letter is the result.

"With reference to your Memorandum of the 15th June last, No M/9/189 . . . . who proceeded to Victoria after having failed to find employment in your state, I beg to inform you that Mr Bu has experienced considerable difficulty since his arrival in this State in securing employment. His position has now been made more acute by the fact that his wife gave birth to another child four months ago. His other child is only two years of age.

On perusing the copies of the nomination received from you, I have observed that the Bu family was nominated by Mr Thomas Murdoch, Market Place, Hobart on 25th November, 1921. When I enquired of Bu as to whether he knew anything of Mr Murdoch he replied that he had never heard of him until he called at this office. I am unable to understand why Mr Murdoch did not take steps to look after his nominees. Bu informs me that when he enquired of you as to the name of his nominator he was given no satisfaction. I would be glad if you would favour me with advice as to why the nominator in this instance apparently failed to provide for his nominees. The case is a most distressing one, and I feel sure that you will realise it is most unwise to accept nominations from persons who are not in a position, or who are not prepared to ensure the welfare of their nominees. Such cases as this bring discredit on the immigration movement, and cause considerable embarrassment to both the Commonwealth Immigration and the State Immigration Offices."<sup>15</sup>

---

14 SWD4 M/9/189.

15 Ibid; Letter from Deputy Director Immigration Melbourne to Immigration Officer Hobart 10th April 1923.

Indeed, if Mr Bu didn't even know who had nominated him, it seems this was a case of fake nomination. Other nominees were given his name so at least they knew who to complain to. The Hobart Immigration Officer's reply accepted no blame on Mr Murdoch's part.

"I have to inform you that Mr Bu was offered employment in this state on his arrival but he stated as the job offered him was, perhaps, temporary and not to his liking, and owing to his having a friend in Victoria, he thought he could do better in that State.

The Bu family was nominated by the Hon. Thomas Murdoch, M.L.C. and the position which was offered to Bu was obtained by Mr Murdoch. Mr Murdoch was absent from this State when Bu arrived here and that is the reason Bu did not see his nominator.

I would point out to you that the Hon Thomas Murdoch had nominated no less than seven families during the last 18 months and in all cases he has found employment for his nominees. Mr Murdoch is a well known public man in this State - Member of the Upper House, Vice-President of the New Settlers League, Master Warden of the Hobart Marine Board, Chieftain of the Caledonian Society and a Director of Messrs Cadbury, Fry, Pascall Ltd, and it is absurd for Bu to say that his nominator would not do anything for him and it would be equally absurd if I refused any nomination made by Mr Murdoch."<sup>16</sup>

The above letter is strong in defence of Mr Murdoch but it contains at least one lie. The evidence shows that he did not provide employment in all cases.

Perhaps, the answer to the question of official deceit lies in the Premier's Department Files. These contain letters between the Secretary of the BDES, Mr R Culver, and Mr Thomas Murdoch. They also contain letters from Mr Murdoch to Immigration Officers and the Premier. Right from the start it was clear that Mr Murdoch was no ordinary nominator. In a letter concerning the first family he nominated,<sup>17</sup> Mr Culver mentioned that "to save time, ask them to cable nomination. You may have to pay a pound or so for the cost of the cable in which

---

16 Ibid; Letter from Immigration Officer Hobart to Deputy Director of Immigration Melbourne April 16th 1923.

17 SWD4 M/9/57.

case we will refund the money to you, if you will let me know what you have to pay."<sup>18</sup> Ordinary nominators had to bear their own costs unlike Mr Murdoch. In fact, the first family nominated by Mr Murdoch endured hardship and separation. Mr T was found employment in the Great Lakes by the Immigration Officer but this meant being apart from his wife. They were struggling financially because they arrived on the 28th March 1922, and it was 12th May 1922 before Mr T was found employment by the Immigration Officer. Such employment had its disadvantages as Mr T explained he had sent his wife £2 in a letter but when she received the letter the money was missing.

— ". . . the fact that upsets me is the £2 missing from the letter I sent her it was practically every penny I had earnt last week and I forwarded it to her as I knew she was badly in need of the money for food and rent.

I had been wet through to the skin three times this week, before I would stop work as I wanted every penny but to hear from my wife of the miserable life she is having and the missing £2 for her keep I think it is enough to upset any man."<sup>19</sup>

Indeed, there were many examples of enforced separation of families, thus adding stress to already difficult situations. The second family nominated by Murdoch would have been expected to do well. Mr H was in charge of an engineering plant in his previous employment and came with £100. The Immigration Department found him work at EZ but the 12-16 hours shifts there affected his health and he tried hard to get another job.<sup>20</sup> Interestingly, the man who witnessed Mr H's form was an intending migrant himself. Apparently, he changed his mind. One wonders if Mr H had contacted him and advised him against coming.<sup>21</sup>

Mr Murdoch didn't seem to feature at all in the lives of these two families. In fact, that was how he meant it to be. It seems that he saw himself as a nominator in name only. He wanted the State to take responsibility for them but retain his position or perhaps even get paid by the government for doing it, as is illustrated in the following letters.

---

18 Ibid; Letter from Mr R Culver to Mr Murdoch 2nd June 1921.

19 Ibid; Letter from Mr Timms to Captain Davis May 31st 1922.

20 SWD4 M/9/174.

21 SWD4 M/9/127.

"Up to the present time I have nominated those who were desirous of coming to Tasmania and have also been able to find work on arrival, but the responsibility of this honorary position is more than an ordinary citizen should accept. The class of immigrants arriving are the right stamp and make desirable residents, but can you suggest any way of securing these people so that I can be relieved both of the duty of obtaining work and the nomination with its attendant claims."<sup>22</sup>

The Immigration Officer's reply was that "anything like a large number of such nominations, where the Government would practically be responsible for the employment of the nominees . . . would defeat our interests in-as-much as nominees under the BDES would practically be on our hands."<sup>23</sup>

This response was relayed to Mr Murdoch by Premier Lee. Mr Murdoch, though, did not give up easily and replied that "I think it would be better to allow me to continue the nominations on behalf of the Government,"<sup>24</sup> when he had not received a prompt reply to his request. He did receive a reply eventually and Mr Murdoch was unhappy with it. Premier Lee mentioned "cases where persons have been nominated and those whom they have been nominated by have been asked to be relieved of their responsibility."<sup>25</sup> Premier Lee cited a Mr W C Wood as one example and this irritated Mr Murdoch because Mr W C Wood had been nominated by him. In fact, later Mr W C Wood was to cause Mr Murdoch embarrassment by writing to newspapers and the Prime Minister. There is no copy of Mr Murdoch's reply on file but whatever it contained the Premier backed down from his position and apologised profusely.

"I would like to take the opportunity of intimating that it was not intended, in my letter of 31st May last to cast any reflection upon your activities regarding the nomination of immigrants."<sup>26</sup>

The "Back pedal" is puzzling. In any event, Mrs St and her family were a few months later nominated by Mr Murdoch and were to find themselves like Mr Murdoch's other nominees, very much on their own.

---

22 PDI Vol 371 55/16/22 Letter from Murdoch to Premier Lee 27th April 1922.

23 PDI Vol 371 Letter from H C Davies Immigration Officer to Director of Agriculture 16th May 1922.

24 Ibid; 55/6/22.

25 Ibid; Premier Lee to Mr Murdoch 31st May 1922.

26 Ibid; Premier Lee to Mr Murdoch 7th June 1922.

The third aspect of Mrs Shelley's story was that Mr Murdoch asked for commission. Mrs Shelley's mother ( Mrs St) wasn't alone in making that accusation. Mr W C Woods wrote to the Mercury but it was considered too libellous to print. In desperation he paraded up and down the main street with a sandwich board displaying comments which would have remained a secret to those who didn't witness them since they were considered too scandalous to print if Mr Murdoch hadn't written the following response to the Mercury.

"The case referred to in your issue of Saturday suggests that a nominator draws a commission for immigration introduced to this State. As the Tasmanian Representative of the British Emigration Society of London my position is a purely honorary one, and there are no fees; all out of pocket expenses I have paid myself, except the cost of any special cables."<sup>27</sup>

Mr Murdoch also complained "that the trouble in getting new arrivals settled has not been to me either a pleasing or an inexpensive proceeding."<sup>28</sup> His references to expenses are puzzling since it appeared that he claimed for any expense incurred and that Mr Culver willingly reimbursed him as in the case of,

"Referring to your letter of December 23rd, in which you send me an account for £4, 2s 11d for cables. I now have much pleasure in settling this account. I have paid the amount to your credit at the Bank of Australia in Hobart and if you will kindly communicate with them they will pay you this sum.

I am very sorry that you have had to wait for it so long, but we thought it would simplify matters if you would collect the £5 from Bex and refund yourself in this way."<sup>29</sup>

Bex, however, did not turn up. One nominee who did turn up was Mr Ba. He wasn't met, even the Immigration Officer presumably acting on behalf of Mr Murdoch missed the train. He was under the impression that his nominator Mr Murdoch would pay their first night's board and refused to pay. It seems that Murdoch did eventually pay it but then claimed it back from Mr Culver.<sup>30</sup>

---

27 The Mercury June 12th 1923 p3.

28 Ibid.

29 PDI Vol 371 Letter from Mr Culvert to Mr Murdoch 21st March, 1922.

30 SWD4 M/9/140.

Mr W C Wood had claimed that there was an "Immigration Swindle" and that as soon as the nominators of immigrants "had drawn their commissions" the unfortunate migrant was left to look after himself.<sup>31</sup> Murdoch did attempt to get Wood employment at Mount Lyell and Maria Island but Woods refused to go. He wanted to go home and was, in fact, deported.<sup>32</sup>

There were others, though, who accused Mr Murdoch of asking for commissions. At a sitting of the "Royal Commission investigating Railways, 1923" it was alleged by a Mr Stone that Mr Murdoch asked him for Commission for having introduced Mr Stone to the Cadbury Fry Pascall Company as a result of which Mr Stone received the contract to erect the firm's factory at Claremont.<sup>33</sup> Mr Murdoch vehemently denied the allegations and appeared at the Commission to refute the evidence. During cross-examination of witnesses the previous day, Murdoch was referred to as a "commission monger" and a witness also made the observation that "I do not think anyone in Tasmania would believe that Mr Murdoch was jocular over a commission."<sup>34</sup> This, in the same month that Mr Murdoch had stated "In further to your article which appeared on Saturday . . . I wish to say that I have never received a commission or payment of any kind for acting as agent in this state for the BDES."<sup>35</sup> Later that year Thomas Murdoch was re-elected as Marine Warden of Hobart and a disappointed candidate denounced him as a liar.<sup>36</sup>

The consistent references to Mr Murdoch's lack of personal integrity aside, there is overwhelming evidence that he failed to fulfil his obligations as nominator to his families. For whatever reason, whether it be officials frightened of Mr Murdoch's power or a mistaken conception that because he was acting in an official capacity he should be treated differently, the result was the same for the unfortunate families concerned. The overseas delegation visiting Tasmania expressed dissatisfaction with some aspects of nomination in Tasmania and described "cases where there had been distinct departures from the principles of nomination."<sup>37</sup> They had talked to Mr W C Woods and made an obvious reference to Mr Murdoch by saying that in "cases where persons are nominated not by friends or relatives

---

31 The Mercury June 9th, 1923, p7.

32 SWD4 M/9/188

33 The World June 28th, 1923.

The Mercury June 28th, 1923.

34 The Mercury June 27th, 1923.

35 The World June 12th, 1923.

36 "You are a liar" said one of the unsuccessful candidates for Warden of Marine Board, Mercury 22/12/23

37 The Mercury July 3rd, 1923.

but by individuals, acting either for agents or societies the nominations could not be described as bona fide. Otherwise the nominator could be made to maintain the newcomer."<sup>38</sup> Mr and Mrs St were newcomers and even Immigration Officials described them as "the Right Stamp of Migrant". Unfortunately though, they did not meet the "Right Stamp of Nominator" in the Hon. Thomas Murdoch.

## Chapter 5

### The Farm Boy Learners

"The life blood of a nation has its fountain head in its farm fields and rural homes. The nation's pulse is the hum of the thrasher, the bleating of lambs, the lowing of kine.

Let us get a national thought and lift it high up into the sunlight. Let it become a deed by individual effort, and because natural intelligence is being guided along channels which lead people more towards the open fields and less towards the walls of cities."

Algar Bailey<sup>1</sup>

It was a typical Tasmanian winter's day. Crouched in the corner of a milking shed, lighting up a cigarette was John. He was a small, skinny boy about 16 years old with a pale face and lank, untidy hair. Hearing footsteps, he quickly stubbed out his cigarette and started cleaning the separator. John didn't know it but his presence in the milking shed was the enactment of Algar Bailey's vision.

In 1923, 73 Farm Boy Learners came to Tasmania. The Farm Boy Learner Scheme was based on the theory that robust boys aged between 15-17 years old who were trained in farming could be usefully employed on local farms. Farmers who wrote to the Immigration Officer enquiring about the scheme were given the following information.

"The boys vary from 15 to 17 years of age, they are carefully selected in England, have passed a very thorough and searching medical examination and are robust and well fitted for farm work."<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, initially farmers seemed keen to take in these young farm learners as is suggested by the following query:

"I see by the paper that the boys who arrived a few days ago have been snapped up. Could you let me know when you expect to have some more coming as I am anxious to get a lad."<sup>3</sup>

---

1 CO 721/989 A paper on Empire Settlement by Algar Bailey, October 8th, 1924.

2 SWD4 M/1/509 Letter from Sampson, 6th April 1923.

3 SWD4 M/1/525 Letter from farmer, 20th April 1923.



Perhaps, though, this keenness should be regarded suspiciously as farmers viewing the boys as a source of cheap labour. Indeed, a report of the 1930s did suggest that some of the farmers' treatment of boys had been regrettable and that boys were sometimes placed with farmers who were shunned by local boys because of their harsh treatment.<sup>4</sup> Some farmers though, were genuinely interested in the idea of helping young migrants such as one farmer who specifically requested a "Scotch Laddie" to be sent to him because his mother was Scottish and he had "a soft spot for Scots."<sup>5</sup> Major Sampson, too, was initially keen on Scottish boys since he remarked that "I was pleased to see that the batch of 12 due to arrive on Saturday are nearly all young Scotch boys."<sup>6</sup> These high expectations of Scottish boys were misguided since the boys who came were not strong, robust Highlanders but, in fact, were mostly from Glasgow. These "Scotch Laddies" were archetypal products of urban poverty.

It soon became apparent that the "careful selection" had not been effective. Major Sampson was the Immigration Officer in charge of the boys and he received consistent complaints from farmers. Many of the boys were chain smokers. "His one desire is to sit and smoke."<sup>7</sup> Another farmer commented that his boy was "an inveterate cigarette smoker,"<sup>8</sup> and another that he would "sell his shirt for a cigarette."<sup>9</sup> For one farmer the chain smoking had expensive consequences.

"I am dispensing with the services of C H through misconduct, continued use of bad language and repeated carelessness with cigarettes. He caused me to have destroyed by fire this last harvest about £70 worth of straw."<sup>10</sup>

Lack of experience in farm work was another criticism that farmers made about the boys. "He has no experience at all in farm work, for instance, he cannot use an axe, has never milked a cow, never ridden or driven a horse, never touched a plough and as far as I can gather has never seen any modern agricultural implements at work."<sup>11</sup> This boy had spent 4 months at a "Farm School" ran by a

---

4 SWD5 Wentworth Report also in PDO /55/9/36

5 SWD4 M/1/507 Letter from Mr Ayers to Sampson, 21st April 1923.

6 SWD4 Ibid; Letter from Sampson to Mr Ayers, 23rd April 1923.

7 Ibid;

8 Ibid; Letter from Mr Ayers to Sampson.

9 SWD4 M/1/499.

10 SWD4 M/1/509.

11 SWD4 M/1/508 Letter from farmer to Reynolds, April 23rd 1925.

Dr F G Cossar. The school was at Paisley near Glasgow and recruited predominantly unemployed Glaswegian youths. Sampson after receiving several batches of boys from Craighielinn concluded that "The training at that Institution would appear to be of a superficial nature."<sup>12</sup> It transpired that the nearest the boys had got to rural life was being bricklayer's labourers to builders constructing greenhouses as indicated in "He informs me that most of his time at the so called training farm was spent acting as labourer to bricklayers who were building greenhouses."<sup>13</sup> This prompts the question of just whose responsibility it was for the training and suitability of the boys.

Browsing through the personal files of the boys, I began to suspect the motives of whoever sent them to Tasmania. I wondered if financial gain had been involved? In fact, the man in charge of Craighielinn Farm School, Dr F C Cossar, had established his Farm School to train intending migrant boys because he believed that unskilled boys who had no hope of employment would have a much better life if they migrated to the Colonies. The acquisition of farming skills would fit them for their new life.<sup>14</sup> The boys who came to Tasmania in 1923 would have been involved in building greenhouses because Dr Cossar's school had just been established in August 1922. An agreement in May 1923 made the school a joint venture between the government and private enterprise citing that "Under the Empire Settlement Act 1922, the Secretary of State may co-operate with private organisations in formulating and carrying out schemes of affording joint assistance to persons who intend to settle in any part of His Majesty's Overseas Dominions."<sup>15</sup> Other parts of the agreement involved payment for maintenance of the boys and £6 for an outfit to go overseas. The payment for boys who did not proceed overseas was less. However, the boys were "encouraged to contribute in cash as large a sum as possible towards the cost of their maintenance etc and any sum so contributed shall be deducted in arriving at the amount of expenditure for which the Secretary of State and the Craighielinn Farm are jointly responsible."<sup>16</sup> The school had to provide a course of elementary agriculture and was "open at any time to Government inspection."<sup>17</sup> Any profit on the working of the Farm was to be used

---

12 SWD4 M/1/499 Letter from Sampson to farmer, May 12th 1923.

13 Ibid; Sampson to farmer, May 13th 1923.

14 CO 721/100 Agreement, 24th May 1923.

Whereas the said Craighielinn Farm was instituted on the 28th August, 1922, for the purpose mainly of affording to city boys of the poorer classes some experience in farming and gardening with a view to testing their suitability for migration as farm workers to His Majesty's Overseas Dominions.

15 CO 721/100 Agreement, 24th May 1923.

16 Ibid;

17 Ibid;

for the extension of the Farm for the benefit of the boys admitted to the Farm. The cost of maintenance was calculated at 22/- for each boy and the government paid exactly half of that 11/- for not more than 13 weeks. It seems the school was only given 3 months to turn city boys into farmers! If they did not proceed overseas the school was only given 5% instead of 50% of the boys' costs. The Secretary of State and the Craigelinn Farm were to "carry out the said scheme and use their best endeavours to secure its success."<sup>18</sup>

Dr Cossar did use his best endeavours to secure its success but he felt he was frustrated in his efforts by selection officers and others at Australia House. The doctor's own manner and personality seemed to aggravate the problem. Dr Cossar's argument was that officials should be persuaded that they had "a real duty to this portion of the Empire to take not only the cream (in the way of physique) of our population; but also to assist that class of boy who through previous environment, is not yet up to the standard of a boy who has had advantages of an English public school."<sup>19</sup> Dr Cossar's boys often had difficulty in meeting the medical standards. Initially, he did the medicals himself. The boys who came to Tasmania in 1923 had their medicals done by Dr Cossar. When medicals became more stringent many of the boys failed. In January 1926, 75% of his boys were rejected by Australia House because of being underweight and under the required height. In 1926, Australia House cancelled the Agreement with Craigelinn Farm School.<sup>20</sup> Dr Cossar challenged the selecting officers's decisions and was described by Mr Plant as having a "vigorous attitude and an "idealist who is very impatient of any hindrance to his work".<sup>21</sup> Dr Cossar in fact wrote to the Prince of Wales complaining that,

"It does seem a shame that boys whose parents are quite prepared for them to go over to Australia as they see little hope of them getting out of a blind alley occupation in the city should be disappointed because they had not been able to give the boys the nourishment in the past that they required, while the possibility of development in the boys is latent and only require proper environment to be attained."<sup>22</sup>

---

18 Ibid;

19 CO/721/99 Dr Cossar to Prince of Wales, 6th February 1926.

20 CO/721/99 6th February 1926.

21 Ibid; 8th February 1926.

22 Ibid;

Indeed, Dr Cossar made strenuous efforts, by experimenting with diet to improve their physique. In January 1929, Dr Cossar wrote to the Glasgow Herald replying to an article about giving extra milk to school children. He explained that "It is pathetic to see the condition of the large number of lads who come to me with no hope under normal circumstances of any substantial improvement,"<sup>23</sup> and that "it has been obvious as a result of past experience that these boys need special treatment and that it is not enough to place them direct on farms, with their poor physique."<sup>24</sup> Accordingly, "I first adopted the usual method of adding cod liver oil to the diet, but got no marked change until I added calcium salts and eventually in selected cases glandular extracts all accompanied by stretching exercises."<sup>25</sup> All this was with a view to increasing the boys' heights since many of his boys didn't meet the height requirement of 5ft. He said that this was done because, "the change of environment, fresh air, plain food, regular hours of sleep and the prevention of cigarette smoking - a habit which I have found to be a great handicap to growing boys,"<sup>26</sup> did help but didn't get an increase in height of the boy under 5ft in height within three or four months. Dr Cossar claimed that his dietary regime proved successful. He cited two interesting cases of lads who were both 4ft 11in in height and aged 17 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> and 17 <sup>11</sup>/<sub>12</sub> years. At the end of respectively 11 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> and 9 weeks they were both 5ft <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>in and had thus gained 1 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>in in height as well as 7lbs in weight.<sup>27</sup> Sometimes though, he made reference to less scientific methods of meeting medical standards. In writing to Mr Plant about the Canadian authorities now stipulating the 5ft height rule and 100lb in weight, Dr Cossar admitted that this presented a difficulty for him. He explained "I can put a few stones in their pockets but I cannot increase their height in their stocking soles!"<sup>28</sup> It was a joke but given his obsessive attitude it is likely that there was an element of "cheating" in his endeavours to get the boys selected.

Dr Cossar, though, was realistic enough to realise that it wasn't just a matter of rendering them physically fit. He argued that they needed discipline and training and that on arrival overseas they needed further behavioural training. He strongly advocated after-care and was critical of some of the treatment the boys received once in the colonies. In fact, such treatment sometimes back-fired on him since the British press were only too happy to publish stories of migrant hardship. Such stories triggered off questioning in the British Parliament by Labor MP's.

---

23 The Glasgow Herald January 11th 1929.

24 Ibid;

25 Ibid;

26 Ibid;

27 Ibid;

28 CO/721/99 Letter from Dr Cossar to Mr Plant, 15th June 1929.

"In the House of Commons this afternoon, Mr A. Salter, the Labour member for West Bermondsey, asked an extraordinary series of questions regarding the treatment of boy immigrants in Australia. He said that lads of 17 and 18 years of age were writing home complaining that though they were supposed to receive 15s to 20s weekly, they were not receiving any wages. In some cases, they were without clothes and boots, and with no means of obtaining them, while on some up-country stations, they were being knocked about, ill treated and compelled to work from 6 o'clock in the morning until 10 o'clock at night. They described their conditions as slavery."<sup>29</sup>

Anxious mothers who often didn't receive letters from their sons contacted Dr Cossar asking for news of their sons. Dr Cossar wrote to Major Sampson asking the boys to write. Dr Cossar sometimes felt that he was getting criticism from all sides with "parents condemning me left and right"<sup>30</sup> and officials too complaining of the boys' behaviour. Paralleling the question in the British parliament were comments made in Australian parliaments questioning the suitability of boys. In one instance an article from the Melbourne Argus was cited with its heading

"Undesirable Newcomers - Disturbing Allegations - Larrikinism and Filthy Habits."<sup>31</sup>

It was stated that,

"That article shows there are people coming here who are undesirable. A responsible Minister in Tasmania said that no more boy immigrants were wanted there, because they were of the wrong type. The scouring of the cities of England are of no use for populating the empty spaces of Australia."<sup>32</sup>

Indeed, in October 1924 London were cabled requesting that no Farm Boy Learners be sent to Australia.<sup>33</sup> Dr Cossar it seems at times found the strain too much and

---

29 The Mercury Report from London, May 7th. May 9th 1923, p7.

30 C/721/99 Letter from Dr Cossar to Bruce Walker, Immigration Department, London. 17/3/26

31 Victorian Parliamentary Debates, Legislative Council. Vol 164, The Hon W J Beckett, p501. 14th August 1923.

32 Ibid;

33 SWD4 M/505.

apparently suffered a nervous breakdown in 1926.<sup>34</sup> However, he soon recovered on 11th July 1927, the Farm School changed its name to Craigielinn Boys Training Farms (Incorporated) and was declared a Charitable Institution. Local businessmen and leading citizens provided funding. By 1928, though, Dr Cossar was struggling to fill the school because "of all the new agencies taking untrained boys to the colonies", but undeterred, Dr Cossar was actively recruiting. "I am trying out advertising in the Papers just now and am having some encouragement. I shall be broadcasting from Glasgow on Sunday evening at 7:55 pm".<sup>35</sup>

Dr Cossar was convinced of the value of his work but surely his extreme paternalistic approach is open to criticism. As one Farm Boy Learner who came to Tasmania said "I will write to Dr Cossar - the man who sent us here - and I will tell them straight that he ought be shot for sending boys out here away from their homes and friends to starve."<sup>36</sup> The Immigration Officer's response was that "it seems evident that the migrant is inclined to blame the system under which he was recruited for Australia, for his non-success in this country."<sup>37</sup> The migrant concerned stated that he had been misled.

"When I left home we were led to believe that we were going to get 25/- or 30/- per week and that the Government was going to keep us in employment for 2 years. I had one job got for me 10/- per week and I had to work from 6 in the morning to 7 or 8 at night. Do you think it is a fair deal?"<sup>38</sup>

In fact, this boy had run away along with several other Craigielinn boys and had successfully avoided paying back his loan. For young lads they were given unrealistic financial commitments. They earned about 10/- a week initially and half of that, 5/-, had to go to the government. Farmers were supposed to forward it but sometimes they didn't. Jack was a typical example in that he had to pay back £24. He wasn't typical though in that he did pay it off and it only took him 22 months

---

34 CO/721/99 Letter from Mr Plant to Dr Cossar "Do take care of yourself and do not run the risk of another breakdown." Oct 1929.

On the 17th March, 1926, Dr Cossar had given up temporarily and written to J Bruce Walker, Immigration Department, London. "I wish anyone who is going to act as the representative of this Association the best of luck in the days to come, but I am very pleased to be able to drop the burden now."

35 CO/721/99 Letter from Dr Cossar to Mr Plant, 3-4-28.

36 SWD4 M/1/507 Letter from migrant to Immigration Officer refusing to pay outstanding debt. 11th June 1930.

37 SWD4 M/1/507 Letter July 1930.

38 Ibid; Letter from migrant to Immigration Officer, 11th June 1930.

to pay it back.<sup>39</sup> Boys soon become disillusioned realising that they were never going to be overnight successes.

There were some successes though, although usually not from Craigielinn. There were some boys who had been recruited from the North of England. One, Ernest West, went on to become Secretary of the ALP, an MHA and to retire in a senior public service position.<sup>40</sup> Another, Jack Shepherd, paid off his loan, found secure employment and later nominated the rest of his family.<sup>41</sup> His father had wanted him to come to escape the only other alternative of going down the mines.<sup>42</sup> A lady remembers Jack's reply when asked how he liked Tasmania "Fine" he said, "but it's aw trees and nae houses".<sup>43</sup> Indeed, many boys suffered great emotional trauma because they had to adjust to a completely different lifestyle. They could not bear the isolation of rural life. One boy from London sent to King Island wrote that "there's nowhere to go on Saturday night except around the paddocks."<sup>44</sup> This particular boy, though, did find compensations in his new rural life and was very grateful for them. "Thank you for getting me this job for I am living in luxury and treated as a boy should be treated, a bedroom all to myself and plenty of tucker."<sup>45</sup> Indeed the boy's employer was happy to note the improvement. "You would not know the boy now he has grown so, he will be a fine man, he could not have been fed too well."<sup>46</sup> His employer, too, took a fatherly interest in him and worried greatly about the psychological effect of the death of the boy's mother in Britain. In fact, he subsidised the financial assistance that the boy was giving his mother. In the midst of mostly failure and suffering, both physical and psychological, still, there was a humane spark.

Yet, there was tragedy here. The most poignant story was that of John Sutherland, one of Dr Cossar's boys. When he arrived it was noted that he was poor in both appearance and dress. He had an exploitative farmer who claimed that he wasn't paying him because he was buying him clothes instead. In fact, John became ill with advanced consumption and died within 2 years of coming. The Immigration Officer visited him in hospital and noted that he had only a pair of old breeches in holes and no coat to put on for the train journey from Launceston to the hospital in

---

39 SWD4 M/1/593.

40 S and B Bennett Biographical Register of the Tasmanian Parliament 1851 - 1960 p166.

41 SWD4 M/1/593.

42 Verbal information from Mrs Nellie Shepherd.

43 Verbal information from Mrs Dorothy Russell.

44 SWD4 M/1/561.

45 Ibid;

46 Ibid;

Hobart, where later he was to die. The Immigration Officer did write and ask the boy if he needed anything. The boy's reply was ironically that all he lacked was cigarettes. The Immigration Officer also arranged that "good ladies", meaning voluntary workers, visit him in the Hobart hospital realising his isolation. Boys had visited him in Launceston but they couldn't get to Hobart. Saddest of all was that when he died, there were no friends or family to mourn him. Queries sent to Dr Cossar revealed that nobody had enquired of him.<sup>47</sup> His was a tragic, but quiet, failure. Assisted Migration, was only the final chapter in John Sutherland's life.

The experiences of the Tasmanian boys on the whole were not as drastic as they could have been. There were two modifying factors in the Tasmanian experience. One was, that although the boys felt isolated, distances between towns were not as great as the mainland. Indeed, the Immigration Officer, Major Sampson, did respond to a boy who had complained that "it is no pleasure out here, you see I have been used to a town more than anything else"<sup>48</sup> by saying "Why, bless me, you are not in the back-blocks at all you are only some dozen miles or so from Burnie."<sup>49</sup> That may have been small comfort to the boy concerned, but in fact, the boys were fortunate in having Major Sampson as their supervisor. One boy who went to the mainland and featured in British newspapers making "startling Allegations as to treatment"<sup>50</sup> cited that his Immigration Officer had forgotten him. That couldn't have been said of Major Sampson. He wrote to each boy to ask how they were settling in and he did respond quickly if he thought a boy was being mistreated. He was efficient, he usually replied to letters the same day or the next and if there was a delay he apologised for it. Inefficiency in others annoyed him. If a boy forgot to put the date on his letter Major Sampson would pointedly refer to "your undated letter". His own background and experience fitted him for the job. Comments such as,

"I can assure you that there is nothing to keep a horse in condition better than a frequent and thorough grooming. It was only through constant grooming and great care that we were able to do what we did in Africa, Egypt and Palestine with our horses,"<sup>51</sup>

---

47 SWD4 M/1/544.

48 SWD4 M/1/524.

49 Ibid;

50 The Mercury May 9th 1923, p7.

51 SWD4 M/1/506 Major Sampson to boy 11th August 1923.



gave an indication of his military background. He also had an ability to be fair in trying to balance the needs of the farmers and the boys because he had an investigative style which meant that he was unusually aware of what was happening. Discreet enquiries were often made. He listened to the boys and then assessed the validity of their comments. Ernest West was the outstanding success in the Farm Boy Learners but he didn't have an easy time either. West thought he was being exploited by his first farmer so he left him. He explained with reason and clarity why he left.

"The working hours were 6 o'clock am to 8 o'clock pm during the week except on very rare occasions, when I had about  $\frac{3}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour rest before 8 o'clock pm and on Sundays I had to rise at 6:30am and milk, wash the cream separator, clean the stables and was kept busy doing various odd jobs throughout the day, but on Friday afternoon last, things reached a climax, it happened like this, I was in the paddock hoeing potatoes and I sent to the house for a drink and was refused."<sup>52</sup>

Ernest West approached the farmer after work and mentioned the refused drink. The farmer wasn't sympathetic and told him that if had any complaints he'd better leave. The next morning West did the milking and washed the separator before he left "not wanting to leave my employer in the lurch."<sup>53</sup> His employer refused to give him the money he was due, although West eventually received it. His next farmer too didn't pay him and West approached Major Sampson who duly put on pressure. Perhaps it was because Major Sampson was of English born parents and had himself worked on a farm as a young lad that he was fair towards the farm boy learners. In 1901, he worked his passage as a stoker to South Africa. He served with the South African Constabulary (1901 - 03) as a mounted trooper and later as a detective in the Orange River Colony and Southern Rhodesia.<sup>54</sup> Perhaps this explains his efficient investigative style. Anyway, Major Sampson was a good example, of a local bureaucrat who performed well in his capacity as Immigration Officer, particularly in regard to the Farm Boy Learners.

Ernest West states that "I do not regret having migrated and it is my firm belief that the scheme should be rigourously encouraged".<sup>55</sup> He added that he "was grateful for the opportunity which I have been given in Tasmania, and I thank you, on

---

52 SWD4 M/1/590 Ernest west to Major Sampson, October 23rd 1923.

53 Ibid;

54 Australian Dictionary of Biography Vol 11, p514.

55 SWD4 M/1/590 Letter from West to Sampson, July 24th 1924.

behalf of the government, for it."<sup>56</sup> Jack Shepherd, an example of a quieter success story, also gave thanks.

"I should like to thank the Government for the assistance rendered me. I am glad I came to this country and am doing better than I ever imagined I would."<sup>57</sup>

Despite these positive comments, essentially the scheme was an abject failure. While remembering Ernest West, we must not forget John Sutherland. Had he remained in Britain, he would still have died when he did, but perhaps he would have preferred to be left to die at home.

---

56 Ibid;

57 SWD4 M/1/593 Letter from Shepherd to Sampson, July 25th 1925.

## Chapter 6

### The Young Family - A Success Story

In 1925, two brothers, aged 17 and 19, had been toying with the idea of emigrating to Canada. They lived in Fife, Scotland. After attending a packed meeting in the Town Hall hosted by representatives from Australia House, Australia seemed the place to go. In true romantic adventurer style, they were given a rousing send off at the tiny station of Mawcrose as they embarked on their long journey to Tasmania. Their quest for happiness at the other side of the world did in fact succeed. They settled well, assimilated into the Tasmanian community and became financially secure. One of the brothers, John Young now aged eighty-five, has given me his account of their migrant experience and subsequent life in Tasmania.

John and Jim were from a farming family. Their father managed Glenlomond farm Kinross-shire for the Fife and Kinross Sanatorium Board. There were eight children in the family aged from 1 to 20. John and Jim were both keen on farming and saw no prospect of ever owning their own farms in Scotland. They thought that emigration would provide opportunities that staying in Scotland wouldn't. The local doctor Willie Murray heard of the boys' emigration idea. He had a farmer student friend who went to Tasmania and wrote to him asking about prospects for young farm workers. The friend Mr Alec Stenhouse replied in glowing terms and said that if the boys were capable in a few years they could own their own farms. Mr Stenhouse was a produce merchant in Devonport and seemed well informed. "In consequence of all this good information we went ahead with our plans." The weekly newspapers carried advertisements seeking farm workers. The boys applied and were accepted after an interview. However in the meantime Mr Stenhouse nominated them and so they became nominated migrants and not selected farm workers.

They sailed on the Orsova of the Orient line on the 3rd April 1926.

"The ship was spotlessly clean although there were 8 bunks for single fellows like us near the waterline. However, we slept on deck most of the way. We were fortunate to meet two fine young fellows from Scotland, Sandy Mason and Jimmy Craig, the former an Aberdonian and the other from the Western Isles. We stayed together all the journey. We vowed to rendezvous some time in the future but never did."<sup>1</sup>

---

1 Unless otherwise stated all quotes are from written account by John Young. May 1992.

Mr Stenhouse also had a business in Burnie run by a manager and this manager found employment for the boys. Jim went to a farmer at Stowport and John to one at Natone. "In each case the farmer was married and had several small children. In both cases we were accepted as one of the family. We had to work hard but were well fed and looked after generally. No one could afford to pay high wages, odd times we had to wait some months on our pay. However, they made it up in kind by giving us some land, horses and told to put in a few acres of potatoes. This was instrumental in our saving money to start on our own."

The first year John received wages of £1 a week but this was raised to £2 the next year, Jim being more experienced earned £3 per week.

John was a bit disappointed with the general appearance of the countryside.

"However I soon came to realise the mammoth task of clearing new land and bringing it into production; at that time nearly every paddock had stumps of all heights dotted everywhere, some were tall dead trees that had been ringbarked. Bullocks were used for logging the felled trees. They were slow and steady and could hold a log half way up the heap. Horses were generally used for working the land implements. Most of the soil was described as chocolate soil which was easy to work and was rich. Potatoes were the main crop which were dug with forks, bagged and shipped to Sydney. They brought a comparatively high price and were of high quality. Some weeks 40,000 or more bags were shipped from Burnie or Devonport."

The importance of potatoes echoes the Farm Boy Learners experience. Sometimes when being pressed to pay of their debt they would say that they'd have the money as soon as they harvested their potatoes.<sup>2</sup> Another source of income was dairying which provided a mostly constant income for the small farmer. The farmer's wife and children did most of this work which allowed the husband more time in the field and improving the property.

Anyway, the boys progressed well and wrote home regularly. At the end of 1926 the lease on their parents' farm in Scotland expired. The boys contacted the Closer Settlement Board in Burnie and through their representative secured a small 50 acre farm in Stowport for their parents. Jim nominated his parents and they arrived with their six other children in February 1927. The boy's father, Alex Young, subsequently nominated his youngest brother John, wife and three children. They arrived a year later in February 1928. Therefore, in less than two years, fifteen members of the Young family came to Tasmania under the Assisted

---

2 SWD4 M/1/503.

Migration Scheme. Jim and John integrated well into the community. They were regular attenders at the Methodist Church and they both married local girls. As the boys prospered they graduated to bigger and better properties and eventually made them freehold. In fact, all five brothers ended up owning their own farms. Will, the fourth brother, is now eighty years old and still supervises his five farms with his sons and grandsons. Only John sold his farm, to move nearer the town which he felt would be of benefit to his children. He did this in the 1950's and obtained a position in the Department of Agriculture as Vermin Inspector. The brothers kept an interest in Clydesdale horses even when tractors had replaced them. They exhibited and bred Clydesdale horses and competed in ploughing matches. Until quite recently John still judged Clydesdales at agricultural shows. Will (William Thompson Young) became involved in local politics. He was elected to the Burnie Municipal Council in 1950 and served for 21 years. The last 16 years he was Warden. In 1971 he became a member of the Legislative Council for Braddon and served for 11<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> years. On his retirement he received the honour of Order of Australia.

From the original 8 siblings who came, the two girls never married but the six boys together had 26 children. The next generation comprises about 55 children in line with the trend of smaller families. The original brothers between them own hundreds of acres still being farmed by themselves or their children.

This, then, is definitely a success story. What was the recipe for success? Some elements are easy to define. Jim and John had a good nominator, who only knew of them through a mutual friend but did fulfil his obligations. In fact, seventy years later the Stenhouses and the Youngs are still friends though the younger members of the family didn't know of the reason for the connection. None of the family had to borrow to pay their passage and so started without debt. Perhaps, the most important factor was that they were all farmers by birth and upbringing and wanted to stay in farming. There was no adaption involved. Possibly, they also assimilated easily into the community because they were genuine farmers and were seen as such. They didn't come in that first influx of 1921 - 1922. By 1925, land was available; if they had come earlier they wouldn't have been able to get land. They were sensible "canny Scots" careful with their money and astute in business. A willingness to "fit in" also helped.

From a government point of view the Young family were also a success. By staying on the land, producing children and becoming good Tasmanian citizens, they did what the government hoped they would do. Indeed the assimilation has become so complete that some of the younger members of the family are scarcely aware of their Scottish roots. The only noticeable evidence is the trace of a Scottish accent still apparent in the voices of the original brothers. Only a few of the family have felt the need to visit their father's birthplace.

However, the second youngest of John Young's seven children decided in 1974 to backpack and see the world. He decided to begin in Scotland and slowly make his way back overland to Tasmania. In fact, it was a very slow journey back. Thirteen years later he returned with the writer as his wife and three British born-children. Thus continuing the migrant story.

## Conclusion

Before researching assisted migration of the 1920's and 1930's my expectations were that the title was a misnomer. This couldn't be a story about "migrants" because they were British. As a British migrant who arrived on the eve of the 1988 Bicentennial Celebrations, I was struck by the Britishness of it all since Aboriginal identity and multi-culturalism received scant attention. Surely, seventy years ago British people of all social classes would have eased naturally into their new-found home. After all, their new home had strong echoes of, and indeed lauded, the culture and values of their old home. I thought it was going to be a cosy story and that my research might become bland and boring. I couldn't have been more wrong. These British people who came seventy years ago, spoke the native language; that apart they were truly migrants. Far from being bored, I found myself in Archives looking at personal files and because of my natural empathy, and the intimate nature of the material, struggling to retain objectivity. I concede that often I lost the battle and became perhaps too subjective. One such occasion was when reviewing the material for Chapter 4 about the Hon Thomas Murdoch. I read letters from the families he nominated and listened to the story of the Stokes family. I looked at the ADB to check Mr Murdoch's biographical details. Suddenly, I had an overwhelming desire to delete the words Hon Thomas Murdoch, Honorary Agent for the British Dominions Emigration Society, or at the very least put a question mark after the Hon.

These people were migrants but they were not assisted greatly. Financial assistance was given but even that was paltry. Families could arrive with an instant debt of £60. Farm Boy Learners who were just 15-17 years of age had to pay back £24. This provides an interesting contrast to the £10 poms of the 60's.

These people were to bring "willing hands" to the "empty spaces of the Empire". However, since little thought was given to what type of "willing hands" were needed and the nature of the "empty spaces" an effective plan was not developed. Since over-population is a greater problem than under-population, migration was primarily Britain's concern. The Federal bureaucracy often seemed on the back foot responding after the event rather than initiating comprehensive planning. At a state bureaucracy level the performance of officials involved in immigration was reasonable. In the case of Major Sampson and the Farm Boy Learners, the bureaucratic response was good. However, there is some validity in Algar Bailey's comment that peopling the corners of the Empire involved the art of civilisation expansion. He complained that "A great engineering undertaking is still regarded as being a pick and shovel job."<sup>1</sup>

---

1 CO/721/98 A D Bailey. Paper on Empire Settlement

The pattern of experience of these migrants depended on the local response. Victor Tuting best summed it up when he stated that "It wasn't an easy time to be a newcomer. It was difficult to be accepted and assimilated into the community."<sup>2</sup>

Why this was so escapes easy definition. Pommy bashing wasn't just name calling; it was much deeper than that. Victor Tuting felt that "it wasn't just a question of being called a pom; it permeated into every-day life."<sup>3</sup>

It is a story characterised by delusion and desperation. For whatever reason people usually had high expectations and expectations temporarily raised had further to fall. Deprivation of all types is evident. From the physical and social deprivation of Dr Cossar's boys to the status deprivation of the families who were comfortably well off in Britain and had visions of genteel colonial life then found themselves in desperate hand-to-mouth situations. Still, there were "successes". However, listening on the radio to Margaret Humphreys, Chairman of the Child Migrant Trust, I began to doubt my own definition of "success". When the interviewer attempted to draw out some of the "success" stories. Margaret Humphreys commented that just because people were in responsible positions that didn't mean they were successful human beings. Underlying the outward show of responsibility and status could be psychological and emotional trauma arising from their child migrant experiences. Yet lines have to be drawn somewhere and judgements made. Psychological and emotional traumas are not exclusive to migrant experiences. They are part of the nature of living. Failure too must not be defined simplistically. "Failure" in one generation could be a "success" in the next. Perhaps Sir Joseph Cook had a point when he stated that "the readjustment of the population of the Empire opened up vistas of happiness and prosperity for millions of still unborn men."<sup>4</sup> It seems that often it was the migrant's children who benefited from their parents' struggle. Some migrants who never achieved financial security themselves saw their children gain it. Failure tends to be noticed more. Most of my research was based on personal files, and in that context, it was the failures which were recorded. Perhaps I was given an overly pessimistic impression with regard to the ratio of successes and failure. That doesn't diminish though, the degree of suffering in individual cases. However, it is important not to use the 1992 standards in judging success and failure. Mrs Russell reminded me that in the 1920's the daily grind was more of a grind in the farming world, that was just the nature of farming then. The Farm Boy Learners were aged from 15-17 years. To us they are adolescents, but at that time, boys of that age were viewed as young adults. ready to cope in an adults world.

---

2 Walter Pless interviewing Victor Tuting, Sept 1990.

3 Ibid.:

4 See Introduction.



Tact and adaptability on the part of the migrant was essential for successful assimilation. Victor Tuting's father displayed a desire to "fit in" on arriving in Melbourne. He had a brand new bowler hat still in its box but after being advised by a shipping official that it wasn't the right thing to wear in Australia gave it away to the said official.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps the new owner risked ridicule by wearing it or did he then sell it for a handsome sum?

Yet, even people possessing tact and adaptability and who were acknowledged by officials as the "Right Stamp of Migrant" found themselves in difficult and sometimes desperate situations. Often they seemed powerless pawns in the game of Empire. They were, however, a significant group and must be regarded as such. Whilst researching, I found connections to assisted migration among my own family, friends, and neighbours. Initially, I thought this was a remarkable coincidence. Later, I came to realise that this was just a reflection of the legacy of assisted migration. There is a degree of bitterness in the legacy, and among some families, a reluctance to even acknowledge their connection. The families of the status-deprived migrants have sometimes not gained sufficient security to accept the struggle which their relatives had in establishing themselves in Tasmanian society. Migrants, at times, were powerless, but ordinary people were empowered, in that it was individual and community response which shaped the pattern of migrant experience. Often where officialdom failed the magnanimity of some Tasmanians succeeded. For the Stokes family it was Mr Best, and for Jack Shepherd it was the Beswick family. Mrs Beswick felt sorry for the young migrant lad so far from home, and told Jack to "come here as often as you like." The Beswick family were instrumental in the assimilation of Jack. Seventy years later Jack is dead, but the families are still close. Mrs Beswick's daughter is the only person left who can tell Jack Shepherd's widow about her husband's early days in Tasmania. This story is a strong affirmation of the view that ordinary people either individually or in groups, must never be regarded as mere historical nothings. Then, as now, what happened to ordinary people and what they said and did, mattered.

---

5      Walter Pless interviewing Victor Tuting, Sept 1990.

**Bibliography**

Oral Sources

Interview with the following people:

- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| Edward Brooker                                       | Molly Shelley |
| Sally Douglas  | Nita Shepherd |
| Bill Kallend   | Albert Smith  |
| Patricia Pitman                                      | John Young    |
| Dorothy Russell                                      | Alan Hyland   |
| The late Victor Tuting, interviewed by Walter Pless. |               |

---

Official Sources

Archives Office of Tasmania

1. In the Archives Office of Tasmania under the file number SWD4 there are 22 boxes of unindexed files.
2. Premier's Department Correspondence. abbreviation PDI

In Tasmania

Pamphlet: Tasmania for the Tourist and Settler Hobart 1925. C A Bacon Tasmanian Department of Resources Hobart 1991.

Cornwall Coal Company Centenary 1886-1986 Pub 1986.  
Australian National Library  
CO/721/99  
CO/721/100  
DO 57/108

Newspapers

*The Mercury* 1922 - 23  
*The World* 1922 - 23

Books Australian Dictionary of Biography

S Constantine Unemployment in Britain between the Wars Longman Group, 1980.

M Lake The Limits of Hope Soldier Settlement in Victoria 1915-38 (Melbourne 1987).

G Sherington The Dreadnought Boys

D Sherry et al Labor in Lyons (Tasmania 1991)

## **Foreword to Appendix**

In the Archives Office of Tasmania are 22 boxes of personal files of Assisted Migrants. They contain personal and medical details, photographs and letters. To families of assisted migrants they are a valuable source of information. Presently, they are unindexed, thus making access difficult.

Although ever conscious of the limited resources of, and the many demands on, public service departments, the indexing of SWD4 would be a worthy project. As a token gesture towards this, the following Appendix contains an index of three of the current boxes, that is Boxes 1, 2 and 18. Most of these families came in 1921-1922.

Adams	Balranald	5/18/22	Joshua Ward Helene Barbara Leslie	EXSER M/9/98
Adams			John Brown Alexandria David Makay	EXSER M/9/126
Allen	Benalla	5/12/21	Charles Henry	EXSER M/1/198
Allison	Ormonde	8/28/21	Sidney Gordon Dorothy Sidney Ronald Dorothy Sean	EXSER M/1/264
Armstrong	Borda	6/23/21	Alex Brown Helen Alexander Brown	EXSER M/1/157
Armstrong	Omar	9/20/22	Thomas Edward	M/9/157
Ashby	Moreton Bay		12/7/21 Violet	EXSER M/1/243
Ashby	Orsova	7/23/21	Henry G Edith Charlott Alexander William Theodora Constance Kathleen	EXSER M/1/243
Ashby	Orsova	7/23/21	Henry G Edith Charlotte Alexander William Theodora Constance Kathleen	EXSER M/1/243
Barley	Benalla	5/12/21	Harry Annie Leonard Clifford	EXSER M/1/144
Barrow	Langs Bay	4/25/22	Margaret	M/9/130

Bartlett	Demostheres	1/4/22	John Lilian Joseph Harold Bartlett Johnathan Bartlett	EXSER M/9/140
Beard	Orsova	7/23/21	Reginald John	EXSER M/1/241
Beasley	Orsova	7/22/21	Thomas Henry George Lucy Henry Earnest Ida Marie Elsie Eileen Lucy Mary Hilda Mabel Joan Yvonne	EXSER M/1/206
Bence	Langs Bay	1/4/25	Violet Agner	M/9/42
Bingham	Benalla	5/12/21	Percy Mary Charles Marjorie	EXSER M/1/196
Boulter	Orsova	6/23/21	William Herbert	EXSER M/1/239
Boyes	Borda	6/30/21	Edward	EXSER M/1/186
Bradshaw	Borda	9/22/21	John Nellie	M/9/142
Brand	Ormonde	8/20/21	Edward Horace Rosina Cealie Lily Edith	EXSER M/1/259
Brodie			Matthew	M/9/17
Brooks	Beltana	5/26/21	George Henderson Catherine John William Hive George Lewis Henderson Catherine May Sarah Rothesay	EXSER M/1/222

Brown	Demostheres	7/22/21	Jack	EXSER M/1/255
Buck	Ormonde	8/20/21	John	EXSER M/1/260
Campbell	Demostheres	7/22/21	James	EXSER M/1/253
Chadwick	Langs Bay	1/4/22	Thomas Mildred Ronald Thomas	EXSER M/1/161
Chadwick	Omar	8/25/22	Elizabeth William	EXSER M/1/170
Clarke			Elizabeth	M/9/58
Clements	Beltana	5/26/21	Frank Alma	EXSER M/1/99
Compton	Benalla	5/12/21	Thomas Caroline Clifton A E Albert W S Mabel A	EXSER M/1/197
Cook	Ormonde	8/20/21	Edith C Robert John Joan	EXSER M/1/205
Crocket	Benalla	5/12/21	Archibald Martha	EXSER M/1/154
Cullen	Benalla	9/23/22	Hilda Mary Douglas Ashley	M/9/148

Davey	Beltana	5/26/21	Harold O	EXSER M/1/129
Deal	Ormonde	8/20/21	Chalres Laurence	EXSER M/1/262
Dick	Ormonde	8/20/21	Joseph Margaret John McDonald Agnes Burns Hannal E R	EXSER M/1/156
Dixon	Hobsons Bay	2/28/22	Thomas Jane John Harry	EXSER M/9/176
Doherty Hicks	Borda	7/7/21		M/9/21
Doran	SS Ulysses	7/16/21	William Alex Margaret	EXSER M/1/237
Dudley	Ormonde	8/20/21	George W Mary Benda Phyllis	EXSER M/1/117
Duxbury	Omar	6/11/21	Albert	EXSER M/1/230
Eastwood	Osterley	5/25/21	Benjamin Susanne Maurice Margaret	EXSER M/1/153
Ellison	Omar	6/11/21	Thomas	EXSER M/1/151
Feguson	Benrima	8/25/21	Phyllis Irene	EXSER M/9/107



Field	Orsova	7/23/21	Rose	EXSER M/1/231
Fleming	Borda	6/30/21	David Amy Christina & James David Sidney Laura	EXSER M/1/155
Foord	Langs Bay	10/17/22	Emily Sarah Winnie Blanch	M/9/180
Forster	Ormonde	8/20/21	George	EXSER M/1/1476
Foster	Ormonde	8/20/21	Walter Elizabeth Walter Alfred	EXSER M/1/266
Foster	Ormonde	8/20/21	Walter Elizabeth Walter Alfred	EXSER M/1/266
Glassey	Langs Bay	1/4/22	William Margery Lucy Margery	EXSER M/1/174
Goodwin	Berrima	8/25/21	Frank Maude Frank	EXSER
Goran	Osterley	5/25/21	Mark Sophia Barnet Fanny Alfred	EXSER M/1/193
Gover	Ballorat	1/26/22	Roy Martin Beatrice Emma	M/9/150
Griggs	Euripedes	2/1/22	George Edwin	EXSER M/9/154

Grindrod	Oramie	9/16/21	Nellie	EXSER M/9/89
Gunnery	Euripedes	2/1/23	Aleyn	EXSER M/9/153
Haldenby	Moreton Bay	8/29/22	Arthur Winifred John Edward	M/9/184
Hall	Moreton Bay	4/11/22		EXSER M/9/85
Hall	Moreton Bay	4/11/22	John William Margaret Sheila Elenn	EXSER M/9/85
Hamilton	Ballarat	7/6/22	Amelia	EXSER M/9/134
Hancox	Ballarat	1/26/22	Leonard Florence	M/9/77
Harding	Orsova	7/23/21	Victor	EXSER M/1/244
Harris	Hobsons Bay	2/28/22	Bernard Athelstan	EXSER M/9/160
Harrison	Beltana	5/26/21	Hubert G	EXSER M/1/233
Hathaway	Borda	6/30/21	Ernest Gertrude	EXSER

Hayns	Themistocles	12/7/21	Laurence John Mary Margaret	EXSER M/9/45
Heal	Euripedes	8/26/21	Margery	M/9/33
Hedley	Osterley	5/25/21	Albert E	EXSER M/1/220
Heywood	Boltan	5/5/21	James	EXSER M/1/138
Hill	Langs Bay	1/4/22	Fanny	M/9/9
Hobson	Hobsons Bay	2/28/22	Mary	M/9/170
House	Borda	12/22/21	Frederick William	M/9/12
Hoskins	Demostheres	7/22/21	Charles Hubert Florence Anne Ellen Mary	EXSER M/1/257
Hubbard	Borda	6/30/21	Esther	EXSER M/1/245
Humm	Orneto	9/17/21	Robert	EXSER M/1/162
Hutton	Ormenz	3/18/22	Herbert Annie Annie	M/9/174

Ireland	Borda	6/23/21	Charles Nora Dinah James Charles Mark John Clifford George Alfred Earnest	EXSER M/1/238
Jeffrey	Omar	6/11/21	Arthur	EXSER M/1/189
Jenkins	Orsova	7/23/21	William Thomas	EXSER M/1/240
Johncock	Benalla	9/8/21	Alice Algerna	M/9/25
Johnson	Orsova	7/23/21	Albert Henry Emma Jane	EXSER M/1/199
Jones	Themistocles	12/7/21	Emma Georgina Kathleen Dons Stanley Charles Phyllis Eileen Emma Carel	M/9/96
Kitchener	Beltana	5/26/21	Archer A Agnes Leonard Egra	EXSER M/1/137
Kitchin	Beltana	11/10/21	Doris Doris William James Joan Patricia	EXSER M/9/117
Kitt	Ormonde	8/20/21	Herbert P Florence	EXSER M/1/263
Knight	Commonwealth	10/20/21	William Alice William Ruby Muril	EXSER M/1/97
Langton	Sophocles	12/6/22	Joseph George Lily Elizabeth Ada	EXSER M/9/164

Layland	Langs Bay	4/25/22	Ethel Bessie Mary	EXSER M/9/131
Ledingham	Orveito	9/17/21	Louis	EXSER M/1/167
MacClements	Orsova	11/26/21	Martha	M/9/26
Macleod	Borda	7/7/21	Mary	M/9/26
Macleod	Berima	12/28/22	MAry Robina	EXSER M/9/26
Macleod	Berina	12/28/22	Agnes	M/9/26
Mason	Esperance	8/1/22	Laurence	M/9/156
Mason	Ormonde	12/24/21	Thomas Anthony	M/9/152
Mathews	Omar	6/11/21	Willie	EXSER M/1/185
McGeachie	Osterley	5/12/21	Duncan	EXSER M/1/168
Mercer	Ormonde	8/20/21	Albert George	EXSER M/1/261

Michie	Beltana	10/19/22	David	EXSER M/9/143
Miles	Euripedes	8/26/21	Annie Emily	M/9/23
Miller	Borda	12/22/21	Florence	M/9/34
Montgomery	Esperance Bay	4/10/23	Elizabeth	M/1/516
Montgomery	Esperance Bay	4/10/23	Lily	M/1/515
Nicholls	Berrima	8/25/21	Ernestine Mary Helen Roland Mary Eileen	M/9/29
Nicholls	Berrima	8/25/21	Beatrice	M/9/24
Olden Hatcher	Medic	6/1/21	Lily Peter Ian	EXSER M/1/63
Olden Hatcher	Medic	6/1/21	Henrietta Robert Florila	M/1/63
Ogilvie	Omar	6/11/21	James Janit Hugh James	EXSER M/1/165
Orpin	Orsova	7/23/21	Lillian Ronald Cecil	EXSER M/1/200

Patket	Borda	7/7/21	Agnes	M/9/21
Parnell	Osterley	5/25/21	Charles Katherine Charles William Katherine	EXSER M/1/150
Payne	Euripedes	6/21/22	William Frank Edith May Geoffrey Frank	EXSER M/9/93
Perry	Euripedes	6/21/22	Howard William	EXSER M/9/93
Percy	Snevic	8/4/22	George Brian Amy Annie	EXSER M/1/158
Pintoff	Benalla	5/12/21	Joseph Millie Zena Sadie	EXSER M/1/190
Prince	Omar	6/11/21	Harry Waite	EXSER M/1/235
Provan	Langs Bay	1/4/22	Alexander	
Raymont	Demostheres	7/22/21	Percy Clara	EXSER M/1/248
Reed	Moreton Bay	12/7/21	Robert Edith	M/9/53
Roberts	Ormonde	4/16/21	Charles	EXSER M/1/70

Robertson	Orsova	7/23/21	Andrew	EXSER M/1/187
Robinson	Langs Bay	4/25/22	Thomas Beatrice Arthur Cliffe	EXSER M/9/162
Rogan	Beltana	5/26/21	Daniel	EXSER M/1/160
Rowe	Borda	12/22/21	Cecil E	EXSER
Rowsell	Osterleif	10/28/22	Edward William Winifred Anne Iran Mary	EXSER M/9/181
Shaw	Moreton Bay	4/11/22	George	EXSER M/9/167
Sinclair	Moreton Bay	12/7/21	Donald	EXSER M/9/66
Sloane	Ballarat	1/26/22	Albert	EXSER M/9/97
Sith	SS Oriceto	1/21/22	Claude	EXSER M/1/130
Smith	Euripedes	8/26/21	William E Ellen Albert Kathleen Dorothy Beatrice	EXSER M/1/277
Smith	Omar	4/8/22	Mary Harold Arthur	M/9/37



Solomons	Ormonde	8/20/21	Cecil	EXSER M/1/265
Southorn	Hobsons Bay	2/28/22	Leah Lyndsay Tasma Ralph Douglas	M/9/170
Southorn	Euripedes	6/21/22	George C	M/9/170
Sowden	SS Borda	7/7/21	Thomas	EXSER M/1/159
Spizer	Demostheres	7/22/21	Sam Eva Nacharn Woolf Solomon Emmanual Arthur	EXSER M/1/249
Stanley	Langs Bay	4/25/22	Ethel R Ronald	M/9/125
Stansfield	Thermistocles	6/1/21	Ada	EXSER M/1/173
Staples	Langs Bay	1/4/22	Violet	M/9/141
Stark	Demostheres	6/24/22	Isabella John Hunter	EXSER M/9/138
Starkie	Omar	6/11/21	Alwyn Florence Joan Alma	EXSER M/1/149
Sutherland	Benalla	9/8/21	Clara	M/9/101

Taylor	Ceramie	4/22/21	Ralph	EXSER M/1/120
Theobald	Omar	12/22/21	Charles Arthur	EXSER M/9/111
Thoman	Demostheres	1/4/22	Morris Grace Elizabeth	EXSER M/9/71
Thwaites	Demostheres	7/22/21	William	EXSER M/1/254
Timms	Berrima	2/9/22	William Henry	EXSER M/9/57
Tinley	Langs Bay	1/4/22	John	EXSER M/1/171
Tuting	Themistocles	12/7/21	Sydney Lilian Victor Ronald Marian Harry	EXSER M/9/55
Vale	Demostheres	4/12/23	Thomas	M/504
Vernon	Oymnz	3/18/22	Harry Edward Grace Gertrude Ronald Horcat	M/9/118
Wagstass	Esperance Bay	5/24/23	Gladys	M/517
Watt	Ballarat	12/14/22	John Elizabeth Robert John Janet M'Intosh Margaret Kyees Sarah Ellen	EXSER M/9/179

Way	Snevic	10/21/21	Reginald Arthur Irene Mary	EXSER M/9/91
Wells	Ormonde	8/20/21	Herbert Arthur	EXSER M/1/258
Welsh	Themistocles	7/2/21	Jenny Rose	M/1/234
Welsh	Orsova	11/26/21	Williamina	M/9/22
Westwood	Ballarat	1/26/22	Louisa Althea Lousia	EXSER M/9/146
Wheeldon	Borda	6/23/21	Earnest Ann Ernest	EXSER M/1/188
Whittingham	Demostheres	7/22/21	Willie	EXSER M/1/252
Williams	Barrabool	3/15/23	Susan Annie	EXSER M/9/173
Williams	Oniceto	9/30/22	John	EXSER M/9/165
Williams	Moreton Bay	8/29/22	Mark	EXSER M/9/173
Willis	Langs Bay	1/4/22	Jonathen Willington Aileen Rose Sophie Joyce	EXSER M/9/100
Willis	Omar	6/11/21	Harold	EXSER M/1/228
Wilshere	Euripedes	6/21/22	Frederick	EXSER M/9/137
Wilson	Langs Bay	1/4/22	James Francea James Frances Alfred	EXSER M/9/61
Wilson	Orsova	6/23/21	Edwards Bruce	M/1/202
Wiltshire	Borda	6/23/21	Frank C Elizabeth Cecil Gladys Sibil Norah	EXSER M/1/267

Wraight	Hobsons Bay	7/4/22	Leslie	EXSER M/9/161
Yates	Orcades	10/8/21	Ernest Equila Albert Lance	EXSER M/1/90

Dedicated to the memory of

John Sutherland, Mary Stokes, Ernest West, Jack  
Shepherd and Edward Brooker.