

conveying other information regarding the farm was furnished by the department, which will be found along with the reports and evidence respecting the Australian labour colonies now laid on the table. The statement brings into view the natural difficulties which had to be encountered in hewing a settlement of 800 acres in area out of a crowded forest of heavy timber, unrelieved by a single patch of open country.

Founded by the present Government, it is our first institution of the kind, and the good judgment of the founders is seen in the suitableness of its position and fertility of its soil.

The papers herewith laid before the Committee are, —

- (1.) Extract from Mr. March's report.
- (2.) Reports for 1896 and 1897 of Colonel Goldstein, Superintendent of the Victorian State farm at Leongatha.
- (3.) Report for this year (1898) on the several co-operative settlements in South Australia.
- (4.) Certain detailed information as to the cost, progress, and present position of the State farm at Levin.

The evidence, oral and documentary, which has come under the notice of the Committee goes to show that State farms are necessary in a state of society where employment is fitful and uncertain, in order to meet the wants of those who, —

- (a.) Are temporarily out of employment, but have prospects of again taking up their callings;
- (b.) Are mechanics and others who have been permanently displaced by the use of machinery or by other causes, and are thus forced to go on the land to seek a livelihood;
- (c.) Are mechanics and others desirous, owing to the irregularity of their employment, of obtaining a practical knowledge of farming operations, with a view to taking up and occupying land; or
- (d.) Are unlikely to obtain employment elsewhere on account of old age, bodily incapacity, or inefficiency.

To (a) the State farm offers a temporary home and employment under certain specified conditions during the slack period.

To (b) and (c), in addition to residence and employment, it gives such useful and necessary training as will enable them to make a home in the country with some hope of success.

To (d) it offers a more comfortable home and surroundings, and would lighten the burden of Charitable Aid Boards.

Conclusions and Recommendations.

The Committee, after due consideration, are of opinion, —

1. That State farms may be so constituted as to give great relief to men who are temporarily out of employment, and that their utility would be greatly increased if manufacturing industries were carried on in connection with them wherever possible. As an instance, the Committee point out that at the present time cream is sent from the Levin State farm to Wellington and returned to the Levin market in the form of butter. Additional employment would therefore be given if the dairying operations of the farm were extended so as to justify the establishment of a dairy factory thereon; and, in this connection, if the milk from the surrounding farms were purchased at the market rate, the benefits conferred on the district would be substantial.

2. That State farms should be placed within reasonable reach of the persons intended to be benefited, and should contain from 600 to 1,000 acres of first-class land.

3. That other industries, such as market-gardening, flower-growing, fruit-growing, jam-making, poultry-raising, &c., should also be established.

4. That with efficient labour and good management a State farm will show a profit, but that worked by such men as are classified (b), (c), and (d), as above, it will not show a profit, although the indirect results may to some extent justify the expenditure.

5. That State farms should be so constituted as to preclude their being viewed in any sense as benevolent institutions.

6. That, if not admitted under the conditions of Resolution 9, the remuneration of labour should for the first three months of service be slightly below that ruling in the open market, and after the expiry of that time should be 50 per cent. less than the market rate. In computing the remuneration, rent and other cost of living should also be reckoned at current rates and prices.

7. That operations on the settlements should be directed towards supplying the daily wants of the people living there, and with that view, and also with the view of making the employment as far as may be suitable to the various capacities of the residents, the industries carried on should be as numerous as possible: in the attainment of these ends, locality, soil, and other conditions favourable would require to be carefully selected.

8. That, as the restoration of our forests is a work of great national importance, it might be undertaken as an adjunct to the State settlement, and this would give occupation to men at seasons of the year when work on the settlements was slack.

9. In this connection it would be necessary to establish nurseries on the farms where some of the older men might be employed, while the younger and more able-bodied could be employed in preparing the land and planting out young trees in such reserves in the colony as are set apart for such purposes.

10. The settlements in the matter of instruction should have a technological side where the principles which underlie the practical lessons received on the farm might be further illustrated and explained. Persons with little cash and almost devoid of knowledge regarding agricultural pursuits, but who are desirous of settling on small sections of land in the country, might avail themselves of this education.

11. *Industrial Settlements.*—By industrial settlements, as distinct from State institutions, and such as are referred to in the order of reference, the Committee understand a permanent settlement