

Sixth Day.
25 April 1907.
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EMIGRATION.
(Mr. Deakin.)

is not described with strict correctness in that circular as tropical. It is rather sub-tropical. Perhaps you may say that this is a distinction without a difference, but in an official document it is as well to be accurate. The north coast climate of Queensland is sub-tropical rather than tropical. Those however, are minor matters. But the fact is, anyone reading that circular would be discouraged, or would be likely to be discouraged, and certainly those who persist go out under serious misapprehension. They ought to be warned of the climate, which is extremely trying to men not accustomed to a hot sun and close atmosphere. The cane work is perfectly healthy; but as the dense cane shrub shuts out the breeze in its midst, that makes cane cutting moist and uncomfortable work. Still, as I have said, some of the finest specimens of manhood that we possess are to be seen there. Some of these men I have spoken to personally, and they make nothing of their labour. I do not wish to push that too far. We have not sufficient knowledge yet to fix the percentage of average labourers who would choose this work. But I have spoken to men engaged in the actual task of cutting, and they have assured me—and they have no reason to mislead—that they find it not more laborious than many classes of work which they do elsewhere.

Coming back to the circular, and apologising for my long digression, I say that is not the way in which a Government office ought to co-operate with a Colony desiring immigrants. So far as we are concerned we desire the truth to be stated—the whole truth and nothing but the truth—but it is to be stated in such a manner as not to convey misapprehensions. It is to be stated in some way that will not discourage all the Agents-General concerned, as the Emigration Board has done. There will always be a certain proportion of people who come from Great Britain who will be to some extent at all events dissatisfied with their colonising experience. Until they leave their own country they do not know how much they are attached to its special conditions, to their old relationships, ties, and memories, and they are very apt to take an unduly dissatisfied view of their new country, simply because it is not a replica of the old country, with the customs and undertakings with which they are familiar. An allowance always has to be allowed for that margin, which is to be found in any country to which there has been any immigration. On the other hand, speaking broadly, not only for Australia, but for the whole of the dominions, we say that immigrants will find conditions more closely approximating to those in Great Britain there than they will under any other flag. They will find Governments, business relations, and social conditions much nearer to those they have left than they can hope to find anywhere else. Consequently, we suggest that the Imperial Government should adapt some more effective form of instructing those who are about to emigrate and in a far more adequate way than this circular, if it be a fair sample, has done. The statements made should be complete and balanced, instead of being incomplete and unbalanced. The emigrants from Great Britain should, as far as possible, be equipped with official statements which can be furnished from every State giving all the details of life and living, prices, and every other particular, so that there may be no misapprehension whatever as to the state of affairs into which the new comer will be launched. Up to now we have not properly imitated the splendid example of Canada. We have neither coped with immigration on the same scale, nor provided for the reception of immigrants in the manner in which they have set an example; but that is being remedied. Immigrants to Australia no longer find themselves left to look after themselves. They are met on landing, supplied with information, and, as far as possible, assisted in every way to make their homes. Every State of Australia gives exceptional advantages for land settlement. They make advances upon improvements as these are made by the settlers, the Crown, of course, retaining still its right to the land, subject to the fulfilment of its conditions, which are very