

I regret to say that on no Devon and Cornwall group did I come across much evidence that the Devon and Cornwall County Committee were keeping in touch with the settlers. This was distinctly disappointing to me, as I thought one of the main principles of the committee was to keep in frequent touch with their protégés.

#### *General Matters.*

10. Having dealt with the views of the settlers themselves, I come to matters which are perhaps more germane to an official report, but first I may make some general observations.

(a) I was amazed at the distances. No group, except those on the Peel Estate, can be reached except after a night's journey from Perth. It is over 300 miles from Perth to Denmark, and the journey takes, roughly, twenty-one hours by train.

(b) The groups themselves are not necessarily compact, and several miles may separate one block from another on the same group. Quite frequently a settler's house may be a quarter of a mile or more from his nearest neighbour on the same group.

(c) The country is amazingly beautiful, and in spring, when I was there, is a paradise of wild flowers. The flowers consist chiefly of varieties which do not grow naturally elsewhere in Australia or the world.

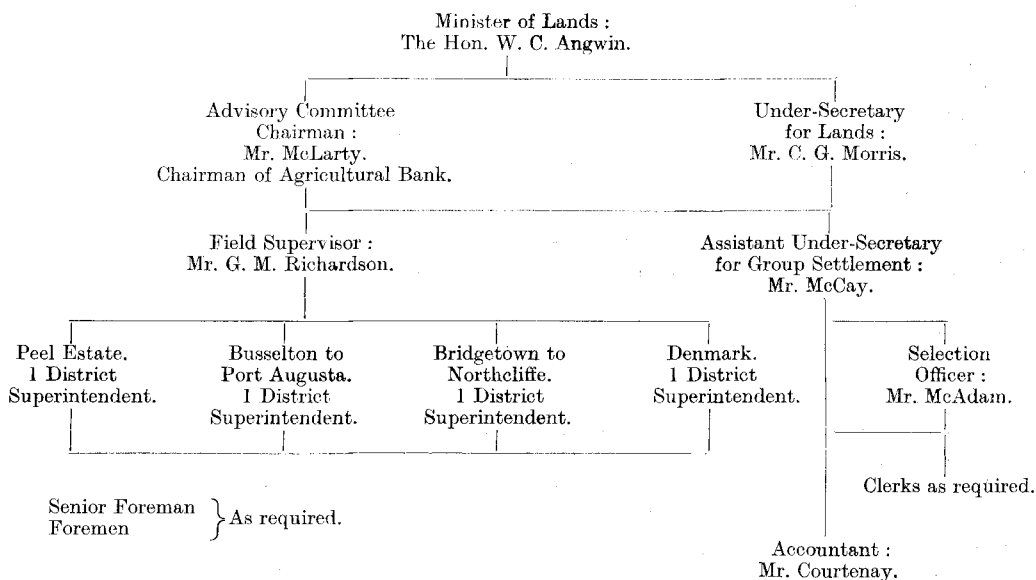
(d) The men do not work in gangs of twenty at a time. Three or four are told off to do this job, three or four to that job, and so on. The foreman has a shack on the group, and his duties are purely of a supervisory nature, unless he is a working foreman—a point to which I shall refer later.

(e) The extreme comfort of the houses: Each has four rooms and a veranda, and can be made very picturesque, especially if the woman takes an interest in the place generally, and arranges for a flower-garden.

(f) There is a telephone service to the group post-office (kept by a selected settler for a small allowance) on most of the groups, and in others (notably Northcliffe) the telephone is being arranged for as quickly as possible.

#### *Administration.*

11. The general administration of the scheme is organized as follows:—



This organization seems to me to be admirably adapted to the needs of the scheme. The work is heavy and onerous, as the settlers are not backward in making representations on matters affecting their interests and comfort, and a heavy correspondence is inevitable. Considerable demands are made on the whole of the field supervisory staff, who must needs frequently be away from home for weeks at an end, supervising points of detail on the spot, and regulating the clearing, and the agricultural and outdoor operations generally. The field staff are mainly recruited from amongst the Inspectors of the Agricultural Bank, and much time is spent by them in an endeavour to economize on the expenditure under the scheme.

#### *Foremen.*

12. The key man of the whole administration is the foreman. To be successful, he must possess an expert knowledge of the country, the methods of clearing, sinking wells, the preparation and seeding of pastures, vegetable crops, &c., fencing, and the like. He must be a capable organizer, accustomed to handling men tactfully; and he must be prepared for much book-keeping work, as his time-sheets, stock-books, &c., form the basis of the overhead charges ultimately levied against the settlers. His pay is £6 a week.

I was not surprised to learn that many men break down completely on one important task or another and have had to be discharged. In fact, the Department have had more trouble in finding competent foremen, satisfactory alike to themselves and to the settlers, than in any other phase of their administration. The settlers themselves realize this, and many are sometimes vociferous in their