

fish, £1010; hides, £504; and seeds, £298. Nearly all the export trade was with the Commonwealth, only small amounts going to New Zealand and the South Sea Islands. There is little other production. A five-weekly steam service is maintained with Sydney; other communication is irregular. The "all red" cable from Great Britain *via* Vancouver, Fanning Island and Fiji, bifurcates at Norfolk Island, one line connecting with New Zealand, the other with Brisbane.

5. **Social Condition.**—Education is compulsory, but free of cost, and there is a public school under the N.S.W. Department of Public Instruction, with standards corresponding to the State public schools. The number of scholars enrolled on the 30th June, 1917, was 160 (73 boys and 87 girls). A mission station has for many years been in existence for the education and general training of Melanesians, mostly from the Santa Cruz and Solomon Islands.

The magistrate's court has criminal jurisdiction in all crimes except capital offences, civil jurisdiction in all matters, and authority to grant probate and letters of administration.

## § 11. Lord Howe Island.

1. **Area, Location, etc.**—Between Norfolk Island and the Australian coast is Lord Howe Island in latitude 31° 30' south; longitude 159° 5' east. It was discovered in 1788. The total area is 3220 acres, the island being seven miles in length and from one-half to one and three-quarter miles in width. It is distant 436 miles from Sydney, and in communication therewith by monthly steam service. The flora is varied and the vegetation luxuriant, with shady forests, principally of palms and banyans. The highest point is Mount Gower, 2840 feet. The climate is mild and the rainfall abundant, but on account of the rocky formation only about a tenth of the surface is suitable for cultivation.

2. **Settlement.**—The first settlement was by a small Maori party in 1853; afterwards a colony was settled from Sydney. Constitutionally, it is a dependency of New South Wales, and is included in the King division of the Sydney electorate. A Board of Control manages the affairs of the island and supervises the palm seed industry referred to hereunder.

3. **Population.**—The population at the Census of 3rd April, 1911, was 56 males, 49 females, total 105.

4. **Production, Trade, etc.**—The principal product is the seed of the native or *Kentia palm*. The lands belong to the Crown. The occupants pay no rent, and are tenants on sufferance.

## § 12. Interstate Conferences.

1. Reference to the various Interstate Conferences, held in 1914 and 1915, will be found on page 1081, Official Year Book No. 8. Considerations of space preclude their insertion in the present issue.

2. **Premiers' Conference, Adelaide, 1916.**—On the 22nd May, 1916, and following days, a conference of Premiers was held at Adelaide. The following is a summary of the more important resolutions adopted:—

(1.) *Uniform Federal and State Rolls.* The electoral officers having recommended that it is practicable and advisable to have uniformity in regard to the State and Commonwealth Rolls, the respective States be invited to take the necessary steps to give effect to the recommendation.

(ii.) *Employment of Persons of Enemy Origin.* It is not desirable that persons of enemy birth, other than those already in the State service who have given full and satisfactory proof of their loyalty to the British Empire, should be engaged for employment in any Government Department while suitable persons of British origin are available.

(iii.) *Support of Unemployed Persons of Enemy Birth.* The internment or other support of destitute persons of enemy birth should be a Commonwealth responsibility.

(iv.) *Collection of Commonwealth and State Income Tax, Land and Probate Duty by One Authority.* The Commonwealth Government and the Governments of the several States shall direct their leading taxation officers to meet at an early date and prepare a uniform scheme for—Income tax (rates excepted), land tax (rates excepted), probate duties (rates excepted).

The Conference reaffirmed the desirability of uniform valuation for Commonwealth and State purposes being adopted as early as practicable, and that the necessary legislative or administrative steps in that direction be taken by the States.

(v.) *Employment of Returned Soldiers after the War.—Settlement of Returned Soldiers on the Land.—Repatriation Appeal.—Emigration to Australia of ex-Service Men from the United Kingdom.* With the view to meeting and solving the difficulties likely to arise on the return of large bodies of men to Australia, a committee comprising one Minister from each State and one Minister to represent the Commonwealth be established to secure co-ordination in matters connected with the repatriation of soldiers. That it be a recommendation to the respective State Governments—

- (a) To treat (after the war) returned British soldiers in a manner similar to that in which returned Australian soldiers are treated.
  - (b) To ask the British authorities to create a suitable organisation to co-operate with the Agents-General of the States in placing before returned British soldiers who contemplate emigrating from Great Britain the advantages accruing to them, and to Imperial interests, from their making their future homes in the Dominions, and to arrange for their immigration to the Australian States in such numbers and at such times as the respective State Governments are of opinion that such immigrants can be satisfactorily absorbed.
- (vi.) *Securing Shipping for Overseas and Interstate Trade.*
- (1) *Re Export of Goods from Australia.* It would appear that present arrangements in this connection are satisfactory. If any State finds that cargoes of greater value to that State are being left whilst goods of lesser value are exported, it is suggested that representations might be made to the controlling body set up by the Federal authorities.
  - (2) *Re Imports.* Where goods are urgently required by a State, and the freights available are being used for the carrying of other goods less urgently needed, it is submitted that the States might invite the Agents-General to meet and make representations to the authorities in Britain.
  - (3) Should this course become necessary, the representations might be made in the first instance to the Commonwealth authorities and the co-operation of the High Commissioner sought.

(vii.) *British Council of Scientists.* The State Governments to have this matter permanently brought under their notice with a view to their—

- (1) Using all the means at their disposal of applying science to the development of their industries and their production.
- (2) Actively co-operating with the organisation being established by the Commonwealth Government.

(vii.) *Strategic Railways.*

- (a) Any proposed railway to be submitted in each State to the Railways Standing Committee, or the Public Works Committee, or such similar authority as any State or States may appoint for the purpose, together with such representatives as the Commonwealth Government may appoint.
- (b) That such committees or authorities in formulating their recommendations be requested to give consideration to the developmental possibilities of the proposed lines, and to make such recommendations as will meet the strategic and developmental needs of the States interested.
- (c) That where the interests of two or more States are concerned, combined meetings of the committees or authorities appointed should be held for the purpose of making a joint recommendation.

(ix.) *Transfer of State Powers to the Commonwealth.* With regard to the proposed transfer of certain powers to the Commonwealth, the States represented at this conference reaffirm the desirableness of giving effect to the agreement entered into between the Premiers and the Prime Minister at the conference held in Melbourne in November, 1915.

(x.) *Bulk Handling of Grain.* It is desirable that the States should co-operate in the adoption of bulk handling of grain.

(xi.) *Centralisation of Statistical Departments.* It is desirable that the statistical bureaux of the States of the Commonwealth should, so far as practicable, be amalgamated, and each State Government to give consideration to this question.

(xii.) *Periodical Conferences of Directors of Education.* It is desirable that periodical conferences of the Directors of Education be held.

(xiii.) *Teaching of Modern Languages.* The State Governments were urged to give greatly increased attention to the teaching of modern languages, particularly the French language, in the public schools of the States.

(xiv.) *Imperial Education Conference.* The Australian States should be well represented at the conference shortly to be held in Great Britain in regard to education and science.

**3. Premiers' Conference, Melbourne, 1916-1917.**—On 12th December, 1916, and following days, and again on 5th January, 1917, and following days, a conference of Premiers (with Ministers of Lands) was held at Melbourne. The following is a summary of the more important resolutions agreed to:—

(i.) *Marriage Facilities for Absent Soldiers.* The Commonwealth Government to be asked to take into consideration the question of marriage facilities for absent soldiers.

(ii.) *Preference to Soldiers.* Other things being equal, preference shall be given by the Governments to returned soldiers for any employment in their services.

(iii.) *Financial Provisions for the Settlement of Returned Soldiers on the Land.* The Commonwealth agreed to make available for the calendar year 1917 a sum not exceeding £2,000,000, half the amount to be available up to 30th June, 1917.

Allocation: Queensland, £500,000; New South Wales, £500,000; Western Australia, £500,000; South Australia, £250,000; Victoria, £150,000; Tasmania, £100,000.

(iv.) *The Treatment of Soldiers and Sailors and the Dependents of Soldiers and Sailors.* That it be the business of the central Commonwealth authority to devise a substantially uniform system of dealing with returned soldiers and sailors and the dependents of soldiers and sailors on service, or of soldiers and sailors who have died as a result of service in respect of—

- (a) *Immediate Amelioration, i.e.,* the provision of means for meeting immediate cash necessities. This, either by supplementing the military or naval pay before discharge, or by sustenance after discharge until employment or remunerative occupation can be found.
- (b) *Care of the Totally Incapacitated:* To include housing where necessary.
- (c) *Training of the Partially Disabled for a Useful Vocation:* To include the provision and renewal of artificial limbs and other aids.
- (d) *Employment Generally.*
- (e) *Assistance Towards Permanent Re-establishment by:*
  - (1) Sustenance during the initial period of settlement on the land or establishment in other vocations.
  - (2) Small businesses where such deemed a desirable form of provision.
  - (3) Grants for tools of trade.
  - (4) Assistance towards house establishment—(a) loans for house building or purchase (to include the conversion of existing mortgages where terms onerous); (b) grants for furniture to a prescribed amount.
- (f) *Care of Dependents:* (a) of men who die; (b) of men on service.
- (g) The co-ordination of governmental and private efforts for the expansion of existing, and the promotion of new, industries to meet the demand for general and special employment.
- (h) The assembling and administration of funds.

The States to be asked to agree to a uniform scale of advances to soldiers and sailors desiring to build or purchase dwellings in certain areas, or to convert existing mortgages of an onerous character, the Commonwealth authority to advance 25 per cent. of the value, the sum so advanced by the Commonwealth authority not to exceed £75.

The States to be asked to co-operate in the development of large national enterprises calculated to provide employment for men who cannot be otherwise placed.

On all bodies concerned with the repatriation of men under the Commonwealth scheme, the representation of soldiers and sailors who have been on active service is desirable.

### § 13. Interstate Commission.

In accordance with the provisions of the Commonwealth Constitution Act (sections 101 to 104, see pages 31, 32) an Act providing for the appointment of the Commission was assented to on the 24th December, 1912. The personnel of the Commission was, however, not decided until the 11th August, 1913, when Messrs. A. B. Piddington, K.C. (Chief Commissioner), Hon. George Swinburne, and N. Lockyer, I.S.O., were appointed. On the 8th September, 1913, a request was received from the Executive Government of the Commonwealth that the Commission should make an investigation in regard to the Tariff. This investigation was made and in all 70 reports were issued in connection therewith. (*Vide* Official Year Book No. 9, p. 1134, and No. 10, p. 1140.)