Recruiting Immigrants: The First World War and Australian Immigration

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It is often assumed that the relationship between war and immigration is tenuous simply because in times of war, immigration virtually ceases. In Australia's case, both global wars of the twentieth century provided a stimulus to immigration in the following years. More than this, the war years constituted a period of dormancy during which past policies could be re-examined and reformulated. Several studies have already been undertaken on the influence of the second world war on post war immigration schemes.[1] Little detailed work, however, has been published on the direct impact of world war one on policies for immigration to Australia and on population redistribution within the empire.[2]

The experience of the second world war had an important influence on the future direction of Australia's immigration policy. A number of pre-war policies and their underlying philosophies were reinforced, particularly the widely-held perceptions of the 'ideal' and the 'alien' in immigration policy, the racial hierarchy of preferred immigrants with the British the most favoured and the desirability of settlement on the land. On the other hand, policy changes made immediately prior to the outbreak of war in 1914 were reversed, while others envisaged at that time and which were to have been put into effect when immigration was actively resumed after the war, were disregarded.

It has been a common assumption that world war one interrupted a trend of increasing immigration to Australia. On the contrary, a drastic decline in immigration had already occurred well before the war for a variety of reasons including the state of the economy, a reduced demand for labour and increased shipping fares.[3] Although the outbreak of hostilities brought a necessary cessation to almost all efforts to encourage immigration to Australia, most of the earlier ambitious schemes had already been modified. State governments had been facing severe difficulties for at least eighteen months and the war was seen by some immigration officials as a way out of an embarrassing and costly situation. Possibly as a result of this decline, there was a gradual movement towards greater cooperation between governments than had hitherto been the case in the field of immigration. Until 1921, the encouragement of immigration was in the hands of state governments but there were developments prior to the war which foreshadowed the later movement of the federal government into the field.

Despite the very low level of immigration during the war years, events between 1914 and 1918 were highly significant in changing attitudes to various classes and nationalities of immigrants, stimulating new theories about Australia's future development, and influencing postwar population policy, not only in Australia but also in Great Britain and elsewhere. This article will analyse the nature of the limited immigration which continued after August 1914 and the public response from a society at war. Governments faced particular problems in justifying any immigration during the war years and in dealing with delicate issues such as the arrival of a

number of Patagonians in 1915 and the Maltese incident of 1916. It will also examine the conflict between the very strict pre-war health standards for immigrants and the humanitarian considerations in relation to British ex-soldiers towards the end of the war and later. Finally, there will be an assessment of changing attitudes about potential immigrants, particularly towards 'ex-enemy aliens', the Japanese and Anglo-Indians, as well as the gradual emergence of a postwar policy.

The operations of the state immigration departments were extremely limited during the war and there was obviously a marked falling off in the number of people wishing, or able, to emigrate, owing to conscription in Europe, government restrictions and the shortages of shipping. Immigration in this period was predominantly British. Most of those who arrived in the first year of the war had been nominated by guarantors in Australia or selected by immigration officials in Britain before August 1914 and had booked their passages some months earlier. The number of assisted immigrants to Australia then declined rapidly. Following the outbreak of war, any measures to encourage immigrants between the age limits fixed by the British government for army recruiting purposes ceased. The consequent reduction in the number of immigrants suited the conditions prevailing in Victoria and New South Wales owing to prolonged drought and the decline in the demand for labour. The sailing of ships was postponed, which in any case would have been difficult to fill with migrants. These two states thus suffered no financial loss from being unable, for other reasons, to honour pre-existing contracts with the shipping companies.[4]

In October 1914, there was a detailed statement in the press announcing the wartime immigration policies of the two states. Adult farm labourers would not be assisted except through nominations. Boys and domestic servants would be accepted owing to continuing demand. The combined operations of the two governments in London were scaled down, advertising generally was abandoned and office staff reduced in order to cut expenditure.[5]

Although operations were drastically curtailed, they did not cease entirely. Throughout 1915, an agreed dual policy of the New South Wales and Victorian governments was to seek domestic servants and nominated passengers and later juveniles, aged thirteen or fourteen.[6] Most British youth previously brought to Australia for farm work had been seventeen to twenty years of age. In general, Australian governments had refused to accept the responsibility of bringing out very young teenagers for employment. Since they did not wish to encourage those fit for military service during the war years, governments concentrated on younger boys and supervised their training before placing them in private employment. Girls were trained for domestic service. Although the vigorous state and private assistance schemes of pre-war days ceased to operate, a small flow of immigrants for the duration of the war was still expected.[7]

The states also considered new schemes to relieve conditions brought about by the war. In September 1914, the Victorian government offered to help British and Belgian women who were war-affected. Up to 150 women per month were accepted for a period of six months.[8] The following year, the federal government financed a similar scheme for New South Wales.[9] There were also various offers throughout Australia to adopt Belgian, French and British children who had become orphans during the war.[10] This emphasis on youth and the willingness to promote schemes

for the emigration of orphans, irrespective of numbers available or the problems involved, is similar to the situation which prevailed during the second world war.[11]

There were further administrative cuts as the war progressed. In 1916, the Victorian government closed its office in San Francisco which for four years had been attempting to attract North American immigrants.[12] In the same year, Percy Hunter, director of the combined office of Victoria and New South Wales in London, returned to Australia.[13] The Victorian state cabinet decided to retain the London office alone, with a skeleton staff, in the expectation of large numbers of immigrants after the war.[14] In 1918 the existing arrangement between the two states was terminated and the agents-general again conducted all immigration work, with considerable saving.[15]

Any immigration during the war was strongly criticised. Labor and a few Liberal, politicians in the federal parliament opposed the continuation of work in this area.[16] On the other hand, members of the Millions Club in Sydney urged the prime minister not to allow the advertising of Australia to lapse during the war, believing that a large number of settlers would be available after the war. This view, however, was not widely shared. There was particular opposition to federal government policy during July 1915 with the arrival in Australia of 220 immigrants from the Chubut Valley in Patagonia, South America. These immigrants were known to be seeking another home and, owing to their predominantly Welsh background, were courted by various Australian governments before the war, resulting in intense interstate rivalry. The commonwealth government had sent a representative, Robert Williams, to Argentina in 1913 to try to attract some of the Welsh Patagonians to the Northern Territory. Williams found their conditions very discouraging and their grievances genuine and offered them perpetual leases of suitable blocks of land on the Daly River. The minister for external affairs, Hugh Mahon, tried to justify their arrival during the war by explaining in parliament that they had come under an arrangement made by the previous Fisher Labor government, an outcome of visits to Patagonia by Victorian officials. Mahon argued that the settlers had sold their farms in order to emigrate but the war had interrupted their plans. With the lapse of time, they were in a desperate plight and in 1915 the federal government arranged to bring them to Australia by a cargo ship calling at Argentina.

Those who arrived from Patagonia in 1915, however, included only 28 Welsh migrants in a group of 113 Spaniards, 45 Russians, 30 Italians, 1 Argentinian, 1 Frenchman, 1 Serbian and 1 Greek. The composition of the party was an embarrassment for the government. All previous publicity and official correspondence regarding the colony of Chubut had emphasised its 'Welsh' character and this partly explains the opposition the Patagonians encountered on arrival in Australia. In addition, although all had previous farming experience and the government's intention was to settle them on the land, the timing of their arrival during the war was politically inopportune. After arriving in Darwin, they were transferred inland where the government provided work for the 147 men on railway construction works. The commonwealth government had advanced their fares, which had to be repaid in monthly instalments from their wages, and land was set aside for them as soon as they were in a position to take it up.

A source of resentment during the war was that, while the pick of Australia's young men had gone to fight, immigrants were being encouraged to fill their places at home. Such sentiments were expressed by the Australian workers union and various

political labour councils. The federal Labor government under W M Hughes gave an assurance that for the duration of the war, no such labour would be imported, but not before the issue had become a political liability.

Another public outcry similar to that over the Patagonian arrivals occurred when 97 Maltese arrived on the *Arabia* in September 1916 and another 214 on the *SS Gange* the following month, shortly before the first conscription referendum. Union opposition, fears of contract labour and racial uncertainties (despite the fact that the Maltese were British subjects) led to the dictation test being given to the Maltese in Dutch and their temporary deportation to New Caledonia. Although most were ultimately allowed to land, the incident resulted in a tough official response; both Maltese and Greek immigrants were prohibited from 1916 to July 1920, the first Australian immigration restrictions specifically targeting Europeans.

The settlement in Australia of British ex-soldiers became a matter of considerable importance both during and after the war, merging to some extent with plans for settling Australian returned soldiers on the land. As the war progressed, there were many inquiries at immigration bureaux in London by men who had been discharged from military service for medical reasons and who wanted to emigrate to Australia. This presented a moral dilemma for the government. Australia's traditional policies requiring the sound health of immigrants came into conflict with humanitarian values. State officials had to maintain strict standards but at the same time, they wanted to help those who had served in the war. In some cases, the desire to obtain British immigrants led to a relaxation of former Australian practice with regard to health.

The government classified British ex-soldiers as follows: (a) men who, though discharged as medically unfit, had recovered, or at least were capable of earning their own living and who, because of previous experience, were eligible for assisted passages as agricultural labourers; (b) men similarly fit for work who had had no previous experience on the land but who were prepared to take up farming and seemed suitable; (c) men not physically incapacitated who wished to take up other employment; and (d) men who had been injured and could perform only light work.

In early 1916, the Victorian minister for lands, William Hutchinson, allowed passages for those classified under (a) and (b) under the previous conditions for assisted farm labourers. Regarding (c), investigations were made into the type of work the men preferred, in order to ensure that jobs were available. No assistance was provided for those under classification (d).[17]

Soldiers also made enquiries through the British Immigration League of Australia. The president of the league, Edmund Jowett, was appointed as special representative in Australia of the Royal Colonial Institute to help settle British sailors and soldiers on land in the empire. While state governments during the war were generally reluctant to assist injured ex-servicemen to Australia, private organisations independently fostered immigration of this type, in addition to other forms of immigration not often encouraged officially, such as the immigration of orphans and the unemployed.[18]

Politicians recognised that an immigration policy which could be brought into operation at the conclusion of the war, should be formulated without delay. Littleton Ernest Groom, federal Labor minister from Queensland, urged this upon the government in June 1915.[19] Sir Rider Haggard, one of the commissioners for the Royal Commission on the Natural Resources, Trade and Legislation of Certain

Portions of His Majesty's Dominions,[20] discussed the subject of postwar immigration with the various governments and argued for special provisions for British ex-soldiers.[21]

The premiers' conference held in Melbourne from 17-19 February 1916 dealt with the problem of settling returned Australian soldiers on the land. The New South Wales government decided to press on more rapidly with irrigation work at Yanco which would result in an increase in the number of settlers there and it was intimated that preference would be given to British subjects who had fought in the war.[22] The following year, New South Wales made arrangements for the settlement of 1,000 ex-British soldiers on irrigation areas if finance could be arranged. The implication was that financial backing by either the Australian or British government was crucial.

The Soldiers' Settlement Board of Australia was called into existence by the premiers' conference resolutions of January 1917.[23] The issue of giving similar treatment to British and Australian ex-soldiers was discussed but not resolved, although the principle had been agreed to at a previous conference in May 1916. At the time, the premiers felt that Australian soldiers would have to come first in any scheme of repatriation or land settlement but a whole-hearted effort would also be made on behalf of British ex-soldiers, again if the federal or British government made funds available. Only prospective farmers would be accepted and training farms in Britain were advocated.

Ideas for postwar immigration and especially of ex-soldiers, were being considered in Western Australia as early as 1916.[24] Already finance was seen as the major difficulty. In November of that year, the Western Australian cabinet considered a suggestion by the secretary of state for the colonies, Bonar Law, of cooperation between the states and the British government. Several ministers in Frank Wilson's second Liberal Ministry strongly supported the proposals, believing that Western Australia could absorb about 25,000 men in the first year and a larger number thereafter. They recommended the extension of pastoral leases in order to stimulate stocking and improvements, the reopening of district land offices in the wheat belts for reclassification and surveys, and the offer of small land holdings. They also suggested that dairy farms and orchards be prepared in the south-west in blocks of 100-160 acres, with 20 acres cleared and fenced and a small house erected by the immigrants themselves. They advised that forest areas be auctioned, railways built and that mining, especially for base metals, be encouraged.[25]

In the various schemes for postwar immigration, there was no central, coordinated planning or common policy for Australia as a whole. In addition, before any practical scheme for the settlement of British ex-soldiers on the land could be definitely formulated, the problem of finance for the states had to be resolved. A report presented to the British government by the Empire Settlement Committee in August 1917 recommended:

> Any of the Oversea Governments which is prepared to draw up a specific scheme ... for the employment and settlement of its own ex-servicemen and those from the United Kingdom and other parts of the Empire, but is hampered by lack of funds, might arrange for such scheme to be prepared and submitted for the consideration of the Home government.[26]

Officials expected that during the 1920s there would be a great exodus of people from both Britain and Europe to Australia.[27] One of the major concerns, reminiscent of pre-war years, was that immigrants would swell the already large urban populations.[28] In Victoria in 1918, there was a debate in the press over Australia's increasing urbanisation and Nationalist premier H S W Lawson authorised a select committee inquiry. Municipal councils and progress associations were asked to give their views on the matter. Some spoke of a 'torrent' rather than a 'drift'. In their eyes, the future of the country was bound up with the farming industry. The committee found that the main causes for the drift to the cities were the decline of goldmining (which had caused the greatest loss of population from country districts), restrictions on the occupation of land in mining districts, the closure of local industries and the removal of larger ones from rural to metropolitan areas, the greater job opportunities, higher wages and better conditions in the city, especially for tradesmen, the lack of entertainment and cultural facilities in rural areas and the general monotony of country life.[29] This debate and the subsequent Victorian inquiry reinforced the perception of a need to direct Australia's future immigrants to country areas, despite the fact that these policies had been of limited success before the war.[30] In the same year, Hughes wrote 'We must get men of [the] right type and get them on the land and not in the great cities'.[31]

Before the war, Germans were welcomed in Australia, regarded as excellent colonists — superior in fact to the average British immigrant.[32] Soon after the war began, however, the attitude changed. There were a number of applications from Germans who were being persuaded by relatives and friends to emigrate to Australia in order to avoid the war. On behalf of the British Immigration League, Rowland Hunt wrote to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in October 1914 to seek the views of the British government. There were already fears of unemployment after the war and Hunt rightly assumed that British and Australian workers would resent employment being found for British enemies in British colonies rather than for their own people.[33] A growing concern was also apparent in parliamentary circles leading to requests to state governments for the numbers of Germans and Austrians who had been induced to immigrate in the previous five years.[34]

The most notable groups protesting against Germans during the latter half of the war were the Salvation Army, the Australian Natives' Association and the Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia (RSSILA), formed in late 1916.[35] Politicians were concerned about Germans forming an anti-war movement in Australia and about 'aliens' who may have been spies. Practically all Germans who entered Australia during the war years were prisoners of war.[36] The Amending Immigration Act of 1920 prohibited the entry of ex-enemy aliens, that is, Germans, Austrian Germans, Bulgarians, Hungarians and Turks for five years from December 1920 (and thereafter until the governor-general determined by proclamation).[37] Again, particular European nationalities were being specifically excluded as a result of the war. In passing this legislation, Australia was following the lead of other nations such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, South Africa and New Zealand. The act also prohibited:

> any person who advocated the overthrow by force or violence of the established government of the Commonwealth or of any state or of any other civilised country, or of all forms of law or who advocated the abolition of organised government, or who

> advocated the assassination of public officials or who advocated or taught any of the doctrines and practices specified in this paragraph.

To restrict potential migrants on the basis of their ideas was a new element in Australian immigration thinking. Ideology had never previously been used as a standard of acceptability. Those with Sinn Fein or Bolshevik sympathies were especially singled out for exclusion.[38]

Despite the passing of the 'Enemy Aliens' Act, the governments of the three new states of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia had been recognised by Britain and Australia and their subjects were treated as 'friendly aliens'. With the exception of those who retained German nationality, passport applications from these nationals were considered on their individual merits; if their health was good and nothing was known against the character of the applicant, they could emigrate to Australia.

The federal government was far more cautious of Armenians and Russians. Apart from exceptional cases approved by the minister for home and territories,[39] they were generally not allowed entry to Australia (although fugitives from the Red Army arrived in small numbers in the early years after the war).[40] Subjects of the new states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, however, were treated as those of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia but the number of cases considered was small.[41]

Through the War Precautions Aliens Registration Regulations of October 1916, Europeans were required to register and report changes of address, foreshadowing the stricter controls on European immigration to Australia which were implemented in the 1920s.[42]

During the war, relations between Australia and Japan appeared to improve as a result of the positive assistance rendered by the Japanese navy to the allies. The premier of New South Wales publicly declared his gratitude to the Japanese fleet for their convoy of the Australian Expeditionary Force and their protection of the Australian coast from the attacks of enemy warships. The University of Melbourne began a series of lectures on Japan given by the writer and teacher, James Murdoch. This apparent goodwill on the part of Australia towards Japan did not, however, extend to contemplating any change in the immigration laws of the country. Yet there is much evidence that the Japanese felt that the time was ripe for the exertion of international pressure on the British dominions to treat Japanese nationals more favourably with regard to immigration and trade.[43]

In the Lower House of the Japanese Diet, the government had been under pressure to take positive steps to modify Australian attitudes towards Japan. The Japanese saw the need to strive for certain rights in the South Pacific. Several Japanese newspaper articles agitated for the free entry of Japanese to Canada, Australia and New Zealand after the war. In the Australian context, this would mean the repeal or amendment of the current immigration legislation.

David Johanson has written that during the great war, criticism of Japan was not permitted in the Australian press but there was evidence that fear of Japan was growing, partly as a result of Japan's repeated attacks on Australia's immigration policy.[44] On his return from England in 1916, Hughes exploited this fear by suggesting in public and in a closed session of parliament that Japan had revealed her intention of attacking the 'white Australia' policy after the war.[45] It is very likely that Hughes was using this as an argument to gain support for his conscription campaign.[46]

When Hughes attended the Peace Conference in Paris in 1919, he anticipated a challenge to the 'white Australia' policy and possibly a military threat from Japan. He was determined to demonstrate his opposition to any change in immigration policy regarding Asians. The Japanese demanded more equitable recognition, the removal of immigration restrictions in the Pacific, and League of Nations mandates over certain Pacific Islands. They believed that the League would be impractical without the removal of all racial discrimination. The treatment of nationals was discussed 'in an atmosphere of mutual distrust and misunderstanding', Hughes later admitted.[47] Nevertheless, immigration remained a question of domestic sovereignty under the League Covenant. The attempt by the Japanese representative, Baron Makino, to insert a clause in the League Covenant guaranteeing 'to all alien nationals of States Members of the League, equal and just treatment in every respect, making no distinctions either in law, or in fact, on account of their race or nationality' was vigorously opposed by Hughes unless it stated 'in clear and unambiguous terms that this did not confer the right to enter Australia'. Hughes narrowly won this concession and was strongly criticised in Japan for his stance.[48]

Most Chinese and Japanese who entered Australia during the war years did so under the exemption provisions of the Immigration Restriction Act.[49] An increase in the numbers in the latter half of the war was because of a revival in the pearling industry after the slump of 1914-15. In the United States Japanese immigration was totally prohibited by the Johnson-Reid Act of 1924.

While the war reinforced the existing restrictive policies towards Japan, it also gave rise to the questioning of a policy which excluded, because of their skin colour, fellow members of the empire who had fought loyally with the allies. This applied particularly to India. James W Barrett, well-known Melbourne doctor and social reformer, on several occasions raised a further problem concerning India: that of the 5,000 British soldiers who retired annually from the Indian army.[50] The states were generally reluctant to accept such immigrants.[51] Barrett argued, however, that if these men became unemployed on retirement, the problems of recruitment of British soldiers in India would be materially increased. If suitable arrangements were made, they could be transferred to the Australian reserve. The British War Office had decided in 1907 that they could draw their reserve pay in the dominions.[52]

The problem of placing these men was in the hands of the secretary of the Royal Army Temperance Association, the Reverend C H Martin, of Simla, India, who visited Australia in 1913.[53] Barrett believed that many of these retired soldiers would make ideal immigrants; some had agricultural or veterinary experience or, having worked in the regimental mess, could become excellent butlers and stewards. Many were well educated. Immigration officials, on the other hand, stressed their disadvantages; they were too old to learn, were rarely men with families and unlikely to marry and bring up children. They admitted, however, that the experiment had not been fairly tried. Although a small number had already come to Australia (sixty in 1913), they had not been selected immigrants and may not have been suitable.

In 1918, Barrett renewed his efforts to encourage interest in Anglo-Indian immigrants but with little response from the states. Yet India's participation in the first world war put Australia under some obligation to her. Yarwood and Knowling point out that the discrimination suffered by Indians overseas had long embarrassed British governors in India and this situation was accentuated during the war.[54] Indian delegates to four successive Imperial Conferences between 1917 and 1923

demanded certain rights for Indians resident in the dominions.[55] Following the Reciprocity Resolution adopted at the Imperial Conferences in 1917 and 1918, the wives and children of Indians resident in Australia were exempted from the application of the dictation test and were allowed to enter Australia for permanent residence after 1923.[56]

Prime Minister Hughes, by voting for a resolution of the 1921 Imperial Conference, helped smooth the way for the removal of statutory restrictions affecting Indians in Australia.[57] He subsequently arranged for the Right Honorable Srinivasa Sastri, President of the Servants of India Society, to visit Australia in 1922 with the object of negotiating with the government and people for full rights of citizenship and equality for Indians who had been allowed to settle in Australia.[58] Sastri was well received and the visit was partially successful. In 1925, the Bruce-Page government exempted Indians from those disabilities arising from their race under federal law. From 1925 British Indians within Australia could be enfranchised and given pensions. Agreements permitting the admission of tourists, merchants and students were made with other British possessions of Ceylon, Burma, Hong Kong and the Straits Settlements.[59] Similar arrangements existed in relation to China, Annam, Egypt, the Philippines and Hawaii. As A H Charteris has pointed out, the importance of these agreements lay in the acquiescence of the foreign governments concerned in the application of the dictation test to all those who did not fall within the exempted categories.[60] Thus the 'white Australia' principle remained intact.[61]

Despite the small numbers involved, the existence of numerous government files and other records dealing with the question of Anglo-Indian immigration and the position of Indians within Australia indicates its sensitive nature and the continuing concern of governments not to compromise in relation to the 'white Australia' legislation, despite the pressure to do so which occurred from time to time.

Perhaps the most significant development for Australian postwar immigration in these years was the change in the attitude of the British government to assisted emigration. From 1860 until after the first world war, approximately forty per cent of British immigrants to Australia received financial assistance from colonial and state governments.[62] As a general rule, the British government did not contribute to these schemes. Although the 1907 Imperial Conference resolved that it was desirable for British emigrants to go to British colonies rather than to foreign countries, little was done to bring this about. The United States had been the most popular destination. Lord Lucas, under secretary of state for the colonies, pointed out in 1911 that 'it was not the [British] government's policy, nor had the Dominions requested that emigration should be subsidised or organised by the state'.[63]

After the war, however, together with the Australian government, Britain agreed to provide free or subsidised passages for thousands of selected British immigrants, initially ex-soldiers, to settle on the land in Australia. The change in British thinking came about largely as a result of the findings of the Dominions Royal Commission, which published its report in 1917.[64] The commission had been appointed after discussions on closer empire cooperation at the Imperial Conference of 1911. Competition from the rising industrial powers of Germany and the United States was threatening Britain's industrial supremacy. The purpose of the commission was to establish whether the empire could function as a self-contained economic unit. Most of the information relating to Australia and New Zealand was compiled in 1912 and 1913.

The report, however, was written and presented during the war and showed the influence of new conditions and an awareness of the problems of a postwar world.

The commissioners recommended that the resources of the individual members of the empire be used for the benefit of the empire as a whole. If the dominions provided the raw materials and Britain supplied the capital and finished products, self-sufficiency could be achieved. An integral part of this plan was the transfer of population from Britain to the dominions.[65] Migration within the empire would solve the pressing problem of over-population in Britain. The sparsely-settled dominions needed people, for reasons of defence and their own development but more importantly from Britain's point of view, for their contribution to the future economic strength of the Empire.[66]

In the immediate postwar years, population problems were studied in the light of imperial necessities. Emigrants leaving Britain were no longer seen as being lost to the empire but as contributing to the strength of British interests overseas.[67] Ideas of self-sufficiency and the dream of an industrial England tied to her dominions through trade and racial origin lay behind these sentiments.

The war reinforced the concern over the future of the empire, but while the redistribution of population became a widely accepted principle in the postwar years, some of the recommendations of the commissioners had to be modified in the changed circumstances. This especially related to proposals for the encouragement of female emigration. Before the war, there was a 'surplus' of women in Britain and of men in Australia.[68] The 1921 census returns for England and Wales still showed an excess of women over men, but in Australia after the war, the ratio of males to females had altered owing to the high male casualty rate. In Melbourne in 1919, there were 20,000 more unmarried women than unmarried men and parliamentarians spoke of an excess of 100,000 unmarried 'eligible' women for Australia as a whole. Thus while it seemed desirable in Britain to encourage the emigration of women to the dominions after the war, Australian officials were sometimes reluctant to receive them.[69]

The terms in which the discussion of female immigration was couched in the federal parliament, clearly indicate that politicians were preoccupied with population growth.[70] The war had resulted in the death of many young Australians and between 1914 and 1918 the population had remained almost stationary.[71] Haggard had drawn attention to the consequences of the continued decline of the birth rate for the future of the empire and for all western peoples.[72] George Knibbs, the commonwealth statistician, delivered a lecture at the Millions Club in Sydney in June 1919. The occasion was to celebrate Australia's attainment of a population of five million. Knibbs pointed out that if Australia continued to increase at the current rate of growth there would be a population of only 18,824,000 by the year 2000. He stressed that this should alarm all those who cared at all for Australia's destiny; that Australia's population was negligible compared with that of other (non-specified) nations. In relation to the events of the previous few years, he believed there was a real danger.[73]

Australians felt a renewed vulnerability as a result of the war; the vulnerability of a small population unable to defend alone an extensive coastline and land area. Figures of twenty to fifty million were suggested in parliamentary debates as the level of population necessary to maintain independence.[74] Discussions during the Paris Peace Conference, particularly those concerning the formation of the League of

Nations, led politicians to believe it was time for a re-examination of Australia's position in the world. A larger population would justify greater influence, at least in the Pacific region. Owing to the state of the postwar economy, however, it was a few years before much could be done to increase the population through immigration.

In conclusion, the war provided a period of relative inactivity in immigration during which past failures and lessons learnt during the pre-war years were forgotten. The experience of the 1914-1918 war particularly reinforced the Australian ideal of land settlement by British immigrants. The report of the Victorian Select Committee Inquiry into the drift of population to the cities in 1918 and the postwar concern over Australia's defence, supported the traditional policy of directing immigrants to rural areas. The concentration on Britain as the major source country for immigrants continued because of the closer ties within the empire which arose out of the war experience and the decision by Britain to contribute to the fares of British emigrants wishing to settle in the dominions after the war. If anything, Australia became even more British-oriented because of the war. At the same time, the categories of prohibited immigrants were reinforced and extended despite some liberalisation with regard to Asian merchants and students. Thus, both the encouragement and discouragement policies with regard to potential Australian immigrants which were pursued in the following decade were strongly influenced by the events and experiences of the first world war.

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1 See for example, Andrew Markus, 'Labor and immigration: Policy formation 1943-5', *Labour History*, no 46, May 1984; and 'Labor and immigration 1946-9: The displaced persons programme', *Labour History*, no 47, November 1984.
2 The exceptions are the specific studies of soldier settlement, notably, Marilyn Lake, *The Limits of Hope*, Melbourne, 1987, and see Michael Roe, *Australia, Britain, and Migration, 1915-1940: A Study of Desperate Hopes*, Oakleigh, Victoria, 1995, especially chapter one.
3 Michele Langfield, 'Fit for the Elect of the World: Government Policy and Contemporary Opinion about the Encouragement of Immigrants to Australia, 1901-1939', PhD thesis, Monash University 1990, pp 112-19.
4 *Argus* [Melbourne], 30 December 1914.
5 *Argus* [Melbourne], 1 October 1914; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 June 1914; 16, 20 July 1914; 2 March 1915.
6 *Argus*, 3 February 1915.
7 *Argus*, 5 February 1915.
8 Letter from Sir Alexander Peacock, 29 September 1914, Colonial Office Records, Australian Joint Copying Project (COR, AJCP), CO/418, Reel Number 4229, Piece Number 127, p 352.
9 Memorandum by Minister for Home and Territories, Australian Archives (AA), CP447/3, item SC 23 [1].
10 Letter from Dr Richard Arthur to High Commissioner, 23 October 1914, COR, AJCP, CO/418, Reel Nos 2229-30, Piece Number 128, 310-16 and Reel Number 4240, Piece Number 140, pp 55-7.
11 Markus, 'Labor and immigration: Policy formation 1943-5', op. cit., pp 30-1.
12 *Argus*, 4 April 1916.
13 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 March 1916; *Argus*, 4 April 1916.
14 *Argus*, 7 June 1916.
15 *Argus*, 16 March 1918.
16 *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates* (CPD), Senate, 9 June 1915, vol LXXV11, p 3774; 29 July 1915, vol LXXVIII, pp 5463, 5478-79; House of Representatives (HR), vol LXV111, p 5351.
17 *Argus*, 1 April 1916.
18 *Argus*, 27 February 1917.
19 CPD, HR, 10 June 1915, volume LXXVII, p 3898.
20 *Sun* (Sydney), 29 April 1916; *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney) and *Sydney Morning Herald*, both of 1 May 1916. Affairs Report from Governor Stanley, 10 July 1916, COR, AJCP, CO/418, Reel Number 4249, Piece Numbers 150, 283.
21 On the role of Haggard, see Roe, op. cit., p 10.
22 Archives Office of New South Wales (AONSW), 4/6248, Settlement of British ex-Soldiers after World War One, 1916-17.
23 AA, CRS A2, item 18/888; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 January 1917.
24 Despatches from Governor Barron of Western Australia, 1 January 1916, 1 July 1916, 1 October 1916. COR, AJCP, CO/418, Reel Number 4249, Piece Numbers 150, 439, 462-3.
25 *Argus*, 8 November 1916.

26 AONSW, 4/6248, Settlement of ex-British Soldiers in New South Wales.
27 *Sun* (Sydney), 29 April 1916.
28 *Argus*, 9 April 1918.
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31 Cable from Hughes to W A Watt, 5 November 1918, cited in L F Fitzhardinge, *William Morris Hughes: A Political Biography, Part 11, The Little Digger, 1914-1952*, Sydney, 1979, p 353.
32 Memo of conversation between R L Craigie of the Foreign Office and H Easton, Honorable Secretary of the British Immigration League, 16 July 1914, COR, AJCP, CO/418, Reel Number 4230, Piece Numbers 129, 346-50; Despatch from Berlin to Foreign Office, 7 October 1913, op. cit., Reel Number 4222, Piece Number 119, vol 10, 1913; *Argus*, 13 February 1914.
33 AA, CRS A2, item 1916/3742. Hunt's letter of 10 October 1914, is numbered 4213/3.
34 CPD, HR, 2 December 1914, volume LXXV, 1243; AA, CRS A2, item 1916/3742.
35 See Richard Broome, *The Victorians Arriving*, Sydney, Associates, 1984, pp 138-40.
36 CPD, HR, 30 May 1918, volume LXXXV, p 5296.
37 *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia*, Number 14 (1901-1920), 1038. Folder containing records of the Aliens Committee, August to December 1918, AA, CRS A3562, item 349/311.
38 Commonwealth of Australia Amending Immigration Act, 1901-1920; AA, CRS A458, item P156/1 Attachment A; AA, CRS A432, item 29/4129.
39 Immigration was administered by the Commonwealth Department of External Affairs from 1902 until 1916 when it was taken over by the Department of Home and Territories.
40 S M Bruce, CPD, HR, vol CIX, 7 October 1924, p 5184; AA, CRS A458, item C156/3; B Christa in James Jupp (ed.), *The Australian People: An Encyclopedia of the Nation, its People and their Origins*, North Ryde, 1988, p 754.
41 Correspondence between the Australian High Commissioner, the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office, 10, 19 March 1920; 27 April 1920; 5, 11 May 1920, COR, AJCP, CO/418, Reel Number 4292, Piece Numbers 196, 320-21, 424, 427; Reel Number 4293, Piece Number 197; AA, CRS A1, item 21/3018-21804.
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