TASMANIA TRANSFORMED OR TRANSPORTATION REVISITED?
Immigration to Tasmania, 1945-1955

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A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Humanities, Tasmanian History

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is my pleasure to gratefully acknowledge the assistance I have received in completing this thesis.

Firstly, I would like to thank Professor Michael Roe for his helpful supervision and encouragement with this project and throughout my course of studies at the University of Tasmania. It has been a privilege to be his student. The friendship and support of my fellow "M. Hummers" over the past three years has made this a gratifying experience on many accounts.

I am grateful to the Hydro Electric Commission, and particularly to Ms. Kate Wheatley of the Public Relations Department, for the cooperation and assistance given to me with access to their archival material. Thanks also are due to former Chief Commissioner Sir Allan Knight for valuable information gained through an interview with him.

And I am most indebted to the many postwar migrants I have had the pleasure of meeting and getting to know in the last year. Their generosity in sharing their lives and stories with me is admired, and their contribution to this work gratefully recognized.

Finally, my sincere thanks to my husband, Susumu Okada, who continues to amaze me with his patience, and his computer skills.
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INTRODUCTION

The first decade after World War II saw Tasmania embark upon a quarter of a century of change and development, a period which would witness a transformation in the state's economy and social character. In the immediate postwar period Tasmania was experiencing an economic slump, with the winding down of war manufacturing, a decreased demand for goods, and severe shortage of materials. The light on the horizon was Tasmania's potential industrial revolution, an expansion of secondary industry, the key to which would be the exploitation of Tasmania's abundant water supply. Tasmania's industrial boom would be led by a relatively small number of firms, such as the Electrolytic Zinc Company and Associated Pulp and Paper Mills, supplied with cheap, bulk power through the state's hydro-electric scheme.

From 1947, with the effects of postwar reconstruction beginning to be felt, Tasmania enjoyed unprecedented expansion and prosperity. There was full employment, an increase in the population and an appreciable rise in the standard of living. Just as hydro-electricity was the crucial component in this development of Tasmania's industry, immigration in the postwar period played a pivotal role in the change in Tasmania's economic and social character. Immigration was a significant factor in the growth in Tasmania's population, accounting for 35.6% of the population increase in the intercensal period of 1947-54, and contributing to the growth in the economy through increased demand for goods and services. More significantly, it was with migrant labour that the hydro-electric power stations were built, the zinc production and mining kept active, the timber industry throughout the state sustained, the aluminium industry at Bell Bay established, and numerous other public works projects completed.

The presence of a larger foreign population within the community helped to broaden Tasmania's outlook in some measure, and afforded it greater links with the wider world. Although Tasmania's society was less changed than that in other Australian states, such a transformation in population and society was, according to Australia's first Immigration Minister Arthur Calwell, one of the desired outcomes of his plans for a postwar immigration program. Calwell's immigration policy was directed by his vision of a "new order" in Australia after the Second World War. His plan was for workers of the world to come to a workers' paradise in Australia, and together help Australia to abandon its isolationist past and become a modern industrial nation. For the first time
since the colonial period, immigration would be planned and controlled. Unlike the spasmodic, unco-ordinated immigration of the past, the new scheme was designed to be part of an organized effort to meet the needs of an advancing nation.¹

In many respects, the 1950's was a unique time in 20th century Tasmania, central to an epoch of progress, optimism, and excitement. This period holds striking parallels to a time in colonial Van Diemen's Land. In the period from the 1820's to 1850's there, too, was an air of enthusiasm, an urgency about development, and a dependence on imported, assigned labour. Like the convicts transported to Tasmania from Britain, many postwar European immigrants came here under bond. They were placed in compulsory employment for two years, had little, if any, choice in where they lived during those two years, and enjoyed few effective civil rights.

As convict labour was used to transform Van Diemen's Land from a subsistence prison farm to a thriving colony in the 19th century, so too, 100 years later, was assigned labour the means to 20th century Tasmania's industrialization and development. And like the convicts, for some European migrants, their "transportation" to Tasmania was the beginning of a new life, presenting opportunities along with the hardship and suffering.

¹ For further discussion of Calwell, his philosophy and intentions behind the postwar immigration program, see A. Calwell, Be Just and Fear Not (Hawthorn, 1972), and C. Kiernan, Calwell, A Personal and Political Biography (West Melbourne, 1978).
CHAPTER I

DEVELOPMENT OF IMMIGRATION POLICY

The Second World War represents a watershed in Australian immigration policy: the threat to security presented by Japan coupled with the longstanding concern about Australia's low rate of population growth caused policy makers to re-think Australia's approach to immigration. This re-think produced a policy significantly different in principle and application from that previously guiding Australia's quest for greater numbers.

The issue of its population size was frequently examined by Australia, with general agreement that an increasing population base was crucial to continued development as a nation. Experience prior to World War II, however, had left little optimism concerning the satisfactory peopling of Australia whether by natural increase or through immigration. Continuing discussion on the matter in light of events of the War led to a new attitude toward immigration in Australia. The sense of urgency surrounding the population issue was embodied in the rallying cry "Populate or Perish". Unlike the Empire Settlement immigration of the period between the World Wars which was designed to meet the needs of Britain, post World War II immigration policy would instead focus on Australia's priorities. Arthur Calwell, as Australia's first Minister for Immigration had a clear picture of the immigration program he believed would reconstruct Australia, and successfully presented it to the nation as a matter of immediate public importance with plentiful long term benefits.¹

Calwell's vision entailed large scale immigration predominantly, but not exclusively, British which would safeguard Australia's shores, provide the labour force needed to spur industrial development, while building a nation of people of diverse origins. This diversity would of course extend only within the limits of the well established and sanctioned White Australia Policy; it remained the assumption that immigrants to Australia should be white. To bring this idea to fruition, in addition to acceptance at policy level Calwell required a receptive Australian public and a bureaucratic structure with which to administer the program. In 1945 the Commonwealth Department of Immigration was established and with that began the implementation of a campaign to persuade the people of

Australia to co-operate with this new notion of immigration. In this chapter I shall firstly trace the development of Australia's immigration policy up to World War II, and then discuss the changes in both the thinking and the administrative structure and processes involved in the move to a new policy. While presenting a general overview, attention will also be drawn to the Tasmanian scenario and the focus of immigration debate and policy there.

In reviewing immigration policy and procedure from the time of European settlement to 1945, one can delineate three phases: early colonisation, the boom years surrounding the gold rush, and the early years of Australia's nationhood from Federation to 1945. The initial, forced, immigration in the form of transportation of British convicts to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land was followed in the 1840's by a system of free settlement with assisted passage to help establish the colonies. With the discovery of gold and other mineral wealth in the latter half of the 19th century Australia experienced a period of economic expansion. One of the consequences of this was an unrestricted and uncontrolled influx of immigrants in the 1850's. Immigration virtually ceased with the depression of the 1890's. The next phase of immigration, that from the time of Federation until 1945, was characterised by the pronouncement of the White Australia Policy and limited and controlled entry of migrants, primarily British. In this phase, immigration increased gradually from 1905 to 1909, and then burgeoned in the five year period prior to World War I, which brought new entries again to a standstill. After the War, renewed interest in immigration culminated in the Australian federal government's assuming the responsibility for the selection and financial assistance of British migrants which had previously been within the domain of the states' Agents General in London.

In this period between the two World Wars the thrust of Australia's immigration policy was fulfilled through Britain's Empire Settlement Act of 1922, the object of which was the redistribution of the white population within the Empire to secure the economic links between industrial Britain and the agricultural colonies supplying Britain with raw materials needed for its industry. For the good of the Empire and subsidised by the British and Australian governments, migrants were relocated from Britain's cities to rural Australia. The Empire Settlement Scheme allowed for assisted passage for migrants who either were nominated by an individual or organisation in Australia or were selected by the states for particular purposes such as land settlement, farm labour or domestic help. Child and youth immigration through such agents as
the Fairbridge Society and the Big Brother movement were also part of the assisted passage scheme. On the whole, this phase of immigration was not very successful for Australia. The number of British migrants arriving (282,000 between 1921 and 1933) was well below that anticipated; many who came were soon disillusioned, dissatisfied with the harsh realities of life on the land in Australia, vastly different from the paradise portrayed in the advertising in Britain. This factor, plus the circumstances of the Depression of the 1930's led both Britain and Australia to reconsider the merits of the Empire Settlement Scheme. With its own decreasing population, Britain was no longer eager to encourage emigration. Likewise the depressed state of Australia's economy deemed it unwise to be accepting large numbers of immigrants. The newly elected Labor government had terminated the assisted passage scheme at the end of 1929. The period 1930-35 recorded a net migration loss, the effect of decreased immigration and the return to Britain of many who had come to Australia in the 1920's under the Empire Settlement Scheme. With changing economic circumstances, in 1938 the United Kingdom and Australian governments revised assisted passage immigration; however few new settlers arrived before the outbreak of War.  

Most non-British applications to immigrate to Australia at this time came from European Jews seeking to escape the threat of Nazi Germany. Following the 1938 Evian Conference, Australia agreed to accept 15,000 refugees, mostly Jewish, over the next three years. The first 5085 arrived in 1939, but the hostilities in Europe prevented the emigration of further refugees, with a total of only 6475 arriving by 1945. It was in the late 1930's that approaches were made by the Freeland League for Jewish Territorial Colonisation to establish in the Kimberley region of northwest Western Australia a settlement for Jewish refugees. The plan attracted the interest of the Western Australian government and the support of the Australian Council of Trade Unions and a number of church leaders, but was opposed by the federal government. The merits of the plan were considered for several years but ultimately the government declared that such group settlement was not in keeping with established policy which excluded the formation of any segregated foreign "colony", and thus would not be permitted. The debate which occurred in relation to this proposal is significant for two reasons. Firstly, it raised issues which would be pertinent in the determining of post World War II immigration policy, such as the admission of alien (i.e. non-British) immigrants. Secondly, the

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debate encompassed a range of sectors of Australian society: government, trade unions, churches and the general public to some extent. The consideration given to the proposed Kimberley settlement was thus a harbinger of the postwar forum.

Tasmanian immigration prior to 1945 followed a pattern similar to that of Australia as a whole. With the exception of periods of economic depression, immigration was consistently encouraged. Net population loss through emigration to the mainland states has been a concern for much of Tasmania's history. In the colonial period several means of attracting immigrants from the United Kingdom were employed. Passages were paid, land grants dispensed and Immigration Aid societies established to recruit and sponsor prospective new Tasmanian settlers. In addition, other European immigrants - German, Italian, Scandinavian- were sought to help open up the land. The discovery of tin in 1876 saw an influx of Chinese to the mining fields of Tasmania's northeast. Hitherto, Chinese in the colony had numbered less than 100. Census figures show that group's population reached its peak of 932 in 1891, the subsequent decline in tin mining in the north east resulting in large scale emigration of Chinese in the early 1890's. 4

Ensuing efforts to increase immigration, the essence of which was a settlement scheme for returned soldiers and British ex-service personnel, proved to be unsuccessful in almost all regards. By 1921 the percentage of foreign born Tasmanians had decreased to 8% of the total population. Most of the foreign born were from the United Kingdom and New Zealand.6 As with mainland Australia, the attempt to attract British immigrants through the Empire Settlement Act of 1922 proved disappointing in Tasmania. Numbers were low and the level of dissatisfaction among the settlers was high. The economic depression in the 1930's and the outbreak of war in 1939 saw immigration in Tasmania slow to a trickle. Jewish Europeans seeking refuge in Tasmania from Hitler's Germany received a sympathetic hearing from Premier Ogilvie who, having visited Europe in 1935, found abhorrent Germany's anti-Jewish

5 Ibid, p.249.
practices. Ogilvie tried to use his position and influence to support applications from Jewish refugees who encountered obstacles to their entry to Australia in its very strict, indeed discriminatory conditions for alien immigration. Ogilvie intervened in many such cases, sometimes successfully, often not.7

While the proposal for a Jewish settlement in the Kimberley region of Western Australia is popular knowledge, lesser known is the story of the attempt to establish such a community in the southwest of Tasmania. In 1940 the Freeland League's representative Dr. I. N. Steinberg, who was negotiating with the Commonwealth and Western Australian governments, also had discussions with relevant parties in Tasmania, including Premier Cosgrove, who expressed positive interest in the scheme. The federal government's rejection of the Kimberley proposal was applied to the Tasmanian plan, and large scale immigration of Jewish refugees did not occur.

The driving force behind Tasmania's proposal was 30 year old Critchley Parker, Jr. of Melbourne, an idealist with an interest in the economic system of the Soviet Union and a passionate belief in the favourable prospects for a thriving Jewish community in the area around Part Davey and Bathurst Harbour. With the assistance of his friend, Melbourne journalist Caroline Isaacson, Parker arranged for Steinberg to visit Tasmania and meet with government officials in January, 1941. At this time Parker's proposal was met with support from Cosgrove, Treasurer E. Dwyer-Grey, the Tasmanian trade union movement and the Refugee Council of Tasmania. The course of the war into the Pacific, however, meant that other priorities forced the plans into the background. Parker was determined not to let his vision fade entirely though. In May 1942, he embarked alone on a hiking tour of his selected southwest region, intent upon gaining detailed geographic information for the proposal. Tragically, the harsh weather conditions and Parker's poor health forced him to halt his walk and make camp three days after heading inland from Long Bay. Parker's attempts to signal for help were futile, and there he died, aware of his inevitable fate and recording his thoughts in his diary.8


8 This diary was used as one of the sources for Hilary Rubenstein's article Critchley Parker (1911-42): Australian Martyr for Jewish Refugees", a most interesting account of Parker and his plan, published in The Journal of the Australian Jewish Historical Society, Vol.XI, Nov., 1990.
As late as 1946, Steinberg was still trying to persuade Australian and Tasmanian authorities to approve a Jewish settlement. While in London in April of that year, Steinberg visited Tasmania's Agent General requesting confirmation of Tasmania's continued interest in the plan. Premier Cosgrove's reply to the Agent General's enquiry indicated that Tasmania would re-open negotiations and thoroughly consider such a scheme, but only after Commonwealth government approval had been ascertained. That approval was not forthcoming; the Chifley government maintained the policy of opposition to group settlement and the Freeland League looked elsewhere for help with Jewish resettlement.

Following the Depression of the 1930's and the threat of Japanese invasion during the war, Australian policy makers in the mid 1940's were faced with two major challenges: developing Australia's resources and industry, and increasing her defence capacity. The bombing of Darwin had shattered confidence in isolation as adequate protection against foreign aggression. Australia, now vulnerable, knew that 7.5 million people could not hope to defend its 7.6 million kilometres of territory. Further concerns about Australia's population were raised in relation to the impact that the declining birth rate of the 1930's would have on the numbers available for the labour force in the late 1940's. At a time when it was imperative to develop resources and industry and thereby enhance defence capacity, Australia would have insufficient people entering the work force. It was recognition of the need for an immediate substantial increase in population which brought about renewed interest in immigration. The findings of various government sponsored committees from 1943-47 supported the notion that Australia should without delay commence an extensive immigration program with renewal of assisted passage. What was envisaged at this point was expanded immigration from the United Kingdom, with some consideration being given to 'white alien immigration'.

In July, 1945, Prime Minister Chifley created a Department of Immigration within his government, and appointed A. A. Calwell, a strong advocate of a bold immigration policy, as first Minister for Immigration. T. H. E. Heyes was named as Secretary of the new department, which originally had 24 staff members, 12 in London, 6 in Canberra and 6 in Melbourne. Branch offices of the

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For additional information see I.N. Steinberg, *Australia - The Unpromised Land* (London, 1948).

9 AOT, PD 1, 55/12/46.
10 Steinberg, *op.cit.*, p.172.
department were later established in each state. Calwell's inaugural parliamentary address as Immigration Minister outlined government policy, reiterating the commitment to increase Australia's population. The target was a 2% annual increase, recommended by demographers as maximum absorptive capacity, which would be achieved through 1% natural increase and 1% immigration. That meant an immigration intake of 70,000 persons per year.¹¹

By January, 1946, Calwell had begun vigorously promoting his immigration plans and setting in motion a sequence of conferences of Commonwealth and State officials to formulate policy and procedure. An April, 1946, meeting of representatives of relevant state and federal government departments considered strategies for achieving the target of 70,000 migrants per year. Priorities were set for the types of migrants preferred, and mechanisms for selection and settlement were suggested. This was followed by a Ministers' conference on 19 August which confirmed recommendations made at the April conference. A Premiers' Conference on 20 August, then determined appropriate areas of responsibility for state and commonwealth governments.

Commonwealth and state immigration officers met in December, 1946 to make plans for implementing the decisions of the August Premiers' conference, and in January, 1947, there was another Ministers' conference to consider recommendations of the Officers' conference of December.¹²

Tasmania was represented at these conferences by Immigration Minister, Mr. Howroyd, Mr. L. E. Smeeton, Director of the Tourist Department, which in March, 1946, had established an immigration section within the department, and by Mr. B. Douglas of Social Services, the department which had previously carried the immigration portfolio, and would continue to have some involvement.

Through this assiduous process, decisions were made on a number of key items. Agreement was easily reached that the preferred migrant would be British, male, and single, with a nominator in Australia to guarantee employment and accommodation. Priority should be given to ex-service personnel. An assisted passage agreement was soon ratified between Australia and the United

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¹² PD I, 55/3/46 contains detailed reports of the proceedings of these conferences, as well as the relevant correspondence between the Commonwealth and State officials.
Kingdom to start the flow of British migrants. Non-British immigration was considered, with no firm conclusions being attained apart from the agreement that group settlements of any foreign nationality were not desirable, and that British should be given preference over other migrants. Despite early support for child migration and an original recommendation to take in 50,000 British and European orphans, it was concluded that this was impracticable and too expensive, and would not be pursued as part of the government's program. Apart from the issue of child migration, which it resolved to pursue, Tasmania's position on all the above facets of the immigration program was in line with the Commonwealth. In March, 1947, the Tasmanian government ratified the policy and decisions made at the 1946 conferences. An editorial in Hobart's Mercury newspaper on 8 January, 1946, illustrates the early support in Tasmania for large scale immigration. It argued that immigration was the obvious and quickest way to build a larger population for Australia, so necessary for the security of the nation. Children, it maintained, were the most desirable migrants.

Economic and industrial development in Tasmania after World War II would be led by hydro-industrialisation. There were great plans for expansion of Tasmania's hydro-electric scheme, plans which would require a huge work force, far more than what was available in 1946. So it was that the Hydro Electric Commission became the linchpin in Tasmania's immigration program in the early years after World War II. In July, 1946, after consultations with the Hydro Electric Commission, Premier Cosgrove submitted a paper to the Commonwealth outlining the plans for future Hydro-electric undertakings and requesting approval to bring in 1000 migrant workers under the assisted passage scheme. There was an urgent need for labour in many occupations: nurses, domestics, teachers, builders, mining workers, lorry drivers were all in great demand. The results of the study of absorptive capacity by occupation offer insight into Tasmania's perception of its labour need at this time. The study done in 1946, showed that 805 men were needed, all in country areas, in mining, building and construction industries, and 75 women, 50 of whom were required as domestics in towns and 25 as nurses in town and country areas. In September, 1946, a state Immigration Advisory Committee was established, its function to monitor the state's employment needs and to "guard against the wrong type of

14 PD1, 55/3/46.
15 Ibid.
migrants reaching the state”. Members of that committee were: the
State immigration officer with the Department of Social Services,
Mr. B. Douglas; the Industrial Registrar, Mr. E. J. Ogilvie; Deputy
Director of Commonwealth Employment Service, Mr. B. Plummer; an
officer of Post War Reconstruction department, and Commonwealth
Immigration Officer, Mr. T. Mellor.16

Here prevailed concern for obtaining the "right sort" of migrant, and
a clue as to the definition of that individual: one who would work
in remote areas of the state at jobs which were not wanted by
Tasmanians. That the person would be other than white was never
considered. With the White Australia policy firmly entrenched and
linked to national identity, the belief was strong that Australia
needed to remain one people, with common ideals and culture
-British. When it became obvious that Britain could not supply
Australia with sufficient numbers of migrants, Calwell looked first
to the countries of Northern Europe and then to the Displaced
Persons camps of Germany as alternative sources, and started on
his campaign to convince the Australian public to accept and
welcome more non-British immigrants. This was accomplished by
reminding Australians of the threat of the Asian menace to the
north, and that it would be better to have a 100% white population
of 20 to 30 million than a 98% British population of 7 million.17 His
strategy was to arouse interest in and sympathy for the Displaced
Persons and to emphasise their contribution to the economy,
culture and population growth. "Migrants MAKE jobs, not take
them" was the message. Tasmanian insularity, engendered by its
isolation and historically low proportion of non-British population,
brought about uncertainty and fears at the prospect of foreign
immigration. These were largely allayed by the assurance that the
new settlers would be working at remote highland Hydro Electric
Commission camps, in jobs Australians did not want, and to a
considerable extent would be invisible.

In 1946 a survey of attitudes to immigration within the union
movement was conducted in Tasmania by Mr. Walter Hood of the
Immigration Department, a man with a union background himself.
Hood’s Tasmanian survey was part of a national study which he had
been asked to conduct, and its findings present a valuable
Tasmanian perspective on the matter. In several respects, opinions

16 Tasmanian Tourist and Immigration Department Annual Report, 1946-47,
in Journals and Printed Papers of the Parliament of Tasmania,
Vol.CXXXVII, Paper # 36.
17 Kunz, “The Genesis of the Post-War Immigration Programme and the
Evolution of the Tied-Labour Scheme”, Ethnic Studies, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1977,
p.31.
in Tasmania were quite different from those voiced elsewhere in Australia. While in the other states Hood found general support for the government’s proposed large scale immigration, in Tasmania he encountered doubts and resistance to the idea. Hood observed an "intense fear of migrants" among the union leaders he interviewed, attributable, in Hood’s view, as much to Tasmania’s inherent conservatism as to the high rate of unemployment of the time and traditional union opposition to immigration. Hood noted a level of comfort and security enjoyed in Tasmania which, it was feared, immigration might jeopardize. It was significant that a number of the union officials were English migrants themselves, who had come to Australia in the inter-war years and had suffered through either the Depression or anti-British prejudice, or both. It was only in Tasmania that anyone challenged the idea that immigration to Australia could be of benefit to an Englishman. This view was espoused by Ernest West, Member of Tasmanian Parliament, President of the Australian Workers Union, and Secretary of the Australian Labour Party, who at the age of 15 had migrated to Tasmania from England. He and others maintained that although in some ways life was now more comfortable in Tasmania, industrial conditions were not significantly better than in England. They questioned whether British migrants would be better off in Tasmania, and insisted that publicity needed to be honest and accurate, unlike the promotional material they had seen and believed in England.

Hood made two visits to Tasmania, one in January, 1946, and again in August. The second trip was for the purpose of ascertaining the union position in regard to future large scale recruitment of overseas labour for the Hydro Electric Commission. This investigation appears to have been a response to discussions between the Australian and British governments about the possible emigration of a large group of Polish ex-servicemen from Britain to Tasmania.¹⁸

Hood concluded from his enquiries in Tasmania that under the right conditions, "infiltration of good types" of migrants would be possible. A very low key approach was suggested. Union officials, who accepted that immigration was necessary for the Hydro Electric schemes to progress, recommended that migrants should come in small groups with reasonable intervals of time between arrivals. Some suggested that little or no publicity should be given to the immigration scheme. Hood agreed that a different approach to

¹⁸ Further details of the immigration of the Polish ex-servicemen to Tasmania is discussed in Chapter Two of this paper.
publicity about immigration was required in Tasmania, and warned that community antagonism could easily be aroused.\textsuperscript{19} The execution of postwar immigration practices in Tasmania and the nature and degree of publicity surrounding it illustrate that Hood's findings were respected, and his recommendations, to a considerable extent, observed.

\textsuperscript{19} W. Hood, Report from Tasmania on survey of trade union attitudes to immigration, 1946, AA CP 815/1 24/021/02.
CHAPTER II

EVOLUTION OF THE IMMIGRATION PROGRAM IN TASMANIA, 1945-55

The foremost aim of Tasmania's postwar immigration program was to increase its population so as significantly to augment the labour force which was required for postwar reconstruction and industrial expansion. In this regard the program was successful. In 1947, before the immigration wave began, the population of Tasmania was 257,078; by 1954 it was 308,752, an increase of 51,674 or 20%. In the same period, the population of Australia as a whole increased by 18.6%. At this time Tasmania experienced a 2.65% average annual population increase, well in excess of Calwell's designated 2%, and above the rate of 2.5% achieved nationally. Immigration accounted for 35.6% of Tasmania's population increase. In line with the objective of building up work force numbers, 43% of the migrants were men between 20 and 55 years of age. Most importantly, the conditions of the agreements under which many came to Australia dictated that migrants be placed in employment as directed by the Department of Labour and National Service in areas of greatest labour shortage. In Tasmania, this was most often in remote Hydro Electric Commission camps.

Tasmanian migrants of this period came from many parts of the world and found themselves working in a melange of assignments throughout the state. The greatest demand for labour was from the Hydro Electric Commission which was re-commencing large scale development of power stations after some curtailment during the war owing to lack of labour and materials. Migrant labour was sought also by a range of other employers, all stymied by the labour shortage. From government departments to private industry, small business and farmers, immigration was to provide the essential, and, at least since convict days, the missing, ingredient for economic growth: an ample, and moveable work force. In agreement with federal policy, Tasmania's preferred source of immigrants was the United Kingdom, and after some press coverage in England regarding the call for labour from the

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20 These figures are not fully inclusive of Aboriginals owing to the fact that prior to 1967, the Commonwealth census was 'Exclusive of full-blood Aboriginals'.
Hydro Electric Commission, Tasmania's Agent General in London, Sir Claude James, was soon receiving enquiries from prospective migrants. Many British people migrated under assisted passage programs; others were entirely unsupported, paying their own travel and settlement expenses. When it became obvious that the United Kingdom could not provide sufficient numbers of migrants, Tasmania looked to other sources. Tasmania, in fact, hosted the first large non-British congregate immigration in Australia, that of a group of Polish ex-service personnel. It appears that this scheme was viewed as a "trial run" with non-British immigration, and provided some guidelines for the scheme for Displaced Persons and the many other Europeans who came to Australia through the 1950's. This chapter shall follow the evolution of the immigration program in the first decade of the postwar period, with the initial ardent, almost desperate, drive for British and then European migrants, the frustrating delays and difficulties in implementing the scheme, and the impact of the changes in the Tasmanian economy, particularly the recession in 1952. The policy, procedures and conditions under which migrants came to Tasmania will be examined. This will be done by focusing on five categories of Tasmanian migrants: British assisted passage, Displaced Persons, migrants specially recruited by the Hydro Electric Commission, non-refugee Europeans, and child migrants. The majority of migrants to Tasmania in this period fell into these categories.

**BRITISH ASSISTED PASSAGE SCHEMES**

Notwithstanding Calwell's vision of bringing workers of all nationalities to Australia, British migration continued to be accorded the highest priority and would remain the cornerstone of Australia's immigration program. Early postwar negotiation between Australia and the United Kingdom established free and assisted passage agreements which would underlie British migration to Australia for the next 30 years. In March, 1946, such an agreement was signed for British ex-service personnel and their dependants and selected civilians. Although, as a partner in the agreements, the British government insisted that Australia should select from a cross section of the population and not strip Britain of its professionals and skilled labour, the free and assisted passage schemes were, in fact, used to bring to Australia the type and numbers of workers it needed. The intake of migrants reflected the economic conditions in both Australia and the United Kingdom. Between 1947 and 1952 Australia was experiencing a time of economic expansion and a severe shortage of labour. In Britain, rationing was still prevalent and consumer goods were scarce, real wages were inferior to those in Australia, and thus motivation for
emigration was high. The demand for labour in Australia declined with the onset of brief economic recession in 1952 and concomitantly the numbers of assisted British migrants decreased. The Australian economy improved in 1954, but by this time conditions in the United Kingdom were improving and interest in emigration abating.

Under the immigration agreement, free passage to Australia was provided for British ex-service personnel whose usual place of residence was the British Isles, and their dependants. Assisted passage was granted for approved migrants and their dependants whose normal place of residence was the United Kingdom and who were not eligible for free passage. Persons 19 years of age and older were required to contribute 10 Pounds toward the cost of their fare; 14 to 18 year olds, 5 Pounds; children under 14 received free passage. Prospective migrants were required to be deemed by Commonwealth authorities to be medically fit and suitable for settlement in Australia. Assisted passage carried the condition that the migrants remain in Australia for two years or pay the Australian government the cost of passage. Costs were born equally by the United Kingdom and Australian governments with the exception of fares for British ex-service personnel which were paid entirely by the British government as a Rehabilitation benefit. Until 1972 when Britain terminated the assisted passage agreement with Australia, Britain progressively reduced its contribution to the scheme. From an initial equal share arrangement, in 1950 Britain fixed its maximum contribution to a 500,000 Pound grant, and in 1954, to a 150,000 Pound grant. Firm in its commitment to British as preferred migrants, Australia sustained the increasingly greater balance of the cost of this immigration program.23

On arrival in Australia, all British migrants were eligible for the social service benefits of child endowment, maternity allowance, unemployment and sickness benefits. In addition, ex-British service personnel were entitled to a number of re-establishment benefits to assist them in entering a satisfactory occupation, but were not entitled to preference in employment as were Australian returned soldiers.24

The administrative structure established to manage the immigration program from London was contained within the branch of the Commonwealth Immigration Department at Australia


24 A. Calwell, Ibid., p.20.
House. Its staff of 12 included migration officers to process applications and interview applicants, an officer to advise on Australian industrial and employment prospects, and a senior medical officer to oversee adherence to Australia's medical standards. The Chief Migration Officer was Englishman Noel Lamidey, who had migrated to Tasmania in 1919, and had worked with the Tasmanian Public Service, for a period with the Closer Settlement Scheme until he joined the Commonwealth Public Service in 1926. The States' Agents General in London also had a role in the immigration process. They were members of the London-based Immigration Advisory Committee which was established in July, 1946 to consider matters related to British immigration to Australia, and was chaired by the Australian High Commissioner. The Agents General carried no decision-making function in regard to immigration. Their role was concerned primarily with answering enquiries from Britain about immigration to their particular states and assisting with the processing of applications. They also advised their Premiers of circumstances and events in Britain and at Australia House related to immigration, and often suggested appropriate courses of action.

For the first three years of the program there were two avenues through which a prospective migrant could be considered for the assisted passage plan: Personal Nomination, by an Australian resident who could guarantee accommodation for the migrant, and Group Nomination, whereby an Australian employer requested the particular type and number of workers needed. Personal and Group nominations were lodged with the State immigration authorities. In the cases of personal nominations, upon receipt of a nomination, the bona fides of the nominators would be checked, after which the state immigration department forwarded its recommendation to Commonwealth immigration officials in Australia for approval. Details of approved nominations were then sent to Commonwealth Immigration in London, and arrangements made for the nominee to be interviewed and to undergo a medical examination. If successful in those aspects, the nominee would then be accepted for immigration under the scheme, and arrangements made for travel to Australia. Group nominations followed a similar process of approval from the state and then Commonwealth immigration authorities. Employers' requests for labour were filled in London from the pool of people registered at Australia House as interested in emigrating to Australia. Because of the severe housing shortage in Australia at this time, it was a critical component of both Personal and Group Nominations that the

nominators guarantee accommodation for the migrants. This proved to be a serious obstacle to attracting nominators for the many thousands of Britons wanting to emigrate. In order to remedy this, early in 1950 the Commonwealth government announced the establishment of its own nomination scheme which would function in addition to the state handled nominations, and would provide accommodation to British migrants through Commonwealth operated hostels.

The course of these assisted passage schemes did not run altogether smoothly. Although signed in 1946, the agreement could not be enacted until 31 March, 1947, owing to the dearth of available shipping after the war. Throughout 1947 and most of 1948 the shipping situation remained difficult, and migrant arrivals were far fewer than anticipated. Although it was originally estimated that some 35,000 British migrants would be brought to Australia in the first year of the program, in fact, only 6000 berths were available for 1947. As early as November, 1945, Sir Claude James, was receiving enquiries about immigration to Tasmania, and by August, 1946, reported having over 5000 applications. Based on a decision of the Immigration Conference in Canberra in January, 1947, this first allotment of 6000 berths was divided equally among the states, with 900 each, and 600 to the Australian Capital Territory. Of Tasmania's 900, there were group nomination for 20 nurses, 50 domestics, and 764 workers for the Hydro Electric Commission, in addition to 66 personal nominations. Tasmania was very pleased with this and future allocations of shipping berths; however, they were not fulfilled. By the end of 1947, only 3265 British migrants had sailed for Australia, a scant 342 of them to Tasmania. The total number of nominations approved in Hobart for this period was 1460, of which 1067 had been given top priority rating. This was an issue of considerable concern to Tasmania's Agent General who wrote repeatedly to Premier Cosgrove urging him to take the matter up with the Prime Minister and insist that Tasmania receive greater numbers of British migrants. Cosgrove, however, at this time did not pursue the matter beyond his own immigration Minister, Mr. Howroyd, who advised that Tasmania's situation was actually quite favourable because, in addition to the British migrants, 492 Poles had arrived in 1947. Cosgrove further made the point in his reply to the Agent General that Tasmania could not have accommodated more migrants in any case. While the shipping situation eased by late 1948, the housing dilemma did

26 AOT, PD 1 55/3/46.
27 AOT, PCS 1 55/11/48.
AOT, PCS 1 55/1/47.
Authorities were very worried about the great decline in nominations, which was attributed to the virtual impossibility of finding accommodation. Consideration was given by the Tasmanian government to building migrant hostels, but ultimately was not pursued because of the feared public backlash if scarce building material were used for migrants, and because of the continued uncertainty about numbers actually arriving. The Mowbray hostel was opened in Launceston in 1952 for migrants coming under the Commonwealth Nomination scheme, but was taken over for state housing in 1953, the Commonwealth Nomination scheme having been suspended late in 1952 because of the recession.

HYDRO ELECTRIC COMMISSION RECRUITMENT

From the time the Assisted Passage Scheme was announced in 1946, negotiations were under way regarding recruitment for the huge unmet labour needs of Tasmania's Hydro Electric Commission. Executives of the Commission met with Tasmanian government officials to convey details of their exact requirements. On the basis of this, Premier Cosgrove presented a paper in July, 1946, to Commonwealth Immigration Minister Calwell, entitled "Hydro Electric Undertakings (Tas)" outlining the planned hydro electric development, the urgency of the need for more labour, and requesting 1000 migrants for this purpose. The Commission would guarantee employment for five years, with a possible additional five years, if the migrants agreed to remain in continuous employment with the Commission for a minimum of two years. These migrants were under no contractual obligation; it was merely a "gentlemen's agreement" with the Commission. As soon as the scheme commenced accepting nominations (December, 1946), a group nomination was submitted for 764 single men for the Commission. This nomination was given first priority rating by the Commonwealth, and by March, 1947, selection had begun in London. In late April, 1947, Hydro Electric Commission representative Harold McCullough arrived in London to participate in the selection of migrants for the Commission. It had been a request of the Commission that it have some involvement in the selection process, a request approved by Calwell on the understanding that the role of the Commission's representative would be "to interview applicants and make preliminary selection", with final approval being the
decision of Commonwealth immigration officials. McCullough's
time in England - he was there for a year - was fraught with
frustration, chiefly related to what he perceived as the lack of co-
operation on the part of immigration authorities there. When plans
of his posting in London were announced, British authorities
objected, saying that the Commission's recruiting contravened the
immigration agreement and that they would deal only with
Australian government officials. In his correspondence back to the
Commission, McCullough related the difficulties he encountered in
trying to establish a role for himself in the immigration selection
process. Not only was he denied permission to participate in
selection interviews for the Commission's group nomination, he
was not privy to details about successful applicants, and thus it
was virtually impossible for him to contact the selected migrants
before they sailed from England. Chief Commissioner of the Hydro
Electric Commission, Mr. (now Sir) Allan Knight appealed to
Premier Cosgrove to approach the Commonwealth and negotiate a
more satisfactory arrangement for Mr. McCullough. Knight argued
that the Commission was seriously disadvantaged by the current
situation. Firstly, many men being selected for the Commission
were unsuitable for the type of work demanded, and secondly, they
were arriving in Tasmania with no knowledge of the conditions
under which they would be working, i.e. at remote bush camps in
harsh climatic conditions. The consequence of this was that many
of the migrants were dissatisfied and left the employ of the
Commission. As examples, Knight cites a man selected as a concrete
laborer who had been an entertainer and was physically incapable
of heavy labor, and a general laborer who had been working as
an assistant in a ladies gown shop. Neither did he find acceptable a
carpenter who had the use of only 1/2 a thumb and a little finger.

Dissatisfaction with selection procedure and a very low retention
rate remained the bane of the Hydro Electric Commission's
experience with group nominations for British migrants. In 1950
and again in 1951 the Commission received permission to send a
representative to England to recruit labor, but the results were no
more acceptable than in the past. By early 1952, the Hydro Electric
Commission cancelled its outstanding group nominations with the
Immigration Department. Of the 1176 British migrants who had
been brought out to employment with the Commission in the
previous five years, only 95 remained employed as of June, 1952.
Fewer than 40% had stayed for more than 6 months. Many never

32 AOT, PD 1 55/30/46.
33 AOT, PCS 1 55/1/47.
34 HEC Archives, AA 57-20-9-1.
even commenced work, declaring that they had signed on for employment with the Commission merely as a means of getting to Australia.35

The next, and first non-British, group to come to the Hydro Electric Commission was comprised of 796 Polish ex-service personnel who arrived in Tasmania in three stages between October, 1947 and August, 1948. After the War some 40,000 refugee Polish troops remained in Britain and were formed into the Polish Resettlement corps by the British army. They included members of the Polish Carpathian Brigade who fought beside Australian forces at Tobruk, pilots from the Battle of Britain, and members of General Anders' army which had been formed on behalf of the Polish government in exile in London. The British government assisted with re-establishment support. The migration of these men to Tasmania was part of the resettlement plan.

In May, 1946, Tasmania was asked if it would consider accepting Polish migrants, as Britain was finding it difficult to provide housing for these Poles. At that time Premier Cosgrove's reply was one of preliminary approval, stipulating that he would prefer that they be placed in rural areas, and that the formation of separate communities would not be acceptable.36 In March, 1947, Cosgrove formally conveyed to the Prime Minister that Tasmania would accept some Poles, provided the number did not exceed 25% of the number of British migrants.37 Tasmania was assured that this would in no way effect its allocation of British migrants, as the plan for the movement of Polish ex-service personnel was outside the normal immigration program.38 The immigration of this group of Poles was a special arrangement devised by the British government and Calwell, at Britain's behest. At this time, the Australian Rats of Tobruk Association had also approached Calwell about the matter of settlement in Australia for their Polish counterparts, but it appears that the major impetus for the special arrangement was the leverage exercised by the British government. The plan, which was publicly announced in June, 1947, was for Polish members of the Rats of Tobruk to come to Tasmania as employees of the Hydro Electric Commission. Only men under 45 years of age, single, or married men willing to come initially without their wives, would be accepted. They would all be employed as general labourers at

36 AOT, PD 1 55/28/46.
37 AOT, PCS 1 55/13/47.
38 AOT, PCS 1 55/1/47.
award wages, and as ex-service personnel would be eligible for benefits under the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme. They were bound to remain with the Commission for two years and liable to deportation if they did not.39

The first group of 280 Poles left England on 29 August, 1947, on the "Asturias" and arrived at Fremantle on 22 September. They were met there by Mr. J. R. Coates of the Commission and then transported to Tasmania by the army. Accompanying Mr. Coates was Polish interpreter Mr. John Birnan, who had translated introductory information from the Commission for the Poles. A second group of 168 landed at Burnie on 10 January, 1948, via the "Nairana". On arrival in Tasmania the Poles were warmly greeted by government officials, Hydro Electric Commission representatives and returned servicemen's groups. The close ties forged between Poles and Australians during the War stood these migrants in good stead.

The Commission's representative Harold McCullough, in London to recruit British migrants, found himself instead dealing with Polish soldiers and again trying to liaise with Australia House, with equally little cooperation. Arrangements for the Polish scheme were made at Ministerial level, not through the Immigration Department and as such, Australian immigration officials had limited involvement. Upon enquiring, McCullough was told by Noel Lamidey, Senior Immigration Officer in London, that selection would be done entirely by the British War Office. When McCullough contacted the War Office, however, he was told that the plans had been changed and that Australia House would be doing the selecting. Later McCullough was informed through Tasmania's Agent General that Australian Immigration was doing the selection, and that McCullough could participate in the interviews. That, however, did not ensure that the results of the selection were any more satisfactory to the Commission than that with the British migrants. The process was rushed and confused. McCullough and Mr. Laurence of Australia House saw 440 men, and chose 280, most of whom had very little, if any, English, and only a small number had any knowledge of carpentry. This group was meant to be the building crew for the Commission's new construction villages. In October, 1947, when plans were being made for the second group of Poles, the Commission attempted to have the selection criteria altered so that former service at Tobruk was no longer requisite. That limitation, argued the Secretary of the Commission when he wrote to Premier Cosgrove, was preventing the Commission from

39 AOT, AA 520/57.
getting the men most suitable for their work. Cosgrove raised the matter with Calwell who insisted that this special agreement with the British was for members of the Rats of Tobruk only. Calwell suggested that further requirements for labour could be filled with other Poles through the normal immigration scheme. That is what happened with the third group of Poles. In December, 1947, the Commission requested 300 of the 900 Poles who were being brought to Australia in August, 1948. They arrived in Hobart via the "Strathnaver" on 5 August, spent a few weeks at Brighton military camp and then proceeded on to the Hydro Electric Commission works. Their conditions of employment were the same as those of the first two groups, but they were not eligible for Repatriation benefits.

It was not only the restriction to the Rats of Tobruk which hindered the Commission from getting the most suitable men. The Commission's condition that all men must work at general unskilled labour, regardless of their trade or qualification proved to be a problem in attracting applicants. In trying to recruit the second group of Poles, when 350 men were called for, only 170 registered interest. McCullough and Laurence, again doing the interviewing, selected 112, 50 of whom, according to McCullough, were most unsuitable, being below the standard of those rejected from the earlier group. McCullough reported that skilled men were refusing employment with the Commission because they could not work at their trade, and urged that the policy be reconsidered. He went on to say that Mr. Laurence, the Immigration Department's industrial expert, was advising qualified men not to go with the Commission, but to wait for a later immigration scheme in which they could get better jobs. The Commission, however, did not change its policy.

The August, 1948, arrivals brought the total number of Polish ex-service personnel with the Hydro Electric Commission to 797. In November of that year the Immigration Department announced a free passage scheme for the wives and children and British born fiancées of these Poles.

Early in 1950 the Hydro Electric Commission, ready to begin new works, was again seriously short of labour, and sought permission from Commonwealth Immigration to recruit overseas. About 100

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40 AOT, PCS 1 55/1/47.
41 AOT, AA 520/57.
42 Ibid.
43 AOT, AA 520/58.
of the Poles had left in 1949 when their contracts expired, the British migration program was proving most unsatisfactory, and the Commission was unable to get sufficient numbers of Displaced Persons from the reception camps on the mainland. Thus the Commission turned to recruiting in continental Europe. In 1951 and 1952 some 60 Italians and 800 Germans were brought to Tasmania under a two year contract to work for the Hydro Electric Commission. In July, 1950, the Immigration Department had introduced a Special Projects procedure which allowed companies engaged in special developmental projects to bring in groups of workers. Staff and Industrial Officer Charles Best spent from September, 1950, until June, 1951, in England and Europe recruiting skilled tradesmen. His brief was to obtain 100 married tradesmen from England (the hope being that married men would prove more reliable workers that the single ones had), and 150 single men from Germany or northern Italy, where it was believed were substantial numbers of potential migrants. Britons were still preferred as a matter of policy because, among other reasons, the cost of passage would be covered by the government under the immigration agreement. No similar arrangements had yet been made with the German or Italian governments.

The Commission particularly needed men for tunnelling and rock quarry work, and knew that they could be found in northern Italy. In February, 1950, Commonwealth immigration authorities agreed to the plan to employ Italian workers provided that they met the usual immigration criteria, were employed according to award, their accommodation was not to the detriment of locals, and they were determined not to be subversives. The Italians would be admitted for a period of two years during which they would be under contract with the Commission, and liable to be deported if they broke their contracts. With satisfactory conduct, on the expiration of their two years, they would be approved for permanent admission to Australia. Before leaving for Europe, Best met in Canberra with the Secretary of the Immigration Department, T.H.E. Heyes, and received a letter of introduction to the Department's representatives in Italy and Germany, who were attached to the Australian military missions there. In November, Best met with Australia's Chief Migration Officer in Italy, Colonel Boyle, and Italian officials to negotiate terms of an agreement. When this was completed, the men were selected and arrived in Tasmania in February, 1951. Under this agreement, the Commission

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45 HEC Archives, AP 57-20-9-1.
46 Ibid.
advanced the fares to Australia, the men signing an authorisation for the deduction of the cost of the fares from their wages in 52 fortnightly instalments.\textsuperscript{47}

While on the Continent, Best also placed advertisements for workers in the Berlin newspapers, and approached the Australian immigration authorities there. His initial contacts with Immigration were difficult. As McCullough in London earlier, Best reported lack of co-operation from immigration officials in Berlin, describing them, in fact, as "dead from the neck up".\textsuperscript{48} Interestingly, future negotiations regarding the migration of Germans to the Hydro Electric Commission took place between Best and the International Refugee Organisation (IRO), who agreed to act as the Commission's agent in the documentation and transport of these Germans.\textsuperscript{49}

In February, 1951, Best was requested by Head Office to immediately secure 500 labourers. After obtaining permission from German authorities to recruit in Bonn and Berlin, Best finalised arrangements with the IRO. For its services, the IRO was paid a per capita rate by the Hydro Electric Commission through Tasmania's Agent General. Preselection began in Berlin, by the German Labour Office for labourers, and by Best for tradesmen. This was followed by an interview and medical examination by Australian immigration authorities, who made the final decision on selection. A security screening, which according to Best was very thorough and in fact considerably delayed the process, was conducted by Berlin Central Records Office. The IRO had the right to veto any application. Upon being advised by Best of their successful applications, the men were required to report to sign their contracts (in German) with the Commission.\textsuperscript{50} The conditions of the contract were similar to those for the Italians: the employee agreed to work for the Commission for two years and authorised the Commission to deduct repayment for their fares in fortnightly instalments from their wages. In return the Commission agreed to employ the men under award conditions, and to provide accommodation.\textsuperscript{51} In the meantime, the Commission in Hobart was communicating with the Secretary of the Immigration Department in Canberra regarding the progress of the German project, and received permission in March, 1951 to bring in 600 single German men. They arrived in Tasmania between April and July, the first several groups coming by air, the later ones by ship.

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{49} AOT, AA 520/60.
\textsuperscript{50} AOT, AA 520/61.
\textsuperscript{51} AOT, AA 521. See Appendix for copies of contracts.
dispute arose concerning the conditions under which the men travelled on the first passage by ship - the SS Skaubryn which arrived in June - and the fare which they were charged. Letters of complaint were written to the Commission by many of the men who had arrived on that ship, stating that although they had to repay the Commission an amount equivalent to tourist class fares, they, in fact, were transported in the same manner as the Displaced Persons, who received free passage. The ship, they argued, was a cargo steamer being used to transport Displaced Persons, not a passenger ship; their sleeping quarters were in compartments with from 50 to 250 people. Before they left Germany, and as a condition of passage, they had had to sign declarations agreeing to work on board the ship. They were obliged to work six hours a day, seven days per week, carrying out many essential duties. They requested, therefore, that as they did not receive tourist class passage, there be a reduction in the amount they owed to the Commission for fares. The Commission explained that the amount charged to the men for their passage was not based any particular fare, but rather the amount paid by the Commission to the IRO to cover the IRO's administrative costs as well as fares. The Commission did support the men's complaints, however, and pursued the matter with the IRO office in Sydney, requesting a rebate on their behalf. Initially, the IRO rejected the validity of the complaints and refused to give any rebate. That decision was soon overturned by IRO Headquarters in Geneva, apologising for the "misunderstanding" whereby migrants were obliged to work on the crossing, and offering a total rebate of 195 Pounds, calculated according to the number of hours worked. The Hydro Electric Commission distributed this money to the men involved.52

In July, 1951, the Commission estimated that it would require an additional 1200 labourers in the next 12 months. It sought, and received, permission from the Immigration Department to recruit a further 1000 men from Germany. Mr. J.R. Coates was the Commission representative in Europe this time, there from September, 1951 to March, 1952. An additional 200 German men were employed by the Commission through this recruiting drive. By this time many others were seeking large numbers of labourers from Germany, among them the Commonwealth, Victorian and South Australian Railways as well as Canadian organisations. Recruitment was somewhat more difficult for Coates. All selection was now handled by the German government

52AOT, AA 520/60.
employment office, and the Hydro Electric Commission had to pay for all the recruiting expenses, including a percentage of the time of the government staff. Despite the austere post-war conditions and high unemployment rate in Germany, the Commission was not attracting the number of applicants that it expected. This was no doubt attributable to some degree to adverse publicity in the German press and trade union journals about the worsening economic situation in Australia, and stories of the harsh, "uncivilised" conditions of Australian life. One such article, written by two Berlin emigrants in Australia, described their distressing transition from their home city to "beyond the moon" in the Tasmanian bush, and cautioned people against coming to a place where they would be deprived of so many essential aspects of culture and civilisation.53

The recruiting of migrant labour overseas by the Hydro Electric Commission was brought to a halt in 1952, when the Commission encountered financial difficulties. In January of that year, the state government informed the Commission that it would receive no further loans funds for the 1951-1952 financial year; moreover its allocation from the Loans Council for the next year was as yet undetermined. The Commission decided it would have to modify its construction program; Coates was instructed to cease further recruiting and return to Australia as soon as the current processing was completed. He was asked to try to defer the departure of as many men as possible, to fully advise the German authorities and inform them that the Commission hoped to resume the full recruitment program at a later date. Coates cautioned against cancelling already approved applications, as the German authorities' reaction to the curtailment of recruiting was not sympathetic and indicated that the Commission might lose the preference in selection which it had been granted. At this time negotiations were taking place between the Australian and West German governments to establish an immigration agreement in relation to large scale immigration to Australia. Canberra would not approve the cancellations of any of the Commission's German recruits, for fear of jeopardising the negotiations.54

As part of that Australia-West Germany immigration agreement, a special scheme was introduced in January, 1953, in which free passage was made available to the wives and children of these Special Project Workers. The irony of this offer was pointed out by one German worker who noted that two years prior, when

53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
in Germany, the Commission would only hire single men; now this assistance was available only to those with wives and children. The Commission, too, saw the anomaly, and requested the Immigration Department to consider extending the scheme to include fiancées. From April, 1953, German fiancées resident in Germany were included in the scheme.55

The immigration of these German and Italian Special Project Workers in 1951 and 1952 marked the end of the Hydro Electric Commission's efforts at large scale recruitment of labour directly from overseas. The Commission continued to prefer to do its own selection, but henceforth drew on the pool of Displaced Persons and other migrants by sending its recruitment officers to migrant hostels and other locations on the mainland. Individual migrant workers - those who were not bound by contract with the Commonwealth - were also hired locally according to usual employment procedures.

DISPLACED PERSONS

In a four year period from November, 1947 to December, 1951, 170,695 Eastern European refugees entered Australia under a program sponsored by the International Refugee Organisation (IRO). Of these, approximately 3800 came to Tasmania. It was this program, known in Australia as the Displaced Persons Scheme, which first brought large numbers of non-British migrants to Australia, and its relatively trouble free implementation which signalled public acceptance and thus set the direction for future non-British immigration to Australia.

Australia was a signatory to the constitution of the IRO, an international agency established in 1947 to assist with the resettlement of the estimated 1.6 million refugees in some 920 camps in Germany, Austria and France. Immediately after the War, in 1945 and 1946, Australia had granted entry on purely humanitarian grounds to a number of refugees with close relatives in Australia, but had since decided that it was necessary to develop new guidelines regarding the entry of refugees. When, at the January, 1947, Ministers Conference, the issue of alien immigration was discussed, it was agreed that British migrants would receive priority over refugees. To prevent shipping berths, so much at a premium, from being appropriated to refugees, aliens were banned from travelling on British ships from Europe to Australia; alien visas were stamped "not valid for transit via the United Kingdom". 55

55 Ibid.
The resultant policy declared that Australia would thereafter be more selective when issuing entry permits to aliens. Decisions would no longer be made on a humanitarian basis, but rather from the perspective of the person's "ability to contribute to Australia's economic welfare".57

When it became clear that the population increase target could not be reached by means of British immigration or that of the racially acceptable Northern Europeans, Calwell began to consider the European refugees as the next best alternative. On a visit to Europe in June, 1947, Calwell visited one of the Displaced Persons camps, and was favourably impressed with the "high standard" of potential migrants there. Another attraction of the IRO scheme was that transport was arranged and financed by the IRO, who had chartered ships at its disposal. The only cost to the Australian government would be an ex-gratia payment of 10 Pounds per person to compensate for the extra distance to Australia. On 21 July, 1947, Calwell signed an agreement with the IRO for Australia to take 4,000 Displaced Persons during the remainder of 1947, and 12,000 per year thereafter. The actual arrivals for 1947 and 1948 were considerably below those estimates, but during 1949 and 1950, the peak years of the program, a total of 140,000 arrived.

The selection process was thorough, including several medical examinations and strict security screening. Although declaring that its procedure was without prejudice, Australia was able to ensure that its new pragmatic criteria and the principles of the White Australia policy were maintained. Selection was based on suitability for work and absorption into the Australian community, and thus young, healthy, blond, blue-eyed, single men and women from the Baltic nations were Australia's first choice.58 As the supply of Baltic persons diminished, the range of applicants acceptable to Australian selection teams was gradually broadened to include first Ukrainians and Slovenes, later Czechs, Yugoslavs and Poles, and eventually all Europeans.59 For many of the refugees, Australia was not their first choice. Those applying for resettlement through the IRO were able to register their preferred country. Most simply wanted to get out of the camps and away from Germany, and applied for emigration to many countries. Australia, however, was considered by many to be too far away as

56 AOT, PCS 1 55/13/47.
57 A. Calwell, op.cit., p.36.
58 M. Kovacs, "Immigration and Assimilation: An Outline Account of the IRO Immigration in Australia" (Melbourne, 1956) P.192.; Calwell, op.cit., p.54.
it was the hope of most refugees that they would be able to return to their homelands as soon as Soviet occupation was ended.

As a condition of their entry into Australia, all Displaced Persons, with the exception of mothers of young children, were required to agree to be directed in employment by the Commonwealth government for a period of two years. Their conditions of employment and rates of pay were according to award. They were obliged to notify the Commonwealth of any change of address or termination of employment. It appears that the precise duration of this period of indentured labour was either somewhat flexible, or just not very clearly communicated. Kunz's work cites an undertaking which states that the Displaced Person must remain in employment as directed "for a period of up to two years". In November, 1947, the Hydro Electric Commission's information was that the contract period was one year. Later publicity for the scheme mentioned 18 months as the term of employment. Accounts of some of the migrants who entered Australia under the Displaced Persons scheme report conflicting information being given: in Germany they were told that the contract was for one year, only to be told on arrival in Australia that their obligation was for two years. It was the intention that the Displaced Persons would be placed in employment in the country, at jobs for which no local people were available, and that accommodation he provided with their employment, so that they were in no way competing with Australians for housing or jobs. Upon arrival in Australia, the Displaced Persons were taken to what were euphemistically termed "reception centres"- disused army barracks, with only the most basic facilities for habitation. They waited there until placed with an employer. During this period they received unemployment benefits from which was deducted a fee for board and lodging. The first of these reception centres to be opened was Bonegilla near Albury in New South Wales. It received the first group of 843 Displaced Persons on 5 December, 1947. Early in 1948, the first of Tasmania's allocations began the 2 day journey by bus, train, and boat from Bonegilla to Tasmania.

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60 Ibid., p.40.
61 AOT, AA 520/58.
The Commonwealth Employment Service handled the deployment of the Displaced Persons into jobs throughout Australia. Any employer who wished to retain the services of Displaced Persons notified the CES of numbers and types required. During 1948, about 300 Displaced Persons came to Tasmania, the men working on the installation of telephone lines on the West Coast, in timber mills in the North East, and in zinc production at the Electrolytic Zinc Company in Hobart, and women being employed as hospital and hotel domestics. In anticipation of increasingly large intakes of Displaced Persons, early in 1949 Premier Cosgrove met with Mr. T. O. Mellor, the Commonwealth Immigration officer based in Hobart, and CES officers to discuss Tasmania's plans for the year. It was then estimated that Tasmania would be receiving 100 Displaced Persons per month until June, 1950; this projection increased dramatically by the end of 1949, when Cosgrove was told to expect 3500 arrivals in Tasmania. It was recognised that supplying housing would be difficult, and so the Commonwealth agreed to provide hostel accommodation for 800 people in Tasmania: 400 in Launceston, and 400 at Brighton Military Camp outside Hobart.65 Brighton Camp was used as a migrant hostel for the duration of the Displaced Persons scheme. There was strong community objection to the proposed hostel at Mowbray in Launceston, protesting that Calwell had promised there would be no Displaced Persons camps in the cities, and foreshadowing the development of a slum, and the lowering of property values.66 Perhaps because this debate was occurring at the time of the Federal election campaign and took on very political tones, the plans to provide accommodation for Displaced Persons in Launceston did not proceed.

Throughout 1949 and 1950, large numbers of Displaced Persons continued to arrive in Tasmania, working for the Forestry Commission on Tasman Peninsula, in food and textile factories, cutting timber at Mt. Lyell, planting pine trees at Scottsdale, working in the tin mines at Rosebery, in hospital laundries and newsprint mills, on the land with farmers and orchardists. Mid-1951 saw the end of the allocation of Displaced Persons to Tasmania. By that time some 3800 Displaced persons were resident in Tasmania. Most of those working were in occupations for which there were insufficient Australians or in positions "Australians were loathe to accept, owing to the locations and rates of pay". 67

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65 Mercury, 25/3/49; AOT, PCS 1 55/21/49.
67 Mercury, 8/10/49; Examiner, 7/10, 8/10, 11/10, 12/10, 13/10, 14/10, 21/10, 24/10, 25/10.
Apart from the opposition to the Mowbray Hostel, there was no critical objection to the Displaced Persons scheme in Tasmania. The labour of these "New Australians" was obviously fulfilling a need, they were located mostly in country areas, the men often in bush camps, and in no way posed a threat to Australians for jobs. In this way, public acceptance of non-British immigration was established. When the supply of Displaced Persons abated, the Australian government felt confident in looking again to European sources for additional migrants.

NON-REFUGEE EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION

In the late 1940's and 1950's, most southern and western European countries, troubled by slow post-war industrial recovery and overpopulation, were encouraging emigration. In an effort to attract some of these migrants before they went to other receiving countries in North or South America, Australia eased some of its regulations related to entry of Non-British settlers, and offered a number of assisted immigration plans. In 1946, a pre-war agreement with the Netherlands was renewed which allowed the entry of Dutch into Australia with a much lower than usual amount of landing money required.68 New policy announced in March, 1948, extended the Empire Ex-Servicemen's Scheme to provide assisted passage to Allied ex-service personnel from Holland, Belgium, France, Norway, and Denmark who had served in World War II. Over 80% of the 20,000 migrants who entered under this scheme were Dutch nationals, many from Indonesia. Also announced at this time were changes to the entry policy for ex-enemy aliens. Following the ratification of peace treaties with Italy, Roumania, Bulgaria and Hungry, it was agreed that citizens of those countries would be admitted if they fit into a priority employment and were within acceptable age limits. Their entry was conditional upon being engaged in the type of work for which they were nominated for a period of two years.69 The concept of indentured labour was hereby broadened to apply to non-refugee, unassisted migrants. Provisions were now available for Displaced Persons to nominate relatives in Europe for admission, contingent upon having been in Australia for at least three months, "having satisfactorily demonstrated his worth" and being able to support the relatives.

68 "landing money" was a feature of Australian immigration conditions which required that an immigrant be in possession of a certain amount of money in order to gain entry to Australia. For British migrants this was three Pounds; for non-British, the amount ranged from 50 to 200 Pounds.

69 Calwell, op.cit., p.53.
From the early 1950's, Australia entered into immigration agreements, many of which included Assisted Passage, with a number of European countries. Those with the most significant impact on Tasmanian population were the agreements with the Netherlands, Italy, and Germany. In Tasmania, Dutch communities were settled in the Kingston area south of Hobart, in Launceston and around Ulverstone in the North West. The development of these pockets of Dutch population evolved according to common occupation: the communities in Kingston and Launceston were engaged in the building trade, while those in the North West were in dairy and mixed farming. Growth in Dutch settlement in postwar Tasmania began in 1947, with young Dutch farmers being encouraged to come to the North West. According to an editorial in the Hobart Mercury they were the right type of migrant—"industrious, thrifty and democratic". Dutch farmers did come to the North West, and settled around the town of Penguin from 1949. Preparation in Holland for emigration was extensive, with prospective migrants being prepared for the transition and taught English. The chronic shortage of housing in Tasmania was well known. To mitigate this situation, some of the Dutch brought their own pre-fabricated houses to Penguin. Under the Netherlands-Australia Migration Agreement of February, 1951, assisted passage was offered to selected migrants, the cost of passage shared by the Dutch and Australian governments, with the Dutch government contributing the greater portion. Immigration was restricted to single males from 18 to 35 years old, single females from 18 to 30 years old, and families of which the head of household was under 45 years old. These migrants, too, were required to be employed under the direction of the Commonwealth for two years. This scheme began chain migration among the Dutch, with early assisted migrants sponsoring others who came unassisted. Unlike most of the Dutch migrants in mainland Australian states, who were of the Catholic religion, those settling in Tasmania were predominantly Protestant. After the Reformed Church was established, it became an important sponsoring body for new Dutch migrants. The Dutch were the largest group of non-British postwar migrants to come to Tasmania. Their population increased from a total of 13 in 1947 to 2345 in 1954.

March, 1951, saw the introduction of an assisted passage agreement with Italy, based on the Dutch model. It provided assisted passage to selected migrants, preferably young single men, and, like the

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70 Mercury 10/10/47.
71 Advocate, 5/3/51.
Dutch experience, generated large unassisted, sponsored migration. These migrants were subject to a two year work contract, also. The Italian and Australian governments each contributed 25% of the fares, with the migrant being responsible for the other 50%. There were organisations in Italy from which passage money could be borrowed and repaid in instalments from Australia. The selection process in Italy was rigorous, with stringent medical, security and police clearances having to be obtained. Acceptance within the Australian community of Italian immigration was still dubious; immigration authorities had to allay fears of the possible entry of Nazis, communists or Mafia members. And there was the infamous "75% Rule", by which the Australian selection team had to be assured that the applicant was of 75% white European background.

So ridiculously strict was the selection, Italian officials claimed, that by November, 1951, only 62 of the 8191 applications for assisted migration to Australia had been approved. Declining economic conditions in Australia, in 1952 experiencing the first unemployment since 1947, spilled disappointment for the migrants and a deterioration of relations between Australia and Italy. Australia did not provide the Italians with the two years guaranteed work they were expecting on arrival. They were kept at the reception centres for months awaiting placement in jobs. Demonstrations mounted by the migrants at various mainland reception centres throughout the latter half of 1952 - the most well known being that at Bonegilla in July - did little to improve their circumstances, and, indeed, worked to their detriment by damaging the level of their acceptance by the Australian public. Italian officials held that Australia had breached the immigration accord by not providing the migrants with employment as was assumed to have been promised through the agreement. The Australian-Italian Assisted Passage Agreement was soon suspended by Australia, and remained so until December, 1954. Of the nearly 100,000 Italians who migrated to Australia in the first decade after World War II, only 16.5% came under an assisted passage scheme.

Tasmania's Italian population increased from 64 in 1947 to 975 in 1954. Seventy one rural workers arrived in the 1951-52 financial year under the assisted passage scheme, most of the balance arriving in the following two years. In March, 1954, a new plan was opened offering assisted passage to relatives and fiancées in Italy nominated by someone who had arrived under the previous assisted passage scheme. Nominations were required to be

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74 J. Jupp (Ed), op.cit., p.614.
75 Ibid.
accompanied by a guarantee of accommodation if for a sister or brother, and a guarantee of employment if for a brother. In Tasmania that employment had to be in a location other than Hobart or Launceston. This plan was utilised by many Italian men working for the Hydro Electric Commission, as the Commission in most cases was willing to guarantee employment for their brothers.  

Amidst strong public protest, including a statement against German immigration by Labor leader Dr. Evatt at a Sydney rally, Australia signed an assisted passage agreement with West Germany in August, 1952. Public opinion was heeded, though, in that the number of German migrants was limited to 6000 per year, 3000 of whom could be assisted. The offer of assisted passage was extended to a larger proportion of migrants and eventually the vast majority (84%) of German migrants arriving in the 1950's came under assisted passage. The preference was still for young single males. From a population of 171 in 1947, the German population in Tasmania grew to 1795 by 1954.

CHILD MIGRATION

That aspect of Australia's postwar immigration program to bear the greatest resemblance to the 19th century transportation system may well be the immigration plan which, during its peak, brought 20,000 British children and youth to Australia in the 1940's and 1950's. Like the convicts, many of the children had no choice in their forced emigration, and on arrival were virtually bound to their assigned institution or farmer overseer.

In the original planning of Australia's postwar immigration policy, child migration was considered the preferred method. Children were the ideal migrants, it was claimed, because they created no immediate economic problems, they would not compete for jobs, but in fact create jobs. They had a long potential working life to contribute to the Australian economy. Furthermore, as they were young and adaptable, their assimilation into Australian life would be smooth and easy. It was on this basis that in December, 1944, Federal Cabinet approved a recommendation to bring in 17,000 children per year during the first three years after the War. Some members of the inter-departmental immigration planning

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76 AOT, AA 520/63.
If the committee questioned whether such numbers of children were available. It was assumed that there would be an abundant supply of war orphans, and no further enquiries into the matter were made at that time. The Army's representative on the committee dismissed the likelihood of any potential supply problems: children, apparently considered to be the spoils of victory, could simply be pirated from defeated nations, given English names, and brought to Australia. The immigration planning committee thought that Australia's previous child migration program, using voluntary organisations and involving British children only, was too limited. The post war situation in Europe was an opportunity not to be missed; the Commonwealth should have its own large scale program. By the middle of 1946, however, the flaws in this plan were revealing themselves. The Immigration Advisory Committee commissioned by Calwell to tour Europe and Britain in late 1945 and assess Australia's migration prospects there, revealed that the presumed mass of war orphans simply did not exist. Where there were children in need of care, European governments were keen to find solutions within their own countries. The Committee reported that orphans would be available from former enemy countries, but its recommendation was that a costly migration scheme for these children was not justified. Closer analysis also had exposed the huge potential cost of the plan. An extensive construction program would have been required to create the necessary accommodation for the children. The April, 1946, Immigration Minister's Conference decided that the Commonwealth would not proceed with its child migration scheme, but rather it would encourage, and provide some additional financial support to, voluntary organisations to continue their work in that field. In addition to a weekly per capita maintenance payment, the Commonwealth agreed to contribute to approved institutions a portion of the capital expenditure required to construct accommodation for the children. (PCS 1, 55/3/46)

In Tasmania, 248 child migrants, 80% of them males, arrived between 1948 and 1955, some 65 sponsored by the Big Brother Movement and placed with farmers, the remainder came under the auspices of approved institutions or private nominators. Some of the children coming to private nominators had been wartime evacuees in Australia, and were being sponsored by their former host families. The approved institutions receiving child migrants in

79 Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Committee Report (Canberra, 1946) p.27.
80 AOT, PCS 1, 55/3/46.
were the Clarendon Children's Home at Kingston, Boys Town at Glenorchy, St Joseph's Orphanage, and the Hagley Farm School. The scheme at Hagley Farm school was part of the state government's program to nominate child migrants through the Education Department and place the children at area schools. The development of this plan, which envisaged inclusion of area schools throughout the state, never fulfilled expectations. Hagley was the only school to receive children, and it took over seven years of negotiations - with the Tasmanian Education Department, Commonwealth Immigration Department, the Fairbridge Society in London through Tasmania's Agent General, Commonwealth authorities in London - for the plan to eventuate, from inception in November, 1946, to the opening of the cottage for the boys in 1954. Because the Tasmanian government was financing the plan, the Loans Funds crisis of 1952 played a part in the delay. By March, 1952, all necessary approvals had been received and tenders invited to begin construction of the accommodation, when all plans had to be deferred until mid 1953. By the time the scheme was fully operating, the supply of children was dwindling. Nominating institutions were having difficulties filling their vacancies. One curious response from a Fairbridge Society officer writing from London in March reported that "at this time of the year it is always difficult to secure children suitable for migration".

Child migrants in Tasmania were under the legal guardianship of the Social Services Department, so delegated from the Commonwealth Immigration Minister. It was responsibility of the Social Services Department to investigate and approve the proposed accommodation and employment, and to supervise the placements through regular inspection visits and interviews with the children. The State made a weekly per capita maintenance payment to approved institutions with child migrants.

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81 AOT, PCS 1 55/8/52.
82 AOT, PCS 1 55/4/54.
83 Social Services Department Annual Reports, 1948-56, Journals and Printed Papers of the Parliament of Tasmania, Passim.
CHAPTER III

ASPECTS OF LIFE AS A MIGRANT IN TASMANIA

The Tasmania to which the postwar migrants came was a community in transition...from war to peace, from war production to postwar reconstruction, from full employment and relative security to uncertainty and fear of a return to the well-remembered unemployment and Depression, a community which thought of itself as fundamentally stable, agricultural and Anglo-Australian, gearing up for hydro-industrialisation and large scale immigration. Tasmanians of that time had little contact with foreigners. With only 3% of its non-Aboriginal population being born overseas and a mere 1% being of non-British origin, Tasmania in 1947 had its smallest ever foreign population. It was a homogeneous, staid society. Calwell's "vision" meant to change that, and his publicity campaign was intently priming Australian communities to welcome and embrace large numbers of migrants of diverse nationalities. As evidenced in the press coverage, this campaign was successful in Tasmania. "Tasmania needs migrants now" was the message. In Hobart in January, 1946, Calwell was pressed to justify the slow start to immigration. The Mercury editorial of 8/1/46 strongly supported the immediate need for immigration and criticised government inaction. The arrival of groups of migrants occasioned much favourable publicity and in some cases, as with the arrival of the Poles, considerable fanfare. The new arrivals were portrayed as handsome, healthy, happy to be in Tasmania, and in awe of the comfortable life and abundance of food. Community organisations were formed to assist migrants in their new life, such as the New Settlers Christian Fellowship League for the British and later the Good Neighbour Council. Many existing church and community groups became involved in the after care of new migrants. This chapter shall consider some aspects of life as a migrant in Tasmania in the late 1940's and early 1950's, from pragmatic matters such as accommodation and employment to the application of the government's assimilationist policy in regard to the settlement of migrants. As Tasmania's episode in migration is so closely associated with the Hydro Electric Commission, particular attention will be paid to experiences of life at a Commission construction camp.

A notable exception to the prominent press coverage given to immigration in this period was the arrival of Displaced Persons in Tasmania. It appears that the advice of the Hood report to
introduce alien migrants to Tasmania quietly and in small groups was heeded. A review of the Hobart *Mercury* for the first six months of the operation of the Displaced Persons scheme reveals very little coverage of arrivals in Tasmania, but continued reports about the shortage of labour and the need for migrants. The arrival of the first Displaced Persons ship in Melbourne was given prominent coverage evoking both sympathy and admiration for the refugees. In contrast, the announcement of the first allocation of Displaced Persons to Tasmania was found in an inconspicuous article entitled "Most Baltic Migrants for Country" and simply stated as part of the brief report about the placement of migrants from Bonegilla that 24 would be coming to Tasmania, 12 to employment in newsprint production, and 12 to zinc production. Although Displaced Persons later arrived in Tasmania in much larger numbers, the press coverage continued to be slight. Reporting about immigration focused on British migrants in Tasmania and Displaced Persons in other parts of Australia, but not Tasmania. There was some objection to alien immigration, warnings of the "threat to the Empire", pleas to restrict immigration to "our own kind", and even more serious question raised about the entry of enemy aliens. In the *Mercury*, this sort of opinion was aired almost exclusively through letters to the editor, not in editorial comment or reporting. A 30 August, 1949, *Mercury* editorial entitled "Too Soon for German Migrants" did strongly oppose a plan, supported by Premier Cosgrove, to bring German farmers to Australia. When Germans recruited by the Hydro Electric Commission started arriving, however, the coverage in the press was extensive and predominantly favourable. Some concerns were raised about the adequacy of the security screening of the Germans, but this was countered by assurances from the Commission and Immigration Department officials. Conversely, the approach to the arrival of the Italian Hydro Electric Commission workers in 1951 was low key, apparently following the warning offered in Hood's report that, owing to extremely bad residual feelings from the use of Italian internees at the Butler's Gorge site during the war, Italian migration be dealt with very carefully. The advice to him from union leaders was that foreign migrants shouldn't even look Italian.

Within the Tasmanian community resistance to immigration, both British and foreign, centred frequently around the issue of housing. It was often argued that immigration should be curtailed until all

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84 See, for example, *Mercury*, 6/12, 9/12, 12/12/47.
86 *Mercury*, 21/7/51.; *Examiner*, 27/7/51.
87 Hood, op.cit.
Tasmanians were properly housed. In anticipation of this difficulty, the guidelines for the location of Displaced Persons prescribed that it be only where accommodation was available and never in circumstances which would disadvantage Australians' options for housing. The use of migrant hostels in Tasmania was different from the other Australian states. Brighton camp was used for a period, but only for Displaced Persons, and primarily as a reception centre. Some people did remain living at Brighton for a time after they were placed in employment, most leaving as soon as they could possibly find other accommodation. Unlike other states, there was no reception centre provided for British migrants and no Holding Centre for longer term accommodation. As mentioned in Chapter Two, there was much discussion about the need for hostel accommodation in order to attract British migrants, but due to the sensitivity of the housing issue this never eventuated. In 1951, home units were built in New Town and Warrane for 40 married British tradesmen. These were intended to provide interim housing only, until they bought or built their own homes.

The Agricultural Bank, the State housing authority in Tasmania, apparently restricted its clientele to Australian or British nationals, and thus foreign migrants were left to find their own rental accommodation on the private market. One frustrated Dutch migrant from Burnie wrote to the Premier complaining of this unfair treatment and asked for help in finding a home for himself and his family of seven, or subsidy by the state for their fares back to Holland. Cosgrove's reply expressed his sympathy for the man's situation, but said that he could not help with fares to Holland. No mention was made of the Agriculture Bank's policy regarding migrants.

Many migrants worked long hard hours to save as much money as possible in order to buy a block of land and build their own homes. The burgeoning area of Glenorchy, with its relatively low land prices and proximity to employment at factories such as Cadbury's and Electrolytic Zinc, was a popular district. The Springfield area, in particular, was the site of much building activity by European migrants in the 1950's. Others of the Displaced Persons remained and established homes in the Brighton area. Wherever they built homes, it was done largely on the basis of pooled skills, shared labour, and with whatever of the scarce construction material they could garner.

As noted in Chapter II, a condition of entry to Australia for many non-British European migrants of this period was that they work as directed by the Department of Labour and National Service for a
period of two years. No such condition was applied to British 
migrants. Those Britons recruited by the Hydro Electric Commission 
came under a gentleman's agreement to remain with the 
Commission for a minimum of two years, but this was never 
enforced. From the placement of the Poles with the Hydro Electric 
Commission, through the Displaced Persons and Assisted Passage 
schemes, this two year bond remained a feature of Australian 
postwar immigration policy through the early 1950's. The rationale 
for the imposition of a two year bond was twofold: firstly, it 
ensured that migrants were not competing against Australians for 
jobs and thus helped to promote a favourable public attitude 
toward continuing the immigration program; secondly, it facilitated 
the mass movement of migrants, either to fill labour needs or to 
remove migrants from an area if there were any adverse 
community response. Of countries receiving migrants after the 
Second World War, Australia and New Zealand alone had such 
open-ended contracts. Other countries put employment obligations 
on Displaced Persons, but they were placed as contract workers 
with specific firms, knowing beforehand the type of work they 
would be doing, the wage offered, and the location. Under their two 
year bond, Australian migrants were virtually at the disposal of the 
Commonwealth for that period. They had no choice or 
foreknowledge of where they would be placed or the type of work 
they would be doing.90 In this respect, the Special Projects 
Workers recruited in Europe by the Hydro Electric Commission 
were at some advantage in that they were informed in Europe 
before signing any agreement with the Commission of the 
conditions of their employment. Their contracts with the 
Commission specified the type of work they would be doing, the 
wage received, and they were informed of the living conditions at 
the Commission's construction sites.

The issue of the two year bond placed on Displaced Persons aroused 
some public debate. Opinions were varied. Some supported the 
practice on the grounds that the migrants' were indebted to 
Australia for receiving them and should serve this term as an act of 
appreciation. This often was based on the mistaken notion that 
Australia had financed their immigration, when in fact, the 
Australian government's contribution was only a ten Pound per 
person subsidy to the International Refugee Organisation. On the 
other hand, there was considerable sympathy among the Australian 
community for the migrants. This was expressed as early as 1946, 
in a letter to the editor in the Mercury of 11 November, in relation 
to the search for British migrants for the Hydro Electric Commission.

Suggesting that they had suffered enough in the war, the writer questioned the use of migrants for work which was unpalatable to Tasmanians. He further suggested that their assisted passage should include a return ticket to England. The assignment of Displaced Persons into manual work irrespective of their skills or qualifications met with some public criticism. The waste of valuable skills was questioned as, when in 1950 complaints were being made about the inadequacy of the medical services at Bronte Park, it was noted that a European surgeon was working there as a labourer. Others, though few, were more fortunate and managed to be placed in employment somewhat more closely related to their previous occupation. Owing to the severe shortage of nursing and other hospital staff, people with medical training often were given jobs as hospital attendants. One man with scientific training and very good English, when placed with Electrolytic Zinc was permitted to work as a laboratory assistant in their research department, although being paid only a labourer's wage. When he had completed his two year contract and wished to continue working for the company, it was decided that his wage and position level could be reviewed. As a result of that review, his classification was upgraded from "labourer" to "tradesman's helper", and his wage was increased by one Pound per week. Prior to coming to Australia, he had had a career in Europe as a University Professor of Biology and Chemistry. Although the logic of this misuse of talent was sometimes questioned, and sympathy expressed for the individuals involved, it generally was considered to be merely the price migrants had to pay.

There was also appreciable public sentiment against the deportations of recalcitrants, which Calwell had on occasions enforced with some bravado to set an example to other migrants. Within the Labor Party, there were doubts about the policy of a two year bond, as the concept of indentured labour was not altogether consistent with Party philosophy. Harold Holt in Opposition also questioned the justice and wisdom of the indenture system which gave people no choice in their employment, and so often forced individuals with professional or technical qualifications into base grade labouring jobs. In Government, and with the portfolios for Immigration and Labour and National Service, Holt did not change the system. The enforcement of the bond was relaxed as the employment situation in Australia began to change leading up to

91 Mercury, 5/8/50.
92 AOT, NS 569/7-47,A205/1.
93 Kunz, op.cit., pp.166-179.
94 Kunz, op.cit., p.147.
the period of recession around 1952. As the economic climate worsened, unemployment was reappearing for the first time since 1946 and the employment of migrants presented a dilemma. As migrants who thought they were guaranteed employment in Australia found themselves being retrenched or, in the case of those just arriving, never placed in work, the critical question then became: What responsibilities were incumbent upon the government and employers as part of the agreement? The Commonwealth's response was that obligations under the contract were on the part of the migrant only; employers could dismiss migrants if their services were no longer required, and the government was not obliged to provide employment.95

This issue came to the fore in Tasmania in mid-1952 with adjustments the Hydro Electric Commission made to its workforce in light of financial difficulties being encountered with reduced Loans Council funding. Initial dismissals in May, mostly of Australians, brought much public criticism of this apparent favouritism towards migrants, particularly with regard to the Germans who were employed under contract, and thus were seen to be at an advantage over Australians. The State Opposition called for an inquiry into the dismissals. The Mercury of 2/6/52 admonished the Commission and asked for a full explanation, the RSL demanded a Royal Commission. The prevalent thinking was that migrants should have been dismissed before Australians. There was also evidence of support for the migrants' rights to their jobs, sympathetic letters to the editor pointing out that the migrants had been brought here at Australia's instigation because their labour had been needed and deserved to be given a "fair go". They should not suffer for the Commission's financial problems. In July, when this matter was presented for broader consideration by the Commissioners and Heads of Departments of Tasmanian state instrumentalities an order of discharge was established. This determined that should dismissals be necessary, they were to be carried out in the following order: firstly, single men, followed by married men without dependant children, and lastly married men with dependant children. Within each of those categories there were further rankings: first, ex-enemy aliens, second, non-ex-servicemen, third, allied ex-servicemen, and fourth, Australian and British ex-servicemen.96

On 1/1/7/52, another 86 men were dismissed from the Hydro Electric Commission, 58 of whom were German, 12 other foreign

95 Kurz, op.cit., p.178.
96 AOT, AA 527/1,
migrants, 2 British and 14 Australian. The Commission's public statement declared that the dismissals were for "unsatisfactory service", and not for financial reasons.97 In an interesting twist, this now brought the Commission under much criticism for dismissing the Germans. Tasmanians decried the injustice and deceit in the Commission's use of "unsatisfactory service" as the reason for dismissal, when everyone was aware of its financial constraints and cutbacks. Termination from employment in such a manner would make it unduly difficult for the men to find other jobs. On 18 July, with further Germans' dismissals announced, the Launceston Examiner, while not censuring the Commission, stressed the duty to give fair warning to employees about to be so dismissed, and the need to be somewhat accommodating with New Australians. The matter was discussed at a Trades Hall Council meeting in Launceston, which "expressed concern" about the dismissals, recommended that official warnings should always be issued first, but went no further in its support of the Germans.98 The opportunity was used by the union movement to support the Labor Party's and the ACTU's call to curtail immigration and their criticism of the Menzies government. The issue of obligation toward unemployed migrants was raised at Federal level, when the Acting Minister for Labour, Mr. McBride, suggested that the responsibility for their welfare lay with the State government. Premier Cosgrove was quick to reply that the Tasmanian government could not accept responsibility for the Germans formerly employed by the Hydro Electric Commission.99 The leader of the Opposition in Tasmania, R.C. Townley, pressed Cosgrove on this, warning of the concern in the community of "the presence of an idle alien group". Allan Knight of the Commission assured Cosgrove that this was unlikely to eventuate, as he believed most of the men would be able to find other work, as in fact already many had. Now Personnel Officer with the Commission, Charles Best, at the request of some Germans who had protested the charge of "unsatisfactory service", had re-examined their dismissals and in some cases had deleted the reference to "unsatisfactory service" in their notices.100

Ironically, until just a few months before these dismissals, the Commission had insisted on the strict enforcement of the two year contracts of some dissatisfied Germans who wanted to leave the employ of the Commission. From the time of the arrival of the first

97 Mercury, 12/7/52.
98 Mercury, 1/8/52.
99 Mercury, 7/8, 8/8/52.
100 AOT, AA 520/63.
postwar British migrants to the Commission's construction camps, there had been complaints by the migrants about the living and working conditions. Although efforts were made by the Commission to ensure that the new arrivals were made welcome and as comfortable as possible, the harsh climate, the isolation of the place, the bare wooden huts with straw mattresses and the limited recreation and other amenities came as a shock to most, and were simply intolerable to many. The Commission was aware of the deficiencies of the facilities, but circumstances were difficult. Building material in the late 1940's was virtually unavailable. When the Poles began arriving in 1947, a building which had been intended to be a recreation hall had to be used for accommodation. Over the years conditions at the camps improved, with most of them being developed into villages with shops, a cinema, medical services, schools, and recreation facilities. Conditions in all the camps were at their most Spartan in the early stages of development, and it was at that time that migrants usually were brought in to supplement the construction force.\(^\text{101}\)

In this period the Commission was plagued with a very high turnover in its labour force. Australian and British workers could, and did, leave the austere conditions and find employment elsewhere. For European migrants under contractual obligations such options were not permissible. For some, though, life in the camps was simply unbearable and they chose to leave, knowing that they risked being deported. In December, 1948, nine Polish men left Bronte Park and went to Sydney, sending a letter of explanation to Immigration officials. Written in imperfect but obviously laboured English, the letter described their life of physical and social isolation, and of unscrupulously harsh and unfair treatment by their supervisors inflamed by constant threats of deportation. It was their desire, they said, to become good Australians, but they could not bear such degradation and unkind treatment. They reported to the Immigration Department on arrival in Sydney. The Hydro Electric Commission urged Immigration to deport the men for breach of contract. While agreeing that the matter should be handled seriously, Immigration asked the Commission for further details about the men and the allegations. This the Commission supplied from the findings of a Board of Enquiry which it had appointed to investigate the matter. The Board was composed of the Commission's Legal Officer, Mr. M. F. Sorell, Mr. G. T. Colebatch, an engineer with the Commission, and Mr. E. Vickers of the Australian Workers' Union. The Enquiry's

\(^{101}\) AOT, PCS 55147; S. Rackham, *Hydro Construction Villages* (Hobart:1982), passim.
brief was to establish the truth or otherwise of the allegations, to investigate any matters concerning the Poles at Bronte Park which were potential causes of industrial unrest or inefficiency and to make recommendations for action. The Board conducted hearings at Bronte Park on 21/12/48, and found that the complaints of the Poles were invalid. The Enquiry recommended that the amenities at Bronte Park be improved, and that there be greater numbers of Australian and British workers "to assist the Polish workers to appreciate ...what is required and expected of workers" in Australia. The report of the Enquiry went on to note the existence of a small disruptive element among the Poles, and suggested that further problems would be contained by their deportation. Although the Commission sought deportation, the Immigration Department decided to place the nine Polish workers with another employer, commenting that the Enquiry had not heard evidence from the men involved, and further, that it was well known that conditions at Bronte Park were bad. It appears that, although unwilling to actually deport, Immigration was quite willing to cooperate with the Commission in threatening deportation. In early January, 1949, an Immigration Department notice was posted at the Commission work sites. It reminded the Poles that if they left the employ of the Commission without permission they were liable to arrest and deportation "to occupied Germany". Some weeks later, the Secretary of the Immigration Department, T.H.E. Heyes, visited Bronte Park and subsequently informed the Commission in writing that he was satisfied that conditions at Bronte Park were acceptable, and that the men had been in the wrong.102

The actions of the Engineer in Charge at Bronte in the next month would suggest that moves were afoot to remove that "small disruptive element" identified by the Board of Enquiry. On 2 February, he sent a memo to his superior listing 12 Poles whose services were no longer required; three weeks later 8 names, all Poles, were added to the list, which was then sent to Immigration with the request that they be deported. It was said that they were being discharged because of "continued misbehaviour" and for "causing dissension and industrial unrest". One of the men so described and recommended for discharge and deportation by the Engineer in Charge at Bronte was an individual who had written to the Immigration Department in Hobart in some detail of that very officer's cruel and unfair treatment of him. The Engineer in Charge, it was claimed, had a sadistic attitude and manner toward the Poles. By mid-June, 30 Poles had been dismissed; a further 13, whom the Commission wanted to dismiss, but were prevented from doing so

102 AOT, AA 520/59.
under instructions from the Immigration Minister, received stern warnings. The dismissed men were placed in other employment outside of Tasmania.  

The Commission was equally stringent in its treatment of German Special Project Workers who broke their contracts. Like the Australians, British and Poles before them, many Germans, too, found life in a Hydro Electric Commission camp insufferable, and some—a total of about 70—chose to leave before their contract had been completed. Their complaints were similar to previous ones: the accommodation was substandard, sanitary conditions poor, medical services inadequate to deal with all the workplace accidents, life—and the food—too monotonous. The grievances were considered, but not accepted, by Charles Best, who in October, 1951, went to Tarramah to meet with the Germans. Again the Commission pressed for deportation of recalcitrants, acknowledging that it needed that threat to retain the men and prevent further abscondings. Immigration Minister Harold Holt, however, decided that, although one German employee of the Hydro Electric Commission had been deported in June for refusal to work, in the future Germans would be not be deported, but rather directed to other employment. In December, 1951, the Immigration Department again issued a statement by Holt for display at Commission works asserting that absconders would be deported. In 1952, the Commission eased its stance on absconding, which had continued despite the published threat of deportation, and in June announced that any German who repaid the full amount of his debt owing to the Commission could be released from his contract if he wished. This change in attitude was related to two factors. The Commission came to find out that some of the offending Germans had been misled by another German into believing that it was within their rights to leave their employment with the Commission provided they repaid any money owing for their fare to Australia. This is substantiated by the many letters written by the men, giving the Commission their new addresses and making arrangements to continue their repayments. Many of them, on learning that they had been reported to the Immigration Department, wrote to the Commission and apologised for the misunderstanding, and some voluntarily returned to the Commission to work. The other reason for the less rigid approach was the Commission’s financial constraints of 1952 and the consequent restriction of its construction program and decreased  

103 Ibid.
need for labour. The Commission was no longer desperate to retain
its workers.\textsuperscript{104}

Harsh taskmaster though it was in some respects, that was not the
limit of the Commission's role in relation to its migrant work force.
It was considered by many to be a good employer, providing them
with a start, and sometimes a whole life's work, in a new country,
and assisting with re-uniting their families. It was not uncommon
for the Commission to receive a letter of thanks from a migrant
who, after a few years service, was ready to move on to the city, to
other employment, perhaps to the mainland. As an organization, it
showed a degree of awareness of and sensitivity to the traumatic
prior lives of these men and made efforts to ease their settlement.
Undoubtedly, intolerance and prejudice on the part of some
individuals hindered this, and unfortunately was the paramount
experience for a few migrants. For some, the trauma - of war,
migration, and then the isolation of the Tasmanian bush - was too
much. Mental breakdowns, and sometimes suicides, occurred. The
Commission was most often co-operative in following the
recommendations of medical authorities to transfer a migrant
worker to another, usually less isolated, location, or to discharge
him entirely on medical grounds. Upon completion of their two
year contract, migrants were encouraged to remain with the
Commission, those with relevant trade or technical backgrounds
being moved from labouring jobs and fostered back into their
preferred occupations.\textsuperscript{105}

A guiding principle of Australia's postwar immigration policy was
that all migrants would soon be assimilated and become good
Australians, that is fully absorbed into the existing social, cultural
and economic system. Strategies for effecting this process were
directed primarily at non-British migrants, as it was assumed that
the British would simply naturally fit in to Australian society.
There would be two prime indicators accepted as signs that
assimilation of foreign migrants was taking place: the usage of
English rather than their native language, and the adoption of
Australian citizenship. Calwell's "vision" saw the successful
assimilation of migrants as a mutual responsibility shared by
migrants and the Australian community. The two principle
mechanisms introduced to achieve this were government
sponsored English classes and the Good Neighbour Council.

\textsuperscript{104} AOT, AA 52/60;  
\textsuperscript{105} AOT, AA 52/60; AA 52/62.
English classes, which included instruction in the Australian way of life, were offered to European migrants in the Displaced Persons camps in Germany, on the ships travelling to Australia, and in the Reception Centres in Australia. "Continuation classes" were later established throughout the community for migrants to continue their tuition in English. These were usually held twice per week in the evenings. There were also correspondence courses and radio lessons broadcast twice per week on ABC radio for those in remote areas, on shift work housebound or for other reasons could not personally attend classes. Migrant English classes, which were offered at no charge to the students, were instituted in 1941 by the Commonwealth Office of Education in a Commonwealth/State joint program, with the State Education Department supplying the staff and venue, and the Commonwealth covering all costs. In 1951, administration responsibilities for the program were transferred to the States, with the Commonwealth continuing to set policy, and provide materials and teacher training. Initially, teachers from local schools took the classes, but as demand grew and qualified teachers could not be found, teachers were drawn from willing members of the community.

Before the instigation of the Commonwealth program, the Hydro Electric Commission and the Tasmanian State Education Department co-operated to provide English classes for the Poles working with the Commission. The Head Teacher of the school at Butler's Gorge, enlisted the aid of four volunteers - two English speaking Poles and two Commission staff - and held classes at the school, with the men from the nearby construction camps being transported to Butler's Gorge by the Commission. These English classes could cater for approximately 70 students. At that time there were 450 Poles working in the Butler's Gorge area, and another 350 about to come. Even these limited arrangements were not consistently offered, as it depended upon the availability of teachers and volunteers. Similar provisions were later made at the other main Hydro Electric Commission sites. With the influx of Displaced Persons the Commonwealth sought the co-operation of employers in encouraging migrants to enrol in classes. Attendance at classes was often difficult. For most migrants, working and earning money to establish themselves and bring their families to Australia was the priority. Any overtime work was eagerly accepted. And when they weren't working, many were simply too physically exhausted to attend evening classes. On the other hand, there were those who took advantage of everything offered, enrolling in local classes.

doing correspondence studies, and listening to the lessons on the radio.\textsuperscript{108}

The other arm of assimilation efforts, the Good Neighbour Movement was initiated by the Commonwealth government in 1949 and formally launched at the First Citizenship Convention in January, 1950. Established in each state, Good Neighbour Councils were umbrella organisations with local branches made up of various community groups involved in helping migrants. Branches were formed in Hobart and Launceston in November, 1949, with state headquarters at the YMCA in Argyle Street, Hobart. Over the next ten years other branches were set up at Campbelltown, Burnie, Huonville, Penguin, Devonport, Ulverstone, Georgetown, Queenstown., Rosebery and New Norfolk.\textsuperscript{109} Good Neighbour groups held social gatherings for migrants, sometimes offered English classes, and had local volunteers who called on new arrivals, helping them to get settled in the community. The work of the Good Neighbour movement was intended for all migrants, but especially for non-British to help them learn as quickly as possible the Australian way of life. This was so not only because it was recognised that foreign migrants would require considerable assistance, but also because their failure to assimilate posed a certain threat. The aim was to prevent segregated foreign communities from developing. In his address to the inaugural meeting of the Launceston Good Neighbour Council, J. T. Massey, the National Secretary of the YMCA, and the first National Co-ordinator of the Council, warned of the potential for migrants and their different customs to "take over" if they were not treated well and absorbed into the local community.\textsuperscript{110}

One of the key figures in the development of the Launceston branch of the Good Neighbour Council was Jean Baulis, who was asked to help in the establishment of the Council because of her previous experience in working in the Displaced Persons camps in Germany. Jean was one of five young Tasmanian women who had been with the Guide International Service volunteering in the camps. The Guide International Service was established by the Girl Guide movement in Britain to do relief work after World War I. After the Second World War, it decided to offer its services in the refugee camps in Europe, and invited Guide movements in other countries to join. Jean Baulis was with the Guide team at Fallingbostel in Germany from June, 1948, to June, 1949, doing general welfare,

\textsuperscript{108} Interviews with A. Minnucci, A. Dziendziel, 1992.

\textsuperscript{109} G. Winter, unpublished manuscript on the history of the Good Neighbour Council in Tasmania, passim.

\textsuperscript{110} \textit{Mercury}, 4/11/49.
helping refugees with immigration processes, and helping to conduct English classes. Shortly after her return home, steps were being taken to establish a Good Neighbour Council in Launceston, and Jean was approached to help. She soon became very active in the group, and continues to be so. The Launceston Good Neighbour Council is one of the few remaining active groups in Australia.\(^{111}\)

During its first five years, the Good Neighbour Council was an organisation made up of Australians and which provided services for migrants. All the policy setting, administration and service delivery was done by Australians. The 1955 annual conference introduced the idea of seeking the input of migrants as to what services they thought were needed. The following year, it was suggested that necessary Association constitutional changes be made so that migrants could be allowed to become members of the Council. From that time, there was increasing involvement on the part of migrants in the administration and operation of the Good Neighbour Council.\(^{112}\) It was not until 1976 that the Tasmanian Council first had a president from a non-English speaking background, Mr. Albert Schluter, a German migrant who had come to Tasmania in the mid 1950's.\(^{113}\)

Another group in Tasmania working toward the assimilation of migrants was the Settlers Association of Tasmania, established in December, 1953, by representatives of various national groups in Tasmania. Like the Good Neighbour Council, the aim of this association was to encourage and assist migrants to learn English and become Australian citizens. The Settlers Association was a self-help group for non-British migrants, assisting each other in dealing with settlement problems, and learning how to negotiate Australian institutions and bureaucracies. With a similar group in New South Wales, the intention was to form a national network. The Association appears to have had a broad socio-political agenda. Listed among the Statement of Aims of the Tasmanian group were "to expose anybody who may damage the good name of his national group by wrong doing or spoiling its good will with Australians", to educate members in Australian history, its basis of democracy and the means of protecting democracy against its enemies.\(^{114}\) The Settlers Association in Tasmania remained active for about one

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\(^{112}\) Winter, *op.cit.*, passim.

\(^{113}\) Interview with A. Schluter, 1992.

\(^{114}\) AOT, PCS 1, 55/8/54.
year, but languished and eventually dissolved as key members moved interstate.\textsuperscript{115}

Among the other, material, advantages of life in Australia, it was the precious democracy which migrants from war torn Europe so valued. It was a bitter disappointment to some to discover upon arrival that complete liberty was not immediately available to them. Many had fled from oppressive regimes in their home countries. Now they were in a free land, but not quite free themselves. They had been promised jobs with the same wages and conditions as Australian workers, but found themselves in conditions of indentured labour, with jobs that no-one else wanted. They had no choice in where they worked, little choice in where they lived. The telling headline "Polish Ex-Servicemen Joyfully Await Freedom" in the \textit{Mercury} of 7 October, 1949, on the occasion of the naturalization ceremony for some 200 Poles at Butler's Gorge reveals the acknowledgment and validation of the denial of freedom to migrants under bond.

The Australian community had firm expectations of European migrants and their behaviour. Migrants were called upon to quickly abandon all prior cultural baggage, including the use of their own language, at least in public. The pressure to assimilate was particularly effective in Tasmania where Displaced Persons and European migrants under bond were scattered throughout the state, at remote Hydro Electric Commission sites and in other country locations, rendering unlikely the concentration of any significant proportion of a single ethnic group. Neither did later migration from the country into the cities result in the formation of identifiable, segregated ethnic settlements, as occurred in mainland cities. In the mid 1950's, by which time most Europeans had satisfied the requirements of their two year employment bonds, there was considerable movement of migrants in and out of Tasmania.\textsuperscript{116} While some settled and stayed in Tasmania, others wanted to see what mainland Australia had to offer - many (who had known Tasmanian highland winters) hoped it was a better climate. Paradoxically, there was a flow of migrants to Tasmania from the mainland states, a number of whom, having spent two years in the Queensland cane fields, were likewise in search of a more agreeable climate. Some migrants, permanently embittered by their early experiences of humiliation and denial, left Australia. It is perhaps the ultimate irony that for some migrants such as the

\textsuperscript{115} Interview with K. Kruup.

refugees from Eastern Europe, with no valid travel documents, it was the acquisition of Australian citizenship, and the accompanying passport, which enabled them to leave Australia and seek freedom elsewhere.
APPENDIX 1

MAP OF SITES OF HYDRO ELECTRIC COMMISSION POWER STATIONS
APPENDIX 2

HYDRO ELECTRIC COMMISSION EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT FOR BRITISH MIGRANTS
I, having read and being familiar with the provisions in the booklet "Information for Migrants" prepared by the Hydro-Electric Commission and dated the fifteenth of November, 1946, in consideration of the Commission guaranteeing employment to me for five years (with possibly an additional five years' service), the period of my employment being subject to satisfactory service by me, hereby agree and undertake:—

(1) to proceed to Tasmania, and
(2) upon arrival in Tasmania to report for duty with and remain in the continuous employment of the Commission for a period of not less than two years.

PROVIDED ALWAYS that this Agreement shall lapse and be void and of no effect unless I have embarked for Tasmania within three months of the date hereafter or such extended time as the Commission may in writing approve.

Dated this day of 1947.

Signed ___________________________

For and on behalf of
The Hydro-Electric Commission,
Tasmania.
APPENDIX 3

HYDRO ELECTRIC COMMISSION INFORMATION SHEETS FOR POLISH MIGRANTS, 1947.
Polish Emigration to Australia

INTRODUCTION

1. As a result of conversations between the Australian and British Governments, the Australian Government have agreed to accept an initial intake to Polish emigrants to Australia, but this is at present restricted to members of the Polish Resettlement Corps who served at TOBRUK.

There is an immediate need for 280 unskilled, single men for the Hydro-Electric Project in TASMANIA. Personnel selected will in the first instance be required to undertake unskilled work but as can be seen from the table of trades below vacancies will probably occur for certain skilled trades and provided the person concerned holds adequate qualifications, he will be considered for employment in a skilled occupation as vacancies occur.

In view of development projects in Australia it is hoped that further unrestricted volunteers, including married men and their families, may be asked for towards the end of this year or early in 1948.

2. The initial intake of volunteers will be required to sail for Australia on or about 21 Aug 47. The general conditions, types of employment and approximate wages for the TASMANIAN Scheme are given below. The types of men required are those who would like, eventually, to settle permanently in Australia.

EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES (Subject to fluctuation caused by cost of living adjustments)

3. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRADES</th>
<th>Wages per week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£   s  d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Labourers</td>
<td>5   10 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenters Labourers</td>
<td>5   16 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete Labourers</td>
<td>5   16 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradesmen’s Assistants</td>
<td>5   13 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenters</td>
<td>7   4 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulldozer Drivers</td>
<td>7   5 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackhammer Men</td>
<td>5   19 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rates are based on weekly hiring, i.e., there is no loss of time due to wet weather.

GENERAL CONDITIONS

4. (a) The country is similar to the Scottish Highlands, but more heavily wooded.
[b) Accommodation - wooden huts - 2 men to each hut, hot and cold showers. Messing charge 22/- per week, but a camping allowance of 21/- per week over and above the weekly wage is paid.

c) Welfare and recreation - free library - wet canteen and other general facilities available in a military camp, such as recreation grounds, billiards, Post Office, etc.

d) A FIVE day week - 44 hours. It will be possible to spend week-ends (Friday evening to Sunday evening) in either HOBART or LAUNCESTON.

ELIGIBILITY

5. (a) Single men under the age of 45 years, preference will be given to the younger volunteers.

(b) Must be members of the Polish Resettlement Corps who have served at TOBRUK.

(c) Volunteers will be required to pass a medical examination by a medical board consisting of Australian and British Medical Officers.

CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT

6. (a) Volunteers will be under obligation to serve for two years in the Hydro-Electric Project in TASMANIA.

(b) Employment will be restricted to work in this project. Change of trade within the project may be permitted.

(c) Volunteers should bear in mind that any further plans for emigration to Australia will be based on the good behaviour and success of the initial intake.

(d) Failure to fulfil obligations may result in being deprived of consideration for naturalisation.

(e) After a total period of 5 years in Australia volunteers may be considered for naturalisation.

SOCIAL SERVICES

7. Volunteers will be eligible to participate in Workers Compensation Schemes which will provide them with the same medical benefits and compensations for injuries connected with their employment, as Australians receive.
TRADE UNIONS

8. Trade Unions in Australia will admit to membership non-British nationals in those cases where the applicant is properly qualified.

DOCUMENTS

9. In view of the short time available for documentation it has been agreed that a certified nominal roll of volunteers will be accepted in lieu of a Travel Permit.

Every effort is being made to obtain individual Travel Permits and if these are not ready by the date of sailing, they will be forwarded so as to reach individuals on their arrival in Australia.
APPENDIX 4

HYDRO ELECTRIC COMMISSION CONTRACTS OF EMPLOYMENT FOR GERMAN AND ITALIAN SPECIAL PROJECTS WORKERS.
CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT

Contract of Employment made the 5th day of

One thousand nine hundred and fifty one

BETWEEN

of V. Brunagh,
Agorio, Province Belluno (hereinafter called the Employee)
of the one part AND The Hydro-Electric Commission of Tasmania (hereinafter called the “Commission”) of the other part. Whereby both parties agree and covenant to carry out the terms and conditions of this agreement as hereinafter set forth -

AS TO THE EMPLOYEE

(1) To remain in the employ of the Commission for a period of two years from the date of his arrival in Tasmania, Australia.

(2) To repay to the Commission the sum of Two hundred pounds sixteen shillings - - - - - - - - - - - - - Australian (£A 200.16. 0-) being the amount of Air fare from the place of embarkation in Italy to Melbourne, Australian £A 232. 3. 6 less £A 31. 7. 6 subsidy payable by the Commission.

(3) The Employee hereby acknowledges his indebtedness to the Commission in the sum of Two hundred pounds sixteen shillings Australia (£A 200.16. 0- - - - ) and irrevocably authorises the Commission to deduct the said amount from wages payable to him from time to time by fortnightly instalments over a period of two years from the date of his arrival in Tasmania.

(4) That should the employment be terminated by either party before the expiration of two years from the date of arrival in Tasmania or should the Employee fail to commence service with the Commission on arrival in Tasmania the amount of his indebtedness to the Commission shall become immediately payable in full.

(5) To become a member of the Australian Workers’ Union.

(6) To learn to speak and understand English.
Contract of

(Continued)

(7) The Employee acknowledges that the terms and conditions of this agreement have been read over and explained to him and are in accordance with the Italian translation incorporated herein and agrees to accept the English version should any dispute arise out of this Agreement.

AS TO THE COMMISSION

(1) To employ the Employee as a Quarryman or Tunneller under the conditions of the Australian Workers (Road Construction etc.) Award of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration.

(2) To observe the conditions of employment and pay the rates of pay prescribed by the Australian Workers (Road Construction etc.) Award of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration.

(3) To pay to the Employee wages in accordance with the Australian Workers (Road Construction etc.) Award of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration as from the date of his arrival in Tasmania.

(4) To suitably house and board the Employee in accordance with standard conditions prevailing on its construction works for all other unmarried employees.

SIGNED by ...........................................

in the presence of ................................

................................................. Employee.

SIGNED on behalf of Hydro-Electric Commission of Tasmania in the presence of

................................................. Staff & Industrial Officer.

AGENT GENERAL FOR TASMANIA
Contrafatto di Lavoro firmato il giorno millsnovecincinquantauno FRA

di
(cui si riferira d'ora innanzi come l'Impiegato) da una parte
E la Hydro-Electric Commission of Tasmania (cui si riferira
d'ora innanzi come la "Commissione") dall'altra. In virtù
del quale le due parti contraenti conveno no di attenersi
alle condizioni sotto elencate -

PER L'IMPIEGATO

(1) Di rimanere alle dipendenze della Commissione per
un periodo di due anni dalla data del suo arrivo in
Tasmania, Australia.

(2) Di rifondere alla Commissione la somma di
Australia
(£A ) corrispondente al prezzo del
biglietto per via aerea dal luogo d'imbarco in
Italia a Melbourne, Australia £A
meno £A pagabili dalla
Commissione come sovvenzione.

(3) L'Impiegato dichiara pertanto di essere in debito
verso la Commissione per l'ammontare di
Australia
(£A ) ed autorizza irrevocabilmente
la Commissione a dedurre tale somma dal salario a lui
dovuto, a rate quindicinali, entro un periodo di due
anni dalla data del suo arrivo in Tasmania.

(4) Nel caso che l'impiego venisse terminato da una
delle due parti contraenti prima del termine dei due
anni dalla data di arrivo in Tasmania, o nel caso
che l'Impiegato non entrasse a lavorare alle
dipendenze della Commissione dopo il suo arrivo in
Tasmania, l'ammontare del suo debito con la Commissione
dovrà essere pagato immediatamente e nella sua
interesse.
Contratto di Lavoro (cont.)

(5) L'Impiegato si iscrivera al Sindacato Lavoratori Australiani (Australian Workers' Union).

(6) Imparerà a parlare e a capire l'Inglese.

(7) L'Impiegato dichiara che le condizioni e i termini di questo contratto gli sono stati letti e spiegati, e che sono analoghi a quelli della traduzione italiana qui unita, ed è d'accordo nell'accettare la versione inglese nel caso che il Contratto dovesse originare controversie di qualsiasi genere.

PER LA COMMISSIONE

(1) Di avvalersi dei servizi dell'Impiegato come lavoratore nelle cave di pietra o come scavatore, secondo le condizioni previste dall'Australian Workers (Road Construction etc.) Award of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration.

(2) Di osservare le condizioni di impiego e pagare le corresponsioni previste dall'Australian Workers (Road Construction etc.) Award of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration.

(3) Di pagare all'Impiegato il salario previsto dall'Australian Workers (Road Construction etc.) Award of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration dalla data del suo arrivo in Tasmania.

(4) Di fornire all'Impiegato vitto e alloggio adeguato, in conformità con le condizioni generali in cui vivono sul posto del lavoro tutti gli altri impiegati scapoli.

FIRMATO da .....................................................
Testimone ..................................................

.......................................................... ......... Impiegato
FIRMATO in rappresentanza ..................................
 della Hydro-Electric Commission .........................
of Tasmania, testimone ................................

.......................................................... Staff & Industrial Officer
(A istratore del Personale)
Contract of Employment made the thirtieth day of January, one thousand nine hundred and fifty two between BERLIN (Germany) (hereinafter called the "Employee") of one part and the HYDRO-ELECTRIC COMMISSION OF TASMANIA (hereinafter called the "Commission") of the other part WHEREBY IT IS AGREED AND DECLARED AS FOLLOWS:-

1. The Employee hereby agrees and conveys with the Commission as follows:-
   (a) To accept employment and remain in the employ of the Commission for a period of two years from the date of his arrival in Tasmania, Australia.
   (b) To repay to the Commission the sum of ...(Australian) being the amount of the expenses from Germany to Commission's Works Tasmania paid and advanced by the Commission on behalf of the employee at his request (this amount comprises actual air, rail and boat fare, medical and immigration fees).
   (c) The Employee hereby acknowledges his indebtedness to the Commission in the sum of ...(Australian) and irrevocably authorises the Commission to deduct the said amount from wages payable to him from time to time by fortnightly instalments over a period of two years from the date of his arrival in Tasmania.
   (d) That should the employment be terminated by the Commission on grounds for which the employee bears the responsibility before the expiration of two years from the date of arrival in Tasmania or should the employee fail to observe and perform any of the obligations and undertakings contained in this agreement the total amount of his indebtedness to the Commission shall become immediately due and payable.
   (e) To become a member of the Trade Union appropriate to his trade.
   (f) To learn to speak and understand English.

2. The Commission hereby agrees and conveys with the Employee as follows:-
   (a) To observe the conditions of employment and pay the rates of pay
prescribed by the appropriate Award of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration.

(b) To pay to the Employee wages in accordance with the appropriate Award of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration as from the date of his arrival in Tasmania.

d) To suitably house and board the Employee in accordance with standard conditions prevailing for unmarried employees on its construction works.

d) Upon discharge by the Employee of his obligations under clause 1 (a) and 1 (b) hereof to pay to the Employee on completion of his contract the sum of £3. 6s. 3d. (being an amount equal to £31.7.6 (Australian) subsidy, plus medical and immigration fees, plus transport charges in Australia.

3. THIS contract shall be construed and operate in conformity with the laws of the State of Tasmania in all respects as if the Employee was resident within the Commonwealth of Australia and as if all the conditions and obligations were to be wholly executed within the Commonwealth of Australia.

4. THE Employee acknowledges that the terms and conditions of this agreement have been read over and explained to him to his complete satisfaction and are in accordance with the German Translation incorporated herein and agrees to accept and to be bound by the English version should any dispute arise out of this agreement.

Signed by ........................................

in the presence of .................................

Signed on behalf of the HYDRO-ELECTRIC COMMISSION OF TASMANIA.

in the presence of .................................

Signed on behalf of the Assistant Industrial Officer.
Notice.

Approximate cost £193.9.3 (Australian Pounds) less £46.7.6 (Subsidy paid after 2 complete years of service) £147.1.9 anticipated actual cost
ARBEITS - VERTRAG

Arbeitsvertrag, abgeschlossen am ........................... Tag des ................ Monats, Januar.

Dreiundneunzig zu zweitausendfünfzig zwischen ..........................................
(im nachfolgenden der Arbeitnehmer genannt) einerseits, und der HYDRO-ELECTRIC
COMMISSION OF TASMANIA (im nachfolgenden die "Kommission" genannt) andererseits,
wodurch Folgendes vereinbart und erklärt wird:

1. Der Arbeitnehmer ist einverstanden und verpflichtet sich der Kommission
gegenüber:
   
   (a) für einen Zeitraum von zwei Jahren, gerechnet vom Datum seiner
   Ankunft in Tasmanien, Australien, in die Dienste der Kommission
   zu treten und zu bleiben.

   (b) der Kommission den Betrag von ....................... (Australische)
al Reisekosten für Flugzeug, Bahn, Schiff sowie Gebühren für
   ärztliche Betreuung und Einwanderung zurückzuzahlen.

   (c) Der Arbeitnehmer anerkennt hierdurch, der Kommission die Summe von
   ...................................................... (Australische) (£A .............)
zuschulden und ermächtigt die Kommission umäderfüllig, die
genannte Summe von dem ihm jeweils auszuzahlenden Lohn in 14-tägigen
Raten über einen Zeitraum von zwei Jahren vom Tage seiner Ankunft in
Tasmanien abzuziehen.

   (d) Sollte die Anstellung, aus Gründen, die der Arbeitnehmer zu vertreten
   hat, von der Kommission vor Ablauf von zwei Jahren vom Datum der
   Ankunft in Tasmanien beendet werden, oder sollte der Arbeitnehmer
   unterlassen, irgendeine in diesem Vertrag enthaltene Verpflichtung
   oder Zusage zu erfüllen, so soll der Betrag seiner Schuld an die
   Kommission in voller Höhe sofort fällig und zahlbar werden.

   (e) Der Arbeitnehmer verpflichtet sich, Mitglied der Gewerkschaft seines
   Berufszweiges zu werden.

   (f) Er verpflichtet sich, Englisch zu lernen, um es sprechen und verstehen
   zu können.

2. Die Kommission erklärt hierdurch und verpflichtet sich dem Arbeitnehmer
gegenüber:

   (a) die Bedingungen des Arbeitsvertrages einzuhalten und die durch den
   entsprechenden Beschluss des Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and
   Arbitration (Schlichtungs- und Schiedsgerichtshof) festgesetzten
   Lohnsätze zu zahlen.

   (b) dem Arbeitnehmer Löhne entsprechend dem Beschluss des Commonwealth
   Court of Conciliation and Arbitration (Schlichtungs- und Schiedsgerichtshof)
vom Datum seiner Ankunft in Tasmanien zu zahlen.

   (c) den Arbeitnehmer entsprechend den normalen Bedingungen, wie sie an
   der Arbeitsstätte für alle anderen ledigten Arbeitnehmer gelten,
   unterzubringen und zu versorgen.

   (d) nach Erfüllung seiner Verpflichtungen gemäß den oben aufgeführten
   Klauseln 1 (a) und 1 (b) sowie seines Vortrages die Summe von
   £A .................. zu zahlen, die sich zusammensetzt aus £ 31,7.6
   (australische) für Beihilfe zuzüglich der Kosten für ärztliche
   Betreuung und Einwanderung sowie für Reisekosten in Australien.
3. Dieser Vertrag soll ausgelegt werden und in jeder Beziehung wirksam
werden in Übereinstimmung mit den Gesetzen des Staates Tasmanien, als ob der
Arbeitnehmer innerhalb des Commonwealth of Australia (australischer Staaten-
bund) ansässig sei und als ob alle Bedingungen und Verpflichtungen innerhalb
des Commonwealth of Australia auszuführen seien.

4. Der Arbeitnehmer bestätigt, dass die Bestimmungen und Bedingungen
dieses Vertrages ihm zu seiner vollen Zufriedenheit vorgelesen und erklärt
worden sind, und dass sie mit der deutschen Übersetzung wie sie hier vorliegt,
übereinstimmen, und er erklärt sein Einverständnis, die englische Fassung
in etwa sich aus dem Vertrag ergebenden Streitfällen als massgebend anzu-
erkennen.

Unterzeichnet von

in Gegenwart von

Arbeitnehmer

Unterzeichnet für die HYDRO-ELECTRIC
COMMISSION OF TASMANIA

in Gegenwart von

Assistant Industrial Officer
Anmerkung

Ungefähre Kosten abzüglich

£193.9.3 (australische Pfunde)

46.7.6 (Rueckerstattung nach 2 Jahren)

£147.1.9 tatsächliche Kosten
APPENDIX 5

AUSTRALIAN DISPLACED PERSONS AGREEMENT FORM
Undertaking:
I hereby certify that the personal particulars supplied by me to the Australian Selection Officers are true in every respect and that I have made myself familiar with the conditions under which displaced persons can emigrate to Australia. I fully understand that I must remain in the employment found for me for a period of up to two years and that I shall not be permitted to change that employment during that period without the consent of the Department of Immigration.

Full name (Blocks) ..................................................
Signature .............................................................
Date ...........................................................................
CHRONOLOGY

1945
July, Commonwealth Department of Immigration established, with T.H.E. Heyes as Secretary, and Arthur Calwell as Minister for Immigration.

October, 300 German and Italian prisoners of war repatriated from H.E.C. works at Butler's Gorge.

1946
January, Immigration Department survey into union attitudes toward immigration conducted in Tasmania by Walter Hood.

July, Tasmanian Premier Cosgrove meets with Calwell to discuss H.E.C. labour needs.

August, Immigration Branch established within Tasmanian Tourist Department.

September, Commonwealth Immigration Minister gives approval for H.E.C. to send representative to England to recruit workers.

1947
March, British-Australian free and assisted passage immigration scheme commences.

April, H.E.C. representative Harold McCullough to England to recruit.

June, Calwell visits refugee camps in Europe.

Agreement between Calwell and Cosgrove regarding the immigration of Polish ex-service personnel in England.

July, First British migrants for H.E.C. arrive.

Australia signs agreement with International Refugee Organisation.

October, First group of 280 Polish migrants for H.E.C. arrive.

Tasmanian government approves plan to bring British child migrants to area schools, with Hagley Farm School as first school selected.

November, First group of Displaced Persons leave Europe for Australia, and on arrival go to newly opened Bonegilla Reception centre in Victoria.

1948
January, First Displaced Persons arrive in Tasmania.

December, H.E.C. inquiry into conditions at Bronte Park following letter of complaint from Polish workers.
1949
January, Immigration issues notice of warning to Polish H.E.C. workers that they face deportation to Germany for breach of contract.
February, Publicity campaign in Tasmania for increased sponsors for British migrants.
October, Naturalisation ceremonies at Butler's Gorge and Bronte Park for Polish migrants.
Tasmania's plan for Displaced Persons Scheme announced, with 3500 Displaced Persons expected to arrive in Tasmania by June, 1950. A section of Brighton military camp to be used as reception centre.
November, Good Neighbour Council established in Tasmania.

1950
January, Commonwealth nomination scheme established to increase numbers of British migrants
August, Commonwealth Cabinet considers the issue of entry of enemy aliens.
September, H.E.C. representative Charles Best to Italy and Germany to recruit.

1951
February, Italians recruited in Europe by H.E.C. arrive.
Netherlands-Australia Migration agreement commences.
March, Italy-Australia Assisted Passage Agreement commences.
March/April, Germans recruited in Europe by H.E.C. arrive.
May, Last Displaced Persons arrive in Tasmania, bringing total to 3800.

1952
January, H.E.C. experiencing financial problems owing to decreased Loans Council funding.
April, H.E.C. cancels outstanding nominations for British migrants
May/June, Controversy over H.E.C. dismissals.
August, West Germany-Australia Assisted Passage Agreement commences.
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