The Dying Town Syndrome: A Survey of Urban Development in the Western District of Victoria 1830-1930.

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Introduction

Recent debate surrounding the future of country towns has raised the issue of the historical process of growth and decline in the small towns which service rural communities. To many, the current deterioration of country towns is symptomatic of the dominance of large urban centres and the indifference and neglect of government. The debate has generated many emotive responses which indicate that the underlying long term causes of decline are not fully understood.

Viewed from an historical perspective it becomes clear that what may appear as a recent and worrying trend has been in fact been an intrinsic feature of regional development. An illustration of this can be seen in the history of urban growth in the Western District of Victoria. The pattern of development in this region suggests that the prosperity of small towns is linked to the nature of land settlement and use in the surrounding area. This in turn is influenced by the economic and technological factors operating at the time. At times these factors have supported growth and expansion in small towns. For the most part though, these forces have not been conducive to promoting long term urban prosperity. Thus a cycle of growth and decline occurs.

This experience is not a unique feature of Western District history. Instead it reflects the process of urbanization in Australia. A characteristic of economic development in this country has been the growth of capital cities and the concentration of population in these centres. Between 1861 and 1891, for example, the population of Melbourne, as a percentage of the total population of the colony increased from twenty-three per cent to forty one per cent. In the same period population growth in Victorian country towns stagnated in relative terms. Around one fifth of the colony's population lived in country towns in 1861 and the proportion was the same in 1891. These figures suggest that the problem of sustaining the population and economic viability in Victorian country towns has been ongoing and systemic, arising from the nature of the functions of these towns.

Patterns of urban development to 1890

The experience of urban growth in the Western District of Victoria highlighted the basic economic problem of many country towns; namely, as service centres, they were dependent on the demand generated by the surrounding rural area. The District is one of the oldest areas of white settlement in Victoria. By the 1890s it was a well established pastoral economy with some of the largest holdings of freehold land in the colony. As such it had a particular influence on the growth of urban centres in the region.

From the period of first settlement in the 1830s to the 1890s the impetus for urban development in the region was weak. The reason for this lay in the pattern of land use which evolved in this period. The emergence of a pastoral industry, focusing on wool growing, defined the structure and growth of the regional economy. It did this in two ways, firstly through the influence of forward and backward linkages with local industry. Secondly, by the manner in which the income and wealth created by wool production was distributed.

In the Western District, the regional linkages created by the wool industry in this period were weak. As a result the demand for the types of services provided by country towns was small and urban growth was constrained. Unlike other agricultural pursuits, wool producers did not require the types of the localized services that were the key functions of small towns. The pastoral estates were generally equipped to provide for basic needs and the services, which small farmers might rely on townships to provide, were catered for on the property. Other
requirements of the wool industry were adequately met by the larger urban centres of Melbourne and Geelong. As a result there was little need to provide them at a more local level. Wool for example, was sent out of the region to be sold. This led to the development of a strong complementary relationship between the Western District and capital city. Melbourne, as the largest commercial centre in the colony, was the link between output of pastoral estates and international markets. Apart from providing the access to wool markets, the city, as a financial and manufacturing centre, provided the other services necessary to the pastoral estate. Small country towns existed basically to assist the flow of goods and services from the dominant metropolitan centre to the rural population. As a consequence the pattern of growth of towns and townships was determined by the simplistic nature of the regional economy. This was a fairly typical of the pattern of urban development in the colonies where the metropolitan centre came to dominate the urban hierarchy. It led to a substantial gap between the size and complexity of the large city and the remaining smaller urban centres. It promoted the centralization of services which further perpetuated the focus on the capital.

The pattern of urban growth in Victoria after the 1870’s concentrated largely on the expansion of Melbourne at the expense of other centres. As a result of this, by the 1890s a hierarchy of towns in Victoria had evolved with a least four levels of importance in terms of population size. The metropolis of Melbourne was at the pinnacle, the second level incorporated the regional centres of Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo. Warrnambool, the largest town in the Western District, formed part of the third level Whilst all other Western District towns belonged to the lowest order.

In 1890, there were sixty-nine urban settlements in the Western District. Fifty-eight of these had less than five hundred inhabitants; the majority of settlements had populations of between one hundred and five hundred. Four of these had populations between 500 and 1,000. This was also fairly typical of the pattern in the rest of the colony where eighty per cent of non metropolitan settlements had populations of less then five hundred. In addition to the small townships there were seven larger settlements which could be classified as towns, defined as having populations of more than one thousand.

This urban hierarchy highlighted the basic function of smaller settlements as service centres. Within the Western District this can be seen in an analysis of the structure of business in the regions towns. Table 1 illustrates the structure of the manufacturing and tertiary sector of the Districts towns in 1890.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Camperdown</th>
<th>Casterton</th>
<th>Hamilton</th>
<th>Koroit</th>
<th>Pt. Fairy</th>
<th>Portland</th>
<th>Warrnambool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SECONDARY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Processing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processing pastoral Products</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crafts Assoc with Transport</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Crafts</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building &amp; Construction</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing/ Footwear</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Secondary</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TERTIARY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels/</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: The Structure of Business in Western District Towns 1890
The profile presented in Table 1 indicates that in all towns the tertiary sector was the most significant sector, supporting the argument that these towns were basically service centres for the surrounding hinterland. Little processing of pastoral products was done in these centres. Instead, they were instrumental in providing transportation and commercial links between the countryside and the larger urban centres.\(^{17}\) Simpler versions of this structure are apparent in the pattern of business in the townships and smaller settlements of the Western District.\(^{18}\)

The focus of urban centres was limited. They catered primarily for local needs on a limited scale and had no industry which serviced markets beyond the boundaries of the immediate region. In this sense they did not cross the 'urban threshold', that is they did not grow to the point where the needs of the surrounding countryside were no longer vital in determining the viability of the town.\(^{19}\) Of all the urban settlements in the District only one, the town of Warrnambool, could be said to have passed this threshold with an economy large enough to sustain itself.

The limited manufacturing base reinforced the dependency of towns on the rural hinterland. However the dominance of the pastoral economy with its weak forward and backward linkages meant that towns could not develop beyond a certain point unless the economic and technological parameters changed to allow an alternative use of the land.

### The expansion of urban settlements 1900-1914

In the late 1890s the culmination of a series of advances in agriculture created the environment for the expansion of local towns. Innovation and technical progress in agriculture which occurred at this time, encouraged new farming practices and increased the potential for more intensive forms of land use. In this respect, advances in two key industries led to a transformation in the farm sector and paved the way for further urban development. The application of crop rotation techniques and the use of small amounts of superphosphate together with the introduction of new wheat varieties revolutionized wheat farming practices. In dairying, the development of factory processing and the opening of new markets created the potential for the growth and transformation of the industry.

The significance of these innovations for country towns in Victoria was threefold. First, it led to spread of small scale farming and created a demand for more localized urban services. The linkages between agriculture and small towns were stronger than those with the pastoral estate. Small farmers did not have the same degree of self sufficiency as these large estates and looked to urban centres to provide the necessary services. Second, it created new urban industries, particularly with the spread of the factory system of milk processing and butter production. Milk factories and creameries became an important feature of many small towns.\(^{20}\) Third, it added impetus to the push for closer settlement which became a major policy platform of Victorian governments with the passing of the Closer Settlement Act in 1898.

The spread of new methods of farming encouraged the subdivision of large estates and the growth of small scale farming.\(^{21}\) In line with this, the decade between 1901 and 1911 witnessed a period of rapid urban growth in the Western District. This is illustrated in Table 2 which summarizes the growth of urban settlements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accommodation</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1901</th>
<th>1911</th>
<th>1921</th>
<th>1933</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Service</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractors</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Tertiary</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Wise's *Post Office Directory* 1891
However, the expansion in the number of settlements was not associated with a sophistication of their function. No urban settlement of less than five hundred inhabitants had any secondary industry of significance, aside from a creamery. Most small townships continued to be primarily service centres for the surrounding rural area. These services were limited to those connected with transport, communications and banking. Within the next level of the hierarchy townships with populations between 500 and 1,000 there was a limited to degree of manufacturing. However this was largely restricted to simple food processing, building and construction. The growth of butter factories increased the level of manufacturing in country towns but this in itself was not sufficient to allow them to cross the urban threshold. The extent of secondary industry remained limited, catering for local needs rather than a value added export market. The town of Mortlake is a typical example of the small rural country towns in the Western District. The population had increased from 701 in 1891 to 1,332 in 1911. The town boasted a railway station, two hotels, two banks, four stores, a butter factory and flour mill.

The majority of new settlements which emerged were situated in the expanding dairy region along the coastal fringe of the District. Many of the smaller settlements were little more than clusters of houses with a school and post office. Less than twenty per cent of settlements had populations of more than two hundred. Their significance lay principally in their location within the transport network which itself was a function of the technical parameters of the time. Public investment in rail transport had been undertaken with a view to encouraging closer settlement. While it has been argued that the growth of the rail system did not directly lead to urban expansion, it was the role of the railways in facilitating more intensive land usage that was important in promoting country towns. Smaller urban settlements appeared along the rail network as it extended into the Western District in the 1880's and 1890's. In this way the rail network influenced the location of settlements which grew around railway stations and sidings as they became a focus for local farmers to gather.

Whilst the towns and townships of the District grew in response to economic stimuli, they were more than just service centres for local farmers. Although the majority were small, they were thriving centres of community and social activity. The breadth of activity is evident both in notices in local newspapers and in almanacs and directories. In particular, sporting associations provided a cohesive focus for community interaction. However the existence of many other societies and associations is indicative of the diversity and sophistication of these small centres. The small township of Willaura is an illustration of the extent of this community interaction. In 1913 it had a population of 300. In addition to a range of sporting clubs including, football, racing, cricket and golf it also had a debating society, a Ladies Guild, a squadron of the Light Horse Regiment, and various church and political associations. Willaura was not unique, many townships in the District had a similar range of associations. The level of social interaction belies the weak economic base of these centres and highlights the loss to the community as urban decline occurred.

**Urban decline 1921-1930**

The urban growth experienced in the period leading up to the first world war was largely reversed in the inter war period. The extent of the decline in rural towns can be gauged by comparing population changes between 1921 and 1933. In 1921 there were eleven towns with populations greater than 1,000. By 1933, six of these had experienced significant population declines. In two, the population had fallen below 1,000. Fifty-seven per cent of established settlements in the District experienced population declines in this period. Drifts of population such as this necessarily had a significant impact on the prosperity of the country town and the success of local business. The vulnerability of these urban centres was reinforced by the link between town and country. This
was particularly so in the economic climate of the 1920s which did little to further the fortunes of farmers and likewise local townspeople. However it was a more fundamental change in the factors influencing the farm sector which impacted most on the outlook for country towns.

In the period prior to world war one, technological developments promoted small scale intensive farming and encouraged the spread of localized processing of farm output, particularly in the dairy industry. For example the spread of the factory system of milk processing was associated with the growth of butter factories and creameries. The function of the creamery was to separate the milk and cream. The cream was then transported to the butter factory and the milk returned to the farmer to be used as feed for livestock. Each butter factory had several creameries located in the surrounding district to service outlying farms. With the growth of creameries small townships also sprang up. Creameries were necessary because the farmer did not have an efficient method of separating the milk himself. However the introduction of hand separators solved this problem. By the 1920's the creamery had become obsolete and many of these processing plants had closed leaving small townships with no secondary industry.

Technical innovations in the 1920s also promoted the potential for the aggregation of small localized processing plants into larger factories. Methods of milk processing improved as did the transportation network, encouraging milk factories to expand. Expansion was associated with the amalgamations of processing plants as some firms became more profitable than others. For example, between 1910 and the 1930s five butter factories located in small towns amalgamated with the Glenormiston factory whilst three amalgamated with the Camperdown factory. As this happened rationalization led to the closure of factories in outlying areas and a resulting loss of employment.

Meanwhile on the farm, further technical improvements created the potential to increase farm size. Labour saving machinery was increasingly used by farmers allowing them to farm greater acreages and reinforcing the trend to farm aggregation. The number of engines in use for example, nearly doubled between 1915-16 and 1933-34. Technical innovation in agriculture encouraged an increase in farm size and as a result a reduction in the number of farmers.

However it was the improvement in transport which had the greatest impact on local towns in the 1920s. Better roads and cheaper, more reliable vehicles brought the larger metropolitan centres closer at the expense of smaller towns. In 1924, the motor car brought Hamilton within five hours travelling time of Melbourne. For those that did not have access to cars, bus services became available. In the 1920s buses ran from Hamilton to Warrnambool twice daily. Distances that once took days to travel could now be covered in a number of hours. By the mid 1920's it was evident that many local retailers were feeling the effects of closer transport ties and shifting patronage to larger retail centres. A bleak future was forecast for these towns if residents failed to support local business.

Road transport also competed with the rail system leading to a fall in rail usage. The road building program of the Country Roads Board brought road transport into direct competition with the railways. Priority was given to rebuilding existing highways. These arterial routes which centred on Melbourne, had a twofold effect of reinforcing the commercial activity of that city, and reducing the viability of rail facilities in small country towns. The resulting decline in revenue called into question the profitability of some lines leading to a reduction in services. The downgrading of these services had repercussions for employment opportunities in small towns further aggravating the drift of population to larger centres.

The failure of small townships to grow beyond their prime function as service centres also made them vulnerable to changes in the farm outlook. In this respect several factors impacted on the prosperity of urban settlements after the first world war. At this time the failure of the closer settlement scheme to generate a permanent increase in the number of small farmers became apparent. The problems faced by new settlers were further intensified by the downturn in the market for agricultural commodities which occurred in the lead up to the depression of the 1930s.

The closer settlement policy, introduced progressively after 1898 and culminating in the soldier settlement schemes of the 1920s, was based on an ideal with little practical foundation. It was assumed that with the advent of scientific farming techniques, the barriers to small scale farming had been overcome. The overriding optimism which was reflected in the 'Australia Unlimited' philosophy led to the inappropriate subdivision of land which was not suitable for intensive farming on the scale envisaged. In the Western District this led to the acquisition and subdivision of grazing properties with very low carrying capacity on the assumption that
they could be made to yield more productively. Prior to world war one, in a period of buoyant demand for agricultural products and rising prices, the fatal flaws in this approach were not immediately obvious. However as the scheme progressed, and more and more marginal land was acquired for settlement purposes, the problems inherent in the assumptions underlying the policy became apparent. The scheme attempted to push the degree of intensive land use beyond the point of sustainability. Basically it encouraged the subdivision of blocks into units which were too small to farm repetitively to the degree expected. Even on estates where farmers were relatively successful it was recognised that farm sizes were too small. The result was that settlers began to aggregate their holdings in a bid to enlarge the size of their farms. Aggregation was a feature of farm land ownership patterns in the Western District in the 1920s. The number of holdings between one hundred to five hundred and five hundred to one thousand acres grew by thirty-seven and sixty-six per cent respectively.

Aggregation, and the associated reduction in the number of farmers, obviously had implications for the demand for services from local urban settlements. However the impact was masked in the immediate years after world war one by the implementation of the state's soldier settlement scheme. Despite the inherent flaw in the closer settlement program, the Victorian government was determined to press ahead with another attempt at promoting intensive land usage. The aim of land policy after 1918 was to put as many soldiers on the land as quickly as possible. The pace of settlement was associated with many mistakes in the implementation of the scheme. Inappropriate land was bought at high prices. High land prices influenced the size of blocks allotted and many settlers were allocated blocks too small to generate an income sufficient to live on. Problems compounded as farm debts rose and battlers were forced off their farms.

Closer and soldier settlement failed to impact significantly on the prosperity of local towns. Settlers, even when successful, had little surplus income to spend. Most settlers obtained goods on credit for at least the first few years. This left business very dependent on the tide of the agricultural trade cycle. The settlers themselves were to a certain extent isolated from the rest of the community and did not mix with local townspeople. Their experiences both in the war and as new settlers both set them apart and created a bond between them. They became a cohesive group within themselves and tended to stick together rather than integrate into the community. They built their own facilities such as halls and tennis courts and organized their own social functions and entertainment. They were seen as a group distinct from the rest of the community.

As the agricultural sector responded to changing circumstances the importance of small towns in the link between farm and market was weakened. The failure of urban settlements to thrive was not generally understood. In the early days of the campaign for closer settlement, townspeople had been very vocal in their support of the plan. Local progress associations led by town leaders lobbied government and campaigned strenuously for the subdivision of large estates. Their motivation was that with a greater rural population, local towns would surely grow and prosper. This optimism was a characteristic of town development in many countries. It was generally expected that urban development would mirror that of the closely knitted British system. This was broadly held view and it was widely accepted that towns would flourish and the countryside became more settled. For example, Premier Harold Lawson told Mortlake residents in 1922, that as a result of increased land settlement, new industries would spring up and country life would be much more attractive. However, these expectations were never fully realized in towns like Mortlake.

Even in the 1920s concern over the decline in rural areas was not new. In the 1890s local country newspapers such as the Coleraine Albion, bemoaned the decline in rural areas. In 1918, a government commissioned committee confirmed the overall drift of population to major urban centres and recommended the implementation of a 'country life policy' to halt the decline. The Select Committee's report highlighted the problems associated with the centralizing influence of the capital city, and of encouraging local urban growth. Evidence given before the Committee when it visited Warrnambool and Port Fairy revealed a deep seated concern over the centralizing effects of Melbourne. Businesses felt that they were unable to compete on the same footing as Melbourne firms. Local residents were concerned about the loss of population to the capital and the lack of employment and educational facilities in the country. In rural areas there was resentment at the lack of initiative in tackling the problem. The Casterton Free Press attributed the lack of progress in the Casterton area to 'inefficient management at headquarters' (Melbourne). 'Centralization', the paper claimed, 'is rampant in our midst: it is the lion in the path of progress; and we shall never progress till we kill that lion.' These sentiments reflected a failure to appreciate the importance of the causal link between the pattern of agricultural development and the prosperity of towns.

Conclusion
The experience of country towns in the Western District suggests that there was an inevitability in the process of development in small country towns. In this respect they grew and prospered as long as the economic and technological factors which influenced the surrounding farm community worked in their favour.

The pattern of growth in towns was inextricably tied to the pattern of land use and as that changed there was a corresponding impact on urban settlements. It was this relationship between town and country which determined the viability of small towns. This can be clearly seen in the Western District. In the period of early settlement with the spread of land extensive industries, particularly wool growing, there was little demand for localized urban facilities. Large pastoral estates were virtually self sufficient, there were few linkages to encourage local urban development. Wool was sold on an annual basis and exported overseas. It was transported directly to auction in Geelong or Melbourne. These centres also supplied the services necessary to run the estate.

The advent of a new approach to farming with the adoption of scientific farming techniques and improvements in processing created the scope for a more intensive forms of land use. Between the 1890s and the first world war agriculture boomed. It was encouraged not only by technological improvement but also by favourable economic conditions and government policy. Government supported closer settlement schemes further stimulated the push for land intensification. With the increase in small holdings came a corresponding increase in the number of urban settlements. These townships evolved to provide a link in the chain between the producer and the market for agricultural products. They were essentially centres which supplied a limited number of services. As such, they did not have the scope to grow to the point of crossing the 'urban threshold'. They flourished within the technological and transport constraints of the time.

However changes in these constraints after the first world war altered the relationship between town and country. Scientific farming techniques failed to deliver the degree of intensification expected. Whilst the number of acres required to make a productive farm had been reduced, it was not on the scale envisaged by authors of closer settlement schemes. The farm problem which resulted was intensified by the changed nature of agricultural markets after the first world war. As a result there was an increasing trend to the aggregation of farm land and an exodus of unsuccessful farmers.

The pressure on small towns as a result of the failure of closer settlement was reinforced by further changes in technology, most notably improvements to the transport system. The spread of motor transport increased the importance of large regional centres. The development of a highway network reinforced the centralizing impact of the capital at the expense of small towns many of which went into a long slow decline.

The experience of urban centres in the Western District points to an evolutionary process in the development of small towns. It suggests that unless a town can grow to a point of self sufficiency it is locked into a cycle where growth is inevitably followed by decline. This outcome tends to support the current view of some observers that the dying town syndrome is an evitable outcome of the history of European settlement in Australia. If this is the case, perhaps the focus of current debate should not be on who is to blame for this trend but how best society's resources can be utilized to alleviate the negative effects on rural communities.

[1] NOTES

This term was used by Dr Gordon Forth in his paper 'Following the Yellow Brick Road and the Future of Australia's Declining Towns', Paper presented to First National Conference on the Future of Australia's Country Towns, July 2000.


[7] The Western District in this respect is identified as the South Western statistical division as defined by the...
Commonwealth Census.


[15] For the purpose of this study the cut off of one thousand seemed appropriate because there was a marked difference in the functions of settlements with five hundred to one thousand inhabitants compared to those with greater populations.

[16] This table is not a reflection of total employment but rather an indicator of the relative importance of the various industrial and commercial businesses the towns.

[17] This is particularly so for the three port towns of Warrnambool, Portland and Port Fairy.


[25] Richmond (*op.cit.*, p. 73) argues that simple generalizations about a positive relationship between railway extension and town growth are insupportable.

[26] Hamilton Spectator Almanac 1913

[27] *The Age* 28 November 1921, p. 6; 5 December 1921, p.6.


[30] The number of engines used for agricultural purposes increased form 1,274 to 2,976.

Agricultural and Dairying Statistics, Commonwealth Record Series MP 570/1.


[33] The 'Australia Unlimited' hypotheses represented an overly optimistic view of the efficacy of science in promoting intensive agriculture. It argued that the boundaries to settlement in Australia were unlimited.
and that the country was capable of supporting a dense population. The potency of the vision can be seen in E. J. Brady, *Australia Unlimited*.

G. Robertson & Co. Melbourne, 1918.

[37] Mortlake Dispatch, 27 February 1931, p.3.
[38] Mortlake Dispatch, 29 June 1934, p.3; Terang Express, 12 June 1925, p.4.
[40] D. A. Hamer comments that towns were ‘the great over-reachers of nineteenth century frontier society.’ A characteristic of development in Australian, the United States and New Zealand was the over-estimation of the potential for growth. Hamer, 1979, pp. 19-20.
[44] Report of the Select Committee upon the causes of the population from country districts to the city, *Victorian Parliamentary Papers*, 1918.