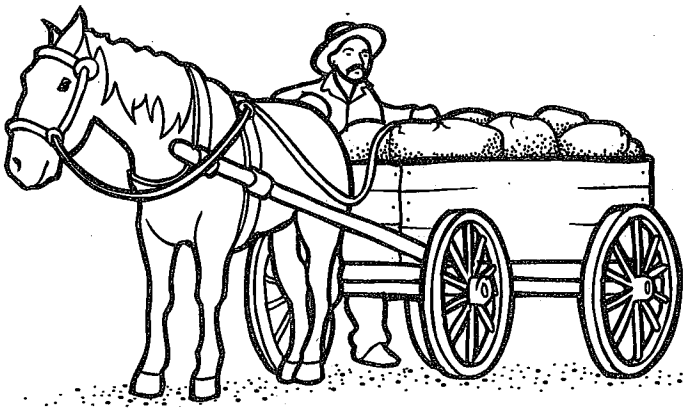


Developing the colonies - 1



The early colonies established by the British in Australia were on the coast near harbours so supplies and people could be landed safely. At first they stayed near the coast because transporting goods over land was difficult without any roads or bridges. Convicts sent to some colonies were immediately put to work making roads and constructing buildings. They also built the convict prisons.

Food supplies were limited in the new colonies and more and more people kept arriving. Often, feeding everyone became a very serious problem. So finding good farming land where water was plentiful was essential. Land was granted to farmers to grow food and to develop herds of sheep, goats and cattle. It was important that all food was produced as close to the settlements as possible, because that was their market. There was also the issue of safety. People stayed where they felt safer and tried to avoid conflict with Aboriginal peoples.

The first free settlers had arrived in 1793. Once the threat of starvation had been averted, more free settlers came. Because many of them were keen to establish successful businesses and properties, they started to move further inland. So searching for more good land became the colonies' priority.

As well as free settlers there were a growing number of ex-convicts in colonies who had worked on farms and knew about farming. Many wanted land for themselves and some of them were given grants of land, too. They became an important part of colonial society.

A number of explorers bravely set off looking for land and trying to find out what was over the Blue

Mountains and in the middle of the country. Many of these expeditions were organised and paid for by the government. These explorers faced untold hardships and some of them had trouble with the Aboriginal peoples they met too. Some found good farming land where small settlements were later established.

The problems of distance and transport made getting farm produce to a market difficult. But over time many of these farms did very well and they were able to get their wheat or wool to ports from where it was shipped back to Britain. Horses, bullock teams and camels were all used as transport and along the rivers, steamer boats did a great trade when there was enough water.

In 1851 gold was discovered and the gold rushes began. Gold had a huge effect on the development of the whole country. People arrived from other colonies and from overseas and the population exploded. There was great demand for services and supplies and successful businesses were established in inland towns as well as on the coast.

There was an expanding need for transport between towns and to the coast. Cobb and Co. began its coach service in 1853 and the first railway was built from Melbourne to Port Melbourne in 1854. Improved transport made the import and export of goods much easier and many businesses were established or expanded. The economy grew rapidly.

Better roads and rail services reduced the isolation of the colonies within Australia. The telegraph also had a positive effect by improving communications between Australian communities and with the outside world. This also helped the development of trade.



Developing the colonies - 2

CONVICT AND COLONIAL LIFE

1. (a) Explain why the early Australian colonies were established on the coast.

(b) Why did it take some time before people started to move inland to live?

(c) Why do you think most of Australia's population still lives near the coast?

2. How did transport difficulties affect the development of the colonies?

3. (a) How would people living in the early Australian colonies have found out about what was happening in Europe?

(b) How would the telegraph have changed their lives?



In 1800, a convict, George Howe, was the first person with printing experience to arrive in the colony. He produced its first book of government orders followed by its first newspaper, the Sydney Gazette in 1803. It wasn't until 1824, when government censorship was lifted, that The Australian became the colony's second newspaper.

The nature of convict or colonial presence, including the factors that influenced patterns of development, aspects of daily life of the inhabitants (including Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples) and how the environment changed. (ACHHK094)