

REPORT BY MR. HALCOMBE, IMMIGRATION OFFICER.

MR. HALCOMBE to the Hon. J. D. ORMOND.

SIR,—

Immigration Office, Wellington, 18th July, 1872.

I have the honor to submit, for the information of the Government, the following report of the Immigration Department for the North Island.

This being the first report since the assumption of the sole control of the work of immigration by the Colonial Government, I propose to arrange the subject-matter of my remarks as follows, namely:—

1. The circumstances of the North Island with regard to immigration on the administration being assumed by the Colonial Government.
2. Arrangements made with the Agent-General and others for the introduction of immigrants to the North Island.
3. The action of the Department.
4. General observations on the subject.

1. *Circumstances of the North Island with regard to Immigration on the Administration being assumed by the Colonial Government.*

As compared with the Middle Island, the northern portion of the Colony was, at the time of the inauguration of the immigration policy, entirely unprepared for any large influx of population. For many years past, owing to the Native disturbances, no regular or systematized immigration had been attempted by any of the Provinces. While Canterbury and Otago had for some years been adding largely to their population by a most carefully organized system of immigration, all the North Island Provinces, with the exception of Auckland, had been solely dependent for any increase of their numbers on the natural increase of the settled population; and even in Auckland, the addition to its population was confined exclusively to an unaided migration of miners from other parts of the Colony to the gold fields at the Thames.

It follows, therefore, that whereas in the Middle Island the effect of the adoption of a great colonizing policy of immigration was to necessitate the enlargement of the existing system and appliances with comparatively little alteration, in the North Island the first duty devolving on the Department was to commence *de novo*, and create the necessary machinery to carry the new policy into practical effect.

There is, moreover, a material difference between the circumstances of the two Islands, which I may be pardoned for referring to, as it has a most important bearing upon the immigration question. The present population of the Middle Island having been able to occupy without hindrance the whole of the country, and being engaged as it is to a large and growing extent in agricultural operations, can absorb a much larger and more constant stream of labour than can the North Island settlers, with their present limited area, and the greater natural difficulties in the way of locomotion and agricultural operations which their country presents.

While, therefore, in the Middle Island, the work of the Immigration Department consists chiefly in aiding the different settlements to enlarge themselves, in the North Island it principally assumes the form of founding a number of small new colonies on lands where Europeans have hitherto been prevented from carrying on even the first rudimentary processes of colonization.

This difference is abundantly evidenced by the various recommendations from the several Provinces published in the Parliamentary Papers of 1871; the balance of the Middle Island requirements being in the direction of labour to be employed by the settlers already in the Colony, while those of the North Island refer chiefly to the promotion of special settlements in connection with public works in districts recently acquired from the Natives.

2. *Arrangements with the Agent-General and others for the Introduction of Immigrants to the North Island.*

The Provinces of Wellington and Hawke's Bay alone made specific recommendations for the introduction of immigrants, and these recommendations had special reference to the formation of new settlements in connection with public works. Auckland applied for the introduction of small farmers, nominated immigrants, and single women. Taranaki deferred the question, as dependent on the extent of territory acquired for settlement, recommending only the introduction of 20 Scandinavian families, as labourers in the Opunake flax mills.

In accordance with these recommendations, instructions were sent to the Agent-General, on the 25th November, 1871, that the following number of immigrants were to be shipped before the end of the year 1872, exclusive of nominated immigrants, immigrants for special settlements, and any workmen who might be introduced under arrangements with Messrs. Brogden, viz.:—

Auckland	...	...	...	...	...	...	800 adults
Napier	...	...	...	...	...	...	600 "
Wellington	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,000 "

Independent of the continuous immigration from Great Britain which has been commenced through the Agent-General and his sub-agents in the United Kingdom, contracts have been entered into with foreign firms, as follows—viz., with