

No. 3.

MEMORANDUM for the AGENT-GENERAL, London.

(No. 38, 1871.)

Public Works Office, Wellington, 28th October, 1871.

IN my memorandum No. 37, of the 30th September, I informed you of the intention of the Government to locate Scandinavian and Western Highland immigrants on blocks of land in the Seventy-Mile Bush and Ruataniwha Districts; and that although the Government were as yet unable to specify the exact conditions of settlement, yet, with a view to forward the scheme, you were authorized to procure and send out a definite number of immigrants, viz., 300 families, 100 single men, and such young women as chose to accompany their relations.

The consideration of the details has led to the conviction that as it is very desirable the immigrants should arrive in New Zealand with the least possible delay, in order to take advantage of the public works in the neighbourhood of the proposed settlements, it would be unwise to fetter you with rigid conditions, and the Government have determined to indicate only the main features which they propose to adopt.

1. It is intended that the Scandinavian immigrants should be located in three small settlements along the line of road through the Seventy-Mile Bush. The nationalities locating them will of course depend on the result of your labours in collecting the immigrants, but it is desired that, if possible, two of them should be Norwegian and one Swedish.

2. The three sites, of about 5,000 acres each, will be early and carefully selected. As far as can at present be judged, they will all be in bush, without any open land.

3. In each settlement there will be a village of ten acres laid out in quarter-acre sections. Reserves will be made therein for a church and school, and for other purposes; the remaining lots will be open for sale to tradesmen and others at the price of say £5 per section, payable in cash; the rest of the block will be laid out in 20-acre sections, a portion of which will lie on the main line of road and the remainder at the back.

4. As it may probably assist you in procuring immigrants if the names of the settlements to which they are emigrating are localized, you will be good enough to give such names to the villages and settlements as you may find to be most attractive to those intending to proceed to them.

5. Each family will be allowed to select one 20-acre section, for which will have to be paid the sum of £20 during the first three years, in monthly payments, the first payment to be made simultaneously with the receipt of the first month's wages. The order in which the selection is to be made is to be decided by lot on the immigrant's arrival. Each alternate section will be reserved from sale, and if the occupier of the adjoining section should desire to purchase it, he can do so during the fourth year by monthly instalments, provided he has paid for the original section during the first three years' occupation, but not otherwise. Should, however, an immigrant leave the settlement, or omit to pay up the monthly instalment for three consecutive months, then the section he occupied will be considered abandoned.

6. The immigrants will be conveyed from Napier to the settlement, and allowed, when they reach there, one or, if found necessary, two week's rations free, in order to give time for them to choose their land and house themselves.

7. Work on the road running through or near to the settlement will be provided, but not for the whole six days a week. Wages of 5s. a day of eight hours, for three or four days' work a week, will be given to good workmen, and less in proportion to capacity.

Those days on which they are not employed are intended to afford them time for clearing their own sections. The Government do not like to guarantee work for any stated period, because the road work must necessarily get further and further removed, and in time come to an end; but there can be no doubt that you will be safe in promising work for at least a year, if you find it necessary to make a definite promise at all. Piece work may perhaps, and probably will, be found preferable to day labour: if so, the price will be such as will enable a good workman to earn certainly not less than he would by day work.

8. It is found from the Palmerston experiment that single men are more attracted by the wages of settlers than by land, and as the object is to settle these immigrants on the land, families will be preferred, so that, instead of the 100 young men formerly mentioned, it is thought better to confine the immigration to families and to such single men and women as are attached to them or form part of them. An exception, however, to this rule, as relates to single men, will be stated presently.

9. The Government are anxious that the moral and religious well-being of the immigrants should be provided for from the commencement, and you are authorized to afford whatever encouragement may be necessary to induce a schoolmaster to accompany each party of immigrants. I am given to understand that a carefully selected schoolmaster would, in addition to his ordinary scholastic duties, supply the place of a clergyman until the immigrants have settled down, and are able to invite one to come out to them.

10. April is understood to be about the best month for collecting immigrants in Norway, as the leaseholds fall in and the re-engagement of servants takes place at that time; but although it is desirable that the immigrants should reach New Zealand as early as possible, so as to prepare for the spring planting, &c., yet, as they could do but little the first season, and their location in such an entirely new district in the middle of winter might be calculated to dishearten them, it is thought, all things considered, that it would be better that they should not arrive at Napier before the early spring—say August next. This will give them ample time to fell bush for the summer burning, and enable them to prepare an encouraging breadth of ground for the next season. It will probably be found that only a portion of the immigrants can start with the first ships, and that the remainder will not be able to follow until later in the year.

11. It is proposed that, if practicable, the immigrants for each settlement be sent out in separate ships, and on the voyage every inducement should be held out to them to short-draw their rations. The provision thus saved, or its value, will materially assist in first starting them on arrival.

12. The only other subject of importance is the amount which these immigrants are to pay for