

The cost of sending the immigrants to the settlement to be defrayed by the Immigration Department.

The Provincial Government to guarantee refund in seven years, unless the land be taken under the Immigration and Public Works Act.

Mr. ANDERSON to the Hon. J. VOGEL.

SIR,—

Greytown, 5th February, 1874.

I have read your published letter on special settlements to his Honor the Superintendent of Wellington. I presume that in publishing the letter you desired to elicit an expression of opinion, and that one who has seen much of the destruction of colonial forests, and some of its effects, during upwards of twenty years (thirteen of them on various gold fields in Victoria, and in shifting from one gold field to another, and that lately as a more settled colonist, who was for some years engaged in the timber trade, in working a saw-mill), may be presumed to have had an opportunity of gaining such bush experience as may enable him without presumption to form an opinion of the practicability of some of the details you have suggested in your published letter.

I think that the conservation of our forests, and the proper treatment of useful timber, should receive the greatest attention the State can bestow on it; and I do not doubt that your own attention may have been first directed to the subject by reflecting on the present barren state of some countries that are now dry sandy deserts, but which in former ages were fertile lands drained by many streams.

Some poor, stony, gravelly kinds of soils grow excellent forest trees; but as soon as the soil is cleared of its bush it soon loses its vegetable humus by exposure to the sun, and in a few years becomes quite dry and barren, and its streams shrink yearly.

It seems natural to think that the wisest course for our statesmen to adopt would be to make such poor, stony, forest lands into enclosed forest reserves. The enclosing of the forest reserves would be necessary to prevent cattle destroying the young growing plants.

The rich soils along the river flats, and other spots of naturally fertile land, might be selected as the homes of settlers, and the drainage from the forest reserves would fertilize the settlements, and prevent them suffering from such droughts as the Cape colonists are often subject to. Regarding the best class of men to be sent as pioneers in a forest settlement, I wish to direct your attention to the fact that men from a coal-consuming country like the United Kingdom have had no experience in cutting timber, such as is gained by men in countries where firewood is used for fuel; and therefore the success of such settlements would be much fostered by having a number of experienced bushmen to show, by their example, what can be done in working the bush.

The suggestions in your letter (*a*, *b*, *c*, and *d*) are such as practical experience would have induced you to materially alter, if economy of labour is any consideration; and consequently it would come naturally to be modified when worked. If the best methods of making reserves is once adopted, the practical details will correct themselves in time.

I would suggest that if saw-mill owners adopted efficient means to extract the sap from sawn timber, it might, on that condition, be cut at any season.

I have thought for some years of trying how timber would be seasoned by placing it, as soon as sawn, in a close building, where it would be for some weeks under a constant shower bath, to extract the sap (by the exchange of water for sap), and then, having sufficiently done so, I would close up the building and introduce a steam jet to be applied until all the *albumen* in the timber was thoroughly coagulated, which would be a preventative against worms. At the same time, if desirable, the timber might easily be impregnated either with salt or some mineral oil or other substance that would thoroughly preserve it, supposing the steaming to be sufficient.

I think, instead of the Government employing men to cut down trees and saw them into logs for removal, the better way would be for a Government Forester to mark trees to be felled and the exact spot of ground they would have to be fallen on, so as to avoid damaging other valuable trees in falling, and to prevent the tops of the fallen trees blocking up the passage or road to other trees; the standing trees to be sold subject to strict conditions as to the manner of falling and transporting them. I adopted this plan in my own bush some years ago, and I found great advantage from prohibiting the falling of any tree that I had not marked to show the exact place upon which it was to be thrown; and I trained all my bushmen to use the cross-cut saw and wedges to fall any tree where they were required for this purpose. The consequence was a great economy of labour, as well as of useful timber that would otherwise have been either damaged or blocked up by the tops.

In falling timber for a saw-mill, it will be found necessary to cut up the trees into logs and move them out of the way of standing trees to be fallen across the place they occupied; and I feel sure that your suggestion under the heading (*b*) would be found very difficult, if not impracticable.

The suggestion under (*c*) might be modified so as to let on lease lands on fertile bottoms that had no very valuable timber on it, upon condition of clearing the lands without destroying the useful timber.