

1877.

NEW ZEALAND.

THE FEILDING SETTLEMENT

(REPORT ON THE PROGRESS AND PRESENT CONDITION OF).

Return to an Order of the House of Representatives, dated 9th August, 1877.

Ordered, "That the Government be requested to procure and lay before this House a statement showing the progress from the commencement and present condition of the Feilding Settlement, in the Manawatu District, with tabular statements exhibiting the quantity of land taken up and paid for to the Government by the Corporation; the quantity of land sold to the public, distinguishing rural, suburban, and town, with the average price of each class and the total amount received, or to be received if sold on credit; the length of roads constructed, defining the character of the same, and whether constructed through bush or open, hilly or level land; the number of immigrants introduced into the block under the auspices of the Corporation; the amount of rates paid to the Manawatu Road Board, and the amount expended by that Board in the Manchester Block; the gross total expenditure of the Corporation in connection with the undertaking; and any general information which may enable the House to understand the position and prospects of the undertaking."—(*Hon. Mr. For.*)

Mr. A. F. HALCOMBE to the Hon. the MINISTER for IMMIGRATION.

SIR,—

Feilding, 15th August, 1877.

In compliance with your request I have the honor to submit, for the information of the General Assembly, a report of the progress and present position of the Feilding Settlement, together with the following appendices:—

- A. Memorandum of lands sold.
- B. Return of road-work.
- C. Return of immigration.
- D. Return of road rates paid to Manawatu Highway Board, &c.
- E. Return of expenditure summarized and in detail.
- F. Return of state of survey of block.
- G. Copy of letter to the Hon. the Native Minister *re* road through Native reserve.

Before commencing my report, I will state briefly, for the information of those to whom the subject is new, the conditions under which the Corporation has been working hitherto.

The Feilding contract was entered into in December, 1871. It has subsequently been slightly modified, and its terms are broadly as follows, namely,—

The Corporation became the purchasers of 100,000 acres of land, chiefly bush, at 15s. per acre, payment being made by bills bearing interest at 5 per cent., and maturing at intervals up to 1st April, 1882. The Corporation undertook the internal survey of the block, and became bound under heavy money penalties to introduce 2,000 statute adult immigrants to the settlement by the 1st April, 1878, and to have 2,000 persons settled on the block by 1st April, 1879.

The Government, on the other hand, agreed to give free passages to the Corporation's immigrants (no free passages being at that time granted to any other immigrants); to find employment for a current 200 labourers in or within ten miles of the block, at a rate of wages of 5s. a day for four days in the week; and it was further agreed that a subsidy at the rate of £2,000 per annum for five years should be granted on an equivalent expenditure being made by the Corporation for road-work within the block.

Some difficulty was experienced in England in starting the undertaking, chiefly in consequence of the heavy penalties attaching to the non-fulfilment of the immigration and settlement clauses of the contract, and it was not until August, 1873, that the first immigrants were shipped for the settlement. It may, however, be remarked in reference to this delay that, owing to the non-completion of the tramway from Foxton to Palmerston, it would have been impossible to commence colonizing operations more than about three months earlier than they were begun. Preliminary work had in the meantime been going on: a survey party had been at work some eighteen months, a commodious immigration depôt had been erected at Palmerston, and preparations made at Feilding for the shelter and supply of the settlers.

The first immigrants arrived in the colony in January, 1874. They were sent up to the depôt at Palmerston, and forwarded on to Feilding as soon as possible. I say as soon as possible, for at that