

In 1865 the sum of £600,000 was set aside to encourage immigration under the above proposals.

In the late "sixties" immigration had slackened off and a serious depression, brought about by the heavy cost of the Maori wars, was in full swing. There was, however, a revival of interest in immigration with a view to settling unoccupied parts and keeping the turbulent Natives in check. The main object was to open up new lands.

In 1869 the New Zealand Commissioners Act was passed, under which two Commissioners were sent to England to collect information and undertake negotiations on which proposals for systematized immigration could be drawn up. It was laid down that careful selection was necessary to prevent the import of undesirable types. Further, ample guidance as to the employment opportunities should be available to the immigrant on arrival. Advances to immigrants should be fully repaid to the Government.

While these exploratory talks were going on, the Immigration and Public Works Act, 1870, was passed, the underlying object of which was the concurrent progress of immigration and public works, so that works supplied a market for labour, and the increase in population created a demand for more works. Public works were undertaken with a view to the opening-up of land for settlement so that ultimately the immigrants would become settlers. Hence it was proposed that as railways and roads were opened up, adjacent land should be opened up for settlement by both the Central and Provincial Governments.

It was intended that there should be a very close liaison between the Provincial and the Central Governments in the matter of immigration, and in the matter of lands available for settlement. In addition to selected immigrants, provision was made whereby residents of New Zealand could nominate persons living in the United Kingdom as immigrants to the Dominion. The immigrant was required to pay £5 only for passage-money, and to pay 25s. for his outfit. The Agent-General in England was directed to select the immigrants and to provide for their care on the passage to New Zealand.

To implement this Act an Immigration and Public Works Department was set up in 1870, generally to co-ordinate the joint problem of public works and the provision of immigrants therefor. Waste land adjacent to proposed railways could be reserved for immigrants. This waste land was usually in the hands of the provinces, but it was the intention that these lands should be made available to the Central Government in return for the provision of railways. One section of the Act provided that the Government could set aside £1,000,000 for immigration.

While the principal intention of the Act was to provide for British immigrants, the New Zealand Commissioners in 1870 visited Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and North Germany with a view to inducing emigration from these countries to New Zealand, largely at the cost of the New Zealand Government. Under this arrangement a number of such immigrants arrived and were settled in the Manawatu, the Hutt, and the Wairarapa in special settlements. The early prejudice against foreigners was soon dispelled when it was realized that these northern European immigrants made very good settlers and soon became New Zealanders.

The co-operation expected as between the Central Government and the provinces in the 1870 Act did not materialize, and in 1871 a second Act was passed enabling the Government to act independently of the provinces in regard to immigration. For the first two or three years the results of the policy were not very satisfactory in point of numbers. Taranaki, for instance, recommended the introduction of twenty Scandinavian families only. Wellington and Hawke's Bay required immigrants to carry out public works. Auckland asked only for small farmers, nominated immigrants, and single women. Of the 6,186 immigrants in 1872, 1,514 were nominated. In view of the very small response, the Government, in 1873, offered free passages to assisted immigrants. During the first four or five years of the eighth decade of last century several shiploads of Scandinavian immigrants arrived and were settled in various places, particularly in the North Island. The free-passage system was limited to married men under forty-five, single men under forty, single women under thirty-five, and children under twelve,