

1874.

NEW ZEALAND.

## I M M I G R A T I O N .

(CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO THE INTRODUCTION OF IMMIGRANTS UNDER THE CONTRACT WITH THE EMIGRANT AND COLONIST'S AID CORPORATION, AND REPORT BY MR. HALCOMBE ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE COLONIZATION OF THE MANCHESTER BLOCK, MANAWATU.)

(In continuation of Papers presented 13th August, 1873.)

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by command of His Excellency.*

## No. 1.

Mr. HALCOMBE to the Hon. the COLONIAL TREASURER.

SIR,—

Wellington, 11th August, 1873.

I have the honor to inform you, that I am prepared, on behalf of the Emigrant and Colonist's Aid Corporation, to pay to the Government the sum of £15,000, at such time after twelve o'clock to-morrow as you may be pleased to appoint.

Of the sum so proposed to be paid, £7,500 is to be an absolute payment under the Feilding contract for 10,000 acres of land referred to in former correspondence: the balance, viz. £7,500, is to be held by the Government as a guarantee of the *bona fides* of the Corporation in the due performance of their contract, and may be hereafter used in the purchase of land at such time as the Government may be pleased to release the amount for that purpose.

I am advised that it is necessary for me to obtain such a receipt for the first-mentioned amount of £7,500 as may enable me to deal with the land purchased thereby under the Land Transfer Act. I have therefore the honor to request that, in anticipation of the proposed payment, this subject may receive the consideration of the Government, and that I may be informed, if possible before the time appointed for the payment, what form the receipt will assume.

In reference to this matter, I ascertain the position to be as follows:—In the first place, no proclamation has yet been issued reserving the Manchester Block from the ordinary operation of the Wellington Provincial Land Regulations; and, in the second place, under proclamation by His Honor the Superintendent of Wellington, the Manchester Block forms part of two reserves, viz. the townships of Palmerston and Sandon.

With reference to the first point, I am advised that the Government is not in a position to give me a legal receipt for the purchase money of the 10,000 acres until a proclamation has been issued, as provided by section 2 of the Feilding contract.

With reference to the second point, it is apparent that, having in view the future operations of the Corporation in dealing in detail with the Manchester Block, and in giving titles to purchasers, it is a matter of very great importance that the lands of the Corporation should be dealt with under the Land Transfer Act as an independent block, freed of the complications necessarily arising from the fact of its forming part of two separate reserves made by the Provincial Government, each of these reserves having sectional numbers bearing no reference to those of the other, and absolutely preventing any uniformity in the registration of the subdivisional section numbers of the Corporation's survey.

So far as I have been able to ascertain, all difficulties will be removed by an insertion in the proclamation of the Manchester Block, a clause cancelling the former reservations by the Superintendent so far as they are affected by the new proclamation; and I am allowed to say that His Honor the Superintendent, recognizing the necessity of freeing the Corporation's titles from complication, will raise no objection to the adoption of this or any other legal method by which the Manchester Block may be placed in an independent position for the purposes of registration and transfer.

I have made use of the term the "Manchester Block," which is the name given by my Directors to the Feilding purchase, and I should esteem it a favour if you will be pleased to direct that this title shall be adopted in the proclamation of the reserve.

I may also observe, for your information, that among the papers in the Public Works or Immigration Office, referring to the Feilding purchase, is a full description of the boundaries of the Manchester Block, which was forwarded some time ago to the Government for the purposes of its proclamation.

I have, &c.,

A. FOLLETT HALCOMBE, Agent,  
Emigrant and Colonist's Aid Corporation

The Hon. the Colonial Treasurer,  
Wellington.

D.—8.

## No. 2.

Colonial Treasury, Wellington, 6th September, 1873.

RECEIVED from the Emigrant and Colonist's Aid Corporation, Limited, by the hands of Arthur William Follett Halcombe, the sum of seven thousand five hundred pounds sterling (£7,500), in payment of purchase money for ten thousand (10,000) acres more or less, being subdivision A of the Manchester Block, in the Manawatu District, as shown in the official map of the Chief Surveyor of the Province of Wellington, and bounded towards the north-east by a public road, bearing about 303° magnetic, being a continuation of the road known as "Reid's Line," from the Oroua River towards the Rangitikei River; towards the south-east by the Oroua River, by the Timona Native Reserve, and by a reserve of two hundred acres for totara timber; towards the south by the Kawa Kawa Native Reserve, and by sections numbered 101, 111, 112, 118, 119, 124, 125, 129, and 130, on the plan of the township of Sandon; towards the west by sections numbered 85, 132, and 130, on the plan of the said township, and towards the north-west by a line bearing about 33° magnetic from the north-east corner of the Mingiora Native Reserve, towards the north-east boundary, excepting always the line of railway running through the said piece of land.

JULIUS VOGEL,  
Colonial Treasurer.

## No. 3.

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY to MR. HALCOMBE.

SIR,—

Treasury, Wellington, 27th November, 1873.

Referring to the sum of £15,000 paid to the Colonial Treasury on the 6th September last, in respect of the principal and interest of the debt of the Emigrant and Colonist's Aid Corporation, I have the honor, by direction of the Hon. the Colonial Treasurer, to advise you as to the manner in which the sum in question has been applied.

In accordance with the understanding assented to by yourself on the occasion of your making payment of the sum referred to, £7,500 has been applied to retire principal notes to that amount out of the Series C, due 1st April, 1882, and £5,881 17s. to retire principal notes to that amount out of the Series A, due 1st April, 1877, the balance of £1,618 3s. being applied to payments of interest due on £75,000 from 1st April to 6th September, 1873.

The retirement of the principal notes above referred to, will, of course, cancel the interest notes of each series appertaining to the principal sums paid off, while the payment of £1,618 3s. will retire interest notes to that amount in respect of those due on the 1st October last. As, however, interest on the whole debt has been paid only to the 6th September, a balance of £211 Os. 5d. is still due in respect of the notes last named; and I am to request that you will be good enough to cause payment of this amount to be made at the Treasury.

I enclose the receipt of the Hon. the Colonial Treasurer for the sum of £7,500, paid on 6th September; also statements of the interest due and paid, and of the notes retired and cancelled.

These last will be handed over to your appointee, or will be transmitted to yourself direct, as may be desired.

A. F. Halcombe, Esq.,  
Agent for Emigrant and Colonist's Aid Corporation,  
Marton.

I have, &c.,  
C. T. BATKIN,  
Secretary to the Treasury.

## No. 4.

Mr. HALCOMBE to the Hon. the PREMIER.

SIR,—

Wellington, 2nd January, 1874.

I have the honor, as representative of the Emigrant and Colonist's Aid Corporation, to request the consideration of yourself and your Government to the altered position in which the Corporation has been placed, with regard to the immigration portion of the Hon. Colonel Feilding's contract, by the recent action of the Government in granting free passages to all immigrants, and by the legislation of the last Session of the Assembly offering grants of land to the value of £20 for every statute adult introduced into and settled in the colony without cost to the Government.

I need hardly remind you, Sir, that in the negotiations with the Hon. Colonel Feilding, which resulted in the contract referred to, the exceptional advantages of a free passage for its immigrants to the colony was offered by the Government and accepted by Colonel Feilding as a very valuable concession, and as a set-off to some extent against the price to be given for the land taken up by the Corporation, and it was one of the chief inducements to the acceptance of the contract. As the lowest rate then charged to Government immigrants from England was £8 per statute adult cash (or £12 if promissory note was given), the exceptional advantage offered to the Corporation by the immigration clause of the contract amounted to £16,000 at least on the 2,000 immigrants whom it is bound, under a heavy penalty, to introduce. Now, in consequence of the action of the Government and the Legislature, not only has the Corporation ceased to enjoy any exceptional advantages in respect to its immigration, as it was on both sides intended to secure under the contract, but it really occupies a worse position than if the immigration clauses were to be struck altogether out of the contract.

The altered position of the Corporation is so self-evident, and your personal knowledge as a principal party in the negotiations with the Hon. Colonel Feilding will, I doubt not, remind you so clearly of the importance attached to the exceptional character of the immigration clauses, both by yourself in proposing and by Colonel Feilding in accepting the contract, that I need hardly do more than direct your attention to the matter to secure to the Corporation such a concession as may place it in a similar relative position to that which was contemplated at the time the contract was made.

I desire, however, to point out, for the information of those other members of the Government who are not so fully informed on this matter as yourself, in what way the Corporation suffers by the establishment of a free immigration scheme, and what are the chief grounds for urging that compensation should be granted as an equivalent to the special advantages intended to be given to the Corporation by the immigration clauses of its contract.

In the first place, I have no hesitation in affirming that, but for the exceptional immigration clauses, the price agreed to be paid for the land would not have been given.

The price of the land taken up by the Corporation is 15s. per acre, and as it was to do all internal surveys at its own expense, which are estimated to cost 5s. per acre, and to pay interest from 1st of May, 1873, on the purchase money of the whole block, a very large proportion of which cannot possibly be made available for five or six years, and not then, except by a large expenditure on roads, this price was really more than the market value of so large a block of inaccessible bush country. As a proof of this, I may mention that the upset price of Government lands in the same district, but open, immediately accessible, and surveyed into small blocks, was £1 per acre; that the price paid by the Hutt Small Farmers' Association for a block of 10,000 acres was £1 an acre, the block being the pick of the Manawatu, and it was subdivided at the expense of the Government into 200-acre blocks; also, that large blocks of land on deferred payments were sold at £1 an acre, without interest during the five years over which the payment was extended.

In the second place, the Corporation relied on its exceptional right to a free passage to enable it to select high class immigrants, and to recoup the expenses of collecting its immigrants in England and locating them in New Zealand, and it necessarily suffers a heavy loss by the alteration.

Under the contract while the immigrants of the Corporation were brought out free by the Government, it was optional with the Corporation what arrangements as to passage should be made between the Corporation and its people. While Government immigrants had to pay £8 cash, or £12 promissory note, for their passages, the Corporation was in a position to offer a cheaper passage than the Government, and yet make a charge sufficient to recoup itself the expenses of the English agency for the collection of immigrants; but now that the Government has established free immigration, and even defrays the cost of transit to the port of embarkation, and makes advances for ships' kit and outfit, it is manifest that the Corporation cannot make any charge without placing itself at a very great disadvantage in selecting its immigrants, and running risk of penalties for non-fulfilment of the immigration clauses of the contract.

In the third place, the prospects of the gain to the Corporation by the sale of its lands is not such as to enable it to bear the additional charge thus thrown upon them.

As I before pointed out, the original cost to the Corporation of its land is 15s. an acre. The cost of survey is estimated by the Chief Surveyor of Wellington at 5s. an acre. An expenditure of at least £8,000 per annum for five or six years (exclusive of the promised Provincial expenditure of £2,000 per annum) is contemplated by the Corporation, and is absolutely necessary to make the land accessible to small holders.

Thus with accumulated interest on purchase money and expenditure, the direct charges on the land will be at least 30s. per acre. To this has to be added the cost of management, the preliminary expenditure for the reception of immigrants (such as the erection of depôts, advances made for tools, and food for the immigrants while housing themselves, and before they can commence to earn wages), and many other charges, such as road rates and education rates, which are very heavy, and bring no compensating expenditure; and when all these unavoidable sources of expenditure are fairly taken into consideration, it will be apparent that the prospect of profit to the Corporation is very small, and, indeed, that without the greatest economy and care in the administration of the estate, a heavy loss would certainly result. I may also remark that the chief part of the outlay of the Corporation in collecting and making advances to their immigrants in England, and of locating them in the colony, represents an equivalent saving to the Government, which has to bear the whole cost in the case of its own immigrants.

I would, therefore, respectfully submit to the Government that, in respect to those immigrants who may be brought out in Government vessels, the Corporation should be allowed the sum of £8 per statute adult, which would practically be a return to the original position occupied by the Corporation with regard to its immigrants, by comparison with those introduced directly by the Government; and with regard to any immigrants of a superior class introduced by the Corporation and settled on its lands, and who shall have paid their own passages to the colony, that the Corporation should be allowed a rebate of £20 per statute adult in payment for land, on the fulfilment of the conditions of settlement set forth in "The Immigrants Land Act, 1873."

In conclusion, Sir, I desire to state that this appeal is made with the full knowledge that the Corporation is entirely in the hands of the Government in this matter.

It has already incurred too large an expenditure to be able to withdraw from the work it has undertaken, and it has now *en route* for the colony 400 statute adults with whom it must fulfil its engagements. The Corporation entirely relies on the *bona fides* of the Government to reinstate it in the position originally contemplated by the contract, which the action of the Government has disturbed, and which the Corporation deems it necessary to uphold as a matter of right and as an assistance in securing its shareholders against loss in an operation which, if successfully carried out, will be of great advantage to the colony, and will probably be only a preliminary to other similar and more extensive colonizing operations in other parts of the North Island of New Zealand.

I have, &c.,

A. FOLLETT HALCOMBE,

Agent, E. and C. Aid Corporation.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

## No. 5.

The Hon. the PREMIER to Mr. HALCOMBE.

(No. 15.)

SIR,—

Immigration Office, Wellington, 24th January, 1874.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 2nd January, in which, for a series of reasons stated, you ask the Government to make to the Emigrant and Colonist's Aid Corporation a special allowance, because a system of free immigration into the colony has been instituted.

In reply, I have to state that I am wholly unable to agree with you that the Corporation has any claim, either in law or in equity, for any consideration on account of the Government having deemed it desirable to introduce immigrants free of cost.

I am of opinion that a great deal of consideration for the Corporation has already been shown by the Government.

You are quite aware that the Corporation was not at all ready to fulfil the terms of its agreement: that in fact it was not prepared to put much capital into the undertaking, but that, nevertheless, the Government made large concessions. I am of opinion, also, that the Hon. Colonel Feilding succeeded in purchasing, at a very reasonable price, a very valuable block of land.

Even if it were the case that the Corporation has suffered injury through the Government having found it desirable, in the interests of the colony, to introduce immigrants free of cost, I should altogether deny any claim upon the part of the Corporation for compensation. It would be preposterous for the Government to admit the validity of any claim of the kind; indeed, it would be impossible to give effect to any measure for the good of the country if compensation had to be given to all persons who had previously made arrangements of a different character. Government have as good a right to suit their actions to the circumstances of the time as any private individual or association has. If it suited the Emigrant and Colonist's Aid Corporation to sell land at £3 per acre to-day, and two years hence to sell it for £2, the Corporation would be entitled to do so. If the claim now made were admitted, the Government would have equally to admit a claim for compensation on behalf of any person who paid for his passage to the colony.

Instead of the Corporation sustaining loss by the free introduction of immigrants, I believe that the reverse will be the case, for the larger the number of people in the colony, the greater will be the benefit to every person who has an interest in New Zealand. Apart from that, however, there was, at the outset, an important concession granted to the Corporation, that, namely, of being allowed to obtain a valuable block of land at a very reasonable price on deferred payment.

I believe there are corporations or associations, with capital at command, that would have been glad to have had the opportunity of purchasing land of the same character upon the same terms.

I am of opinion that it is a great advantage to the Corporation to be able to obtain free passages for its tenants or constituents, whether or not the Government give free passages to other immigrants.

For the reasons stated, I cannot hold out a hope that any claim of the kind made by you will receive recognition.

I have, &amp;c.,

JULIUS VOGEL.

A. F. Halcombe, Esq., Agent for the Emigrant and  
Colonist's Aid Corporation, Wellington.

## No. 6.

Mr. HALCOMBE to the Hon. the COLONIAL TREASURER.

SIR,—

Wellington, 27th March, 1874.

Referring to your memorandum of 6th September, 1873, a copy of which is enclosed (*vide* No. 2), I have the honor to request that the amount of £7,500, referred to therein, may now be released, and the Corporation which I represent be entitled to receive orders for Crown grants or land revenue receipts, under clause 12 of the Fielding Contract. (Parliamentary Papers, D. 11, 1873.)

I make this request on the ground that the *bona fides* of the Corporation is now sufficiently proved, the number of emigrants introduced being in excess of the requirements of its contract with the Government, and the expenditure of the Corporation in the permanent improvement of the block by road making, house building &c., besides the cost of English agency and survey of the block, being a sufficient indication of the intention to carry out the contract in the most liberal spirit. I may mention, in connection with this fact, that nearly one hundred persons are now fully employed at the sole expense of the Corporation, and that every family introduced to their settlement entails on the Corporation an advance of from £40 to £50 for house building, carriage, and for their temporary supply.

As I pointed out in a former letter, the action of the Government in granting free passages to all immigrants has practically deprived the Corporation of a most valuable privilege, secured to it under the Fielding contract, on account of which your Government ignores any claim on the part of the Corporation to compensation. I have no intention now of reopening this question, but I would respectfully submit that this is an additional reason why the utmost consideration should be shown by the Government to the Corporation in the initial stages of the undertaking; and I need hardly remind you that the locking up, even of £7,000 of capital, must to some extent act prejudicially to the interests of the Corporation.

I have, &amp;c.,

A. FOLLETT HALCOMBE,

Agent, Emigration and Colonist's Aid Corporation.

The Hon. Julius Vogel, Colonial Treasurer, Wellington.

## No. 7.

Mr. HALCOMBE to the Hon. the COLONIAL TREASURER.

SIR,—

Wellington, 28th March, 1874.

Referring to my communication of yesterday's date, I have the honor to forward, for your information, a letter since received from His Honor the Superintendent of Wellington.

In reference to this letter, I desire to state that the reason assigned to me by His Honor for refusing my request was altogether outside the merits of the case, but that he declined to take a principal part in a matter entirely in the hands of the Colonial Government.

I therefore applied to you as the principal on the part of the Government in the Fielding contract; and I now submit that, as His Honor's refusal is not based upon a doubt of the ability or intention of my Company to carry out their undertaking, there cannot be, as far as the Company is concerned, any valid reason for retaining the security originally suggested by His Honor solely as a guarantee of the *bona fides* of the Corporation at a time when they had taken no steps whatever to fulfil their contract.

I have, &amp;c.,

A. FOLLETT HALCOMBE,

Agent, Emigrant and Colonist's Aid Corporation.

The Hon. the Colonial Treasurer, Wellington.

## Enclosure in No. 7.

His Honor the SUPERINTENDENT, Wellington, to Mr. HALCOMBE.

SIR,—

Superintendent's Office, Wellington, 27th March, 1874.

Referring to our interview of yesterday, at which you applied, on behalf of the Directors of the Manchester Company, to the Provincial Government to give their consent to the release of £7,500, I now beg to state, for your information, that the reasons which operated with the Provincial Government in declining to accede to your application in no way implied any doubt of the ability or intention of your Company to carry out their undertaking.

I may state further, that it was with very great regret that the Provincial Government arrived at the conclusion it did.

I have the pleasure to inform you that the Provincial Government will propose to the Council a vote of £3,000 in aid of roads within the Manchester Block for the ensuing financial year.

I have, &amp;c.,

WILLIAM FITZHERBERT,

Superintendent.

A. F. Halcombe, Esq., Agent for the Manchester Company.

## No. 8.

The Hon. the COLONIAL TREASURER to His Honor the SUPERINTENDENT, Wellington.

SIR,—

Treasury, Wellington, 31st March, 1874.

I have the honor to enclose a copy of a letter from the Agent of the Emigrant and Colonist's Aid Corporation, applying that a Crown grant or land revenue receipts may be issued to the Corporation in respect of the sum of £7,500 paid on the 6th September, 1873, the grant for which land has hitherto been withheld as security for the *bona fides* of the Corporation.

If your Honor approves of such a course being adopted, the Government will accede to Mr. Halcombe's request, but not otherwise.

I have, &amp;c.,

JULIUS VOGEL.

His Honor the Superintendent, Wellington.

## No. 9.

His Honor the SUPERINTENDENT, Wellington, to the Hon. the COLONIAL TREASURER.

SIR,—

Superintendent's Office, Wellington, 31st March, 1874.

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter of this day's date, enclosing a copy of a letter from the Agent of the Emigrant and Colonist's Aid Corporation, applying that a Crown grant or land revenue receipts may be issued to the Corporation in respect of the sum of £7,500, paid on the 6th September, 1873, the grant for which lands has hitherto been withheld as security for the *bona fides* of the Corporation.

In reply, I have the honor to inform you that the Provincial Government has already fully considered the subject, and decided to decline to approve of such a course being adopted.

I have further the honor to call your attention to the seventh section of "The Wellington Debts Act Amendment Act, 1872," which provides that "It shall not be lawful for the Governor to enter into any agreement with the said Corporation whereby the proceeds derivable from the sale or other disposition of the said lands or from the said securities may be diminished, without the concurrence of the Superintendent of the said province."

I have, &amp;c.,

WILLIAM FITZHERBERT,

Superintendent.

The Hon. the Colonial Treasurer, Wellington.

## No. 10.

The Hon. the COLONIAL TREASURER to His Honor the SUPERINTENDENT, Wellington.

SIR,—

Treasury, Wellington, 7th April, 1874.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of March 31st, in reply to mine of March 31st, with reference to the request made by the Agent of the Emigrant and Colonist's Aid Corporation, and in which you state that the Provincial Government have already fully considered the subject, and decided to decline to approve of such a course as that suggested by the Agent being adopted.

2. I was aware that the matter had been referred to your Honor. In the letter addressed to me by the Agent, Mr. Halcombe, he says, "I desire to state that the reason assigned to me by His Honor for refusing my request was altogether outside the merits of the case, but that he declined to take a principal part in a matter entirely in the hands of the Colonial Government."

3. Mr. Halcombe also forwarded to me copy of a letter received by him from your Honor, in which it is stated that "The reasons which operated with the Provincial Government in declining to accede to your application in no way implied any doubt of the ability or intention of your Company to carry out their undertaking. I may state further, that it was with very great regret that the Provincial Government arrived at the conclusion it did."

4. This letter from your Honor seemed to corroborate Mr. Halcombe's explanation to me; for as you did not decide to retain the security because of any doubt of the ability or intention of the Company to carry out their undertaking, and as the security was given for that purpose, it did not seem to me that there was any purpose in retaining it.

5. I was quite aware of the clause of "The Wellington Debts Act Amendment Act, 1872," quoted by your Honor; and therefore it was that, in my letter to your Honor, I stated that Mr. Halcombe's application would be granted if you agreed to that course, but not otherwise.

His Honor the Superintendent, Wellington.

I have, &c.,  
JULIUS VOGEL.

## No. 11.

The Hon. the COLONIAL TREASURER to Mr. HALCOMBE.

SIR,—

Wellington, 9th April, 1874.

I have the honor, in compliance with your request, to forward to you copy of correspondence with the Superintendent of Wellington, from which you will gather that I am not able to comply with the request which, as Manager of the Emigrant and Colonist's Aid Corporation, you made in your letter of 28th March.

A. F. Halcombe, Esq.

I have, &c.,  
JULIUS VOGEL.

## No. 12.

Mr. HALCOMBE to the Hon. the COLONIAL TREASURER.

SIR,—

Wellington, 10th April, 1874.

In reply to your letter of yesterday's date, I have the honor to inform you that I am prepared now to pay the amount of interest due to the Government on the 1st April from the Emigrant and Colonist's Aid Corporation.

As, however, the question has been raised whether the Government has power to give titles to purchasers of land under the Feilding contract, owing to the regulations referred to in clause 4 of that contract not having yet been made, I deem it my duty to decline to make any further payment until this question has been satisfactorily settled.

As I have to draw upon my Corporation in England for the amount of interest due, the draft being at sixty days' sight, I should be obliged by your informing me if the Government would accept my draft, and on what terms.

The Hon. the Colonial Treasurer,  
Wellington

I have, &c.,  
A. FOLLET HALCOMBE,  
Agent, Emigrant and Colonist's Aid Corporation.

## No. 13.

The SECRETARY to the Treasury to Mr. HALCOMBE.

SIR,—

Wellington, 18th April, 1874.

I have the honor, by direction of the Hon. the Colonial Treasurer, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th instant, notifying that you are prepared to retire the interest notes of the Corporation due on the 1st instant, so soon as the regulations referred to in the contract shall have been made.

In reply, I am to inform you that the regulations in question are now before His Excellency the Governor for signature, and will no doubt be issued in the course of a few days.

In answer to your inquiry whether the Government would accept, in payment of the notes above referred to, your draft at sixty days on the Corporation in England, I am to inform you that the Government would prefer that you should negotiate your drafts through your own bankers.

I have, &c.,

C. T. BATKIN,

Secretary to the Treasury.

A. F. Halcombe, Esq., Wellington.

## No. 14.

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

REPORT by Mr. HALCOMBE on the progress made by the Emigrant and Colonist's Aid Corporation in the Colonization of the Manchester Block, Manawatu.

SIR,—

Wellington, 31st July, 1874.

I have the honor to forward, for your information, a report of the progress made by the Emigrant and Colonist's Aid Corporation in the colonization of the Manchester Block, Manawatu, under the terms of the agreement with the Colonial Government generally known as the "Feilding Contract."

Having already fully reported to His Honor the Superintendent of Wellington at a somewhat earlier date, the report now presented will differ little from that, excepting that it brings up information to the 30th June, 1874.

It may assist, perhaps, in making the report more intelligible to the members of the General Assembly if I briefly recapitulate the origin and terms of the contract referred to.

During the period, some seven years ago, when an agitation in favour of emigration to the colonies was going on in England, a society called "The Emigrant and Colonist's Aid Corporation" was formed by a number of noblemen and other influential men, headed by His Grace the Duke of Manchester.

The title of the Corporation sufficiently explains the object of its formation, but no practical effect seems to have been given to the intentions of its members until, at the close of the year 1871, the Hon. Colonel Feilding, after visiting the Australian colonies, came to New Zealand, commissioned by the directory to find a suitable field for colonizing operations.

The result of Colonel Feilding's negotiations with the New Zealand Government was the purchase by the Corporation he represented of the 106,000 acres of the Manawatu district now known as the Manchester Block.

The price agreed to be given by the Corporation for this block was £75,000, being at the rate of 15s. per acre for 100,000 acres, the remaining 6,000 acres being allowed for roads and reserves. Under the terms of Colonel Feilding's original contract and subsequent modifications, bills were given for this amount, bearing interest at 5 per cent., and maturing at different periods up to the year 1882. The Corporation agreed to execute all internal surveys at its own cost, and undertook, under heavy money penalties, to introduce 2,000 immigrants into the colony, and to settle upon its land 2,000 statute adults before the 1st April, 1877.

The Colonial Government, on its part, undertook to provide free passages from England to the settlement for the Corporation's immigrants, and to employ a current 200 men on railway formation, or other public works, within ten miles of the block. The Provincial Government of Wellington also agreed to recommend to the Council annually a grant in aid, up to £2,000 per annum, as an equivalent contribution to an expenditure, by the Corporation, up to that amount, on road works within the Corporation's boundaries.

Owing chiefly to the great change which has taken place in the last eighteen months in the position of the English labourer, and also to the difficulties naturally attendant on starting in England an undertaking to be carried out at the other side of the world, active colonizing operations under the contract cannot be said to have commenced until the month of September, 1873, although a surveyor had been employed for more than a twelvemonth previously in doing preliminary work; and as agent to the Corporation, I had erected in the town of Palmerston a substantial building as a depôt, for the reception from time to time of immigrants *in transitu*.

The pioneer party of immigrants sent out under the Corporation's auspices arrived in the Colony by the "Duke of Edinburgh" early in January of this year, and up to the present date the following shipments have been made:—

Arrived—

Per "Duke of Edinburgh" ... ..	23½	statute adults.
" "Salisbury" ... ..	45½	"
" "Ocean Mail" ... ..	79	"
" s.s. "Mongol" ... ..	14½	"
" "Woodlark" ... ..	52	"
" "Golden Sea" ... ..	50	"
" "La Hogue" ... ..	60	"
" "Waikato" ... ..	16	"

*En route*—

Per "Euterpe" ... ..	89	"
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Making a total of 429½ statute adults, numbering 614 souls.

Before touching upon operations in the colony, it may be well to describe the position and character of the land which is the field of operations.

The Manchester Block extends from the Rangitikei River to the Ruahine Ranges by the gorge of the Manawatu River. It is twenty miles in length by an average breadth of eight miles. With the exception of about 12,000 acres of open land, the block is covered with bush. Much of this bush is tawa forest, very light, and easily cleared; but there are also large blocks covered with very valuable

timber—matai and rimu—interspersed with totara trees; and large groves of magnificent totara occur in every direction over the block. The soil is uniformly rich, much of it being a deep alluvial deposit underlaid with fine waterworn shingle. Though the country generally has a great fall seaward and is therefore well drained, it has an apparent level, and the few rolling ridges will offer little obstacle to the formation of roads and tramways in any direction.

The block is intersected and almost equally divided by the Oroua Stream, which runs north and south through a magnificent valley, fully five miles wide, into which the drainage from at least two-thirds of the block finds its way, and which is full of magnificent timber. All over this valley water is obtainable in wells from 10 to 15 feet below the surface, and the block generally is very well watered, and yet entirely free from any injurious flooding of the streams.

The main line of railway in course of formation from Wanganui to Wellington and Napier runs through the whole length of the block, and the tramway now open from the port of Foxton to the town of Palmerston approaches within four miles of the southern boundary, and its extension to a point well within the block is now in progress. The town of Feilding, the present centre of operations, is situated on the railway line close to its intersection by the Oroua River, and is reached either from the Foxton or the Rangitikei side by a good metalled road, which runs within four miles of it, and the road over that four miles is being rapidly formed and metalled.

The Corporation's immigrants are received as a rule at Wellington by myself, and while here the lives of the heads of families are insured in the New Zealand Government Insurance Office for £100 each, as a protection to the Corporation for their indebtedness, and as a provision for the families in case of accident; the first half-year's premium being advanced by the Corporation. Then they are forwarded by steamer to Foxton, at Government expense. At Foxton they are received by an agent, and lodged for a night, if necessary, at the expense of the Corporation. The next day they are forwarded, with their bedding, to Palmerston, twenty-five miles, by tramway, their heavy luggage following immediately. Arrived at Palmerston, they are lodged in the depôt built by the Corporation, which is capable of holding about fourteen families.

Up to the time of arrival at Palmerston no charge is made against the immigrants, except for the insurance premium, and for ship's kits, if provided in England at the Corporation expense.

They remain at the depôt for a day or two until carts can be got to convey them through to Feilding, a distance of eleven miles. The immigrants are charged with the cost of their rations while in depôt, and a charge of 30s. per family is made to cover cost of cartage of people and luggage through to the settlement. Arrived at the settlement, each family had at first a bell tent supplied in which to live until their houses should be ready. As winter approached I had a number of  $\Lambda$  huts erected of sawn timber for their temporary accommodation, and after another shipment I hope to have cottages erected in anticipation of the people's arrival.

The immigrants are supplied on the ground with all necessary tools, cooking utensils, and supplies of food, which are charged at reasonable rates against their future earnings, and the men are at once set to work on road making, bush clearing, carpentering, sawing, brickmaking, or bricklaying, or on any other work for which they may be best fitted.

As I attach much importance to the immediate housing of newly arrived immigrants, and believe it to be essential to the full success of a special settlement such as this, I trust I may be pardoned a slight digression to explain the plan which I have adopted with reference to this matter, and my reasons for incurring the expense.

I tried to locate the "Duke of Edinburgh" immigrants at once on country sections of land, and set them to build themselves temporary habitations out of the materials most ready to hand. A very few days' experience proved to me conclusively that such a course would be fatal to the prosperity of the settlement; and that with so large a number as I had to expect to deal with, settlement under these circumstances would be impossible.

In the first place, all my available land would be taken up at once, and it would be quite impossible to put immigrants into the bush before the road lines were cut.

Secondly, the separation of the people made their supply almost impossible, as well as their concentration on any work.

Thirdly, their ignorance of the character of the materials at command, their unhandiness, and the want of tools (unless they incurred a large expenditure for them), and the fact that as a rule only one workman was available to build a shelter for each family, made it almost impossible for them to erect decent houses in any reasonable time.

Moreover, separation means isolation in a country covered with fern and scrub, or even flax, and the people lost their way in moving about, and were thoroughly dispirited. Their utter ignorance of the character of the land made them select the worst, or be discontented with the best sections; and I saw nothing but insurmountable difficulties to myself, great discontent and long discomfort to the people themselves, and a waste of valuable time and of some expensive material in the production of an utterly valueless shanty.

I immediately resolved, therefore, to concentrate the immigrants and their work about the town at first; to erect houses for them at once on terms easy to them, and productive of a fair return for the expenditure; and I look forward to their removing out into the country as the road works open it up, and after they shall have educated themselves into a knowledge of the country, their work, their prospects, and their real requirements.

Acting on this determination, I entered into arrangements for the immediate erection of as many cottages as the timber I could obtain and the carpenters available would allow. There was much difficulty at first, as the timber had to be carted from Palmerston, a distance of eleven miles; and this fact, with other disadvantages inseparable from working in a new place, made the first twenty cottages rather expensive. Now, however, that we have our own saw-mill at work, carpenters at hand, and bricks made on the ground, I am able to lessen the expense, and ascertain exactly the cost of the buildings.

The cottage, 20 x 10 feet, divided into two rooms, weather-boarded, with shingled roof, and brick chimney, I estimate to cost £82, and the acres of township land on which they are placed have an upse



price of £10, equal to £42 in all. By a payment of 7s. per week the immigrant makes cottage and ground his freehold property in three years. If during that time he may wish to buy it outright, or if he desire to remove to a country section, a sum equal to 3s. 6d. per week during the time of his occupancy is deducted as rental, and the balance goes in part liquidation of the purchase money, or in part payment for the erection of another house on the country section.

I have every reason to be satisfied with the results of this arrangement. The immigrant gains in immediate comfort for himself and his family, and in employing himself in profitable instead of unprofitable work, while the Corporation gains by his contentment and by remunerative investment of capital.

I have no fear that the towns will be overbuilt. As one occupant leaves a cottage, a newly arrived immigrant can be placed in it; and I have found, as the result of my experience in New Zealand, that the great difficulty in locating family men in country districts is the want of house-room for them, and therefore that houses, where available, attract population.

With a few exceptions, chiefly of those artisans for whom no suitable work could be found on the block, all the immigrants sent out by my Corporation have proceeded to the settlement. I think this is satisfactory, as I do not make any attempt to coerce them, not wishing to have unwilling hands. Most of them are doing very well, and at the last pay-day many had paid all their debts to the Corporation, and the weekly charge on their cottages up to date; and I think all, or very nearly all, are satisfied with their position and prospects.

As to the class of immigrants sent out—they have been hitherto all labouring men, and I am on the whole well satisfied with them. There is, however, as is likely to be the case even with the most careful selection, a small percentage of people whom I would rather not have to deal with, and who are a source of anxiety to me. But even as to these I am very hopeful, for I find that the sense of present possession of a house and land, and the prospect of an independent future for himself and his family which is here opened out to a man, have generally a great effect upon his character; and the labourer who in England merely worked for the Saturday night and began the world again on Monday morning, devotes himself to the accumulation of property, and is rapidly transformed into a careful and thrifty citizen.

The series of sketches which accompany this report, show to some extent the progress of the settlement; and when it is remembered that at the end of January, little more than six months ago, the surveyors' tents were the only signs of life or work upon the place, we may, I think, claim credit for the progress made.

Fifty immigrants' cottages and several other weather-board buildings have been erected in that time at the Corporation's expense. The road lines in and about the town of Feilding, mostly through bush, have been cleared for a total length of ten miles. Three miles of road and two miles of tramway have been formed. Nearly two miles of the road formation has been metalled, and several small bridges have been erected. A large school and schoolmaster's house is in course of building, and the immigrants' cottages are being rapidly proceeded with. One saw-mill has been at work for the Corporation for the last three months; a second mill will be completed in a week or two, and the demand for timber for house building and other purposes, is so great already that I shall probably have to run the mills night and day to meet the requirements. I consider that the first difficulties of starting so great an undertaking have now been overcome, and I confidently expect a great success as the result of our operations.

The immigrants will now, under a proposed arrangement with the Hon. the Minister for Public Works, be chiefly employed in the formation of the railway line from Feilding towards Foxton, with the view of the completion of railway communication between Feilding and the port of Foxton within about eighteen months' time; and, simultaneously, it will be my endeavour to open up the Oroua Valley by a road and tramway line northwards from Feilding up the Kimbolton Road, anticipating the establishment of a timber trade so soon as railway communication shall be established with Foxton—a trade the extent of which will be limited only by the capacity of the shipping at Foxton to carry the timber away.

While on this subject, I may observe that I look upon the timber of the Corporation's block as a far more valuable crop than the land will ever hereafter at one time carry, and one which, if properly worked when the means of carriage to Foxton and Wanganui by railway shall be established, will be a source of very large revenue to the Corporation, besides being the means of employing a numerous population for many years to come. I may also state for your information, that the tramway which I propose building up the Oroua Valley to the northern boundary of the Manchester Block is but the first step towards tapping the almost inexhaustible forests of timber which stretch, as far as the eye can reach, for many miles beyond on either side.

As to the general plan of our future operations, I gladly take advantage of this opportunity to explain it authoritatively, so far as the scheme has been matured.

We propose to settle the block from three main points—

- (1.) From the town of Feilding, which is the natural centre of our block, and which is, I think, likely to be the chief town of the Manawatu district.
- (2.) From a town which will shortly be laid off on the railway line near the Rangitikei River, which will, by desire of my directory, be called Halcombe.
- (3.) From a town, also on the main railway line, somewhere near the gorge of the Manawatu.

The order in which these places will be settled must depend chiefly on the direction in which the railway formation shall be carried on. So far as I am able to judge, the completion of the line to Wanganui from Feilding must naturally follow the completion of the line to Foxton, so that the Rangitikei end of the block will be next operated on, leaving the Gorge end until the junction with the Wellington and Napier lines through the Manawatu Gorge shall be taken in hand.

It is the intention to deal with the land at the rate of about 20,000 acres per annum, if that is compatible with a due regard to the utilization of the masses of timber upon it.

The lands will be surveyed into town allotments of from a quarter-acre to one acre each; suburban allotments of from five acres to twenty acres; and country sections from forty acres to 2,000

acres. Alternate blocks, of about 1,000 acres each, it is intended to dispose of to our own immigrants and some others for actual occupation on the deferred-payment system, charging a light rental and giving a right to purchase at a given price at the end of from seven to ten years. Periodical auction sales, the first of which will probably be about November next, will be made of the intermediate blocks (amounting to 10,000 acres) and a certain number of town and suburban sections. These sales will be for cash.

In all cases the best blocks of timber will be reserved from sale, as it is the intention of the Corporation gradually to establish an extensive timber trade for the supply of the West Coast towards Taranaki, and for export from Wanganui and Foxton.

The prices fixed upon the land will to some extent depend upon circumstances which it is impossible to foresee, and they will vary according to situation and quality and the character of the timber upon the various sections.

The present upset price of sections in the Fielding township is from £10 per acre for outer sections, to £25 each for quarter-acre sections in central positions. At present I am only allowing land to be taken up on condition of immediate occupation. With this restriction, the most expensive allotments are fast being disposed of, and I should have no difficulty in selling the whole town at once at the upset price were I to remove that restriction.

The upset price at auction of suburban sections will probably be from £5 to £8 per acre, and of country lands from £2 to £4; leased lands will be charged from 2s. 6d. to 4s. per acre rental, with a right to purchase at from £3 to £5 at the end of the lease of seven or ten years.

Of course, in fixing these prices the Corporation contemplates a considerable expenditure in road work, which will in all cases, where practicable, be done in anticipation of sale and settlement.

What with the railway formation at present, the timber supply when the railway work is finished, the formation of internal roads and tramways, the cultivation of the land when the timber is gone, and the manifold industries which a population creates for its own supply, I see no reason to fear that for many years to come there will not be ample and remunerative employment for a very large number of workmen; and when the Manchester Block shall have been stripped of its timber, a similar process of colonization carried on over the adjoining lands will long continue to support far more men than the terms of the Fielding contract contemplate the introduction of.

In conclusion, Sir, I desire to express my sense of the consideration and assistance I have met with at the hands of the Government in the execution of the difficult work which has been confided to my charge.

I have, &c.,

A. FOLLETT HALCOMBE,  
Agent, Emigrant and Colonist's Aid Corporation.

The Hon. the Minister for Immigration, Wellington.