

1895.
NEW ZEALAND.

SETTLEMENT OF THE PEOPLE ON THE LAND

(REPORT ON THE, IN THE COLONIES OF NEW SOUTH WALES, VICTORIA, AND SOUTH AUSTRALIA,
BY J. E. MARCH, SUPERINTENDENT OF SETTLEMENTS).

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

Mr. J. E. MARCH, Superintendent of Settlements, to the Hon. the MINISTER of LANDS.

SIR,—

Wellington, 25th June, 1895.

In compliance with your letter of instructions, dated the 22nd April, that I should proceed to Australia and visit the village settlements and labour colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia, inspect them, and obtain all necessary information as to their methods of working and results, and report thereon, I have the honour to state that I left Wellington immediately on receipt of your instructions, and arrived in Sydney, *via* Auckland, on 29th April.

I propose reporting on land settlement in the colonies I have visited in the following order: New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia. But before doing so may I be permitted to state that I have not the least wish to reflect on the methods adopted by the various Governments in their endeavours to promote a better state of things amongst those who have no permanent abode or fixed employment. I only record facts, and I may be pardoned if I occasionally express my individual opinion thereon.

NEW SOUTH WALES.

In this, the mother-colony, very little has been done to settle the people permanently on the soil. It is true that on the 13th June, 1893, an Act was passed to establish and regulate labour settlements on Crown lands, which was amended in 1894. The Act provides for the appointment of Boards of Control to whom the Crown may lease the area set apart for a labour settlement for any term not exceeding twenty-eight years, commencing on the date of the Governor's approval of the lease, with a right of renewal for a further term not exceeding twenty-eight years. The rent of the land is determined after appraisalment by the local Land Board, and is payable annually after the expiration of the fourth year of the lease.

It is provided under the Act that the Colonial Treasurer may, from any moneys voted for the purpose, advance by way of loan to the Board of Control for each enrolled member:—

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| (a.) Who is head of a family dependent upon him | £50 |
| (b.) Who is a married person without a family dependent on him | £40 |
| (c.) Who is an unmarried person over the age of twenty-one years, which term shall be held to include a bachelor, a spinster, a widower, or a widow | £30 |

Before making any advance satisfactory proof must be given that the improvements made upon the labour settlement are of a value approximating to the aggregate amount of money previously advanced by the Crown. The term "improvements" with respect to any labour settlement is held to include any live-stock or working-plant the joint property of such settlement.

At the expiration of four years from the commencement of the lease, and each following year, 8 per cent. of the total sum advanced to the Board is charged on the revenues of the settlement, until the amount advanced, with interest at the rate of 4 per cent. per annum, has been repaid.

The Government charge the Board of Control a nominal rent per acre per annum—in the case of Wilberforce Labour Settlement it is 6d.—and the Board may, subject to the approval of the Minister of Lands, grant a sub-lease of any land vested in it to any enrolled member at such rent, and subject to such conditions, and for such term, as it may think fit. The settlers have the right under the regulations of nominating a portion of the Board, which in this case consists of nine members. The settlers nominate four, and the Government appoint five.

Under the powers of the Board, I would draw special attention to clause 7 of the Act, as under: "The Board may establish and manage any trade or industry, and may, by regulation, dispose of and apportion the proceeds and profits derivable therefrom among the enrolled members;