

In recognition of these principles, I shall not be averse to considering plans for special settlements, in which it will be necessary to advance some money for the employment of the settlers on useful works, to be recouped out of receipts from the settlement, to be secured to the Department. The formation of roads obviously suggests itself as the description of work on which the settlers might be employed, and the sale of the land as the source of recoupment of the advances; but I do not expressly name these, because I am in hopes that some effort will be made to establish forest settlements, in which the settlers would have employment offered to them to utilize the timber, the returns from which would serve as a means of repayment for advances, in addition, if necessary, to receipts from the land when cleared.

The plan discussed with the Superintendent of Westland, of which the Memorandum herewith forwarded is an outline, contemplated a combination of an ordinary special settlement with a forest settlement. I adopt the phrase as a convenient one.

I ask your Honor's consideration for a settlement of this mixed character, or for one in which the chief object will be that of putting to a profitable use the timber. Amongst the lands available for special settlements in this Province are tracts of splendid forest. Your Honor is aware that, to the ordinary occupier of small means, settlement on such land means the destruction, as rapidly as possible, of the timber which covers it. In fact, small occupiers cannot derive from the timber the great value it possesses.

From an economic point of view, the destruction and the reckless use of the forests of the country do not probably entail so much loss as the improper treatment of the timber. Without dwelling on the question of the suitable time to cut down timber, or the best means of seasoning it, I presume it will not be questioned that the intrinsic value of unseasoned wood, such as is now commonly used, is infinitely less than that timber which has been subjected to a proper mode of treatment. At present, only green timber can be generally procured, and so there is a market for it; but were provision made for timber in a more fitting condition, it would command the favour of the market, and establish for New Zealand wood the reputation which it is believed to deserve, but of which the mode in which it is dealt with has, to some extent, deprived it.

The object of a forest settlement would be of a twofold character—first, to prevent the forests from wanton destruction; second, to prevent the trees from being cut down improperly or being prematurely sawn up. If I am correctly informed, in the State forests of several European countries the Government solely cut down the trees and sell the logs to the saw-mill owners.

I throw out for your Honor's consideration the question of whether a forest settlement might not be established on some such basis as the following:—We will suppose the locality selected is one towards which a railway is approaching, to connect it with a port of shipment or the centre of a large population.

- (A.) During the proper season, trees appointed by a competent overseer to be cut down.
- (B.) At other times a road or tramway through the forest to be constructed, and the logs stacked or placed so as to make them convenient for subsequent use, and in the meantime to run as little danger as possible from fire. When a sufficient number of logs are in a condition to be cut, and the road usable, logs to be sold either for transport in their then condition, or, which would be much preferable, for treatment in saw-mills established on sites in the forest, cleared for the purpose, and offered with the condition of purchasing at a stated price the logs belonging to the Government, and with a rigorous prohibition against cutting down by the occupiers themselves.
- (C.) Land not to be sold or disposed of until cleared of timber, but it might be agreed with the settlers, who would in the meantime have received good employment, that a portion of their earnings should be expended in the purchase of cleared land.
- (D.) Co-operative saw-mills and other factories for working timber might, under this plan, be arranged.

I am of opinion that a settlement on the basis I have sketched out would be successful from many points of view, but I am ready to receive proposals for ordinary special settlements, or for settlements of a mixed character, such as that under discussion with the Superintendent of Westland.

In an earlier part of this communication, I have advisedly used the phrase "supposing immigrants to mainly constitute these settlements," because I foresee that it may be necessary that they should not entirely constitute them. Of course, the Department considers the subject from the immigration point of view; and in that light it appears to me that a small admixture of old colonists might be so valuable to newly-arrived immigrants that I would be justified, when it was considered desirable there should be such admixture, to recognize it as a condition favourable to, and in the interests of, the immigrants composing the settlement.

Your Honor, even if you do not agree with the views I have stated, will excuse my addressing you at such length on the subject; and as I desire to bring the matter under general consideration, I propose to publish this communication if your Honor does not object.

His Honor the Superintendent, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
JULIUS VOGEL.

Memorandum as to Proposed Settlement in Westland.

Special settlement of 100,000 acres, of which about 50,000 acres will be set apart for 250 families, say 1,000 adults; the balance to be made a forest reserve, to be retained by the Government.

Each adult to purchase 50 acres, at per acre per annum, for seven years.

The Government to offer employment to male adults for two years, three days a week, or alternate weeks, at per day, either in making roads or cutting down trees on the Government reserve; but the Government not to be bound to employ more than 200 adults at any one time, and no adult to be so employed for more than one year.