

1880.
NEW ZEALAND.

VINE CULTURE:

(SUGGESTED SPECIAL SETTLEMENT IN THE HOKIANGA DISTRICT).

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

The AGENT-GENERAL to the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,— 7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 16th June, 1880.

I have the honor to forward, for the consideration of the Government, copy of a communication I have received from Mr. Galbraith, setting forth very fully his ideas with reference to a proposed special settlement in the North of Auckland for the Culture of the Vine.

Mr. Galbraith waited on me in the first instance, and I had a lengthened interview with him on this subject, the result of which was my suggesting to him to put his ideas into writing, and promising to forward them to the Government for the purpose named.

I have, &c.,
JULIUS VOGEL,
Agent-General.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

Enclosure.

Mr. GEORGE GALBRAITH to the AGENT-GENERAL.

The Hon. Sir Julius Vogel, K.C.M.G., Agent-General for New Zealand, 7, Westminster Chambers, London.

SIR,—With reference to the matter of a special settlement in the North of Auckland, for the culture of the vine, which I had the honor of bringing under your notice on Friday last, I now, in accordance with your desire, beg to submit, for the consideration of the New Zealand Government, reasons for encouraging a suitable settlement.

This is not a new idea. The *New Zealand Herald* of 21st July, 1879 (issue for Home circulation), says:—"The Waste Lands Board, at the instance of the Government, have reserved from sale a block of 26,000 acres in the Hokianga District, it being the object of Sir George Grey to establish there a settlement of skilled vine-growers, in order to regularly test the capacity of the colony for wine-production. It is of exceeding importance to ascertain as soon as possible what we are really able to do in this way. . . . The locality for the experiment has been well chosen, the climate of the northern districts of New Zealand being, of course, the most favourable."

Northern Auckland, being more broken and varied than the south, is more suited for gardens or small farms than for large farms, which, to modern ideas, are best suited for profitable occupation; and these northern districts are not likely to be soon settled by ordinary agriculturists, as they prefer the southern districts as more suitable; and until these have been filled up the country north of Auckland will probably remain unsettled, unless some special industry for which it may be better suited, as the culture of the vine and wine-making, be well introduced. The olive and silk would no doubt also do well here.

The culture of the vine, the olive, and perhaps also of silk, admit of, and, indeed, require a much larger population—probably from three to eight times more—than ordinary farming does; and such industries would not compete with existing New Zealand industries, but, on the contrary, foster these, and create new ones.

Dr. Jules Guzat, in his work on the "Culture de la Vigne et Vinification," says, in comparing the results to the wealth of France of ordinary farming and the culture of the vine:—"Bread and meat are consequences, and not causes (*principes*), of colonization; they constitute its necessities, and not its wealth: these being to populations what wages are to workers—an expense, and not the treasury which provides the pay. The vine, on the contrary, is at once the workshop and the banker of the *vignerons*: it necessitates and forces all around the production of bread and meat, it pays a large tribute to the State, it exports afar its product, and finds still means largely to remunerate its proprietor if he is a true cultivator."

To succeed in vine-culture and wine-making (as well as in olive and silk culture) skilled workers experienced in the industry would be required. Selected workers from the south of France would be able at once to commence operations with the best possible prospect of success.

To attract such a settlement it would be necessary to arrange for the emigration in sections from the same districts of a sufficient number of families known to each other, so as to overcome the homesick feeling which isolation would produce, especially in French people, among foreigners. Arrangements would require to be made for their simultaneous transit, landing, and occupation, so that the idea of expatriation and isolation might as far as possible be got rid of. Sufficient inducement would also have to be held out as to temporal advantages and comforts in the new home, and support by work, either public or private or otherwise, until the vineyards and plantations were sufficiently grown to yield supporting returns, which could not be looked for till some years—not less than three or four years, at least—had passed.

In order to effect this satisfactorily, a company with sufficient capital would be necessary. The company would have to see to the obtaining of the proper emigrants, their transit, housing, employment, &c., till the vineyards were developed; or, in short, to see to the proper development of the settlement.

The inducements the Government could offer would be, it is presumed, in the direction of free passages, land at a nominal price, and the making of roads, &c., in which the emigrants would be employed—suchlike as have been already given for farming settlements. As an illustration and precedent, the case referred to in the "Official Handbook of New Zealand," page 216, may be cited:—

"Colonel Feilding had little difficulty in selecting a favourable site, and making terms with the Colonial and Provincial Governments. Negotiations resulted in the purchase of this block at 15s. an acre, paid for by bills bearing interest at five per cent., and maturing at different intervals over ten years. The Corporation undertook to introduce to the colony and to settle on the land 2,000 people within six years. The Government, on the other hand, was to provide free passages for these people from England, and to find work in the formation of the railway-line through the property, or in other public works in the neighbourhood, for a current number of 200 labourers. The Provincial Government made a conditional agreement to expend a sum not exceeding £2,000 per annum for five years, to assist in forming by-roads."

It is submitted that the proper introduction of the vine-culture would be a much more important factor in the general prosperity of the colony than the establishment of an agricultural settlement such as the "Manchester Settlement," inasmuch as a successful settlement of vine-growers would give a new and powerful factor towards the product of the general prosperity, whereas an agricultural settlement would relatively be merely a unit.

The success of the proposed vine settlement would insure the spread of such industry, enhance many existing industries, initiate others, and compete with none.

An expenditure towards the successful establishment of such an industry would be amply justified in the great benefit which would accrue from it to the country; as not only would a relatively dense and prosperous population be settled in a district where otherwise for long no population to speak of could reasonably be looked for, but this would act directly on many industries, and re-act on the country generally.

The lands in the north, at Hokianga, being in the meantime of little commercial value, it is submitted that the colony could not better deal with them than by holding out for the occupation of a portion of them, as proposed, the most liberal inducements, in the shape of free passages, employment of labourers, and land at a nominal price.

It will be understood that suitable water, road, and railway (contingent) access will be essential. The head of the Hokianga Inlet or River, if navigable water, might be a very suitable situation.

It is suggested that, if the Government deem this matter worthy of consideration, a competent person might be intrusted to collect information as to the conditions (climatic, geological, and topographical) of the land which the Government have reserved from sale for the object in view, so that if the subject be entertained no time might be lost.

It may be mentioned, that I have spoken of the matter to several persons in England and France, and that it has been well thought of, and considered to be likely to succeed if sufficient inducements and facilities are given.

I hope, if you concur in the desirability of the proposed settlement, that you may signify your approval of the object in transmitting this communication to your Government; and that the Government, if they consider the proper introduction of vine and olive culture desirable for the colony, may grant such terms and assistance as the circumstances require (as previously referred to), so as to warrant the formation of a company for bringing about successfully the proposed settlement in Hokianga.

302, Buchanan Street, Glasgow, 15th June, 1880.

I have, &c.,

GEO. GALBRAITH.