

- (c.) Each boy is paid 4s. a week pocket-money, and the remainder of his earnings is paid by the employer to the Immigration Department and placed to the lad's credit until he becomes twenty-one. Interest is allowed at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

The Commissioner of Crown Lands is empowered by Acts of Parliament and regulations thereunder to apprentice the lads to farmers from one to three years. The agreement provides that an employer shall, with the written consent of the Commissioner, have the right at any time to dismiss a boy in the event of his proving guilty of misconduct, or for any other reason which appears good and sufficient to the Minister. On the other hand, should an employer fail to abide by the provisions of the agreement the Minister may terminate it and withdraw the boy.

The advantages of this scheme seem to be—

- (1.) Every boy will be comparatively young, with a long expectancy of life. The majority will go direct to the country and thus tend to adjust the balance between city and country.
- (2.) Boys thus imported will be provided with accommodation by their employers and will not accentuate any housing difficulties.
- (3.) In a few years South Australia will have six thousand young men trained in agricultural and horticultural pursuits, and each will be in possession of a fair bank balance.

The boys are arriving in batches of fifty to eighty at approximately monthly intervals; there is the closest co-operation between the churches, Y.M.C.A., and the Government to help these boys, and in some districts local committees have already been formed to look after the boys who are to become South Australians.

The Commonwealth Immigration Office, Melbourne, in a recent report stated: "About eight hundred lads have already been introduced into South Australia under this scheme, which is working most satisfactorily."

In 1911 a party of fifty lads (under the Sedgwick scheme) whose ages ranged from sixteen to twenty, and principally drawn from the East End of London and from Liverpool, were brought out by the Government to test the suitability of English town lads for farm work in New Zealand. Out of this batch of boy immigrants thirty-seven were successful. Two prevailing ideas were proved untrue, viz.: (1) The English town lad would neither prove adaptable to nor settle down to New Zealand farm life; and (2) that the colonial farmer would overwork, badly feed, and underpay any boy under his care.

The New Zealand Government apprenticed the lads to good employers at graduated rates of pay, and with the exception of 1s. per week pocket-money the wages were banked for three years, or until the boy came of age. In the first year they earned £1,112 7s., an average of 10s. 4d. per week, but the wages were raised during the second year, some of the boys getting 30s. per week. The advent of war put an end to this phase of junior immigration, and many of the boys joined the New Zealand Expeditionary Force.

During 1914 the Government continued the scheme of immigration of farm lads, but these were drawn from rural districts. The annual report of the Immigration Department for that year stated: "The first party of fifty arrived by the "Ayrshire" on the 20th January, 1914, and the second party arrived on the 1st March. Both parties have given general satisfaction. Quite 60 per cent. of the boys possess a rudimentary knowledge of farming, whilst the remainder, the younger lads, possess the physique necessary to fit them for learning farm-work in New Zealand. The farmers employing the boys advanced part of the passage-money (£8) to bring them out, the Government paying the difference with the shipping bodies. The £8 advanced by the farmer is being repaid by the boys out of wages earned. The wages at the end of May that year ranged from 25s. a week without clothes to 7s. 6d. per week with clothes in addition."

The annual report of the same Department for 1915 stated: "The experiment of introducing boys with some farming experience at Home for farm-work in New Zealand has proved successful, and the results justify further trials on a larger scale. Hundreds of applications have been received by the Department from small farmers who require this class of labour, and as soon as it is possible to resume a more active immigration policy special attention will be given to immigration of farm boys."

If the New Zealand Farmers' Union were to experiment with, say, 100 boys the following procedure would have to be followed:—

- (1.) The New Zealand Farmers' Union would decide upon the minimum weekly wage and notify the Minister.
- (2.) The High Commissioner would be notified of this and asked to make the conditions known to intending immigrants.
- (3.) The provincial secretaries throughout New Zealand will find out the farmers willing to engage a boy and send names and addresses to Dominion headquarters. The religion of the boy desired must also be stated.
- (4.) The selection of the boys in England to be strict and carried on by one cognizant of New Zealand customs and requirements. All boys eligible for selection to be medically fit and examined by a reputable officer appointed by the High Commissioner.
- (5.) On arrival in New Zealand the boys will be taken care of by the Immigration Department, which has the machinery necessary for quick despatch to employers.
- (6.) The New Zealand Farmers' Union to receive annual reports from each boy's employer and forward them to the Minister.