

E. AFRICA
RHODESIA

60689

REF W 8

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281

Gen. Office

1918

3 Dec.

Best previous Paper.

M.D.

582/11

Land Settlement for ex Soldiers

Seals for Opium, letter from Major R.P. Butler
submitting scheme

R. P. Butler

Major Butler

I am sorry that this has been delayed until now.

Our position with regard to land settlement in E.A. is that we are still waiting for the report of the local Commission. We have just telegraphed asking for a résumé of its proposals and the date when we may expect

Major Butler's proposal, in its co-operative aspect, resembles that which Major Ward put forward in C.O. / 45433/18. It fell through for want of financial backing, and I imagine that the same fate will befall any other scheme of the sort unless it is taken up through some philanthropic agency.

In any case, the Protectorate Govt. is not likely to be in a position to undertake any financial responsibility in this matter. It was a condition of the terms of reference of the Land Commission that no pledge of the kind could be contemplated.

Ans. to Enquiry 8 of 1918

Best subsequent Paper.

281/11

I can well imagine that there may be 10,000 to 20,000 officers who would wish to come under a scheme of this kind, but there will not be room for anything like that number in the E.A.P., and it is probable, judging from the number of enquiries which we get, that there will be enough officers with capital of their own, to account for all the land likely to be available.

As regards communications, it was another condition of the terms of reference to the Commission, that we could make no promises on this head. But it is likely that our ordinary programme of railway development, when we can make a move in the matter, will greatly assist in the development of the areas likely to be taken up.

I think Lord Milner's Private Secretary can only be informed that [it is not possible for us to deal fully with this scheme until we have the report of the local Commission, which may take in a few weeks,] but that so far as ^{the friends of} the E.A.P. ^{are} concerned, there is no possibility of any system of advances to officers or any arrangements for free passages, and that, as regards communications these can only be improved as a part of the general development of the country and as its resources admit, and not as a special factor in any scheme of post-war settlement.

For []
Schemes for land
in the E.A.P. are
being reviewed
careful consideration

Pass this, through Mr. Davis as to Rhodesia.
My own view is that the settlement is being ignored.

U.S. 24.11.19
I think that it will be best when we do refer to Rhodesia matter in the off

Agree 27.11.19
4.12.19

Copy of my reply to Major Thornton
attached
W.S. 9.1.19
Fully W.S. 9.1.19

Downing Street,

8 January, 1918.

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Dear Thornton,

I am so sorry not to have replied before to your letter of the 13th December enclosing one which Lord Milner had received from Major Butler, but it has been rather snowed under by other more pressing questions.

I am afraid I can only reply that claims for land settlement in the East Africa Protectorate are at present receiving careful consideration, but that so long as the funds of the Protectorate are concerned, there is no possibility of any system of advances to officers, or any arrangements for free passages. As regards pensions, there can only be made as a part of the general development of the country, and as its resources admit and not as a special factor in any scheme of settlement.

Yours sincerely,

(S.) R.F.S.

20689
REC'D
FCIB

13th December, 1918

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Dear Batterbee,

I enclose a letter which Lord Milner has received from Major Butler, together with a memorandum. Our Educational Branch tell me that this is a question which ought to be looked into by the Colonial Office in the first instance. Would you let me have your comments on it?

Yours sincerely,

H. C. Thornton

H. C. Batterbee, Esq., C.M.C., C.V.O.

Bridging Training Centre, R.E.
Christchurch, Hants.

3 December, 1918

My Lord,

I take the liberty of sending the enclosed to you personally, believing that it will appeal to your personal ideals of imperialism. I feel so convinced that some such scheme as this affords an opportunity for imperial development such as never has been nor will be again, that I feel bound to push it by all means in my power both in season and out of season, until more capable hands than mine will take it up.

I have &c.,

(SD.) R.P.BUTLER, Major,

Tank Corps.

St. Hon. Lord Milner,

17 Great College St. Westminster.

C. O.
60889
REC
14 DEC 18

One of the most difficult problems of reconstruction after war will be to find suitable employment for the officers now living. These may be divided into three economic classes:

Those, who before the war had some means of support to which they can return after it.

Those who had means of support before the war, but who cannot return to it, owing to changes in business conditions or individual temperament brought about by the war.

Those who had not begun to earn their livelihood before the war, but have now lost their student years, and are thus debarred from the careers which would have been open to them.

It is in the two last classes who need consideration. Generally, officers possess, by selection and training, habits of responsibility and self-reliance, for which there is but little demand in the self-governing Dominions, but which should be the highest of Empire in lands where the white man must be the backbone.

There are among the Crown Colonies, regions where the soil is good; labour is plentiful, and other conditions are favourable for agriculture, and where an only suitable employment for their development. I suggest that a tract of such country should be taken over as a settlement for ex-officers. Any number of such tracts may be combined into sub-settlements, each with its headquarters, which would be the social and business centre of that community.

The following conditions are the conditions most necessary to success for anyone settling in such a country.

A certain degree of energy, determination and self-reliance; this is essential, and as such a thing is possible, by his military standing.

Knowledge of the laws, customs of the country, agricultural conditions, etc. This will have to be acquired between the time of leaving his military duties and his starting as an independent settler - or very soon later.

About £1,000 capital. This would have to be loaned by Government at suitable interest - a small return for services rendered by him, and for the benefits to be derived from his efforts in future.

Suitable communications with markets. Although it would be necessary to go far from existing roads or railways to get a tract of land suitable for this purpose, communications will naturally follow any considerable settlement, with the certainty of business derived from it.

The chief difficulty, they would seem to be for the Officers to acquire sufficient knowledge of the country before they start as settlers. For this purpose, I suggest that they should be retained in the army for one year after they have left their military work, which time they should spend in the land of their adoption, doing courses of instruction in the language, agriculture, etc., assisting in the survey of the land, the establishment of communications headquarters, experimental farms, and other preliminary work.

The advantages of taking Officers as such, and forming them into communities corresponding as far as possible, to their military units are enormous. Apart from the inalienable value of expert in corps, they would be saved from the position, usual to soldiers of civilisation, of feeling that they are cutting themselves off from all their friends, and facing forth alone and unsupported; but most important of all, perhaps, are the advantages which their military organisation will give them for co-operation.

The first requisites for carrying out this proposal would

- (1) Government to advance £1,000 per head to the settlers a reasonable interest, the repayment of capital and interest being guaranteed by the community, perhaps also by the land in which the settlement is to take place.
- (2) Government to retain the officers concerned, in the army one year after the cessation of their military duties, arrange for their passage out to the colony.
- (3) The colony to provide a suitable tract of land at low cost and to assist by improving communications, and in every possible way.

The object in view would be:-

- (1) To take every advantage of the existing military organisation starting the settlement along semi-military lines.
- (2) To promote individual effort and enterprise in every way.
- (3) Gradually to substitute civil for military organisation.

The enterprise would be run by a co-operative society president and committee of which would, at first, be nominated on the basis of military qualifications, but later would be elected by the members. The duties of this society would be:-

- (1) To take over the capital to be loaned by Government issuing it to settlers as the committee thinks fit.
- (2) To organise sources of instruction in all necessary and an experimental farm with suitable breeding stock.
- (3) To establish general stores for the supply of all necessities of the settlers and for the marketing of their produce; provide banking facilities.
- (4) To purchase the area to be taken over from the Government, to sub-divide it, and to sell the plots to the settlers.
- (5) To provide expert agricultural, veterinary, and other services.

for the settlers, and to assist them in every possible way.

The course of procedure which I suggest would be somewhat as follows: After the necessary arrangements have been made with the War Office, Colonial Office etc, and those who are to join in the enterprise have been duly selected, a small party should be sent out as soon as possible to decide with the government of the colony as to the tract of land to be taken up, satisfying themselves as to its suitability for their purpose, and to set in motion the general plan of action to be adopted. Others would then follow as they could be spared in the scheme of demobilisation, and on arrival in the colony, would be passed through courses of instructions etc., organised by the advance party. About a year after the starting of the course, conditions should be ready for the distributions of the farms, probably by auction. After this, they would each carry on independently, with what help the co-operative society can give them.

By some scheme such as I have outlined, I suggest that a large proportion of our Officers, who would otherwise have much difficulty in finding suitable employment, would find a most valuable use for their qualifications, and would be building good homes for themselves and families, while benefiting mankind in general and the British Empire in particular, by extending the confines of the habitable portions of the earth. The cost to the government would be but small; the advantage to all concerned, would be enormous.

(1). The country I have in mind is the highlands of British East Africa, but I believe that there are parts of Uganda, German East Africa, Rhodesia, etc., which would be equally suitable. I regret that I only speak from hearsay of all these. The self-governing Dominions, I do not consider well adapted to the settlement of Officers as such, for in them, owing to the high cost of labour, anyone who is not wealthy must do all his work himself, so that he has to compete as a labourer with those who have been at it all their lives.

(2). I believe that, if a scheme of this sort were thrown open to the whole army, there would be from 10,000 to 20,000 Officers who would wish to join it, even if the conditions were not made very attractive to them; among these would be many senior Officers capable of organising it, so that it would not throw any burden upon the Government other than that of advancing the necessary capital.

(3). If Government would not advance the capital, I suggest that it might be raised as a limited liability company, by 5% debenture stock, giving a certain proportion of deferred stock with every 10% share. A proportion of deferred stock could also be given to each member of the settlement every year up to a limited amount, so that everyone would share in the profits of the Co-operative Society. If a scheme of this sort were carried out, successfully, the commercial possibilities of it would seem to be quite unlimited.

(4). The scheme here outlined was suggested by a book, which was shortly re-published entitled "The Soldier Colonists" by Major F. Harman, which deals primarily with the settlement of "Other Ranks" in the self-governing Dominions.

* In any case, each settled member would be called upon to subscribe a certain proportion of capital, say five