

Calle Potosi 3867

Buenos Ayres,

24th April, 1903.

To the Editor

Sir,

Before I left South Africa per S.S. "Pampa" in November last for the Argentine Republic, I promised some of my friends to let them know what this country is like, and as I know that the interests of my countrymen are taken to heart by you, I send you my opinions about this country.

I have been in the Chubut territory and have traversed it in all directions for more than 3 months, and I can assure you that I could not find a mile of land suitable to settle on and for farming as we are used to in Africa. The country in its best parts is still very poor and water is very scarce. The greatest portion of that region consists of Pampa (high table land) without a drop of water, and here and there is a ravine about 100 yards wide with grass in abundance. Thus on three square miles one finds only one ravine of 100 yards wide and three miles long, and the remainder is nothing but sandhills with very little vegetation. Along the coast no water is found and for about 18 miles inland the water is very salt, and even the ground is covered with salt. The land is also everywhere covered with "Malesping" a kind of thorn bush, so dense in some places that no animal can penetrate it.

You see therefore that the nature of the country is not as represented to us by Mr. Henry Green, the Government Agricultural Agent, when he was in Africa, on the contrary it

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is just the opposite.

Climate: This is perhaps the worst of the place. It rains and snows only during the winter, while the remainder of the year is one windstorm, and it is just owing to those winds that no one is able to plant trees or even to cultivate a vegetable garden. I know personally of one man who during the past four years had planted over 4000 trees and all that he can show to-day are two little peach trees two feet high which are protected by a wall of earth. This man, a certain Mr. W. Jones, possesses one of the best pieces of ground in the Chubut region.

The winter is very cold and snow falls in the interior to a depth of 6 feet whereby one man lost 5000 out of 10,000 sheep and another 900 out of 11,000.

Along the coast the snow fall is less, but all the ravines become marshy which prevents the farmer from leaving his cattle there and as there is little grazing among the sand hills the result is that he has almost nothing to keep his cattle alive with.

For cultivation one also wholly depends on the ravines, which as I have already said, become marshy in winter and thereby destroy the few crops. The terms of the Government are that it gives $\frac{1}{4}$ "league" gratis on condition that about 12 morgen are ploughed and 200 trees are planted and cultivated in five years, while $\frac{3}{4}$ "league" can be purchased at 1 paper dollar per hectare, 2500 per "league". All things therefore considered one would never become owner of the land as the conditions cannot be complied with for the reasons which I have already mentioned.

Not knowing the language and the morals of the country is often the cause that people are ruined, as every one

tries to defraud the other, if he sees an opportunity. Emigration to this region is therefore a great venture. My advice is therefore, that when my country-men desire to leave Africa they should rather go to another region which is better and where they can speak the language.

Of the 14 families that came with me here there are still 5 in Chubut, and among these 5 there are 3 who have no money to return with.

If any one is rich and is able to buy land here and plant it with "alfalfa" which will cost him £5000 per "league" then the possibilities for him here are not so bad, but a poor man must be careful, and I only hope that none of my countrymen will ruin themselves as I have.

If you will be so kind please publish this letter in your paper in order that everyone may read it.

I have etc.,

H.J.Visser.

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