

Oliverhoek

PO Bultfontein

Nov. 31, 02

Dear Mr. Smith,

I Make no apology for troubling you once more on Land Settlement matters. I have lately had a communication from one of the settlers of the Welsh colony of Chubut in Patagonia of which you may have heard. My correspondent is an old servant of our family at home, one with whom I often played as a boy, but who emigrated to Chubut many years ago.

I shall be glad if you would bring the case of these people before the L.S. Board and perhaps a short resume of the history of the settlement would interest you. Somewhere in the 60's it occurred to a prominent Welshman of that time, that if the Welsh language was to survive at all, it must be through a settlement of Welsh speaking Welshmen on some uninhabited part of the globe where Welsh only would therefore be spoken. Of all places in the world Patagonia was the country selected. The emigrants sailed with their wives and families and the settlement in the valley of the Chubut river was formed. For some years the aridity of the climate baffled their attempts at agriculture, and great distress prevailed. A system of irrigation was gradually evolved, irrigation works erected by the settlers themselves on the cooperative system. The farms were brought under water, and the community for some years was a happy and prosperous one, and increased rapidly. During the earlier years of the settlement, the government of the Argentine left it pretty much to itself but latterly all the evils of a half breed, Spanish American government have been severely felt by the settlement. The conservation act is enforced, the religious sentiments of the settlers outraged, and according to my correspondence, their children, in spite of them, are growing up

Argentinos.

In addition to misgovernment hard times came upon them. Three times latterly their elaborate irrigation works have been utterly destroyed by abnormal floods in the Chubut River, the last time last winter. Their prospects are therefore not encouraging and there is a general desire among the settlers to emigrate.

Some time ago there was a strong feeling in favor of S. Africa. The Canadian government however sent our agent to the settlement, and succeeded in securing 250 families for Canada. Those families have now left for their new home, and the remainder, among whom is my correspondent, have again had their attention attracted to this county by an offer made to them by the Transvaal authorities. Through Capt. A.O. Vaughan, of sufficient ground in Magutoland, N. Transvaal for the whole settlement.

I have advised my countrymen to make sure that the proposed ground is suitable for European settlement, and also to communicate with the Land S. Board in this colony, with a view to settle by preference here, if ground is to be had, and I also promised to communicate with you, and through you, with the Land Settlement Board on the matter. I have a very strong opinion that this Colony is a much more desirable one to farm in than the Transvaal, that is, speaking generally on account of its healthiness for man and beast, and the suitability in soil and rainfall of its eastern districts for agriculture. I have pointed this out to my Patagonian correspondent, and if not too late I am certain that they will apply to your Board before closing with the others.

I feel strongly that this is Colony will suit the settlers better in every way than the Transvaal, that they will do better here, and I feel also that the advent of a large and solid body of settlers, such as these

Patagonian Welshmen, sober, God fearing, hard working, persevering, who are leaving what they have toiled so hard for, in order to preserve their children's birthright, will be a distinct and substantial gain to whichever Colony gets them, and I trust that if possible, that Colony will be the O.R.C.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely,

E.S. Davies