

Extract from Natal Advertisser, 4.2.1937.

BOER FAMILIES IN ARGENTINE.

Conditions investigated by Predikant.

"Repatriation seems Improbable."

Buenos Aires, Thursday.

The possibility of repatriating the 100 Boer families now living at Patagonia (Chubut territory) are at present problematical, according to the Rev. Dirk Postma, Dutch Reformed predikant at Burgersdorp, who visited the Argentine to investigate conditions.

Interviewed on the eve of sailing for the Cape, Mr. Postma explained that his mission was not to try to repatriate the colony but to ascertain whether the members would be able to support their own Dutch Reformed minister.

"They wish to have a resident minister since the present one goes down to them only twice a year," he said. "I learned that the Boers would be unable to support their own minister and need support from abroad if they are to have a resident. I am going to ask for such assistance from the Dutch Reformed Church of North America and South Africa."

"If this step were taken the colony would be properly represented before the Argentine Government, just as other resident foreign communities. There is a rumour that Mr. A. Zoutendyk has already been appointed Consul-General.

Mr. Postma also suggested that the establishment of a Vice-Consul at Comodoro Rivadavia and stated there were reports that the Armesorg Society of the Dutch Reformed Church was making plans to repatriate three or four families a year, but he was unable to confirm it.

Extract Natal Advertiser, 4.2.1937 (contd).

There are now 800 members in the colony, each family of which was given three square miles of land when they were established in 1902.

The names of the heads of the first families to reach Patagonia on June 4, 1902, were LOUIS BAUMAN, JOHN COULTER, LIVINGSTONE, CALVERT, JOSEPH BEHR, TRIEDGART LE GRANGE, COOK, GRIMBERCK, GREYLING and CONRAD VISSER.

They opened a road from Comodoro Rivadavia to the new colony 30 miles distant, which was named Colonia Escalante, with an area of 155 square miles.

All land except the cottage gardens which were used to raise vegetables and fruit, was utilised for sheep-raising. The sale of wool provided their only income. The land was not of the best type, and no more is available.

Many families are gravely concerned at their prospects. One of the most serious problems is education. From 1912 to 1923 the educational programme was supervised by the Rev. E. C. Sonneveldt who also obtained an instructor from the Argentine Government to teach the children English and Dutch as well as Spanish.