

Report of Emigration Work during last six months by Peter Barclay 11 Jun 1872

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Written from 4 India Street

In December 1871 I went up by request to London and conferred with the Agent General on Emigration matters. The Agent General said he had been instructed to ask my services for Scotland and asked if I could undertake definite work for him there. I said such work was out of my line of things but that being much interested in New Zealand and being so courteously asked I would engage in it at least for a time. Then, and when during the following months the Agent General came to Edinburgh the terms were arranged.

There after I began to write a tract at his suggestion suitable for emigrants. But within a few weeks (about 20th January) I went by invitation to Duncraig the West Coast residence of Alexander Matheson Esqr., of Andross M.P. for Rosshire. There I remained two days and addressed a very large meeting of his people at the Village of Plockton. The interest in Emigration there had been excited by the fact that in June 1871 a considerable number of persons had left for New Zealand at the instigation of Mr Morrison and myself and by the kind assistance of Mr Matheson. Some of these had written home charming accounts of the Climate soil &c. &c. of New Zealand and had spoken of the high rate of wages which in some instances to these poor West Coast Highlanders seemed quite fabulous. The consequence of all this is that about 70 or 80 go this year from that neighbourhood chiefly to Hawke's Bay Province by the Ballarat and Mr F. McDonell the local Agent who has been most useful in going through the people and explaining matters writes that in his opinion a very great muster will go during the ensuing year i.e. after letters are received from those going now.

[The ship Ballarat departed London 13 Jun 1872 and arrived at Napier 1 Sep 1872]

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[Edinburgh 6 June 1872]

I have also received the translation of my New Zealand pamphlet into Gaelic and have put it into the hands of MacLachlan and Stewart who do nearly all the Gaelic printing here. There will be 1000 printed at first and the types will stand for a month or six weeks. It will be given away by the Agents in Gaelic districts and I shall advise them to give with discretion. It has been translated by F. Macdonell at Plockton one of the best Gaelic Scholars in the Highlands. He says it has been very tough work because it touches on so many subjects and that he would have had less trouble with a volume of sermons four times as large. I shall consult MacLachlan and Stuart as to his remuneration for this Work.

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On the West Coast the people are intensely clannish and as a Rule fond of their Church consequently any plain statement about special settlements where they can live near one another and do work for themselves and others is good. If the Scotch Churches were alive to their duty and would contrive to send a worthy minister to such a Settlement a great many would go.