

EMPIRE FLAX GROWING COMMITTEE.

Scheme for Colonising in British East Africa by ex-service men with a view to development of Flax Growing, put forward by Lieut. Col. W. Hughes Ridge, late of the Flax Production Department of the Board of Agriculture.

There are 10 million acres of land in British East Africa fit for white men. Rich soil; healthy climate.

England imports 100,000 tons of Fibre yearly. East Africa can produce Fibre equal in quality to that of Ireland or England which are the finest qualities produced in the British Isles. I have just inspected 5 samples of Fibre produced from 5 different estates in the Wasini Gishu side of East Africa and they are quite up to the Best Irish, and will fetch to-day £300 per ton. That proves that Fibre of the best quality can be produced with a tremendous profit at present prices. At pre-war prices Fibre produced at half the cost of England or Ireland. The Linen Trade is at the present time some 300,000 tons short of Fibre and it is policy to produce raw material for one of the Key Industries within the Empire.

Further this is a good opportunity of Colonising a New Country with men who have the ability possible to have an Empire. The Flax industry is very difficult one to teach and everything necessary to start can be taught within three months.

East Africa has the advantage of all other countries of having two distinct seasons therefore two distinct crops can be grown and the production of Fibre can continue all the year round.

This year about 5000 acres of land were put under Flax in East Africa. If East Africa produced 100,000 acres it would make no difference to the Market value of Fibre. Flax growing in East Africa is not a speculation, it is a certainty. Why not give the Ex-Soldier a chance of making a good living?

The financial side of the scheme is worked out on 1/3rd the present prices of Fibre and seed and given two good seasons in the first 18 months the capital can easily be repaid and the land become the property of the settler.

The scheme is for Ex-Soldiers without capital.

1930

1930

1930

"1930" " " " year.
 "1930" " " " year.
 "1930" " " " year.

as the crop will only produce 750 tons, that
 leaves plenty of margin.

Power, Oil Engines or Water Turbine Engines.

Native labour costs about 10/- per month.

Estimated number of natives required will be about
 2,000.

When the flax is ready for pulling, an extra supply
 of native labour will be required for 1 month.

The land should be obtained near a River or Lake,
and the Factories built on its banks.

Settling is done in the River.

Security - and and Plant.

At the end of 18 months the land should value at 250,000.
Estimated to 200,000.

Fibre. 100,000 acres yields 750 tons, price now
2500 per ton, say 2100.
175,000.

Seed. 5,000 acres yields 1,000 tons,
Present price 250 per ton say 250.
Keeping 250 tons for next crop. 750 tons @ 250.
212,500

Tone. 5,000 acres yields 250 tons.
Price of good tone at least 200 per ton say 200
500 tons @ 250
125,000

Lowest possible estimate Totals 117,500
Extra cost of production say 150,000
Profit on first 18 months 267,500

From then onwards the plant can produce 100 tons of
Fibre per month - 1,200 tons a year.

That catch crops will also be very profitable, and
the fact that the land is under cultivation increases
the value year by year.

This scheme will be the means of employing between
50 and 75 ex-service men at once at a good salary. The
settlers would have an interest in the scheme as the
land would become their property when the capital and
interest had been repaid.

Alternative Schemes.

1,

Government:-

Free grant of Land.

Loan to ...

Supply of ...

To purchase ...

On sale of ...

Capital to ...

profit

and ...

Government:-

Indians:-

Free ... and

to ...

sale ...

family ... to work

... id settlers.

... Pages and Bonus ...

... ngers.

participation

... to

history

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

C.O. 533

219

PHOTODUPLICATION PROGRAM
BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE
PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE (LONDON)

371

1819

...the Colonies
 ...the Protectorate
 ...the subject to this Protectorate may well give
 a more ready measure of assistance in this case than to non-
 resident officers either with regard to terms of lease
 or superiority of land or proximity to railway.
 ...water supply for mills essential.

MILNER,

12.27
M.B. 10783 E.A.P.

Mans
Inch

sent 1.40 pm
1/3/19

23032

for the benefit of disabled officers

with special reference to

production of flax

DRAWN BY

for the

MINUTE

Bottom

28/2/19

acres of flax

- Mr. Grindle
- Mr. Lambert
- Mr. H. Reid
- Mr. G. Fiddes
- Mr. Hewson
- Mr. Long

managers, one agricultural superintendent

Capital required £50,000

training for 6 weeks

6 weeks Flax station in England

be glad to receive any comments

wish to offer before arrival of despatch

it will be necessary for capital to be

provided from other sources

to this Prot. may well give greater

in letter of 10/8/19.

1. Col. Mans

2. of my letter

3. of 1/3/19, with the

4. views which I

5. stated below.

6. E.S.

7. 28/2/19

W.S.
10783 EAS

By 7 March 1919

Sir,
In compliance of
my tel. of 1st March, I
have rec. to the amount of
the acc. copy of Compro
with the B. of T. regarding
a volume for the
of circulation in EAS
by readers who have
been re-im. Dis. Sled
in military service.

I shall be
glad to receive by any
telegram
Bovins which you
may wish to offer in
confirmation of

DEPT.

1919

8/2/19

- Grindle.
- Lambert
- Road
- Kiddes.
- Wrens

7.17 Feb (10.18.2)

12. March (1919)

12. March (1919)

amplification of the reply
which you will have returned
by my telegram under reference

1918.



the outlines of the scheme
 3 Lord Milner will be glad to
 encourage flax growing in F.E. by any means
 in his power, but it will not be possible
 for the Prot. Govt. to incur a capital
 liability in this matter. ^{however}
 possible, however, that the Ministry of
 Pensions would be prepared to provide the
 required for this purpose, and in that case
 it would be for them to decide whether the

Copy to 195...

flat should be bought by the British Govt. or sold by their managers in the open market.

Subject to this, Lord Milner hopes that it will be possible for the Govt. of the E.A.P. to show their good will towards the scheme by selecting a suitable site, and possibly by giving some degree of preference to those cases over the cases of soldier settlers who have not been disabled through the war.

I am etc.,

THE EAST AFRICAN

Downing Street
London
W.C.2

Dear Sir,
I have the pleasure to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th inst. in relation to the proposed scheme for the settlement of Ex-Soldiers in East Africa. I am sorry that I cannot give you a more definite answer at this time, but I am sure that you will understand the necessity for further investigation and consultation with the relevant authorities before a final decision can be reached.

inclosure is herewith forwarded, and the production of the same is not necessary therefore to the Government.

It is estimated that about 5000 acres of land were put under cultivation in East Africa in 1945. The production of 100,000 tons of cotton is not a certainty. Why not give the Ex-Soldier a chance of making a good living?

The financial side of the scheme is worked out on 1/3rd the present prices of Fibre and seed and given two good seasons in the first 18 months the capital can easily be repaid and the land become the property of the settler.

The scheme is for Ex-Soldiers without capital.

This scheme is drawn up with a view of employing Ex-Officers and men of the public school type who through impaired health have to live an open air life in a healthy climate. It will not only enable them to recover their health, but they will be producing raw material for one of our most important industries, and at the same time earning a good wage, and therefore helping the Government with regard to pensions.

25,000 acres land, of which say 20,000 acres suitable for Cultivation. Divided into 25 blocks of 1,000 each, with 5 thirty stock Flax Mills, sufficient for 5,000 acres in Flax, or 200 acres each block. Such block to guarantee to plant 200 acres of Flax.

Personnel.

50 Settlers required, 2 for each block.

5 Managers for Mills.

1 Agricultural Superintendent.

Land.

Free Government grant

Machinery 250,000

Buildings etc. 100,000

Cultivation and clearing 50,000

Working capital

250,000

Capital required 250,000

Output.

Estimated output.
750 tons Fibre yearly.
250 tons Tw.

Partnership Profits.

Profits to be shared on co-operative basis

Settlers to take 3/5

Government to take (Repayment of Capital and interest) 2/5

The Ministry of Pensions (1) to train the selected settlers for 2 months, 6 weeks at an Agricultural College, 6 weeks at one of the Flax stations in England.

(2) to pay passages out to British East Africa. From the day they sail they come on the pay roll of the Scheme. Salary to be settled before leaving England.

Alternative Schemes.

1.
Free of Land.
Work scheme.

Supply seed.

To purchase crop from settler and share profit

On sale of Fibre.

Capital to be repaid by instalments to be arranged.

Government:-

Free of Land & Seed and Priority Certificates

Syndicate

to pay settler salary and purchase crop

salary advanced to be deducted.

Supply capital to work scheme and give bonus to

Managers and settlers.

Scale of Wages and Bonus to be fixed for Factory

Managers.

... under ...
... 20 ...

of production in ... Africa compared ...
... no ...

Take the Unit of one ...

block of 1,000 ...
... This ...

IRELAND.

Plant of Linn (heavy implements)
Preparing land
Cost of Seed ...
Sowing
Planting (cost ... this year)
Retting from field to mill
Including spreading & drying
...
Breaking & Scutching.

Each block to have
implements necessary for ...
including one ... of ...
breaking 10 acres per ...

This will give ...
of Flax in the three ...

2.0 ...
4.15.0 ...
239,6.0 ...

It takes 5 acres to produce 1 ...
227.10.0 add to this freight to ...
24.10.0 per ton to rail head 10/- ...
29.10.0 (present price) from ...
B.E.A. Fibre at an English Port ...
can be considerably reduced. ...
taken from the latest figures avail ...
Fibre production in B.E.A. can compare with that of any
other country.

... fibre that ...
... port ...
... rail to ...
... and we get ...
... 1.8.0 per ton ...
...
... and prove ...
... with that of any ...