

Shipping Intelligence.

Arrivals. On the 1st inst. from London, the ship 'The ...' arrived.

Maritzburg Market prices.

Table listing market prices for various goods including flour, sugar, and other commodities.

Market prices for various goods.

On the 28th October, at the ... of the ...

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The motive question will be settled some day, we are unable to say; but we must confess we have little hope of improvement.

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by way of Church-street and Commercial Road, and took Office at 10 o'clock.

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they could get. When hands of this sort are gathered together and acting in this way...

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Extra to the "Natal Witness," Nov. 4.

PROJECT

FOR THE FORMATION OF A CORPS OF PIONEERS,

FOR
EMPLOYMENT IN THE COLONY OF NATAL, IN THE CONSTRUCTION AND UP-KEEP OF ROADS AND BRIDGES.

Natal has, so to speak, but few roads, and those bad ones. Many of the rivers are still unbridged. There are but few skilled artificers in the Colony, whose services, even if available, are costly; and the supply of unskilled labour is so small that, practically, road-making is suspended. Roads and bridges are so essential to the development of the resources of this Colony, that the establishment of an organized force for road and bridge making has become a matter of the first importance, and to meet this want it is proposed to raise a Corps of Pioneers, 500 strong—to be called "The Natal Pioneers"—for employment on the roads and bridges, under the direction of the officer charged by Government with these duties:—

RECRUITING.

It is proposed to call out, for a service of two years, 500 men from the Zulu clans residing within the colonial border, the men to be young and strong, the contingent containing a certain proportion of leading men, who would with propriety form the superior non-commissioned officers (serjeants) of each company of fifty.

That each company be headed by a Serjeant-Major from the Staff of the Royal Engineers, whose qualification for the post will be hereafter stated.

It is of vital importance that the organization be military. The Zulus are a proud race to whom work is distasteful, but they are born soldiers, and it is believed would render most efficient service under this arrangement, as is the case in India, where road-making is considered by the natives as a purely military duty, and carried out by men proud of their descent from a race of soldiers.

The example too of our own soldiers in this colony would go far to remove any objections that might at first be entertained from their well-known respect for Her Majesty's troops. Great care must however be taken that convicts and prisoners are never employed upon similar works.

There is ample employment for convicts upon the Durban Breakwater, whilst prisoners might advantageously be employed in the vicinity of the towns.

ORGANIZATION.

It is proposed that each company of fifty natives shall be organized as follows:—

1 European Serjeant-Major; a Staff-Serjeant of Royal Engineers; 2 Serjeants, and 2 Corporals; men of certain position, the natural leaders of others; 16 Lance-Corporals, one to act as Interpreter to the Serjeant-Major; to be selected for merit, after trial; 30 Privates.

PAY.

European Serjeant-Major, 7s. 6d. a day.

	First year of Service per month.	Second year of Service per month.
Native Serjeants	£1 0 0	£1 5 0
" Corporals	0 15 0	1 0 0
" Lance-Corporals	0 14 0	0 19 0
" Privates	0 12 0	0 17 0

RATIONS.

Serjeant-Major.—Meat, coffee, flour, sugar, tobacco, salt, pepper, candles, soap, &c., as required; no spirits.

Natives.—2lbs. mealie-meal, 1½lbs. meat (including bone), tobacco, daily.

A proportion of slaughter cattle to be attached to each road-party, and killed as required, once in each week or ten days, under the responsibility of the Serjeant-Major. This will be in accordance with native habits, and prove an economical arrangement, the weight of the beast being estimated before slaughter.

The flour, mealie-meal, &c., can be carried by the carts attached to the company for the transport of their tents, tools, and materials, such supplies being renewed as required; depôts being formed at farms in the neighbourhood, &c.

CLOTHING.

Serjeant-Major.—The dress of his Corps (Royal Engineers).

Natives.—Each year; a kilt of dark grey woollen stuff, reaching to the cap of the knee; two shirts of dark grey flannel; a blue Glengarry cap (like that worn by Her Majesty's troops) with brass badge of a crown within a garter, bearing the words "Natal Pioneers."

For each man's two years service; a grey field blanket, a pea-jacket of dark grey cloth, double breasted, with brass buttons (same device as on a cap badge) roll collar, and red shoulder straps.

On line of march, the pea-jacket may either be worn, or rolled inside the field blanket, which should be worn in a roll over one shoulder and under the other.

ARMS.

Assagai, Shields, Korrives.—Native weapons in the first instance.

It is proposed to drill this force to such an extent, that they may be able to advance, retire, move to either flank, increase or diminish front, without confusion.

They should also learn the principles of skirmishing.

It is believed that this body of 500 natives, each company being under a European leader, and the whole commanded by a superior officer, would be more than a match for a greatly superior number of natives armed with their usual weapons, and commanded by their own chiefs.

It would be of some value to the colony to have such a force, as should troubles arise they have at once an organized body of natives under European leaders, and ready at a moment's notice to move anywhere, untrammelled by commissariat arrangements, and kept up in time of peace without cost to the country as a fighting body.

SHELTER.

TENTS.

TRANSPORT.

It is proposed to attach to each company four light tip-carts, drawn by two horses each, and two spare horses, one for the use of the Serjeant-Major, the other to replace casualties.

On line of march these carts would convey light stores, tools, and equipment, whilst when the company was at work they would be employed in the cartage of stone, gravel, &c.

The horses, or rather ponies, should be hardy beasts, requiring little care, and it is believed procurable at rates not exceeding £6 a piece, which includes the expenses attending their journey to Maritzburg.

Cost of one company of one Serjeant-Major and 50 men for one year, including pay, clothing, and rations, but not including the camp equipment for the Serjeant-Major, ponies, carts, tools, materials, and tents, which must be considered as a general charge against the department.

PAY, CLOTHING, AND RATIONS.

1 European Serjeant-Major, (a Staff-Serjeant of Royal Engineers) pay at 7s. 6d. a day	136 17 0
Value of clothing (to be repaid to the Imperial Government) say	12 0 0
Rations at 1s. 6d. a day	27 7 6
PAY.	
2 Serjeants at £1 a month each	24 0 0
2 Corporals at 15s. a month each	18 0 0
16 Corporals at 14s. do.	134 8 0
30 " at 12s. do.	216 0 0

All, except the serjeants, to commence as privates, and to be promoted, up to the regulated numbers, according to skill and ability as workmen.

CLOTHING, ETC., FOR NATIVES.

Each Year.—1 Kilt, 14s. 4d.; 2 Shirts, at 5s. 4d., 10s. 8d.; 1 Cap, with badge, 3s., 6d. Total, 28s. 6d.

For Two Years.—1 Field Blanket, 7s. 6d.; 1 Pea Jacket, 17s. 6d. Total, 25s.

Taking half the value of the field blanket and pea jacket, the cost of one man's clothes for one year is 28s. 6d. + 12s. 6d. = 41s., or for 50 men £102 10s.

RATIONS FOR NATIVES.

1½ lbs. meat, 2 lbs. mealie meal, tobacco, per diem. It is assumed that 7d. a day will represent the value of this ration for each man under the proposed arrangements, (killing cattle as required once a week or ten days, a practice preferred by the natives to the issue of regular daily rations of beef) which for 50 will therefore amount to £1 9s. 2d. or £532 5s. 10d. a year.

The total cost for the company, pay, clothing, and rations, amounts to £1,203 6s. 10., which represents the annual cost to the colony, for the first year, of the supervision of a highly trained Superintendent, and the properly directed labour of 50 men, working for (say) 300 days in the year, or rather less than 1s. 7½d. for a day's work, including supervision and all other expenses.

The cost of the second year (caused by increased pay to natives) is £1,353 6s. 10d.

There are, however, certain additional items of expenditure to be added, such as conveyance of Staff-Serjeants from England at (say) £30 each.

CAMP EQUIPMENT FOR EACH.

1 table, 2 camp stools, 1 camp bed with mattress, pillow and 4 blankets, 1 lantern.	Total cost, £5.
10 Ponies per company at £6 each	£60 0 0
Saddle and bridle for Serjeant-Major	6 0 0
4 Tip-carts per company, at £20 each	80 0 0
4 Sets of two-horse harness at £5 each	20 0 0

Giving a total additional charge per company of £201, but this is properly a charge against the establishment of the Roads Department, and should, with the tents, tools, and materials required, be taken into consideration, as "plant" for carrying on the works.

From the above, it will be seen, that for the small sum of from £12,000 to £13,500 a year, under the arrangements recommended, the colony will secure the services of 500 men under military organization, working efficiently in peace, and immediately available as a fighting body in case of need, either within or over the colonial border.

The experiment is no new one; it has been worked in India and Ceylon with great advantage; and in the last Abyssinian campaign, a corps of native pioneers gained most deserved praise for general efficiency both as soldiers and workmen.

The question of rewards and punishments have not here been entered into. They must be carefully considered in special relation to the Zulu character, and carried out by the head of the department, subject (in the case of punishments) to appeal to the Lieutenant-Governor as Supreme Chief.

The object aimed at is the formation of a corps of pioneers, considering themselves soldiers—proud to be soldiers—yet working willingly in time of peace under an effective organization, without which, it will be impossible ever to carry out the construction and up-keep of the roads and bridges of this colony. It will be necessary to supplement this force by the establishment of a staff of artificers to be attached to the head-quarter establishment, and drafted to road parties as required, or massed at any particular work. To be in the first instance non-commissioned officers and sappers of Engineers, lent to the colony by the Imperial Government. It is believed that the Zulus would readily work with soldiers, and thus learn something of their trades.

The political importance of such an arrangement in connection with the native population cannot be overrated. No difficulty is anticipated in making the necessary arrangements with the Imperial Government, the colony of course defraying all charges during the time these Engineer troops are lent.

It may be desirable here to describe the class of non-commissioned officers of Engineers from which it is proposed to officer each company of pioneers.

About the year 1840, or thereabouts, it was found desirable to raise the standard of attainments required of a non-commissioned officer of Engineers, and with that view it was deemed necessary to improve his position.

It was therefore arranged that the civil branch of the Engineer department (clerks of works) should be gradually abolished, and their places filled up by Staff Serjeants of Engineers, the result of which has been an improvement in the stamp of men joining the Engineer service; for young men of some education and attainments enlist for the sole purpose of competing for these appointments, for which they are eligible after completing their drills of every kind, including a complete course of field-engineering, and passing through the special schools of the corps at head-quarters, where they are instructed in mathematics, architecture, constructing and estimating, strength of limes and cements, plan drawing, surveying, chemistry (to a certain extent), construction of lines of tramway and field railway, telegraphy, photography (the two latter being voluntary subjects). On appointment as Staff Serjeants (of which there are three grades—Serjeant, Quarter-master Serjeant, and Serjeant-major) they are in the first instance employed on probation in the superintendence of works and buildings, and should they be found efficient, their appointments are confirmed by the War Office, and they are then posted to the permanent establishment, and placed in charge of all military works carried on by the Royal Engineers. The massive forts surrounding Plymouth, Portsmouth, Pembroke, and Dover have been constructed under the direct supervision of these Staff Serjeants, who, posted one in each work, have carried them to completion in the most satisfactory manner.

Their positions are calculated as worth from £100 to £150 a year, and they have always been found most trustworthy and reliable in every respect.

It is considered that from their qualifications and training they are peculiarly fitted for the duties it is proposed they shall undertake in connection with the Natal pioneers.

These non-commissioned officers should be single, or, if married, unaccompanied by their wives and families, their life in this country being but a rough one, and all their energy being required for the duties confided to them.

The advantages of this project may be summed up in a few words. The Colony of Natal secures the services of an organized force for employment on the public works, under the superintendence of well-trained and efficient men, at a very small cost. By means of this force the native population will gradually be trained into habits of order and industry. It affords occupation for a certain number, and will cause an increased trade in European produce, giving also to the natives a taste for new articles of civilization. The colony will gain considerable military power without cost, having at its disposal a trained and disciplined body of 500 pioneers under European leaders, available at a moment's notice if required for both offensive and defensive operations. Lastly, the advantage of linking the Colonial depot with a strong Imperial one, is so very great in every respect that it can scarcely be over-estimated.

A. W. DURNFORD,

Major Commanding Royal Engineers, Natal.

24th September, 1873.

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