

to the Agent from the office of the Governor's Secretary, informing him that a very large number of poor people, a peasant class, were on their way to the country, or would soon be on the way. They were mostly from estates in the Highlands of Scotland. That the landlords were putting them away from these estates so as to enlarge and extend the pasturages for sheep, deer parks, &c., and in order that much of the land, now yielding no profit, might be planted to forest. That quite a number of the same class of people were coming from one of the provinces of the Kingdom of Hanover, over which kingdom our British king, William IV., was still sovereign. These, too, must be provided for. Along with this information there was mentioned a scheme to only allot to these poor, dependent people five acres of land to each male, head of a family, and to reserve a block of land in rear of them for the young men, for a short time at least, until they grew to man's estate. This was the Governor's scheme, and the opinion of the Agent was asked as to the practical character of the plan, and whether he would undertake to work it out. I can well remember when this correspondence came. The Agent strongly disapproved of the scheme. It was "absurd," "ridiculous," stronger language even than that, some swearing. If they at headquarters could have sent their ears along with their letters it would have cost the Agent his appointment, for his language was far from complimentary to their sanity and intelligence. The trouble was to prepare a respectful reply which would not offend. The reply was that in his opinion it would fail in the practical effort to work it out; that it was not possible for these people so to cultivate five acres of bush land as to obtain a living from them.

The answer given did not satisfy the devisors of the five-acre scheme—it only seemed to irritate them. Orders were immediately sent to select a block of middling good land of about four hundred acres, as near to the present residence of the Agent as such a block could be found, send the name of a qualified surveyor, and the commission would at once be issued to sub-divide this block into five-acre lots. This was immediately done. The land was selected in the township of Sunnidale, on the west side of the Sunnidale road, at or near Brentwood of the present day, surveyed by Mr. Robert Ross, a Provincial surveyor just then settling in Barrie, and opened for settlement. A few families, mostly Highland Scotch—a good class of settlers—took up lots and built their shanties. Never more than half a score of families altogether settled upon this first five-acre block. As an experiment, it was a failure. Most of those who did settle on them looked upon them as a sort of half-way house, in which they could and did wait for something better in the future, and farther on, when the roads