

CHELSEA PENSIONERS.

(From the Colonial Office.)

—No. 1.—

(Private.)

COPY of a LETTER from the Secretary at War to the Under Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, dated War-office, 26 September 1828.

Dear Sir,

It has been suggested to me, that it would be very desirable to make some arrangement, with the view of affording facilities to parishes to assist military pensioners desirous of emigrating with their families, to any of the British Colonies. I have, in consequence, communicated with the Chelsea Board on the subject, and, from the information I have obtained, I have reason to think that such a measure would be practicable. I should wish, however, before I take any official steps in the business, to ascertain what Sir George Murray's sentiments are, and therefore now trouble you with a sketch of the plan which has occurred to me as likely to answer the end contemplated, and beg that, when it shall have been considered, you will inform me whether there would be any objection thereto, so far as regards the Colonial Department.

Sir H. Hardinge
to R. W. Hay, Esq.
26 Sept. 1828.

It is to be understood that any engagement on the part of the pensioner shall be strictly voluntary, and in every respect his own act, and that the engagement when made between the parish and the pensioner shall be so clearly for the advantage of the latter, that on reference to the Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital, their approval (which is necessary in all cases) can be given without hesitation, on the ground that the arrangement is beneficial to the pensioner.

It is proposed that when a pensioner is desirous of emigrating to a British colony with his family, and the parish to which he belongs is willing to advance the necessary funds for the outfit and passage of the man and his family, and the means of enabling them to reach their destination, the pensioner shall transmit a memorial to the Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital, praying that, for the purpose above mentioned, one-half of his pension may be made payable to the parish until the amount of the money advanced be liquidated. If the Chelsea Board consent, the pension would be issued by quarterly payments alternately to the parish in Great Britain, and to the pensioner in the colony abroad.

It is not intended that these payments to the parish should continue for a longer period than five or eight years, nor that more than half the pensions should at any time be taken from the man.

In order that the Chelsea Board may be satisfied that the prayer of the pensioner's memorial might with propriety be acceded to, the man is to be required to declare that the arrangement proposed by him has been made by his own desire, and with his full consent; that he has been made fully to understand the nature of it; and that he is aware that, in case he should make any attempt afterwards to interfere with the parish in receiving back the money advanced to him, he would be liable to have his pension suspended, and if guilty of fraud, to have it taken away.

The engagement made with the parish will accompany the memorial; the form of it can hereafter be decided upon; but it will show the detail of the proposed arrangement, and will be signed by the churchwardens and the pensioner; the minister also certifying that he has explained the intended proceedings to the satisfaction of the pensioner.

Nothing in the measure now in contemplation is to give the pensioner a right to make any assignment of his pension, unless with the consent of the Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital; and all restrictions now in force for the purpose of preventing a pensioner from bartering away, under a momentary temptation, that provision for life which the country has intended should be permanent shall continue to be as vigilantly protected as before.