

LETTER ON RESETTLEMENT OF ARMENIANS FROM PERSIA (IRAN) TO OUR AREAS.

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Your Excellency was interested to find with my help out more details about the methods, which were taken for the resettlement of Armenians from Azerbaijan and their current settlement in our oblasts. Here is the truth of the matter, to my best knowledge: colonel Lazarev considered himself the main initiator of this emigration, of which he declared openly, but unfoundedly, because Armenians did not have the slightest idea of him, but were only moved by their devotion to Russia and willingness to obey the Russian laws. The treaty provided them with such a right. The active participants in the resettlement were prince Argutinsky, Gamazov, while other subordinated officers acted on their instructions. Colonel Lazarev thought only about the composition of proclamations, and quite inappropriate too, concerning formation of regular Armenian home guard, supposing even to include in his mind Karabakh itself and other areas, which had their own leadership and where no special power could be expected from the existing one. Prince Argutinsky notified him for several times that it was all boastful, frivolous and useless. All other affairs of colonel Lazarev were of the same nature and are not worth a detailed description. I can only add that he is a shallow person, but not immoral, and he cannot embezzle the state funds or do a harm on purpose. The distribution of cash benefits to people from Urmiya was accompanied with serious disorders, but not abuses - the poor were underpaid and the rich were overpaid.

This happened due to the hasty withdrawal of our troops from that province. We acted without distinction in the hurry and the funds provided little help, because they were poorly distributed. This is however the only such case I know about. This is how the things were in the process of re-settlement, but at the time of their settlement in our places, everything was done in a senseless, negligent and unforgivable way. For the purposes of their management, we have established a committee, which was not aware of anything and deserves criticism for the particular reason that that it received the most correct and detailed instructions from Your Excellency as of how to act in those cases: 1) Armenians are mostly settled in the lands of Moslem landlords. This could be somehow allowed in the summer time. The Moslem landowners were staying in their nomads' camps and did not have many chances to communicate with the aliens; 2) the scaffolds were not prepared and other places for continuous settlement of the migrants were not provided. These opportunities were missed in due time. It is now too late to rectify the error this year. The migrants live cooped and press on Moslems, who are all seriously grumbling. Your Excellency is aware that all local residents shall be deemed as migrants, because they were forced out by Sardar during the time of war and have a very poor situation; 3) The distribution of state cash benefits did not do much good: one or two roubles were distributed to each as to beggars, without precise information of the number of poor persons and their needs. 25 roubles which are granted at a time are ten times more important than the same amount, granted in parts through a long time. Not a single common measure was taken, such as buying bread for the maintenance of the whole community, next year's sowing and others. I have now informed Your Excellency about the poor activities of the resettlement committee, but in all fairness I must also mention that even skillful people, of which there were not any in the committee, would find difficulties with resolving those problems. The oblast administration does not even have a superficial description of lands and villages beyond Araks; the number of residents in the okrugs beyond Araks is still remaining unknown. I don't even mention estates - nobody knows who owns what.

The committee therefore did not have any sources to take the appropriate information it needed. The local oblast leader reports that he wished to resettle the majority of new coming Armenians beyond Araks, but they requested Your Excellency to allow them to stay where they were temporarily placed for

the first time, and received your kind consent. Lieutenant colonel prince Argutinsky still did not lose hope for implementing this plan. This official deserves full confidence for his management skills and honesty. The cash benefit to migrants has again been fixed at 30 thousand silver roubles and 2 thousand tschervonetses. We will manage these funds far more purposefully. If Your Excellency could allocate twice as much of that amount in the nearest future for the same purpose, the welfare of those migrants would improve significantly. I hope you can take into consideration the number of persons who are in need of assistance who will pay duties to the state in due time; you can compare it with the figures of the same number of persons in Russia and the whole amount that Your Excellency provides for this purpose will not only seem moderate, but trifling compared to the benefits it brings. I do not know if Your Excellency ever considered this affair from this point of view and if you could approve it.

Another important source of benefits that does not cost anything to the state, is the Sardar cattle, of which up to 30,000 heads are now available. It was distributed by Sardar among the residents in the past and its maintenance formed a part of their duties. Sardar received butter, wool, offsprings and other products from the cattle. I have heard many times about the cattle and received a confirmation from members of the oblast administration Petrikov and Mendoks. The state will have difficulties maintaining this economy and that is simply impossible in our administration. Utilizing the cattle for food of soldiers means utilizing it irrevocably; but the distribution of this cattle among migrants would significant supplement and improve their economies. I did my best trying various methods to find out about abuses in distribution of money through my translator Dadashev, an extremely talented person, whom I asked to question the population here and in Echmiadzin, but nobody made such complaints until now for sure. Mirza-Tatus, the translator of the oblast administrator, is a well-known swindler, but he did not have any instructions on this case, just as his brother - the head of the Surmala magal, another well-known swindler, whom I have mentioned by the way, because they do not have any relation to the re-settlement. Many things depend on efforts of those, control the settlement of newcomers, especially prince Argutinsky, who will for sure not repeat the mistakes committed by his predecessor mayor Vladimirov. We also discussed with him that we must convince Moslems about reconciliation with the current burden, which will not last for long, and extirpate their fears that Armenians may seize forever the lands where they were allowed for the first time. I also told the same to the police officer, members of administration and khans, who were here. Your Excellency would do a very good deed, if it instructed the Tiflis expedition to assign several officers here.

We do not have the sufficient number of employees, even clerks and translators. I think that several pupils from the Armenian school in Tiflis would be good for this purpose. As I address the migrants, I can see that they are much useful than our Georgian Armenians, who are all traders and do not bring any profit to the treasury, while those who came from Persia are craftsmen and ploughmen.