

You have already been advised that, soon after my arrival in England, I found the conflicting regulations of the Provinces so unworkable, that I was compelled (though doubtful whether my instructions warranted me) to adopt an uniform set of regulations for the whole Colony.

The regulations I framed, and am at present acting on, are simply a consolidation of the various Provincial regulations issued by the Governor. They are not such as I should have framed had I felt myself justified in going further beyond my instructions. They are, however, merely tentative. Emigration Agents condemn them as illiberal. I myself believe that they are too liberal; and, from the number of applications already coming in, I am satisfied that the Government will be justified in requiring increased contributions towards their passage money from the emigrants. But it was essential at the outset to start a stream of emigration, even if free passages were granted.

The object of the Government is to make the Emigration Fund go as far as possible, to recoup from the emigrants as much as possible of the passage money,—to make emigration, in short, in a great measure self-supporting. I believe this can be done in the long run.

With respect to providing for the comfort of the emigrants, the contracts forwarded by this mail will, I trust, show that your instructions have been fully complied with. I address you in a separate letter with respect to your recommendation that emigration contracts should not be confined to one "shipowner or firm." In fact, I have by the previous mail already informed you of the efforts I had made and was making in this direction.

I have, &c.,

I. E. FEATHERSTON,

Agent-General.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington, New Zealand.

No. 14.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the HON. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

(No. 175.)

7, Westminster Chambers, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W.,
7th March, 1872.

SIR,—

In my letter No. 149, 8th February, 1872, I informed you of the visit I had paid to Glasgow, Newcastle, Liverpool, and Bristol, for the purpose of inducing leading mercantile firms to tender for the conveyance of emigrants and railway plant.

Though several firms expressed their readiness to do so, I regret to state that I only received tenders from three firms, viz., Messrs. P. Henderson and Co., of Glasgow; Messrs. Gibbs, Bright, Brothers, of Liverpool; and Messrs. Shaw, Saville, and Co., of London.

The tender of Messrs. Henderson and Co. was at the rate of £14 5s. per statute adult to Otago, and £14 15s. to other safe ports in New Zealand; 200 emigrants to be guaranteed for each ship to Otago, and 300 for each ship to other ports.

Messrs. Gibbs, Bright, Brothers tendered at £13 13s. per statute adult to Auckland, Wellington, Lyttelton, and Port Chalmers, and at £14 14s. to the Bluff, Picton, Nelson, and Napier; the Government to guarantee a sufficient number of passengers to fill the 'tween-decks of each ship, and at no time less than 350 statute adults if required.

Messrs. Shaw, Saville, and Co. tendered at £13 3s.* per statute adult to Auckland, the Bluff, Wellington, Nelson, Lyttelton, Otago, and Napier; the Government to guarantee not less than 200 adults for each ship.

The same objection applied to all these tenders, viz., the condition that the Government should guarantee a certain minimum number of passengers to each ship. It would be easy to comply with this condition if all the emigrants were to be sent to the same port, as is the case in the Australian Colonies, but utterly impossible to comply with it, except at a ruinous expense to the Government, when the emigrants are to be distributed at some six or seven different ports in New Zealand.

After repeated interviews with these three firms, and also with other parties, and especially after satisfying myself that no firm could undertake such a service unless they first either secured the co-operation of Messrs. Shaw, Saville, and Co., or came to terms with them, I arranged the contract which I now send out, and which upon the whole will, I trust, be deemed satisfactory by the Government.

The passage money paid by the Canterbury Government, under their late contract with Messrs. Shaw, Saville, and Co., was at the rate of £14 15s. per statute adult; and by the Agent of Otago to Messrs. Henderson and Co., at the rate of £15 per statute adult. The saving effected by this arrangement is certainly not less than £1 12s. 6d. per statute adult, and it must be borne in mind that there has been recently a very considerable increase in the cost of provisions and in chartering of vessels, &c.

Although the contract is confined to emigration from England, emigrants can of course be brought from Scotland and embarked at London under this contract, should I fail to come to any arrangement with Messrs. Henderson and Co., of Glasgow, to whom I have offered the same terms, but which they have declined to accept.

I have not yet made any agreement for the freight of railway plant, but have rather purposely left the question in abeyance till I learn the nature of Messrs. Brogden's contracts, with whom it will be desirable to co-operate, but I shall hope to effect some reduction in the present rates.

I have, &c.,

I. E. FEATHERSTON,

Agent-General.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington, New Zealand.

* Price finally contracted for is £13.