

1873.

NEW ZEALAND.

IMMIGRATION TO NEW ZEALAND.

(FURTHER PAPERS FROM THE AGENT-GENERAL).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by command of His Excellency.

No. 1.

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

(No. 422.)

7, Westminster Chambers, Victoria Street,

SIR,—

Westminster, S.W., 13th June, 1873.

With reference to the Hon. Mr. O'Rorke's Memorandum of 12th April (65), 1873, in which he points out certain matters in the charter-party which, in his opinion, should without delay be remedied, I beg to remark :

1. If it is intended to be an absolute instruction to me to allow eighteen clear supercial feet to each statute adult, instead of fifteen as provided by the "Passengers' Act, 1855," I can readily comply with it, but I would point out that Her Majesty's Emigration Commissioners, after an experience to which I presume the Hon. Mr. O'Rorke will not pretend, have fixed fifteen feet as an ample provision. I need not add that to carry out the Hon. Mr. O'Rorke's suggestions would involve a very serious extra cost to the Government, as it would materially reduce the capacity of the vessels for the conveyance of emigrants. But I do not understand that this is an absolute instruction, and therefore shall not act upon it till I hear further from the Government.

2. With respect to the proper situation of the hospitals I have already addressed the Government at some length, and pointed out the very grave objections which exist to the hospitals being placed on deck, although my own opinion as a medical man was in favour of their being so placed, and did actually, in the case of the "Hovding," have the hospitals erected on deck.

3. With regard to the position of the issuing room, the apartment has during many years been placed in the 'tween decks of the vessel conveying emigrants to New Zealand, and judging from the reports received from time to time from the Immigration Commissioners the arrangement has been approved. The clause in the present charter-party relating to this question runs thus : "An issuing room of dimensions approved by the party of the first part shall be provided on some part of the main-deck, or on the passenger deck, in which latter case it is not to be included in the space allotted to the passengers under the Passengers' Act, &c."

As, however, it is in the opinion of the Government desirable that this room should be upon the main-deck, instructions shall be given to the Despatching Officer to adopt that course whenever it is possible to do so.

4. Section 6 of the charter-party has been strictly enforced, and in the very few cases in which the vessel has not been ready, the ship-owner has been compelled—as you will see by reference to the accounts—to pay for the maintenance of the emigrants.

5. With regard to the proposed bath-room for the married women and children, I would observe that it is not required in the Passengers' Act, and as far as I am aware has not been provided in any of the emigration services. But if, as Mr. Waterhouse in one of his dispatches says, the cost of emigration is of secondary consideration, of course Mr. O'Rorke's recommendation can be easily carried out, the Government which insists upon it, holding itself responsible for the additional cost of emigration.

7. The recommendation of the Commissioners with regard to medicines and surgical appliances have already been complied with, as you will see on reference to the charter-party of the ships.

8. With reference to the suggestion that a portion of the passage money should be made payable in the Colony, I would state that I have adopted the practice of paying the whole of the passage money here on the principle of economy; for, as the Government is aware the funds have been here and the rate of exchange has been saved to the Colony, and consequently the passage money has been proportionately reduced.

I have, &c.,

I. E. FEATHERSTON,
Agent-General.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

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