

1874.

NEW ZEALAND.

IMMIGRATION TO NEW ZEALAND.

(FURTHER LETTERS TO THE AGENT-GENERAL.)

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

No. 1.

The Hon. J. VOGEL to the AGENT-GENERAL.

(No. 129.)

SIR,—

Immigration Office, Wellington, 7th May, 1874.

I have the honor to forward herewith copies of the following documents relating to the ship "Woodlark," which arrived in Port Nicholson upon 29th March ultimo:—

1. Report of Immigration Commissioners.
2. Report by Surgeon-Superintendent.
3. Memorandum by the Immigration Officer, addressed to the Superintendent of Wellington, and His Honor's minute thereupon.
4. Report upon Immigrants ex "Woodlark," by the Officer in Charge of the Dépôt at Wanganui.
5. Certified List of Deaths upon the voyage and in quarantine.
6. Memorandum by the Immigration Officer, addressed to the Under Secretary for Immigration.

2. I regret to have to call your particular attention to the very unfavourable character of the reports by the Commissioners and Immigration Officer relative to some of the immigrants by this vessel, and which have been fully borne out by the subsequent conduct of several of the single women, both here and at Wanganui (see report of officer in charge of dépôt, forwarded herewith). Drunken, dissipated, and immoral, they reflect most strongly and unfavourably upon the department which selected and shipped them to this colony.

3. The Commissioners' report with regard to the medical inspection of the immigrants by this vessel, which is borne out by the surgeon-superintendent, *vide* paragraphs 3 and 4 of his report, is very unsatisfactory. They speak of this inspection as only a "cursory one," whilst the surgeon stated "medical inspection was an impossibility." Under such arrangements, I am not surprised that ship after ship arrives with disease on board, and with large mortality on the passage. Your attention has again and again been directed to the insufficiency of the medical inspection, but the case of the "Woodlark" proves to a demonstration that no practical result has followed, but that the inspection is still confined to "a hurried march past Dr. Humphries."

4. I have also to direct your consideration to paragraph 9 of the Commissioners' report, in which they allude to the embarkation of the emigrants "in a dense fog," and the discomfort consequent thereupon. The surgeon, you will observe, expresses his opinion that "the spread of the scarlet fever was greatly accelerated by the dampness of the bedding and clothing, caused by exposure to the fog." It may sometimes, no doubt, be necessary, in consequence of shipping arrangements, to embark emigrants upon an unfavourable day as regards weather, but it appears that in this case the ship was not ready for their reception, as "the bedding and luggage was strewn about the decks for hours, exposed to the falling fog, whilst the people themselves were huddled together in groups wherever they could find the least shelter, many of them not having anything to eat until late in the evening."

5. With regard to the children's dietary scale, upon which the Commissioners and the surgeon-superintendent remark at some length, I have already instructed you, in my letter No. 37, of 11th February, to the effect that your ships should be victualled according to the number of children on board, and not according to the number of statute adults; and you have no doubt carried my instructions into effect. The report of Dr. Meadows is altogether a very valuable one, and I trust will receive at your hands the consideration it merits.

6. The Immigration Officer directs attention, in a memorandum, copy of which is enclosed, to a most extraordinary proceeding on the part of your agent at Portadown, Ireland, who, it would appear, issued contract tickets for the "Woodlark" to emigrants proceeding to Canterbury, by which ship they embarked at the very time when a vessel for Canterbury must have been lying in the docks. I must request that you will inquire into and report upon this matter.

7. In conclusion, I must impress upon you that the character of the class of immigrants now arriving is a source of very grave anxiety to the Government, and is creating great