

brandy was a stimulant; of it I issued 5 bottles and 433 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces. And I recommend that, as a medical necessary, sherry be excluded the list, an equivalent of port being substituted, and that of a superior quality, even if this be done at the expense of quantity. (Journal, pp. 82, 83, 88, 89, 90.)

The salt provisions were excellent. The coffee was not good. Swiss preserved milk is preferable to that of the Aylesbury Company: the latter was on board, and in the tropics much of it was injured, though not absolutely decomposed. The quantity of it supplied as children's stores was adequate to their necessities, but that shipped as medical comforts absurdly small: eighty-eight tins for 434 souls, during a passage, fairly computed, of ninety days. *Ergo*. To be exact, a very few tins of Swiss milk were shipped. My official lists represent the whole to be of this brand.

The medicines were of the highest class, and to them should be added the following:—*Potassæ chloras*, *liquor epispasticus*, *carbo lignæ pulv.*, *bismuthi nitras*, *liq. sodæ chlor.*, and *chloral hydrat*. I can understand occasion often arises for a larger supply of the following, although I had sufficient, viz.:—*Pulv. doveri*, *hydrarg. chlor.* I required more of the following, and exhausted my supplies, viz.:—Methyd. spirit and linseed meal.

The water was excellent, and the engineer a thoroughly able and practical man.

The cabin of the surgeon should be furnished, and that on a recognized scale, from which no contractor should be allowed to deviate.

To consider my journal worthy perusal would be indeed presumptuous. It is, nevertheless, a record of fact, and contains many suggestions I have not time to reproduce here. Written at various times, under varying circumstances, it is, of necessity, irregular and disconnected. My exact transcript is, however, at least legible, which I forward under promise of return.

Finally, if, in the interest of future emigrants, a personal interview would be desirable, I will gladly see you, and if thereby advancing their prospects, I shall consider it but a poor return for the orderly conduct and universal courtesy and respect shown me by my late charges on board the "La Hogue."

I have, &c.,

W. H. RUSSELL, M.R.C.S., Eng., L.S.A., Lon.,
Surgeon-Superintendent, ship "La Hogue."

The Hon. the Immigration Commissioners.

No. 6.

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

(No. 181.)

SIR,—

Immigration Office, Wellington, 29th June, 1874.

Referring to my letter No. 62, of 14th March, 1874, enclosing you copy of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the origin of the outbreak of infectious disease on board the ship "Scimitar," on her voyage from Plymouth to Port Chalmers, I have now the honor to enclose you a copy of the report of the Commission and of the evidence* taken, which documents, owing to the illness of one of the Commissioners, only reached me upon the 6th June instant.

2. The report, the conclusions of which seem fully borne out by the evidence, discloses a state of things, with regard to the despatch of ships by your officers, and the medical inspection of the emigrants, which I very much regret, and confirms the opinion I had already been led to form upon the subject, and which in several letters I have already expressed to you, viz., that great carelessness, to say the least of it, is the rule rather than the exception in the despatch of ships; and that the medical inspection of the emigrants is of such a character as to be practically useless. In the case of the "Scimitar" the results have been of a very distressing character: the ship was sent to sea with the seeds of infection notoriously on board; fever broke out a few days after leaving port; and, under exceptionally favourable circumstances as to the character of the vessel herself, the conduct of her captain and officers, and the supply of water and provisions, she became a floating pest-house. More than half of the emigrants were down with one form of disease or the other, and twenty-six died.

3. If the evidence is reliable, upon which point the Commissioners do not appear to have entertained any doubt, it is difficult for me to express in terms of sufficient reprobation my opinion of the conduct of Mr. Smith, the despatching officer, and of Dr. Eccles, the Imperial Government Commissioner, who, in the face of the acknowledged fact of the existence of the infection of scarlet fever amongst the emigrants, and in defiance of the opinion of the surgeon-superintendent, Dr. Hosking, who strongly urged that these unfortunate people should be detained on shore for isolation and treatment until the epidemic had passed, are stated to have insisted on sending the ship to sea, arguing that the mortality afloat would not be worse than if the emigrants remained on shore. The Commissioners upon this very properly observe, "We do not concur in this, and believe that the fact of a number of persons being crowded together on board was unfavourable to the proper treatment of any epidemic disease, besides the danger to the Colony afterwards, by the introduction of disease." Any one who knows what the 'tween-decks of a crowded emigrant ship are under the most favourable circumstances, must of necessity agree with the Commissioners; and I may here inform you that a very virulent form of rubeola now prevalent in Dunedin, is generally believed by the medical profession to have been introduced by the "Scimitar" immigrants. It is my intention to cause a copy of the report and evidence to be forwarded to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in order that the conduct of Dr. Eccles may be inquired into by the proper authorities; and I have to request that you will at once call upon Mr. Smith for an explanation of his share in the matter; and also direct a close investigation to be made into all the circumstances connected with the despatch of the ship. If the facts prove to be as stated by Dr. Hosking, Mr. Smith should be relieved of his duties in connection with your department; and you are authorized in such case at once to dispense with that officer's services, without waiting further communication from the Government.

* The evidence is presented in Manuscript.