

and other persons as aforesaid on board the said ship during her said voyage; and into the compliance or non-compliance by all and every person and persons liable and chargeable in that behalf with the laws relating to or affecting passenger ships, in so far as the same affects the said ship 'Scimitar;' and generally into the provision made for the medical and other treatment, and the actual medical or other treatment, of the immigrants on board such ship during the said voyage," proceeded to examine such witnesses on oath as could best speak concerning the subjects under investigation, and having taken the evidence of twelve witnesses, and also personally inspected the said ship, respectfully report to your Excellency our opinion and conclusions, resulting from the said inquiry, of the several matters and things therein set forth, as follows:—

1. The "Scimitar" is a fine new ship of 1,225 tons burden, being particularly lofty between decks (8 feet 6 inches high), and altogether well adapted for immigration service. The vessel sailed from London for Plymouth, where 430 immigrants were taken on board from the depôt on the 22nd of December, 1873. The vessel finally left for New Zealand on the 24th of December, 1873, and arrived at Port Chalmers on the 5th of March, 1874, after an unusually quick voyage of seventy-one days.

2. The surgeon, captain, and other officers appear to have been specially attentive in the discharge of their respective duties.

3. The supply of water was good and abundant, the ordinary medical stores satisfactory, the medical comforts liberal, and the usual food plentiful.

4. On the fourth day after sailing (December 28th) a child named Brown was observed covered with scarlatina and removed to the hospital. Whilst under treatment an attack of measles supervened, and the child died on the eighth day (January 5th). The period of incubation of measles being usually fourteen days, this child must have been sickening of the measles before embarkation.

5. Both measles and scarlatina developed rapidly, especially among the children, and altogether there were fifty cases of scarlatina and one hundred cases of measles. The latter ceased about a month before landing, but the scarlatina continued during the whole voyage. There were twenty-six deaths in all, with one exception (a girl of seventeen), all children. Fourteen of the deaths were from measles, nine from scarlatina, two from dentition and diarrhoea, and one from bronchitis. This last child died on the fourteenth day of the voyage, having been ill before embarkation.

In addition to the cases referred to, there were 120 severe cases of diarrhoea, twelve of erysipelas, carbuncle, whitlow, and boils; thirty of bronchitis; numerous cases of stomatitis, quinsy, and ulcerated sore throat.

6. The number of cases prevented the possibility of isolating the infected in the hospital, and the major number were treated in their bunks, every precaution being taken, by disinfectants and otherwise, to prevent the disease spreading.

7. The seeds of both scarlatina and measles must have been in a state of vitality amongst some of the immigrants while in the depôt before embarkation, and there is no reason to believe that the origin of these diseases is at all to be attributed to the ship or the arrangements on board.

8. After embarkation, and before sailing, a family named Smith were sent ashore with strong symptoms of scarlet fever. A few hours before sailing, a child named Wolfrey was found covered with scarlet fever rash, and the whole family immediately sent ashore. This family came from Jersey, and there is reason to believe that several members of that family were only convalescent from scarlet fever before entering the depôt.

9. The infection of scarlatina had also been imported into the depôt by a family named Tanner, from Ireland. Four or five days after entering the depôt, a girl named Tanner became ill of scarlatina; and it appears that a young girl on board the steamer in which they came from Cork to Plymouth, was suffering under that disease. Some of the Tanner party were rejected from the ship "Carnatic" and others of them from the "Mongol"—both of which vessels sailed before the "Scimitar"—on account of fever symptoms.

10. The depôt at Plymouth is said to be damp, the bedding in many cases being damp. The situation is not a healthy one. The accommodation in the way of fireplaces was too limited, and the front of the stoves usually occupied by babies' clothes drying. The depôt at the time was over-crowded. The weather was very rainy, and the immigrants going out and in got wet. Colds and catarrhs were prevalent in consequence, and during the voyage the imperfect ventilation on board was also productive of colds and sore throats. The preserved milk issued did not agree with the children, and the navy biscuit provided for them was not suitable food. The large number of persons on board, the imperfect ventilation, and the unsuitable dietary for children, tended to aggravate the epidemic and other forms of disease in existence and latent at the time of embarkation.

11. These facts exhaust the full head of the inquiry, namely, "The origin, outbreak, and existence of any infectious disease or other disease or bodily ailment on board the said ship during her voyage," and lead us to the opinion that the infectious diseases had their origin from cases imported into the depôt, before the sailing of the "Scimitar," from Jersey and Ireland. That once being developed on board, they rapidly spread, owing to inability to insure isolation; and that the other diseases were partially caused by the wet weather at starting, and the crowding and dampness at the depôt, and partly by the usual limitations and discomforts of a between-decks voyage, in this instance accompanied by defective ventilation. We desire to add that in our opinion everything was done by the surgeon, captain, and officers, which was in their power, to arrest or mitigate the diseases on board.

12. In reference to the second head of the inquiry, namely, the state of the health of the immigrants at the time of embarkation, or immediately prior thereto, it is proved that on the whole the health of the immigrants was good, with, of course, the exceptions above referred to. The time of sailing was the depth of winter, and this must be considered as productive of bronchial and chest affections. There was no infectious fever within the depôt at the time of embarkation, so far as known, the rejected cases having been sent outside. It appears that the parents of the child Wolfrey, who were subsequently sent ashore, had, while in the depôt, been consulting a chemist in Plymouth, a fact they had carefully concealed, from fear of being left behind. While the health of