

4. In order to facilitate the discharge of the duties of the surgeon-superintendents with regard to their clerical work, in the way of keeping account of the issue of medical stores and comforts, and the other necessary records, Dr. Russell recommends the use of certain forms, specimens of which he has been good enough to supply, and which are forwarded herewith. I think you cannot do better than adopt them for general use, and supply every surgeon, upon his appointment, with the books containing them. In many cases it has been brought under my notice that very little convenience is afforded to the surgeon for carrying out this very important section of his duties. It should be an instruction to the despatching officer, that the surgeon's cabin should be well lighted, and, where practicable, easily accessible to the quarter-deck.

5. The positions of the hospitals on board the ship seem to have been very badly chosen. I have previously on many occasions had to complain of this, but your officers appear determined to carry on their own course, notwithstanding repeated remonstrances on my part. Common sense, apart from professional experience, would lead any person to judge that contiguity to the water-closets was an absolutely dangerous element in the construction of hospitals, two of which were so placed on board the "La Hogue," whilst the third was a dark hole in the noisiest part of the 'tween-decks. It may be a very simple matter for the inspecting and despatching officers to slur over their work in the manner in which it is only too evident that they do, but it is serious for the poor sick emigrants, who in consequence are exposed to unnecessary suffering and hardship.

6. From a perusal of Dr. Russell's journal, I find not only that he condemns the position of the hospitals, but that when he embarked, a day or two before sailing, neither these nor the dispensary were fitted up, and that he had great difficulty in getting this done. In fact, the hurry and confusion which have been so frequently complained of in the despatch of our emigrant ships, appear to have been repeated to a culminating point on board the "La Hogue"; carpenters still at work fitting up the 'tween-decks when the emigrants embarked, consequently the fittings incomplete, rude and flimsy at the best; the gangways on the upper deck defective and unprotected, rendering the passage-way dangerous in bad weather; dead-lights all leaking; poop ladders not provided with rails, &c. Upon these subjects and other deficiencies the doctor notes, "Before a fatal accident occurs (many serious and trivial have already) I must record the fact of having complained, ere the ship was cleared, that the gangway arrangements were defective, but especially did I call attention to the absence of hand-rails to the poop gangway ladders—they were not however supplied; also to the flimsy description of fittings and utensils, and that many articles required by the contract were not placed on board." Amongst others, Dr. Russell mentioned soldering irons and requisites for the repair of water cans, &c., lead, nails, spare timber, tarpaulins, scales, and scrubbers. The sand and lime shipped, he also states, were bad, and neither holystones, brushes, or other requisites for cleaning the 'tween-decks appear to have been available. In fact, as the Commissioners remark, the whole journal discloses substantial reasons for complaining of the manner in which the charter was carried out, in the neglect of so many essentials to the comfort and health of the emigrants. With regard to the dispensary and hospitals, I quite agree with Dr. Russell that the surgeon should be in possession of them duly fitted with all requisites the moment the emigrants arrive on board.

7. In my letter already referred to, covering copy of the Commissioners' report upon the ship "Scimitar," I have taken occasion to remark upon the necessity of providing for and enforcing the personal cleanliness of the emigrants. You will observe that Dr. Russell expresses himself strongly upon this point: he says, "I cannot too strongly urge on the Commissioners the necessity for a bath-room for the single men. It is not sufficient that laving requisites be shipped (none were or are required by the terms of the contract), it is the privacy that is needed for other purposes, *e.g.*, the efficient treatment of *scabies*, a parasite disease too often prevailing amongst emigrants."

8. There are several matters in connection with the dietary scales upon which Dr. Russell makes useful suggestions, and to which I draw your attention. He condemns the quality of the Aylesbury preserved milk, and recommends the Swiss in preference, and also states that the quantity shipped as medical comforts was absurdly small, viz., eighty-eight tins for 434 souls, during a passage fairly computed at ninety days. I trust this will be remedied in future, as the health of the young children depends, as you must be aware, very much upon the quality of the milk supplied for their use. Another suggestion which I desire you will give effect to is, that a certain quantity of salt fish be in future shipped for the use of Roman Catholic emigrants, who, from the non-issue of this article of diet upon their fast days, are either deprived altogether of their dinners, or are driven, against their feelings, to transgress the rules of their Church.

9. The medicines Dr. Russell reports to have been of the highest class, but he recommends certain additions, of the necessity for which you will no doubt be able to judge. The practical character of the doctor's journal, which I perused with great interest, leads me to the opinion that his suggestions upon this and other professional points are worthy of great consideration, and this I trust you will be good enough to afford them.

10. There is another matter of some importance which has struck me in perusing the journal referred to, *i.e.*, that Dr. Russell made a full and complete statement of the deficiencies and bad arrangements on board the ship, in the form of a letter addressed to you and sent on shore by the Channel pilot. No notice whatever appears to have been taken of this communication, and you have not even informed me of its receipt, much less of any action you may have taken in consequence with Messrs. Shaw, Savill, and Co. I am led, therefore, to assume that this letter of Dr. Russell's has been laid aside as unworthy of attention, and that no closer inspection of the fittings and stores of ships which have sailed subsequently, has been thought necessary in consequence.

I think a copy of the surgeon's complaint should have been forthwith forwarded to me, with an explanation of the reasons which justified the despatching officer in embarking the emigrants before the ship was ready, and in sending her to sea without ascertaining whether all the articles required by the charter-party were on board.

I have, &c.,  
JULIUS VOGEL.

The Agent-General for New Zealand, London.