

No. 11.

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

(No. 255.)

SIR,—

Immigration Office, Wellington, 19th November, 1873.

I have the honor to forward, for your information, copy of the Immigration Commissioners' report upon the ship "Hydaspes," which vessel arrived at Auckland on the 19th ultimo.

I have, &c.,

The Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

JULIUS VOGEL.

Enclosure in No. 11.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORT on Ship "Hydaspes."

SIR,—

Auckland, 20th October, 1873.

We have the honor to report that the ship "Hydaspes," Captain E. S. Babot, arrived here last night, and anchored at the North Head. She has on board 262 passengers, equal to 208 statute adults, of whom 187½ are Government immigrants.

We boarded the ship at the North Head. The Health Officer having ascertained that all were well, we proceeded with the inspection.

This is one of the largest ships that has arrived in Auckland with immigrants. She is fitted up with every convenience, and the accommodation and ventilation is everything that could be desired. The fresh water was supplied from a condenser, and the passengers were allowed an unlimited supply.

The provisions were all of the best quality. The preserved meats, which were prepared in this Colony, were excellent.

There were no complaints from any of the passengers.

There were five deaths during the voyage,—one woman, two children under four years, and two infants.

In conclusion, we beg to recommend that the gratuities be paid to the officers.

We have, &c.,

I. J. BURGESS,

T. M. PHILSON, M.D., Health Officer.

The Hon. the Minister for Immigration, Wellington.

No. 12.

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

(No. 257.)

SIR,—

Immigration Office, Wellington, 19th November, 1873.

Referring to my letter of 29th October, No. 229, I herewith transmit copies of the reports of the Immigration Officer, the Immigration Commissioners, &c., with respect to the ship "Punjaub."

The circumstances detailed in the reports appeared to me to be so serious, that I directed proceedings for breaches of the Passengers Acts to be taken against the ship. I will forward you, in separate cover, a report of the proceedings before the Magistrates in Canterbury, together with a memorandum by the Crown Prosecutor of that Province, a report from the Immigration Officer, &c.

I have, &c.,

The Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

JULIUS VOGEL.

Enclosure 1 in No. 12.

MEMORANDUM for the UNDER SECRETARY.

I FORWARD herewith the Commissioners' report on the ship "Punjaub;" also the further evidence which was taken on Saturday last. I have already transmitted the surgeon's report, and the evidence of several of the immigrants who were first released from quarantine.

I have had several interviews with the Crown Solicitor, and laid before him all the evidence and reports. In point of law it is very doubtful whether I could, as Emigration Officer, under the Passengers Act, take proceedings for a breach of the contract so far as the dietary scale (exclusive of water) is concerned. If you will be good enough to refer to the 37th section of the Act you will at once perceive the difficulty. Our dietary scale differs altogether from that laid down under the 35th section. The questions therefore arise, have the Emigration Commissioners authorized the issue of provisions in accordance with our scale, and has that scale been published in the London Gazette? I can, however, take proceedings against the ship for the non-supply of pure water, for insufficient light and ventilation, for not supplying the provisions in a properly cooked state, and for defective closets; also for not having sufficient hospital accommodation. These proceedings have been taken.

Another difficulty arises with reference to the immigrants themselves taking proceedings, and it is this: By the 71st section of the Act, it is clearly laid down that the contract ticket shall be signed by the owner, charterer, or master of the ship, or by some person in their or his name, and on their or his part. Now this has not been done. The contract tickets are only signed "William G. McKellar," and on inquiry I cannot find that this person is even in the employ of the New Zealand Shipping Company.

I mention these circumstances although I do not for one moment suppose that the Company will in any way dispute the signature: still it shows, I think, that the business is very loosely conducted.