

the "Halcione" the printed instructions of Messrs. Shaw, Savill, and Co. to the commanders of their ships were submitted for my perusal. These do not bear any date, but would seem to be subsequent to the loss of the "Cospatrick," and in all probability were issued upon your suggestion, and appear to me to make every possible provision in case of danger under the existing state of the law. *Inter alia*, it is an imperative order that the officers and crew shall be appointed to stations to which, on an alarm of fire, it will be their duty to repair, and that, although the emigrants cannot be compelled to work, volunteers for the fire brigade should be urged to come forward and drill with the crew. I am informed that the New Zealand Shipping Company have issued substantially the same instructions.

The vital importance of the services of a disciplined body of emigrants being available in case of fire or other casualty, in accord with the crew under the instructions of the officers, induces me to think that the adoption of a system such as that so successfully carried out on board the "Rodney" should be enforced in the case of all our emigrant ships. I am aware that this would require legislation by the Imperial Parliament; and in the event of your not already having taken action in this direction, which from the tenor of your despatches I consider probable, I would suggest for your consideration that you should communicate with the Colonial Office with the view of introducing an amendment in the Passenger Acts, giving the necessary power to the masters of ships carrying emigrants.

The Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

I have, &c.,
H. A. ATKINSON.

Enclosure in No. 22.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORT on Ship "Rodney."

SIR,—

Immigration Office, Wellington, 13th September, 1875.

We have the honor to report the arrival of the ship "Rodney" on the 29th ultimo, with 396 statute adult immigrants. There were six births and nine deaths, equal to one and a half statute adults, during the voyage. The immigrants and ship were inspected on the 30th, when we found everything in a highly satisfactory condition. The single men had a good permanent hatch-house at the entrance to their compartment, which was roomy and well ventilated, it being the place for second class private passengers. The married people had the use of the main and after hatches; their bunks were in blocks with alley-ways around the sides of the ship. There were large permanent ventilators, and the compartment was clean and sweet. The single girls were in the after part of the ship, having a direct entrance to their compartment from the poop. They had plenty of light and ventilation, and the closet, bath-room, hospital, and matron's cabin were particularly good, all being part of the saloon berths. The married women's hospital was the stern cabin, being roomy, well ventilated, and in every respect convenient. The male hospital, on deck, was also very convenient. The galley, condenser, and bakehouse each proved equal to the requirements of the immigrants, and were well fitted and convenient. Complaint, however, was made as to the quality of the flour, which is reported to have caused no little discontent amongst the adult immigrants, as well as sickness amongst the children. We have procured a sample of this flour, which will be tested by a practical baker, when we will send a report thereon. The issuing room and dispensary were on each side of the main hatch, and were reported to be convenient. In going round the ship for inspection we were struck with the order and discipline which prevailed, and we observed, for the first time in an immigrant ship, that notices respecting smoking, drill instruction for fire, night watches, &c., were posted up, and while we were on board the opportunity was taken of exercising the immigrants and crew in fire and boat-lowering drill. We learn from the surgeon's diary that some trouble was experienced with the single men, saloon passengers, and we desire again to express our opinion that such passengers should not be allowed to come in immigrant ships. Reference is also made to the inferior and flimsy description of the booby-hatches. We have over and over again called attention to this, and it is the opinion of every captain and surgeon we have questioned upon the subject that the booby-hatches at present used are anything but safe. Port wine and brandy, medical comforts, appear to have been short-shipped: in fact, as is usually the case, stores were hurried on board with cargo, &c., by night and day. The confusion can be imagined when the loading, fitting, and provisioning of the vessel was completed in a week. The immigrants were on the whole a healthy and useful body of people, and no great difficulty has been experienced in disposing of them, although it is the largest number that has come to this port in one vessel.

In conclusion we recommend the payment of the usual gratuities. The captain and surgeon seem to have performed their duties zealously, and with a due regard for the welfare and comfort of the immigrants under their charge. With respect to the gratuity to the chief officer, a special communication has been sent in by us. A summary of the voyage by the surgeon-superintendent, which contains some practical suggestions, is appended.

We have, &c.,
ALEXANDER JOHNSTON, M.D.
H. J. H. ELIOTT.
JOHN HOLLIDAY.

His Honor the Superintendent, Wellington.

No. 23.

The Hon. H. A. ATKINSON to the AGENT-GENERAL.

(No. 234.)

SIR,—

Immigration Office, Wellington, 25th October, 1875.

I have the honor to forward herewith copies of the following documents relative to the "Helen Denny," which vessel arrived at Napier upon the 20th September ultimo:—1. Immigration