

if he were assured that the 1,000 to whom free passages are promised are to be forwarded. It may be possibly necessary for me to proceed shortly to the North in order to pacify some of my agents, and also to fix the exact extent of obligations; but before leaving I should like to have your answer to this, to produce, if necessary, to my agents. I should have liked to have reduced our liability to three ships or less; but it is no use giving any false hopes. Your Government ought to have given an earlier and longer notice. I frequently wrote about the increasing applications, and, although there was some uncertainty about foreign emigration, I expected at least a six months' notice, and not such a sudden pull up, particularly as winter is just the time for engagement of our emigrants, who require a longer time to prepare than yours, for they have to give a notice of three months to their employers to get permission to leave from Government, and generally have also a little landed property to sell. I shall be glad to get an early reply from you, and remain," &c.

10. The Agent-General at once replied to this letter by telegraph in the following terms:—"Impossible I can accept the liabilities you say you have incurred without myself examining each application, and verifying each acceptance by you. Send the necessary documents." He also wrote the following letter, in which the whole case, as it then stood, is carefully considered:—

"MY DEAR MR. KIRCHNER,—

"Brighton, 22nd February, 1876.

"I received your note of the 20th instant, this morning, and at once telegraphed that it was impossible that I could accept the liabilities you said you had incurred, without myself examining each application, and verifying the date of each acceptance by you. This telegram so clearly expresses my views and intentions, that it is only necessary for me to advert very briefly to the main points raised in your letter now under reply. You say that the New Zealand Government ought to have given an earlier and longer notice of their intention to discontinue free emigration, and to get rid of their German contracts; and further on you say that 'you expected at least a six months' notice, and not such a sudden pull up.' The following facts will show how far such a charge or complaint on your part is justifiable. Immediately on my arrival at Hamburg last June, I showed you a letter (if I did not give you a copy of it) addressed to me on the 30th April, 1875, by Sir Julius Vogel, then Premier of New Zealand, in which, under the heading 'Immigrants to give Promissory Notes,' he stated 'that the time has come when immigrants should pay some portion of their passage money.' Notices of this change were actually printed and issued on the 1st July, 1875, but were almost immediately withdrawn on receipt of advices from the colony that the proposed change was premature. But the Government, in the Official Handbook and in all other official announcements and publications, always in the most explicit manner announced that they reserved to themselves the right of at any time abolishing free passages, and reverting back to the system of cash payments or promissory notes. Of all this you were fully aware. It was with the view of warning and advising local agents of the probability or rather certainty of such a change, that I requested you to accompany me to Switzerland, the Tyrol, and Italy (and Mr. Glyn, your local agent in Italy) to meet me either at Leghorn or Turin. You will remember that in the cases of the then proposed emigration of considerable bodies versed in certain industries, notably in the case of a proposed migration of Waldenses from the valleys of Piedmont, I distinctly informed the agents that unless these several bodies could make their arrangements to emigrate during 1875, I could not guarantee them free passages, and I warned you and the local agents not to prolong the period of such engagements. But more than this, I drew your special attention to the instructions given to me by Sir Julius Vogel in his letter of the 30th April, 1875, under the heading 'German Contracts'—that is, he desired me to determine these contracts, or at any rate to exact from the emigrants cash payments or promissory notes. I must candidly confess that I am at a loss to conceive what further notices or warning I could have given you not to commit the Government to engagements except to a very small amount and for a short period. I trust and believe you have not done so. It is true that you state that, after 'investigating your obligations for free passages, you find that four ships at least must be despatched,' and further on you state 'it may be possibly necessary for you to proceed shortly to the North in order to pacify some of your agents, and also to fix the exact extent of obligations.' The only inference I can draw from this is, that the obligations referred to have not been incurred by you, but by your local agents. If so, I have simply to say that I cannot and will not recognize any engagements or liabilities of local agents. When you were appointed Agent of the New Zealand Government for Continental emigration, it was upon the distinct understanding that while you might appoint local agents, the power of approving and accepting emigrants vested in you solely and exclusively, and that you could and should not delegate such power to your local agents. But surely it was implied that you should exercise this power with discretion. It surely will not for one moment be contended that, with the knowledge you possessed that the Government were desirous of determining all Continental contracts, and might at any moment abolish free passages, you were justified in involving them in heavy liabilities extending over a lengthened and indefinite period. If you could commit the Government to granting free passages to 1,000 emigrants, you might equally well have engaged to give free passages to 4,000. It is for the purpose of enabling me to judge for myself to what extent you have committed the Government, that I have to request that you will, with as little delay as possible, forward to me the applications submitted to you by your local agents, and all your written acceptances. In the meantime, I have to instruct you not to take up any vessels for the conveyance of emigrants. I shall address a communication to the same effect as this to Messrs. Sloman. I was surprised to learn from Mr. Dutton, the day after you left, that he had some days previously drawn your attention to the 144th clause of the Penal Code recently passed by the German Parliament. Had you informed me of this, you would not have left without precise instructions. It is perhaps right to add that, in a personal interview with the Consul-General for Germany, I very frankly, in answer to his queries, explained the proceedings of my Government *re* emigration, and amongst other matters your own position, that of your local agents, my arrangements for the conveyance of emigrants, the intention of the Government to discontinue free passages except to a very limited number, to whom they had already been promised, &c.

"Believe me, &c.,

"I. E. FEATHERSTON."