

438. What was the Government bringing them out for?—£5 I believe.

439. Was that the reason you would not work?—No; I worked as long as Brogden got any work. That was the time I refused to pay when they had finished the line. Then I went to Henderson's office, and he said he had got no more work. I told him it was hardly fair we should pay our passage, and said I should not pay any more, as they had got no work for me. He said he had no more work, as Government had broken their contract with them.

440. *Mr. Allwright.*] You brought your daughters out under the Government arrangements?—Two of them.

441. Why not yourselves?—We did not know. There was no Government agent there.

442. Then how did you know for your daughters?—That was worked between Brogdens and the Government. I do not know how they did it. All girls over twelve years were supposed to be assisted as servant-girls.

443. *Captain Kenny.*] Did you not make some inquiries whether the Government arrangement could not extend to the rest of the family when you found out?—No; we never thought of it, because we had made all agreements and were satisfied.

444. You had all completed before you heard about the Government arrangement?—Yes.

445. The reason you considered yourself acquitted was because the firm had broken your agreement; because they could not give you two years' work?—Yes.

446. Without saying that made any alteration, the hardship of having to pay more than you would have had to pay the Government?—I considered we should not have to pay because the Government were bringing them out free. That was very nearly two years after we came out.

447. You considered the fact of the Government bringing in immigrants at lower rates than your own absolved you from the obligation to pay?—Not altogether. I said it was not fair for us to pay I would have paid if they had carried out their contract with me.

448. *The Chairman.*] How long did you work for Messrs. Brogden?—All the time till that line was finished; then they had no more work, and I left and went to work for the Government.

449. *Mr. Cave.*] How did you pay the Government for the two girls?—I paid nothing at all for them.

450. *The Chairman.*] On what conditions did they come out; on your promise to pay something?—Supposed to pay something. Government had an agreement. It was done between Brogdens and the Government.

451. What did you understand?—That they were to be assisted.

452. To what extent?—I do not know.

453. Did your note to Messrs. Brogden cover the daughters' passages at all?—No; it had nothing to do with that. The girls signed an agreement for themselves.

PETER SOMERS, examined.

*To Mr. Cave:* My name is Peter Somers. I live in Nelson Street, Wellington. I came to New Zealand in 1872 in the ship "Jessie Readman." We arrived here on the 16th December. I was engaged to come out by Messrs. Brogden's agent. I was then a single man. To pay the passage-money I gave Messrs. Brogden a promissory note for, I believe, £17 13s. On landing here I worked for Messrs. Brogden a day and a half.

454. *Mr. Cave.*] Why did you not continue to work for them?—There was a disagreement as to the rate of wages; likewise because they wanted us to work nine hours a day. I objected to that.

455. How much have you paid on account of your promissory note?—I forget the exact amount.

456. Were you ever sued?—Yes.

457. Why did you object to pay?—Because I considered that I had paid sufficient. Considering that, on the vessel I came out by, the Government brought out families of assisted immigrants on lower terms, I considered I had paid sufficient—equal to what they paid.

458. Did you think Messrs. Brogden had no right to charge you more than the Government charged?—I thought it was a great hardship. I objected to pay. That was the principal ground. Directly after, by the next vessel, they came without paying anything, and I had to pay all expenses to the port of embarkation too.

459. *Mr. Bell.*] What was your disagreement with the firm?—I objected to the nine hours a day.

460. Was there something with regard to the wages?—I wanted to have the wages fixed.

461. At what sum?—That was to be arranged between the firm and the men.

462. Then other men disagreed at the same time?—About ninety.

463. Where?—In Wellington.

464. Where have you been since then?—I have stopped in Wellington ever since.

465. What about the others?—I cannot say much about the others. Some are working here. Several have always remained in Wellington.

466. Did the others go away at once?—Some did, and some did not. The majority of them went up country.

467. How long after the disagreement?—I cannot state.

468. How many men struck?—About ninety struck for a proper arrangement to be made to know on what terms they were to work us.

469. How long after the strike were you sued?—About eighteen months, as near as I can judge.

470. Did you ever see Messrs. Brogden's agents in that time?—Yes.

471. Was application made to you for payment of the money?—There was.

472. Did you pay anything?—Not until I was sued.

473. Judgment was obtained against you, I understand?—Yes.

474. Have you been insolvent since?—No.

475. So the judgment is still in force against you?—I think so.

476. *Mr. Turnbull.*] How much have you paid?—I cannot tell the exact amount. I think about £6. I cannot be certain.