

what land is intended to be offered for sale. There can hardly be a doubt that the knowledge of there being a chance of acquiring such land would have attractions for farmers accustomed to keep sheep on the hill-farms of the North; but this bare knowledge is of no use to them unless the Agent-General can tell them precisely what they have an opportunity of getting. Nor is that enough unless he can add to that information some reasonable assurance of stability in the land law. It is the instability of that land law that is the real mischief; and, after a year's experience and close application, I do not hesitate to say that, if there is one thing more than another that deters people of the farmer-class here from going out, it is that no one can feel sure of the land law remaining for two sessions the same, nor can an intending colonist rely upon being able to make an investment which would not be immediately affected by some new agitation for a change. Even in the case of the leases for subdivided runs, whenever I have had to explain that a hill-farmer who should go out with the intention of bidding for one at the Government auction and laying out his small capital in pastoral pursuits is liable to be turned out without compensation any day at twelve months' notice, I have invariably found this provision to act as an absolute deterrent. We complain in the colony that one of the classes we should most like to see making it their home—namely, hill-farmers with small capital—are not induced to come out to us; but we take care to let them know that, if they do come out, they shall have no security of tenure whatever in the pursuit we invite them to engage in.

This subject of the land law is of such supreme importance that, if it would not have been meddling with what is not within my province, I should ere now have offered some suggestions to the Government upon it. But there is at any rate one thing in which you can make the office of Agent-General more useful than it is. If you would direct the Survey Office to keep me regularly supplied with complete sets of plans of every district, showing what Government land is really open to settlement, people coming here to make inquiries would be helped to the particular knowledge they naturally always want to get. There is no advantage in having as Agent-General a person who knows the colony from the North Cape to Foveaux Strait when he cannot even show to an intending settler on a map what he is talking to him about.

Again, a new edition of the Handbook, which is quite obsolete, is greatly wanted; and if I could employ some one I was able to trust to bring out in a bright and attractive form the latest information about both Islands I know it would do great good. For months past I have been trying to make time for doing this most necessary work myself, but in vain; it can only be done properly by a special hand under my immediate supervision, and if it is not done really well it is not worth doing at all.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Immigration, Wellington.

F. D. BELL.

No. 3.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the MINISTER of IMMIGRATION.

(Memorandum.)

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 21st March, 1882.

IN making arrangements with the New Zealand Shipping Company for the passages of nominated emigrants by ships which have not been placed under the Passengers Act, the company required payment for those emigrants whose passages were engaged but who failed to embark.

There is no doubt that the company is liable to loss if they do not receive any payment for such defaulters, more especially as regards ships where the number which it is possible to take is limited, as the room is reserved, and they are therefore precluded from taking other passengers. In the late shipping contract it was provided that where defaulters were more than ten in number the company were to be paid half passage-money for any in excess of that number; but this arrangement cannot altogether be made applicable to cases where the number expected to embark does not as a rule exceed twenty. I have, however, adopted a somewhat similar course, and have agreed that, if the defaulters exceed 10 per cent. of the number for whom passages have been taken, the excess shall be paid for to the extent of half the passage-money, and I trust that this arrangement will meet with your approval.

In connection with this subject I would point out that there are certain special difficulties in making arrangements for the passages of small numbers of emigrants. The shipping companies as a rule decline to put their ships under the Passengers Act, unless I can give them 100 passengers; so that I am compelled in many cases to send those nominated people (who avail themselves of their nominations) out in short ships, which cannot take more than twenty or thirty at a time. I am unable, for instance, in such cases, to make as satisfactory arrangements as could be wished as regards the conveyance of the single women.

Again, some of the nominated people for Otago live in Scotland and wish to start from the Clyde, but their number is not sufficient to enable me to engage a ship from that port under the Passengers Act, while they are too many to go in the short ships, and some have therefore to embark at either London or Plymouth. I mention these one or two points, as possibly your attention may be called to them and others of a similar nature in some other way. I need scarcely add that, as far as circumstances allow, as satisfactory arrangements as possible are made for the conveyance of these small bodies of nominated emigrants.

F. D. BELL,

Agent-General.

No. 4.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the MINISTER of IMMIGRATION.

(Memorandum.)

7, Westminster Chambers, London, 28th November, 1882.

IN accordance with previous practice I am providing the single-women emigrants with a free ship's outfit, and also with a free pass to the port of embarkation, or, where the free passes do not apply, refunding to them, previous to the sailing of the ship, a reasonable amount on account of railway and steamboat fares; and, in this respect, I am making no distinction between those nominated in the colony and those who apply direct to this office.

F. D. BELL.