

No. 13.

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

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, 1st October, 1883.

In one of the newspapers that came by the last mail there appears a paragraph containing a telegram from some correspondent of the paper at Wellington containing a variety of absurd statements respecting the course taken in this office about the vessels of the New Zealand Shipping Company and Shaw-Savill-Albion Company. So far as the paragraph in question refers to myself I do not stoop to take any notice of it; but, lest any false impressions should have been created by it against the officers of my department, I have thought it right to refer the paragraph to Mr. Kennaway for report. I now append a minute by him, and trust that, in justice to him and my other officers, you will be pleased to publish it in the same journal in which the paragraph was allowed to appear.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Immigration, Wellington.

F. D. BELL.

Enclosure 1 in No. 13.

MEMORANDUM for the AGENT-GENERAL.

REFERRING to the newspaper paragraph headed, "Agent-General and the Steam Service," I have to state as follows:—

1. The "Doric" took 274 souls, equal to $236\frac{1}{2}$ statute adults—not 74, as stated in the paragraph. We offered to make the number up to 300 statute adults, equal, approximately, to 350 souls, but the New Zealand Shipping Company could not take that number, and even asked us to reduce the number which they had originally engaged to take by that vessel. You are aware that this circumstance occurred also in the case of the "British Queen," sailing in September, and that the Shipping Company are unable to take emigrants by the "Tongariro," necessitating your engaging the sailing ship "Waitangi" for conveyance of emigrants to Canterbury.

2. As regards the "British King's" first voyage, the New Zealand Shipping Company would not come to terms as to rates of passage-money; and as regards her second voyage, that vessel was despatched at a time of year (June) when, in accordance with instructions from the Government, emigrants were not to be despatched, the object being to avoid their arriving in the winter months.

3. As regards the statement that persons inquiring at this office are "carefully acquainted" with particulars as to the Shaw-Savill-Albion Company's ships, and not as to the New Zealand Shipping Company's, I have made strict inquiry of the officers of this department, and I find it is absolutely untrue. The instructions to the officers of the department who have to answer such inquiries are to hand the person inquiring a leaflet, which we distribute by thousands, and which contains a paragraph giving particulars as to the sailing ships of both lines, and specially draws attention to the monthly steamers of the New Zealand Shipping Company. If persons inquiring wish to know anything further, as to dates of sailing, &c., they are referred to Mr. E. A. Smith, who informs me that he invariably mentions both lines of vessels.

4. Cards, giving particulars of both lines, are exhibited on a board in a prominent position in his office.

5. I also attach the form we issue in large numbers declining persons for free and assisted passages, in which attention is again specially drawn to all the regular direct lines of vessels trading between this country and New Zealand.

6. I have more than once asked both companies to supply this office with their printed prospectus as to dates of sailing, &c., of their respective vessels, so that I may distribute them to intending paying passengers, but neither have complied with my request, except in one or two instances of not very recent date.

7. I do not know that anything more can be done than is done for the purpose of impartially bringing both companies' ships before the notice of the numerous persons who inquire at this office for information as regards paying passages.

WALTER KENNAWAY,

4th October, 1883.

Secretary to the Agent-General's Department.

Enclosure 2 in No. 13.

The AGENT-GENERAL and the STEAM SERVICE.

[By Telegraph. From a Correspondent.]

Wellington, Sunday.

CONSIDERABLE attention has been attracted by the Agent-General's last telegram, showing that he had sent only 74 emigrants by the 5,000-ton steamer "Doric," which is likely to come out in forty-five days, while he has sent 340 each by the 1,000-ton sailing vessels "Nelson" and "Taranaki," which are pretty certain to take at least ninety days; in fact, Sir F. Dillon Bell's attitude toward the New Zealand Shipping Company's direct steam service, it is thought, imperatively needs some explanation, it being remembered how he impliedly disregarded the "British King," which came out first in forty-nine and now in forty-four days, while he was loud in his praise of Shaw-Savill's "Westmeath," which occupied sixty days in the passage, and so grievously disappointed the Auckland people when she did arrive. It is also asserted by the *Wellington Post* that passengers seeking at the Agent-General's office directions as to the sea voyage to New Zealand are carefully acquainted with all Shaw-Savill's ships and their dates of departure, but that no information is given as to the New Zealand Shipping Company's vessels. I myself have been shown a letter the writer of which distinctly asserts that this was done in his case, and he is greatly aggrieved to have been induced to make a long voyage in a sailing ship when he could have come out in less than half the time by the New Zealand Shipping Company's steamer. I fancy the attention of the Government has been directed to these peculiar and suggestive facts, and that an explanation will be demanded by to-day's outgoing mail.