

1905.

NEW ZEALAND.

IMMIGRATION

(CORRESPONDENCE IN REGARD TO).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Leave.

Westminster Chambers, 13, Victoria Street, London, S.W., 29th May, 1905.

SIR,—

I beg to transmit herewith a statement showing the number of persons who were approved for passages at reduced rates, and who embarked, within the first twelve months (24th March, 1904, to 24th March, 1905), during which the extended conditions under which such passages are now granted have been in force.

The total number of persons approved during the first twelve months amount to 2,031, and of these 1751 embarked within that period, taking with them declared capital amounting to £94,711, and £3,396 annual income. Capitalising the annual income amount on a 5 per cent. basis, the total sum of declared capital taken out by these persons was £172,631. There is, however, no doubt that many persons take out with them a larger amount of capital than they name in their applications, so that the actual amount taken out materially exceeds the above-mentioned sum.

I may add that, under the previous conditions, extending over a period of eleven years, 3,091 persons went to the colony, taking with them capital and income equal to £623,450, being an average per annum of 281 persons and £56,677.

The amount of capital was verified either by the production of drafts on banks in New Zealand, or by the money being paid into this office, to be repaid by the Treasury to the owners on their arrival in the colony. The income amount was verified by certificates from reliable persons to the effect that the amount of income named by the applicant was assured.

In applying for these passages, persons had to fill in and sign a form, per specimen herewith, giving their ages, the state of their health, their occupation, the amount of their capital or income, and the names of those to whom reference might be made as regards the character, &c., of the applicants. The fact that these particulars had to be given, and that each applicant must have means in shape of either capital or income, may be regarded as testifying that the persons applying would in all probability prove to be suitable settlers, thrifty in their habits, and acceptable as additions to the population of the colony.

It must not, however, be supposed that persons are approved for these passages simply because they have the capital qualification. I have rejected many applicants because I have considered that they would not make suitable settlers. In order so far as possible to ascertain what was the character and condition of the persons going out under the reduced-rate system, I instituted an inspection of them on their embarkation, and I am glad to say that, with hardly an exception, the reports of the inspector have been favourable.

There is no doubt that it would have been desirable if a larger proportion of those availing themselves of these passages had belonged to the agricultural class. But at the same time it must be remembered that a large number of those now successfully occupied in New Zealand in farming and other pursuits connected with the cultivation of the land, had little previous agricultural experience. In any case, as has always been the case, the farming class in this country are slow to move, more especially as regards our more distant colonies.

Having, however, in view the desirability of encouraging those experienced in agricultural work to go to New Zealand, I have in my cablegram to you of the 26th instant suggested for your consideration that the "capital" qualification for reduced-rate passage be raised to £100 excepting as regards farmers, farm labourers, and others experienced in the cultivation of the land, strong general labourers, female domestic servants, dressmakers, and tailoresses, and that in respect to these classes the "capital" qualification might be reduced to £25.

I attach hereto copies of the advertisements and also of the paragraphs which have appeared in a large number of newspapers circulating in the United Kingdom. The paragraphs I may say were inserted without charge. Great care has been taken in the selection of the newspapers in which the advertisements are inserted, and the list has been from time to time revised.

I feel sure that, if New Zealand desires to have additional settlers of the right sort, the principle on which this system of reduced fares is founded is the right one. Some of the Australian Colonies are apparently disposed to follow our example, as I have had inquiries from their London offices for information respecting our arrangements for reduced-rate passages, and Western Australia has, I understand, already adopted the system.

The Right Hon. the Premier, Wellington, New Zealand.

I have, &c.,

W. P. REEVES.