

IMMIGRATION, SHIPPING, AND ADVERTISING DEPARTMENTS.

SIR,—

8th May, 1912.

I have the honour to report on the work of the Immigration, Shipping, and Advertising Departments for the year ending 31st March, 1912.

IMMIGRATION.

Following are tables showing a comparison of the number of persons dealt with under the reduced-rate passage scheme for the years 1910–11 and 1911–12 :—

	1910–11.	1911–12.
Number of applications received	2,898	4,235
" approved	1,758	2,231
" declined, abandoned, and in abeyance..	1,140	2,004
Number of persons to whom reduced-rate passages were granted who proceeded to New Zealand—		
Farmers	506	520
Single women domestic servants	831	1,020
Wives rejoining their husbands	325	397
	<hr/> 1,662	<hr/> 1,937
Total number of souls	2,634	3,300
Number of persons nominated in New Zealand	713	846

There was an increase of 666 in the number of souls booked.

During last season, by arrangement with the shipping companies, two extra steamers were scheduled to sail for New Zealand—viz., the s.s. "Tongariro" and the s.s. "Mamari"—which left London on the 20th October and 12th December, and carried 358 and 491 reduced-rate passengers respectively.

Owing to our not being able to secure sufficient accommodation, the usual congestion of applications and nominations for reduced-rate passages occurred, preventing a large number of intending emigrants from proceeding to New Zealand at the reduced rates, and they had either to pay ordinary fares and sail during the winter months or else wait for the present season's bookings. The demand for accommodation to New Zealand has been so great that at times all third-class berths were booked up fully three months in advance. I feel certain that two, or even three, additional steamers could have been readily filled with emigrants for New Zealand had they been available.

The first steamer of the season by which farmers and nominated persons, other than domestic servants, were forwarded was the s.s. "Tainui," which left London on the 20th July, 1911; and the final steamer was the s.s. "Turakina," which sailed from London on the 20th January, 1912.

I would suggest for consideration that, as far as possible, those who are nominated by relatives resident in New Zealand should be permitted to travel between January and August, so as to relieve the demand for accommodation which occurs during the August-December season, it being arranged for the nominators in New Zealand to undertake to provide work for their nominees immediately on arrival.

I must reiterate that, in my opinion, farmers and farm hands could with advantage be sent from here in June and July, so as to arrive in New Zealand in July and August respectively, in which case farmers could purchase farms and begin operations immediately after winter, and farm labourers could hire themselves to farmers in time for ploughing and other early operations.

The amount of capital submitted for inspection by the Department and taken to New Zealand by reduced-rate passengers amounted to £33,922, but it is known that this did not fully represent the total sum of money taken by these passengers. Many of them, as a rule, merely declared the amount of capital necessary to comply with existing conditions, as they did not desire that their financial position should be generally known.

The class of farmer, farm labourer, and single-women domestic servant who apply for reduced-rate passages are, speaking in general terms, very high and satisfactory, and it is not often that such passages are declined for lack of good character.

Large numbers of applications are received from those who are not eligible for consideration in respect of reduced-rate passages; many of them who have had farming experience in early life having taken up other forms of employment, and many of the girls having been employed in factories or other occupations outside of domestic service. In all cases strict inquiries are made as to character and health, as well as other suitability, before reduced-rate passages are granted. The ages of persons to whom reduced-rate passages are given is restricted to fifty years as a maximum for farmers, and thirty-five years for domestic servants, the minimum age in both cases being seventeen years. In all cases where the person applying is under twenty-one years of age, the written consent to their going to New Zealand is obtained from the parents or guardian.

The practice of sending a matron with parties of not less than twenty-five girls has been maintained, and it is found that a good type of highly principled certificated medical nurses are willing to proceed to New Zealand as matrons on the voyage. It is gratifying to note that the reports of the matrons and the Immigration Officer in New Zealand show the type and class of persons who are being sent to New Zealand under the Government immigration scheme to be quite satisfactory.

The following table of the population and comparative increase of the countries named for the last ten years, 1901–11, shows that New Zealand obtained a very gratifying percentage.