

making this representation to you, Captain Jenkins has only anticipated me as, after receiving a report from the "Fawn" in the early part of last month, I was shocked to see the amount of desertions from her, and I had decided on immediately bringing the subject to your Excellency's notice.

NOTE.—No mention is here made of the desertions from H. M. ships Iris, Niger, Elk, Cordelia, while they were stationed in the Province of Auckland.

2. Eighty-four men are reported by Captain Jenkins to have deserted from the "Miranda," "Fawn," and "Harrier" in the Province of Auckland alone; to these must be added (exclusive of those who have been recovered) 12 from the "Pelorus" and 16 from the "Cossack," making a total of 112 men and boys who have been lost to Her Majesty's service through the disgraceful system of crimping which the inefficient Police of Auckland seem powerless to check.

3. The result has been that the "Fawn" is now in a less efficient state than she was twelve months ago, and that I am utterly at a loss how to replace the men who have deserted from her.

4. I am glad to learn from Captain Jenkins that your Excellency has called the attention of your Responsible Ministers to his representations. I earnestly hope that the measures that they may adopt may prove efficacious, and that I may not be compelled to withdraw Her Majesty's ships from the coast of New Zealand altogether, a measure which I should deeply regret as it is my anxious desire to afford your Excellency all the support it is in my power to give.

5. As the matter is now in your Excellency's hands I will say no more on the subject excepting that I have always maintained the opinion that the Auckland Police are too few in number, and that only in two instances have I known of men having been apprehended in the bush or away from the town; one was when His Excellency Colonel Gore Browne, at my solicitation, sent a party to the Manukau Ranges, accompanied by some men from this ship, and the other, when your Excellency was so good as to furnish Commander Cator with an Interpreter through whose exertions, assisted by the Chief "Patuone," three deserters from the "Fawn" were apprehended.

I have, &c,

F. BEAUCHAMP SEYMOUR.

His Excellency Sir George Grey, K.C.B.,

&c., &c., &c.,

Governor of New Zealand.

No. 4.

MEMORANDUM BY MR. FOX.

The position taken by Commodore Seymour in his letter to His Excellency, of the 18th April, as well as in other documents which have proceeded from him, is that the unusual number of desertions which have occurred from the ships under his command in New Zealand have been owing to what he terms the disgraceful system of crimping on the part of the employers of labour—owners of sheep-runs in particulars—in this Colony. Commodore Seymour also imputes to the Colonial Government—and particularly to the Provincial authorities—the greatest laxity in reference to the capture of deserters, and scarcely hesitates to insinuate that they are parties to the disgraceful system of crimping which he alleges to exist.

Ministers feel that they cannot allow such imputations on the Colonial authorities to remain unanswered, and that it is their duty to expose, for the information of Her Majesty's Government, the unfounded nature of the charges made by Commodore Seymour.

That the number of desertions in ships under Commodore Seymour's pennant has been unusually large, it is believed is perfectly true. Whether this is owing to want of proper discipline on board their ships, or to the crimping referred to, Commodore Seymour has not called any facts which might enable Her Majesty's Government to judge. It seems to the apprehension of persons not familiar with Naval affairs that there must be some great defect in the discipline of the ships under Commodore Seymour's command, if, with the knowledge which he professes to have had for three years past of a disgraceful system of crimping being in existence ashore, precautions have not been taken to prevent the men from becoming its victims. They must first escape from the control of their own Officers before they can fall under that of the crimps; and it seems both only proper that, before bringing against the Colonial and Local authorities the charges referred to, Commodore Seymour should account for the facts, first of his men being so desirous to quit the service; and, secondly, for their being able to do it with apparently such very great facility. Ministers do not hesitate to express their belief that, if proper precautions were resorted to by the Naval authorities to prevent desertion, instead of endeavouring to throw the blame upon the Colonial authorities after it has taken place, its occurrence would be much less frequent.

That seamen who have deserted from Her Majesty's service find employment ashore is, no doubt, perfectly true; but it neither proves that they were induced to desert by a "disgraceful system of crimping," nor that the persons into whose employment they enter had any knowledge of their being deserters. Only two instances are known to Ministers of persons being convicted of "harbouring deserters with a guilty knowledge." These were isolated cases—one in the Province of Wellington, and one in Auckland—and they go a very little way towards proving the existence of this "disgraceful system of crimping." Commodore Seymour ought, it is submitted, to have adduced some more conclusive evidence than he has done, before making this charge.

The charges made by the Commodore that the local authorities have not aided him in the recapture of his men is believed to be entirely unfounded. The local authorities have done everything in their power; but these efforts have been very much impeded by the course pursued by Commodore Seymour, and by the absence of proper information which ought to have been furnished