

36. *Mr. O'Neill.*] When did your firm commence sending out immigrants?—On 13th April, 1872, arriving at Wellington on 9th July.

37. When was the last shipment sent out?—They arrived by the "Lutterworth" in March, at Port Chalmers.

38. Was that the last shipment?—Yes.

39. *Hon. Mr. O'Rorke.*] Are you acquainted with the terms upon which the Agent-General sent out immigrants between the month of June last year and the date of the arrival in Otago of the "Lutterworth"?—I knew that in one instance, for a period of three weeks, he sent out men free. At the expiry of that three weeks they were charged £10 payable by promissory note, and £5 cash.

40. What I want to know is, are you acquainted with the regulations in force between the month of June, and the date when the "Lutterworth" was despatched to Otago?—No.

41. You state in the first paragraph of your petition, "That, amongst other things, your petitioners had no reason to believe that the terms upon which the Government of the Colony would carry on emigration thereto during the term of the said agreement would vary, as regards the money payments to be paid by emigrants, from those which were then in force, and which were the same as those established by your petitioners for the emigrants to be sent out to the Colony pursuant thereto." What is the difference referred to there?—I do not remember just now.

42. Are you aware if the Agent-General ever charged a sum of £15?—No, I am not aware.

43. Are the Immigration Regulations in force between February, 1872, and March, 1873, the same as yours, as is alleged by the petition?—No, they are not.

44. You also allege in paragraph 5 of the petition, "That immediately after the making of the said agreement with your petitioners, the Agent-General altered the terms upon which he was sending immigrants to the Colony." Do you adduce proof in support of that allegation?—The allegation is founded on information received from home; and further, I have already mentioned that during a period of three weeks he carried on a system of free passages.

45. I think you ought to state in what month that occurred?—I can give you the month. It lasted from the 3rd to the 14th of March, 1873.

46. You further state in your petition, that "the works intrusted to your petitioners have not been sufficient to employ the number of persons who have actually been sent out by them; and in many cases, on the arrival of the immigrants in New Zealand, your petitioners were compelled to incur great expense in maintaining them temporarily, although your petitioners had no work upon which they could give them employment." In the case of the arrival of immigrants, by what vessel was that the case?—The "Jessie Readman," I know for one.

47. At that time had you no works upon which to employ them?—No. The contract for the Upper Hutt line was then pending, and our tender was refused to us a few days afterwards.

48. Could you not have put them on the Lower Hutt line?—No. We had sufficient men on that line at that time.

49. Then let me ask how did you employ them temporarily?—They were employed through the Provincial Government.

50. Then the Provincial Government is indebted to you, is it not?—This is a matter of arrangement.

51. Have you failed in many cases to recover the amounts due to you?—In several cases, perhaps one-third of them.

52. Where were these cases tried?—At Invercargill, Auckland, Picton, Wellington, Oamaru, and Napier.

53. *Mr. Carrington.*] Do you consider that the difficulty in many instances was so great, and the expenses so heavy, as to make their recovery little or no gain?—I think I have mentioned before that the legal expenses and costs already incurred exceed what we have recovered from the men.

54. *Mr. Macandrew.*] Have you any idea how many men have left the Colony indebted to your firm?—I have no idea. We only hear of it occasionally from their mates.

55. Upon what grounds do these men leave the Colony?—Upon the one ground of evading payment of these notes.

56. What rate of wages do you pay your men?—We pay from 6s. to 8s. per day for labourers.

57. Have you not paid some of your men as low as 5s. per day?—We started a few in Auckland at that rate, but it only lasted a couple of weeks.

58. What amount of these notes arrived at maturity do you now hold unpaid?—By special arrangement the notes are to be repaid by instalments.

59. *The Chairman.*] Have you any idea how many men have left the Colony?—I have not.

60. *Mr. Macandrew.*] How many hours do your men work per day?—It depends upon the locality. Some work nine, some ten, and others only eight. Many of the men who work nine hours are what is called piece-men. The day-men never work more than nine hours, and a great many of them work only eight.

61. *Hon. Mr. Fitzherbert.*] The only mode you have of recovering these notes is by stopping the amounts out of their wages?—Yes.

62. From the experience you have obtained, do you not think that it would be more easy to recover these notes were they made payable upon demand?—I question very much if you would get men to come out on these conditions.

63. If these notes were taken payable on demand, you would save the difficulty of having to delay proceedings until they came to maturity. When you saw a tendency on the part of the men to leave, you would be in a position to have them brought up before the Court and get judgment against them at once?—Perhaps so; but there are very many of these men who leave without giving the slightest notice of their intention to do so.

64. Was it any part of your arrangement with the Government that these notes should be drawn in a particular form?—No, it was left wholly for the firm to decide upon.

65. The firm might, if it had been so disposed, have made the notes payable on demand?—Yes, so far as I am aware.