

No. 53.

MEMORANDUM No. 31, 1873, for the AGENT-GENERAL, London.

HEREWITH is a memorandum (copy) forwarded to the Government by Dr. Concannon, late surgeon-superintendent of the ship "Christian McAusland," to which I desire to direct your particular attention. You will observe from the doctor's remarks that the character of the emigrants by that ship was so intrinsically bad as to justify the assumption that even ordinary care was neglected in their selection, whilst the medical examination would appear to have been a perfect farce, many of the women being scrofulous, and others consumptive. I need hardly impress upon you the great mischief, irrespective of the waste of money, which the introduction of such classes of persons entails upon the Colony.

G. MAURICE O'ROKKE.

Immigration Office,
Wellington, New Zealand, 14th February, 1873.

Enclosure 1 in No. 53.

REMARKS on Voyage in Ship "Christian McAusland," with Immigrants, from London to Otago,
by WM. CONCANNON, Esq., M.D., Surgeon-Superintendent.

THE voyage, inasmuch as no casualty occurred, may be called a prosperous one; and considering the immense amount of sickness on board, the low physique of the people and the unhealthy condition in which they came on board, the mortality was small, being confined to one adult and four young infants. I may observe that out of thirteen cases of scarlet fever, some of which were of a serious character, none terminated fatally.

The people as I have already remarked, are of a very bad class, with of course exceptions, and are the most obscene and dissatisfied lot I have ever in a varied experience been connected with. Many of the women are scrofulous, have diseases of arms and joints, and pulmonary affections are not uncommon. How they could (if they did) pass any skilfully conducted medical examination puzzles me. Their health was much tried by twenty-eight days passed in the tropics, the thermometer considerably over 80°, calm alternating with rain and fog; however, we at last arrived at cooler weather, which somewhat braced up their exhausted energies. Owing to the ignorance and stubbornness of many, I had much difficulty in getting the rules observed, such as related to sweeping of decks, airing of bedding, keeping watch, and the like; however, at length we got them into a little better training. Finding, however, it was futile to try and prevent the single men from smoking below, I asked the captain to stop all sale of tobacco to them. With respect to the single girls, after the first two or three weeks their conduct was fair, but they all through required a great deal of watching, and some strictness. The cooking arrangements (after some changes which the captain made in the cooks) were most admirably conducted. The ship has throughout been kept in a well-ventilated and cleanly condition, several fresh sources of ventilation having been constructed during the voyage. Divine service was conducted by me whenever the weather admitted of it. Disinfectants have been energetically employed; and in fact, the emigrants, taken collectively, are now in much better health than when they left England.

I may add that Captain Tilly has throughout most kindly and cordially co-operated with me in all matters relating to the ventilation, health, or welfare of the passengers, and the supervision of the single women.

Observations and Suggestions.

In accordance with a request contained in my instructions, I venture to make the following suggestions. I trust my doing so will not be considered presumptuous, as I have now been surgeon of several vessels, in varied climates, and with different classes of passengers; and many of the suggestions are on such things as can only be noticed at sea, when in attendance on large numbers of people. At this time things seemingly trivial add much to the convenience and comfort of passengers; and I would state that, contrary to the provisions of the charter, much water and many provisions were stored under the single girls' hatch, thereby necessitating the weekly and bi-weekly presence of members of the ship's company in the single girls' compartment; also entailing the continual presence of the matron in the "tween decks," and constantly taking her away from the supervision of the girls exercising on the poop.

The passengers' luggage was bundled aboard in the most promiscuous manner. Single girls' boxes in the main and single men's hatches, and *vice versa*. This entailed the greatest confusion in sorting the boxes at sea, and several of the single girls' chests could not be found for some weeks after we left. In this case I would suggest that the luggage of each class of passengers should be marked with some distinguishing mark, and stowed under the hatch of its own compartment.

With respect to the hatches on deck, their construction is most inconvenient: opening as they do at each side, they are much more likely to ship water; when it rains, they must be shut down; and also the ingress and egress is not only difficult but dangerous, the ladder requiring to be shifted from side to side, according to whichever is the lee-side of the vessel. Now, if these hatches were made opening fore and aft, covered at the top, and with small doors level with the deck, the expense would be little greater, and much discomfort done away with. And this is by far the most important subject I wish to observe on. I think that in any vessel carrying such a large number of steerage passengers, there ought to be no first-cabin passengers, and certainly no second ditto, for the following reasons:—

Stay of infectious disease breaking out; place for holding school; undivided attention of all people to emigrants and their stores: for, in the first case, were the cabin empty, the hospitals could be held there, as in the Government ships, and a case of infectious disease breaking out could be at