

I myself, as a medical man, am inclined to concur in the opinion expressed by the Immigration Commissioners, that hospitals on deck are preferable to hospitals below as a general rule, and especially in cases of an infectious or contagious disease breaking out, where complete isolation is so essential. But the following objections, which have been urged, have to my mind very considerable weight. In the first place, in heavy gales, hospitals on deck, like everything else, are liable to be washed away. For instance, had there been an hospital on deck in the "Edwin Fox," it would undoubtedly have been carried overboard with all its inmates. In the second place, I am told on the very highest authority, that hospitals on deck have been used for purposes of the grossest immorality, and that on this account the system of having the hospital on deck has been very recently discontinued.

It will also be seen that Captain Foster, in his report on the "Bebington," states that parents object to having a grown-up daughter, who happens to be unwell, sent to an hospital on deck; and that even in the case of patients of other classes, he expresses a doubt whether an hospital on deck, where every sound is distinctly heard, is as conducive to the health and recovery of the patients as one below. However, the question is one which shall engage my serious attention.

I am rather inclined to the opinion that the best plan would be to have all the materials and fittings for an hospital on deck put on board, so that it might be erected without delay in the event of an infectious disease breaking out during the voyage.

I have, &c.,

I. E. FEATHERSTON,
Agent-General.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington, N.Z.

No. 31.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

(No. 215.)

7, Westminster Chambers, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W.,

11th April, 1873.

SIR,—

With reference to the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse's Memorandum of November 3rd, 1872 (No. 19), in which he states that "the Government have learnt with regret that the 'Palmerston,' now long overdue at Port Chalmers, was not even in the second class," I beg to make the following remarks:—

In my memorandum of agreement with Messrs. Louis Knorr and Co., the following is one of the conditions:—"The vessels used for the conveyance of such emigrants shall be first-class (at Lloyds or French Veritas) fast-sailing vessels."

I submit, therefore, that it was scarcely fair for the Government to have assumed that I would allow so important a condition of the contract to be violated; and the unfairness of this assumption will be all the more apparent on reference to my letter of even date herewith, in which I have shown that not a single Emigrant ship has been despatched by me which is not classed A1 or Aa1 at Lloyds.

I beg, however, as the doubt has been expressed, to append an extract from a letter dated 7th February, 1873, received from Messrs. Sloman and Co., bearing on this very point; and in confirmation of Mr. Sloman's statement, I now append the following extract from the French Veritas:—

"'Palmerston,' 5/6.A.11.4 masts, 950 tons register, two decks with orlop beams, German flag, built in 1853, in Liverpool, iron, five compartments, repaired 1866 and 1868; bottom caulked in 1872, length 75.8, breadth 8.8, depth 7.20 metres; owned by R. M. Sloman and Co., Hamburg."

I cannot help adding that it has afforded me extreme gratification to find that the Immigration Commissioners at Otago, in their report upon the "Palmerston," have declared, "We have no hesitation in stating that no emigrant ship ever entered this port better fitted in every respect for the conveyance of immigrants than the ship 'Palmerston.'" (Report dated 23rd December, 1872.)

I have, &c.,

I. E. FEATHERSTON,
Agent-General.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington, N.Z.

Enclosure in No. 31.

R. M. SLOMAN and Co. to Dr. FEATHERSTON.

SIR,—

Hamburg, 7th February, 1873.

In reply to your valued favour of 1st instant, we beg to refer you to the French Veritas, where you will find the "Palmerston" No. 69, re-classed last July 51/6.1.1. as first-class. We can assure you, besides, that a better and a stronger ship has hardly ever left our port, and owing to her high and well ventilated between-deck, she is particularly well qualified for the conveyance of passengers. We are very sorry she is making a long passage, but from your long experience you will know that passages depend so much upon chances beyond the control of the captain. The "Palmerston" sails remarkably fast.

We have, &c.,

ROBT. M. SLOMAN AND Co.

I. E. Featherston, Esq.

No. 32.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

(No. 222.)

7, Westminster Chambers, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W.,

17th April, 1873.

SIR,—

With reference to the Memorandum of the Hon. the Minister of Immigration, No. 13, 1873, of 16th January last, enclosing copies of statements made by three persons who paid their own passages, per ship "Jessie Readman," from London to Wellington, I have the honor to inform you that I have forwarded copies of these statements to Messrs. Shaw, Saville, and Co., with the request