

Re Construction of Hatchways, &c.—The Despatching Officer defends the construction of hatchways, on the ground that they were the same as customary as to strength and structure. The Commissioners are of opinion that this is no excuse for their exceedingly flimsy and inefficient nature, but would suggest the possibility of building full hatchways like other houses on deck. This would prevent the difficulty and inconvenience of women and children climbing over high combings.

Re Galley.—The cooking accommodation in this ship appeared to be small and inconvenient, and therefore the Commissioners notified the matter in their report.

Re Condenser.—Although the condenser was passed by the Board of Trade Inspector, and reported by him to be efficient, yet the captain, the surgeon, and the engineer stated that it was very inefficient, and the Commissioners are of opinion that an inquiry should be made as to the nature of the test to which the condensers are subjected. They believe it should be the working of the machine for twenty-four consecutive hours.

The Hospitals.—The Commissioners acknowledge the advantage of three hospitals in place of two, as used to be the case, but maintain their opinion that they should all be on deck.

Raising Coal through the Fore-hatch.—The Despatching Officer's experience is certainly at fault if he maintains that the surgeon practically should be held responsible for allowing the coals to be raised through the fore-hatch. The surgeon reported the circumstance on arrival in port, but could not prevent it during the voyage.

Re Duty of Surgeon.—We presume the Despatching Officer superintended the fitting of this vessel, and he would thus be continually about her; if so, it was his fault for allowing a surgeon to come in her who did not attend to his duty before leaving.

“ SALISBURY.”

Re Store and Issuing Room.—The Commissioners have already remarked on this subject above: see ship “ Duke of Edinburgh.”

Re Construction of Hatchways, &c.—The Commissioners agree with the Despatching Officer's remark that the hatchways and combings were the same kind as have been used for twenty years. In their report the Commissioners suggested the propriety of some improvement.

“ WOODLARK.”

Re Embarkation during Mist and Fog.—The Despatching Officer allows that the emigrants were embarked during a heavy dense fog; but wishes to know how it could be avoided. The Commissioners, not being at the port of departure, have not a sufficient knowledge of the locality, or of the arrangements made by the Despatching Officer for the embarkation of emigrants, to enable them to suggest what should have been done, but they felt it to be their duty to report the fact that the emigrants had been shipped upon a very unfit day, and, in consequence, were exposed to much inconvenience and danger.

Re Lavish Expenditure of Stores and Comforts in the Channel.—The Despatching Officer states that he never heard any complaint made of such lavish expenditure. The Commissioners do not for one moment suppose that such a complaint would reach him unless from this end; and on that account, and in order that such doings should be stopped, the Commissioners were very particular in getting the information and reporting upon it.

Re Sand, Charcoal, &c.—The deficient supply of lime, sand, charcoal, &c., is the fault of the charter-party; but the Commissioners have fully reported upon this subject, and believe that in future the supply will be made more liberal.

“ GOLDEN SEA.”

Captain's Complaint of not getting Copy of Charter-party.—The Commissioners cannot give an opinion on this subject. They reported the fact that the children during the early part of the voyage were mulcted of a portion of their rations, and the explanation or excuse given by the captain for such short issue.

Re Origin of Outbreak of Scarlatina.—The Commissioners do not think it necessary to discuss the origin of the outbreak of scarlatina on board this ship. In their report they gave the evidence obtained from the surgeon-superintendent.

“ LA HOGUE.”

Re Position of Hospitals.—The Commissioners are of opinion that the surgeon-superintendent's complaint as to the position of the hospitals in this ship was a very proper one. Its proximity to the water-closet rendered it unfit for use, the double bulk-heads, with felt between the boards, proving no protection, as was quite evident to the senses of the Commissioners at the time of inspection. In reply to the Despatching Officer's remark that the surgeon of this ship endeavoured to raise himself in the estimation of the colonial authorities by making exaggerated complaints, the Commissioners are of opinion that such a charge is unwarranted. This surgeon had no thought of remaining in the colony, or of accepting any appointment or further charge connected with New Zealand: he was far superior to the medical men usually engaged in the emigration service; his report was very useful and well considered, and his opinion perfectly disinterested and unbiassed.

If the Government desires any further information upon the points raised by the Despatching Officer, it would be well to send copies of his reports, together with our remarks thereon, to the several surgeon-superintendents concerned.

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Wellington, 16th December, 1874.