

stringent and, on the whole, effectual precautions are taken for medical inspection in connection with the Blackwall Depôt. It is my intention to supplement these precautions by very strictly exacting in all cases the personal attendance of the surgeon of each ship at the depôt some time in advance of the arrival of the emigrants of whom he is appointed to take charge. I fear the appointment of a permanent medical officer would tend to diminish the responsibility which ought to attach to the surgeon of the ship in regard to the state of health of those whom he allows to proceed to the colony under his immediate care, and also, perhaps, in some degree, that of the medical officers of the Imperial Government.

7. I return to the consideration of economy in connection with your observations on the undesirability of allowing the depôt to be open to others than New Zealand emigrants, and on the plan which you contemplate of a depôt where our own officers should be able to observe the conduct of the people, to watch their health, and ship them from time to time as may be found most desirable. These are processes which would appear to involve the detention of the emigrant at the depôt for as many weeks as he is now delayed days. If you consider the classes from which our emigrants are chiefly drafted—agricultural labourers, navvies, shepherds, single women between fifteen and thirty-five years of age—and then contemplate the probable results of assembling and accommodating in the neighbourhood of London, without any serious restriction of personal liberty, hundreds of these people fresh from country life, and many of them never before brought in contact with the temptations of a great city, I think you will agree with me that neither their health nor their conduct would be likely to improve in the process. But apart from this consideration, I do not believe the plan is altogether practicable. The emigrant naturally wishes to remain with his friends until near the period of his actual departure, and objects to submit himself an hour sooner than he must to the amount of restraint involved in the discipline of the depôt. It is possible to get him to come there two or three days before the time the ship is advertised to sail, but I doubt its being possible to get him to stay there for two or three weeks. To the immense increase of the expense of the immigration service which would accrue, I need only allude. What strength of staff, what extent of depôt establishments would have been needed, if I had attempted to carry out such a system of supervision of the physical constitutions, character, and conduct of the 40,000 emigrants I have shipped to New Zealand since January, 1872! The problem that it seemed to me I had to solve in connection with the organization of the Blackwall Depôt was, how to insure the priority of right to its occupation (virtually giving me its complete control) while emigration to the colony is proceeding on its present extensive scale, and yet not to involve the Government in an undertaking based on the assumption that emigration should continue at the same rate for at least seven years.

8. I have already discussed the question of first outlay, and in reference to paragraph 8 of your letter, have only further to observe that the difference between the status of an Emigrant Depôt in England and an Immigrant Depôt in New Zealand is much more than a difference of degree. In truth, it would be as idle to compare the circumstances and conditions under which the two establishments exist, as it would be to compare the power which the Government possesses there with those which I exercise here.

9. You allege that the agreement is loosely drawn. I am advised that, considering the power reserved to me, it is perfectly adequate for its purpose. It is founded upon a similar agreement of the Colony of Victoria regarding the Plymouth Depôt, which worked in a very satisfactory manner for many years, and which had for its basis the arrangements originally made by Her Majesty's Emigration Commissioners. You say there is no doubt of the liability which I incur, but grave doubt as to what I am to get in return. The liability which I incur is, that in case I do not pass a minimum number of 30,000 emigrants through the depôt between the 25th of March, 1874, and the 25th day of March, 1877, I shall have to pay the sum of 1s for each emigrant short of that number. I estimate that I shall have passed through the depôt by the end of my first year's occupation of it, 18,000 emigrants. If emigration should be suddenly stopped at that point by order of the Government, no doubt I shall have incurred a liability of £600. But what liability should I have incurred in the same event, had I in March last incurred all the outlay and annual charge involved in founding the depôt as a permanent Government establishment—£2,000 sunk in altering and refitting the building, a lease of six years on my hands at £400 a year, taxes and insurance, wear and tear, the restoration of the building to its original state if I could not dispose of it to some other colony, material to be disposed of at a sacrifice, staff to be disbanded and compensated? It is only on the assumption that emigration is to be suddenly checked that I can be said to have incurred any liability worth consideration, and if it is to be suddenly checked then the reasons for founding a permanent depôt lose all their force. At present my expectation is that I shall have passed the full number covenanted through the depôt within the two years instead of three, and that at the end of the former date I shall be absolutely free from even one shilling's liability. During that time the agreement gives me a prior right to, and as a matter of fact the absolute occupation of, the depôt, and up to the present date, at which upwards of eight thousand have been passed through, not the slightest difficulty has arisen. The case which you suppose of a particular emigrant arriving at the depôt over night and leaving next morning, and of

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of Danes and Swedes brought into the port for the purpose of transhipment, it is not probable, as I am informed, that during the ensuing autumn continental emigrants will be brought up the Thames. But although British emigrants, after having been collected from various parts of the kingdom, are now quartered at a very convenient depôt at Blackwall, are medically examined on arrival there, and are also inspected by the Emigration Medical Officer at Gravesend, a large number of persons (chiefly children) have lately been landed at Gravesend from these outward-bound emigrant vessels suffering from contagious or infectious diseases.

Your Committee is aware that a communication relative to this subject has been made by the Gravesend Urban Authority to this Port Authority, and I have also been appealed to by the New Zealand Agency to permit such cases to be sent on board the "Rhine."

In canvassing the merits of this question, and reminding the Committee that their hospital ship may be often thus occupied, I have to record that no legal obligation exists compelling this Port Sanitary Authority to provide hospital accommodation. I have, however, received an intimation from the New Zealand Emigration Agency that they will pay a certain sum per patient to defray the cost of maintenance of such cases.