

The packing of the biscuits in casks or tanks will necessitate additional expense over and above that incurred under the provisions of the charter-party, but, should there be no other mode of preventing the biscuit being injured by damp, I will cause that mode of packing to be adopted.

I have, &c.,

I. E. FEATHERSTON,

The Hon. the Minister for Immigration, Wellington, N.Z.

Agent-General.

### No. 20.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the MINISTER for IMMIGRATION.

(No. 851.)

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

25th November, 1875.

SIR,—

Referring to your letter No. 143, of 2nd June, in which you transmit the official reports relative to the ship "Tintern Abbey," and, at the same time, request me to institute inquiry into certain matters mentioned therein, and to report the conclusions I arrive at, I have the honor to inform you that, having acted in accordance with your request, it appears to me that the principal cause of the unsatisfactory condition of the ship was that, her equipment being delayed on account of (amongst other reasons) the inclemency of the weather, the preparations were somewhat hurriedly completed by Messrs. Shaw, Savill, and Co., who were naturally anxious to avoid paying the cost of the maintenance of the emigrants at the depôt, as soon as possible.

The depôt also, at the time, was full of emigrants, the "Edwin Fox" having been obliged to put back, and disembark her passengers there; and it was therefore an object to embark those going by the "Tintern Abbey" as soon as possible, but this was not done until the fittings of the ship were ready for their reception.

The extract you quote from my Shipping Officer's report referred more especially to the general equipment of the ship, and not to the fittings, &c., required for the emigrants themselves.

As to the insecurity of the store-rooms, they were built in the usual manner; but owing to the great height of the ship between decks, the stanchions must have tripped and the bulkheads gave way in the rolling of the vessel. I shall give instructions that, for the future, in vessels of more than ordinary height between decks, the stanchions are to be put closer together and the cleats deeper, which, I understand, will prevent the repetition of the matter complained of.

I note the remarks made with reference to the plumbing, and as to the quality of the solder, and have to inform you that notice has been given to the person who fits the ships that, unless there is a great improvement, the shipping firms will be requested to employ some one else.

I regret to learn that the matron of the "Tintern Abbey" was unfitted for her post. I need scarcely say that I quite concur in thinking that a good matron is very necessary to proper discipline amongst the emigrants, and the matter has been with me the subject of anxious consideration. The present system does not always place at my disposal the services of experienced persons for the post; nor can I expect such to be the case, without the adoption of a system of appointing and retaining permanent matrons in the employment of the Government, which would be extremely expensive, and, considering the varying number of emigrants sent out in each year, might lead to much difficulty. I shall continue to take the utmost care I possibly can in the selection of matrons, and I trust that you will not have again occasion to call my attention to their inefficiency.

The complaint as to the badness of the bread at the depôt was attended to at the time by my Despatching Officer: the bread was dark in colour, but was perfectly sweet. The defect, however, was remedied, and I have heard of no further complaint.

I have, &c.,

I. E. FEATHERSTON,

The Hon. the Minister for Immigration, Wellington.

Agent-General.

### No. 21.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the MINISTER for IMMIGRATION.

(No. 896.)

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

23rd December, 1875.

SIR,—

I have the honor to forward Mr. Mackrell's report upon the action brought against me by Messrs. Willis and Gann.

I have, &c.,

I. E. FEATHERSTON,

The Hon. the Minister for Immigration, Wellington, N.Z.

Agent-General.

### Enclosure in No. 21.

Messrs. JOHN MACKRELL and Co. to the AGENT-GENERAL.

21, Cannon Street, London, 16th December, 1875.

SIR,—

*Willis and Another v. Yourself.*

We have now the pleasure to report to you, for the information of your Government, the particulars of this case, which has ended in a verdict in your favour.