

There are many points in the Commissioners' report which are worthy of your consideration, and I would especially note one subject which in several other cases has been commented upon by these officers—viz., the insufficiency, for purposes of decency, of the divisions between the married people's bunks. I beg that you will bring this specially under the notice of your Despatching Officer, as also the arrangements for the hospitals, which in this ship appear to have been anything but satisfactory.

You have probably heard that Captain Birch died on the voyage out. I forward copies of the telegrams advising the arrival of the ship, as they distinctly affirm the cause of death to have been *delirium tremens*, and, although the Commissioners are strangely reticent upon the subject, I have been informed on the authority of some of the passengers that from the very time of leaving the Channel this unfortunate man was more or less in a state of liquor, and that he kept the ship cruising on and off the coast of Brazil for some weeks, to the general risk of life and property, not to speak of the delay, to which the extra length of the voyage (142 days) may to a great extent be attributable. I have to request that you will communicate upon this matter with Messrs. Shaw, Savill, and Co., and point out to them the necessity for very strict investigation into the character of officers who are intrusted with the command of emigrant ships. This is, as you are aware, not the first case in which persons of other than temperate habits have been placed in such positions of grave responsibility.

I have, &c.,

C. C. BOWEN,

(in the absence of the Minister for Immigration).

The Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

Enclosure in No. 39.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORT on Ship "Adamant."

Invercargill, 14th December, 1875.

THE Commissioners inspected the immigrant vessel "Adamant" on the 3rd instant, and found that the health of the immigrants, notwithstanding the length of the voyage, had been good, which may in a large measure be attributed to the ample space in each compartment. The ship, considering her age, was very clean in all the compartments, which were all more than ordinarily roomy and airy. The requirements under the charter in regard to hospitals, bath-rooms, closets, &c., were complied with. The condenser answered all requirements during the voyage, the supply of water having been ample. The conduct of the immigrants during the long voyage was very good, and they spoke in terms of praise of the kindness and consideration shown to them by all the officers. The total number of adults landed at the Bluff was 244½. Nineteen adults were forwarded to Dunedin to join their friends. The Commissioners recommend the usual gratuities should be given to those entitled to them, and in doing so would specially commend, both from what they saw and heard, the acting chief officer (second officer at starting), Mr. James McNeill, and the purser, Mr. W. Williams. The latter must have displayed patience, care, and judgment to have given the satisfaction he evidently has done in supplying rations on a voyage some six weeks in excess of ordinary calculation. They would also indorse the recommendation of the acting captain and surgeon-superintendent that gratuities should be given to the assistant matron, Miss S. T. Servin; assistant nurse, Charlotte Thorns; and ship's steward, Frisby Johnson, who gave material assistance to those invalidated by cooking and waiting on them. The Commissioners have again, as in reports on the "Christian McAusland" and "Peter Denny," to call attention to the indecency of the divisions between the married people's bunks, which nothing should excuse. There would have been ample ventilation had the boarding been carried up to within six inches of the deck.

While the space in the single women's compartment was more than usually airy and ample, the Commissioners have to express grave surprise at the arrangements for their hospital accommodation, bath-room, and the position of the matron's cabin. To quote the Despatching Officer's letter to the Agent-General, explanatory of the fitting up of the "Adamant" for the voyage, "The poop is divided by a fore-and-aft bulkhead, the starboard side being allotted to the officers of the ship; the port side, with the exception of the foremost cabin, which is occupied by part of the crew, being fitted up for hospitals, &c. The stern cabin is divided, part forming an hospital for women, part a bath-room; next to this is the single women's water-closet, the next cabin is fitted up for a female hospital, and the next is the matron's cabin; and the means of communication to these is by a ladderway down the companion-hatch; then comes a thwart-ship bulkhead, and before this is the dispensary and male hospital, having an entry from the fore-end of the poop." This arrangement resulted as follows:—The two hospitals were used throughout the voyage by the married women, one being the after-poop cabin. The surgeon-superintendent, having several important cases, principally confinements, requiring his constant attention day and night, had, for convenience, a door cut through the fore-and-aft bulkhead in the poop cabin. This door was supposed to be padlocked on the starboard side, the doctor keeping the key, while the matron had the key of the padlock on the port side. On inquiry, however, it appeared that the husbands of the women in the hospitals were obliged to pass backwards and forwards in attendance on their wives day and night, passing the single women's closet and bath-room, and through the only passage the girls had to get on deck. It is improbable, therefore, that the door of communication with the starboard side of the poop was always locked, unless the doctor and matron were supposed to stand sentry day and night at their respective locks. Thus that strict separation between the single women and the rest of the passengers, contemplated by the charter-party, could not have been maintained. This, in the opinion of the Commissioners, could easily have been managed under a more careful arrangement. The thwart-ships bulkhead should have been placed *abaft* the matron's cabin, which ought to have been in the compartment with her charges, where there was ample room. The two cabins might then have been left for single women's hospital, bath-room, and closet, and entire privacy been secured. The married women's hospital could have been forward of the thwart-ship bulkhead, in the matron's cabin and male hospital, which should have been 'tween-