

No. 54.

The Hon. H. A. ATKINSON to the AGENT-GENERAL.

(No. 90.)

SIR,—

Immigration Office, Wellington, 5th April, 1876.

I have the honor to transmit herewith copies of the following documents relative to the ship "Rangitikei," which vessel arrived at Lyttelton upon the 16th February ultimo:—1. Immigration Commissioners' report. 2. Surgeon-superintendent's report. 3. Certified list of births and deaths.

The Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

I have, &c.,

H. A. ATKINSON.

Enclosure in No. 54.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORT on Ship "Rangitikei."

THE Commissioners report the arrival of this ship on the 16th instant, after a passage of seventy-three days. The health of the immigrants had been good throughout the passage. The compartments were clean, and the 'tween-decks lofty and well ventilated. The provisions had been served out satisfactorily, and in accordance with the dietary scale, and no complaints were made of any kind. The distilling and cooking apparatus worked well. The plumbing work in the single women's water-closet did not work well, and the approach to the 'tween-deck hospitals was very narrow, and very awkwardly arranged, almost preventing access in cases of accident, being situated immediately at the foot of two companion-ladders, which occupied the two sides of a well, the third side of which formed the entrance to the store-room. The surgeon-superintendent's report is attached herewith. The Commissioners recommend payment of full gratuities, and the further employment of the surgeon-superintendent should he desire it.

Lyttelton, 28th February, 1876.

W. DONALD.
FREDK. D. GIBSON.
JOHN F. ROUSE.
J. E. MARCH.

No. 55.

The Hon. H. A. ATKINSON to the AGENT-GENERAL.

(No. 99.)

SIR,—

Immigration Office, Wellington, 6th April, 1876.

I have the honor to transmit herewith the following documents relative to the "Salisbury," which vessel arrived at Auckland upon the 27th February ultimo:—1. Immigration Commissioners' report. 2. Surgeon-superintendent's report. 3. Correspondence with regard to complaints of the surgeon-superintendent respecting certain occurrences during the voyage. 4. Correspondence upon the subject of the reported neglect of boat and fire drill, and the weekly muster of the emigrants. 5. Certified list of births and deaths.

Although the Commissioners' report is on the whole satisfactory, you will observe that the surgeon-superintendent makes certain definite complaints as to the arrangements on board this ship, which will no doubt meet with due consideration at the hands of your Shipping Officer. There is only one point upon which I think it necessary to specially remark—*i.e.*, the flimsy character of the bulkheads dividing the hold from places accessible to the crew at night—resulting, according to Dr. Cartwright's statement, which is not denied by the captain, in broaching of the cargo at the imminent risk of the lives of all on board. I should have supposed that the fate of the "Cospatrick," attributed to this very cause by the Board of Trade, would have induced your Despatching and Inspecting Officers to have insisted upon substantial partitions being erected, so as to render it impossible, except with such violence as would lead to immediate detection, for the men to break through. I must ask you to inquire thoroughly into this matter, and report to me the name of the officer responsible in the case of this ship; and in future you will please direct that a special report upon the condition of the bulkheads separating the hold from places accessible to the crew and emigrants in each ship be made to you previous to the embarkation of the passengers.

It appears to me clear, from the correspondence enclosed, that very bad blood existed between the captain and surgeon-superintendent, but I did not deem the charges made by the latter officer sufficiently substantiated in some cases, or grave enough in others, to justify the withholding the captain's gratuity. I however caused him to be informed that I was not satisfied with his having organized the system of fire-drill without ever putting it in practice, nor with his explanation as to the neglect of mustering the emigrants and crew. I have now directed a special report upon these two most important matters to be made to me by the Immigration Commissioners with regard to every emigrant ship arriving in the colony, and I desire that you will, in your instructions to captains, insert a clause requiring that regular practice in fire-drill be carried out, and that the emigrants be mustered at certain fixed periods, of course weather permitting. Surgeon-superintendents should be also instructed to enter in their daily journal the exercise of the crew and emigrants at fire-drill and the muster of the emigrants.

The Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

I have, &c.,

H. A. ATKINSON.