

No. 8.

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

SIR,—

Immigration Office, Wellington, N.Z., 30th March, 1878.

Referring to my cablegram of the 23rd instant—of which the following is a copy: “Five thousand immigrants required current year; classify agricultural and domestic servants; arrange accordingly, particulars posted”—I have now the honor to transmit copy of return from the various Immigration Officers throughout the colony, setting forth the number and character of immigrants which, in their opinion, are required during the ensuing twelve months. With regard to many of the trades enumerated in this return, I do not deem it advisable that public money should be expended in bringing persons of the description indicated to the colony, inasmuch as in many localities there is at present a glut of such workmen, and supply and demand will soon regulate itself within the colony. I have put a cross in red ink under the various headings to which I refer. This you will understand to mean that the class of persons therein described are not required, unless they pay their own passages, or are nominated from the colony.

It will be observed from this that the classes of immigrants chiefly required are ploughmen, agricultural labourers, dairywomen, and domestic servants. The places to which they will have to be sent, and the proportion, will be somewhat as follows, viz.: Auckland, 300; Taranaki, 80; Napier, 400; Nelson, 100; Blenheim, 100; Hokitika, 200; Wellington, 600; Canterbury, 1,600; Otago, 1,600; total, 4,980. You will also find enclosed particulars as to rate of wages and price of provisions in different parts of the colony.

As respects the best plan to be adopted for the future conveyance of emigrants to the colony, I have been anxious to have this matter considered in full meeting of Cabinet, but have been unable to do so. I propose addressing you separately at an early date on this point. As it is, no harm will result from the question remaining open in the meantime. My own impression is that an effort should be made to convey the whole of our immigrants from Europe by steam, and that arrangements might be entered into whereby this might be done at little if any additional cost. In the view of the possibility of our succeeding in making such an arrangement, it would be unwise to be tied up by any lengthened contract with owners of sailing ships, and it may perhaps be better to charter vessels as required. At the same time I am not prepared to give any decisive opinion on the matter. I shall endeavour to have the question disposed one way or the other before your operations for the ensuing twelve months require to take effect.

The Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

I have, &c.,
J. MACANDREW.

No. 9.

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

SIR,—

Immigration Office, Wellington, N.Z., 5th April, 1878.

Referring to that portion of my letter to you of 30th ultimo, No. 57, relative to the conveyance of emigrants to the colony, I have now to say that, with the exception of the tender of the Albion Company from Glasgow to Otago, the others show an advance upon previous rates; it becomes, therefore, a question as to how far the Government would be warranted in entering into any lengthened engagement upon the terms stated. Even as regards the Clyde to Otago tenders, it is questionable how far it would be expedient to tie up our hands even for twelve months in view of the possibility of being able to enter into arrangements for emigrants being conveyed to the colony by steam. It would seem that the best course to pursue would be to go into the open market from day to day for tonnage as required;—at the same time, looking at the nature of the business and the whole of its surroundings in the past, there are objections to this course. The business of conveying emigrants to New Zealand with safety and satisfaction to all concerned is not one which can be acquired in a day, and I should be sorry to throw away the experience of years for the sake of saving a few shillings per head. There are, moreover, other considerations which ought not to be lost sight of. The New Zealand Shipping Company is a colonial enterprise, and as such has claims which the Government is unwilling to ignore; at the same time there is of course a limit to the extent within which such claims can be recognized. As it is, I am disposed to think that the advanced rate proposed in their tender—viz., £14 7s. 6d. as against the previous rate of £13 11s. 6d.—is not such as to warrant our throwing the Company over, especially seeing that, with the exception of Glasgow to Otago, even at the advanced rate theirs is the lowest tender.

As regards the Clyde tender, the Albion Company has for so many years carried on emigration to Otago upon reasonable terms, without a hitch, and so much to the satisfaction of all concerned,—it has, moreover, placed on the line such a superior class of ships expressly built for the trade,—that it has always appeared to me to have been a mistake on the part of the Colonial Government to disturb it.

Looking at the whole circumstances of the case, the Government is prepared to accept the tender of the Albion Company from Glasgow to Otago, and that of the New Zealand Shipping Company from other ports in the United Kingdom to New Zealand, provided the tenderers will consent to the contracts being determined in case arrangements can be made for a steam line for the conveyance of Government emigrants to New Zealand, four months' notice at least of such determination to be given on behalf of the Government.

While upon this subject I may say that it has long appeared to me that a considerable saving might have been effected in the Agent-General's Department if advantage could have been taken of the services of the Emigration Contractors in the way of selecting and supervising the shipment of emigrants. For example, some years ago negotiations were on foot, whereby, had they been carried out, the whole business of selecting and shipping emigrants to Otago would have been undertaken by