

filthy condition of the dépôt, I shall presently lay before you a mass of proofs showing the extent to which the Commission were deceived. (2.) As to the statements of M——, I have to repeat what I said to you when I had only seen the condensed report of them in the newspapers. Now that his actual evidence is before me, I have distinctly to state that, so far as it relates to myself, there is not a word of truth in it.

The Hon. the Minister of Immigration, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
F. D. BELL.

No. 9.

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

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 30th November, 1883.

I am glad to be able to send you at last the new "Official Handbook." It must speak for itself; but I request your perusal of the preface, in which I have briefly explained the design on which I instructed Mr. Gisborne to prepare Parts I. and II., and on which Part III. will be also written. Eighty copies are in a box which I am sending to Plymouth to-night, to be put on board the New Zealand Shipping Company's steamer "Aorangi."

I trust the work will appear to you a useful one. It has occupied a long time, but it brings together a mass of varied information which cannot but be useful to intending colonists. In my opinion Mr. Gisborne has rendered good service to the colony by the manner in which he has executed the work I confided to him; and I need not say how much the editing of it has engaged my own attention and interest.

The Hon. the Minister of Immigration, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
F. D. BELL.

No. 10.

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

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 6th December, 1883.

Adverting to what I said in my letter of 24th October, on the subject of the Plymouth Dépôt: I hoped to have been able to send you by this mail copies of the reports which I have obtained on the state of the dépôt generally, as well as at the time of the departure of the ship "Oxford." The letter and enclosures which I have received from the Board of Trade raise questions which I shall probably have to write to them again about; so I keep the correspondence, in order to send it to you complete by next mail.

The Hon. the Minister of Immigration, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
F. D. BELL.

No. 11.

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

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 19th December, 1883.

In my letter of the 24th October (No. 296) I stated that I was getting together a variety of information on the state of the emigration dépôt at Plymouth; and this information is now contained in the correspondence which I enclose herewith, and which is noted in the margin.*

The condemnation of the dépôt was pronounced by the Royal Commission on the ship "Oxford" in the following terms: "Complaints of the dirty state of the establishment, and the want of such ordinary comforts as the severity of the weather would render essential, are almost universal. The sleeping accommodation, as described by the married witnesses, was absurdly small, and the filthy condition of the bedding almost incredible. Vermin appears to have abounded. A proper supply of bed-clothing for the existing cold weather was not forthcoming; and a considerable amount of unnecessary harshness seems to have been displayed in the management, and particularly with regard to the women and children. A considerable amendment is stated to have occurred during the visit of the Agent-General, for whose inspection special preparations are said to have been made. The Commissioners, however, point out the evidence showing the filthy state of the establishment and the bedding."

You will observe that I applied for information to the Board of Trade, to the Local Government Board, and to the Agents-General for New South Wales, Queensland, and South Australia, in order that you should have the best means of judging how far the allegations made in the evidence before the Royal Commission were correct.

It appeared to me that the matter was one of too great importance to remain where the evidence had left it. The question as to whether the Plymouth Dépôt was a place such as the evidence represented it to be was obviously one of great interest to all the colonies which are sending out emigrants. If a general impression were to get abroad in England among the people who are going out that the dépôt was a filthy place, not fit for the reception of decent and modest people of the working class, it would be bad enough; but it would be much more serious if such an impression should prevail among the large numbers of colonists in Australia and New Zealand who are sending Home for their friends. It is perhaps fortunate, therefore, that the accusations made before the Royal Commission have given an opportunity for accumulating proofs respecting the true condition of the establishment.

It is hardly necessary for me to refer particularly to any of the correspondence; nevertheless I should like to notice a few salient points:—

* Correspondence with the Local Government Board, Board of Trade, Agents-General for New South Wales, Queensland, and South Australia, and the Hon. Mrs. Joyce (extract from letter from).