

accompany such publications with the helpful, painstaking advice which an intending emigrant so anxiously asks for, is the very thing that we cannot do. Knowing what the work ought to be, I fret under the incessant discouragement of not being able to overtake it, and of feeling that without stability and permanence I never shall overtake it.

Yet I am perfectly confident that, if permanence and stability were only assured and a really efficient method established, results of enormous importance to the colony might be achieved. I am not speaking so much of the working-class immigrants, although even in their case an entirely different system is absolutely necessary if the colony does not intend to confine itself to nominated people alone. But I am referring to the class which above any other we want in the colony, namely, small farmers with moderate capital at their command, to fill the second-class accommodation on board the new lines of steamers. There are thousands of small farmers who might easily be brought to New Zealand if we would adopt towards them the policy which may be expressed in these words: "The Government will take you to New Zealand as cheaply as you can be taken to Manitoba;" and I do not hesitate to say that each fortnightly steamer could be made to take out its complement of valuable settlers. Literally it may be said that nothing is done in the agricultural counties of England Scotland, and Ireland to bring the advantages of New Zealand before that class. Yet I am incessantly urged by people here to do it, and I am certain that it could be done successfully if we did it with steadfastness of purpose. Nor am I less convinced of this: that, if it pays the colony to bring out working people, it would pay at least as well to devote a part of the Immigration Fund to bringing out small farmers. But there are two things which, in both the cases, I consider to be absolute essentials.

1. As regards the working-class, it is essential that the colony should decide whether it will confine itself to nominated people, or whether it will invite a moderate but steady inflow of un-nominated. The former are easily got together, for they have been prepared by their friends for the move which they are to make; the latter have to be sought out, and a really good class—especially in the case of single women—can only be sought out by the most painstaking and careful organization, maintained over a considerable space of time, and not liable to be suddenly interrupted. And, equally for nominated and un-nominated people, everything relating to their selection and to their reception at the *dépôt* immediately before embarkation should be under the sole control of the Government, nor should any private profit ever be allowed to be made out of it.

2. As regards the class of small farmers, it is essential that they should be told as clearly as possible what they can do when they get out to the colony. This means not only general information such, for instance, as is given in Parts I. and II. of the Handbook, but special information and advice, such as I have contemplated in Part III. They should not only be able to know that there is, say, good agricultural land to be had on the west coast of the North Island, or good pastoral farms to be had in Otago, but they should also be able to know for certain what the land law will really enable them to do. I ventured nearly two years ago, in my letter of the 20th February, 1882 (No. 2, D.—4, 1883), to express the opinion that the instability of the land law was defeating even then the very objects it was intended to subserve; and all the reflection which I have been able to give to the subject since has only strengthened me in the views I then held. Yet, at the very time when I was about to urge, in the report you have been so long expecting, what seemed to me strong reasons (from the immigration standpoint) in favour of a stable land law, the Assembly was engaged in considering a fundamental change in the disposal of the public lands. It would be entirely outside the province of the Agent-General to express any opinion as to what the system ought to be; and I assure you of the sincerity with which I should try, so long as I held this office, to give the best effect I could to whatever policy was chosen by Parliament. But what I said to you two years ago about the Otago pastoral question I could say now with a great deal more force about the system of perpetual leases. If that system were the law, it could, I believe, be easily made popular with intending settlers. The trouble is that I can never say with any confidence what really is the law.

I faintly indicate in these few words a very small part of what has so long been passing through my mind. I hope it is needless for me to say how entirely I admit your right to require a far more complete statement, or how much I appreciate the opinion you are pleased to express that my report would be of assistance in determining how best to give effect to the wishes of Parliament. Nor should I think of letting you meet Parliament again without placing you in full possession of what I think.

The Hon. the Minister of Immigration, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

F. D. BELL.

No. 18.

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

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 5th February, 1884.

In the answer which you gave to a question by Mr. Fish in the House of Representatives last session (*Hansard* No. 2, Session 1883—20th June, page 50), I observe that you seem to contemplate 450 immigrants being sent out by each of the monthly ships. If it is your desire that so large a number of people as 450 should be sent out in any one ship, I trust I shall receive definite instructions to that effect. I beg leave to observe, however, that none of the steamships now running to New Zealand could carry such a number without putting them in the orlop deck, and my Despatching Officer assures me that neither the "Tongariro," "Aorangi," "Ruapehu," "Ionic," "Doric," "British King," nor "British Queen" is capable of carrying even as many as 300 statute adults in the upper 'tween decks, although only 16 feet space is allowed per adult, instead of the 18 feet that I should like.

The Hon. the Minister of Immigration, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

F. D. BELL.