

of dividing a ship by a wall of steel forming an entire longitudinal section meets the requirement specially insisted on by Sir Edward in his paper, and if he thinks fit to express any opinion on the design I will take care to let you know. In the meanwhile I am calling the attention of the two shipping companies to Sir Edward's remarks.

So far, however as regards the resolution of the Joint Committee that "preference should be given to unsinkable ships" in making the temporary arrangements contemplated for the immigration service until next session, I can hardly think there is any chance of their recommendation being capable of being carried out. During the few months that will elapse before the General Assembly reconsiders the steam question we must be content to accept the ships already built by the New Zealand Shipping Company, and those chartered by themselves and the Shaw-Savill-Albion Company. Whenever the Assembly shall think the time has come for taking more permanent steps in relation to the steam service, and for exercising a real control over the ships built for the service, such precautions as those desired by the Committee and now raised by Sir Edward Reed's paper can be enforced as they ought to be.

The Hon. the Postmaster-General, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

F. D. BELL.

No. 21.

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

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

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 6th October (No. 188), containing your instructions upon the direct steam service, and the steps to be taken by me with regard to the Government immigrants and freight.

I received these instructions with all the more satisfaction because it seemed to me that I had anticipated their purport more or less in the minute which I addressed to the two shipping companies, as reported in my letter of the 8th instant (No. 318). I hope that when you receive that minute it will also seem to you that I had anticipated your wishes as far as I could.

I have waited since, day after day, in the hope that the companies would come to terms between themselves for the short period that will elapse before Parliament meets; they have had several conferences, and various proposals have been made from one side and the other. But, so far as I can see up to the moment I am writing, I think we must give up all hope of any agreement between them, and the most difficult part of my task therefore yet remains for me to face.

I have, &c.,

F. D. BELL.

The Hon. the Minister of Immigration, Wellington.

No. 22.

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

SIR,— 7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 4th December, 1883.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 6th October (No. 189), transmitting photographic plans of the ship alluded to in the resolution of the general Committee on the Direct Steam Service.

Before the receipt of that letter my attention had been directed, as stated in my letter to the Postmaster-General of the 8th November (No. 326), to Sir Edward Reed's opinion on unsinkable ships, and a few days after writing to you, I addressed Sir Edward Reed, sending him Mr. Isbister's design for his consideration. To that letter I received an interesting reply from Sir Edward Reed, in which he said he was ready to stake his reputation upon the perfect practicability of designing and building a New Zealand line of steamers which should be exempt from perils on the ocean by collision or stress of weather, and that he was, therefore, of opinion that the recommendation of the Joint Committee was not only reasonable in itself, but if acted upon would confer great advantages upon the colonial world, inasmuch as any such example of the adoption of unsinkable ships would necessarily be largely followed in future. It was immediately after getting this letter from Sir Edward Reed that I received yours enclosing the drawings of Mr. Isbister's ship, and I sent them on to Sir Edward Reed, who has returned me, in reply, the valuable opinion and suggestions which are contained in his letter of the 29th November.

You will observe that Sir Edward Reed expresses his willingness to make a design of a ship of the class contemplated by the Joint Committee. If, therefore, the Government should be of opinion that it would be advisable to take advantage of Sir Edward's offer, perhaps you will be pleased to transmit to me the cypher "design" by cable.

I have, &c.,

F. D. BELL.

The Hon. the Minister of Immigration, Wellington.

Enclosure 1 in No. 22.

The AGENT-GENERAL to Sir E. J. REED.

SIR,— 7, Westminster Chambers, Victoria Street, S.W., 13th November, 1883.

I venture to bring the following matter under your consideration: On reading your striking article in this month's "Contemporary" on the Mercantile Marine of England, a passage in it referring to unsinkable ships reminded me of a scheme which was proposed some time ago by a shipbuilder at Dunedin, in New Zealand, for a vessel of that kind, and of a short explanation of his design, which I ask permission to enclose, in case you should think it worth your while to peruse it. While the New Zealand Parliament was in session lately a Joint Committee of both Houses sat to consider certain proposals for a direct steam service between this country and the