

Sermons, lectures, and speeches on this subject are the order of the day. The newspapers are obliged at last to refuse admission to the correspondence, which is therefore carried on as advertisements. . . . The Catholics, meantime, preserve a dignified silence, and if they can only continue proof against the insults and contumely heaped upon their religion, they will rise immensely in the estimation of all who look with concern at this uprising of a narrow bigotry." He then shows that this unhealthy agitation is being "revived for purely political purposes by a few knowing individuals here." One point is worthy of special mention. "Amid the united band who are devoting their best energies to the creation of discord between their own flocks and the Roman Catholic friends with whom they have hitherto and for so many years lived in peace and amity, I should," he writes, "add that the Presbyterian ministers, and notably the Rev Mr Bruce, their Moderator, have kept aloof from this controversy; which attacks not so much the doctrine as the character and morals of the whole Catholic community."

### IMMIGRATION.

[We continue Mr O'Rorke's letter of February last to Dr Featherston:—]

It is the opinion of the Government that this number of immigrants is absolutely required to save the scheme of Public Works from jeopardy during the year. Increased exertions on your part are indispensable to enable the Colony to meet the demands on the labour market, not only on account of public works, but also to enable the ordinary agricultural and pastoral pursuits of settlers to be carried on with reasonable prospects of success.

Turning to another subject, I observe by the accounts you recently furnished to the Treasury, that you have increased the salary of Messrs Birch, Farnall, and Seaton, from 18s per diem to £700 per annum. You have not favoured the Government with any explanation of your reason for doing so, and in addition to this, you have granted back pay to these gentlemen from their arrival in England, to the following amounts:—To Mr Birch, £175 11s 1d; to Mr Seaton, £170 18s 8d; to Mr Farnall, £114 5s 5d.

In the absence of any explanation from you of the reasons for more than doubling their original salaries and granting this back-pay, I can only say that these increases of pay are unsatisfactory to the Government, and are sure to be so to the House of Representatives. These gentlemen went home, as I understand it, primarily on private business, with a recommendation that you should avail yourself of their services during a temporary stay in the United Kingdom. Any obligation that may have been incurred by the Government in recommending, and by you in employing them, has, in the opinion of the Government, been now fulfilled, and the Government devolves upon you the responsibility of saying whether you consider the services of these gentlemen as emigration agents should be retained. Salaries of £700 per annum will not be passed. If you desire to retain their services at the salaries you originally fixed, and report from time to time the results of those services, the Government, if satisfied with the benefits accruing to the Colony from their exertions, would not decline to listen to recommendations based on the advantages obtained.

If these gentlemen are engaged in any important scheme of emigration, as I learn from His Honor the Superintendent of Auckland Mr Farnall is at present, and of which I have advised you by this mail, I do not desire that he or any of them should be stopped short in accomplishing their respective objects, if, in your opinion, they are likely to succeed. What the Government desires is, that their Agent-General should bear the whole responsibility of the conduct of immigration, leaving to him the power of appointing or removing sub-agents. Salaries of £300 a year and upwards should receive the sanction of the Government.

Mr O'Rorke writing by the same mail, says:—Herewith is forwarded report of the Immigration Commissioners upon the ship "Glenora," which ship arrived at Wellington upon the 11th March, 1873; also the report of the proceedings in the Resident Magistrate's Court upon the prosecution instituted against the ship by the Emigration Officer under "The Passengers Act, 1855," which resulted in the captain being amerced in a fine of £25, with costs, in each case.

These enclosures speak for themselves; and it is only necessary that I should add that it is anything but satisfactory to the Government to find that the repeated remonstrance of Mr Waterhouse and myself, with regard to the inefficient inspection of ships and selection of emigrants, are not only not attended to, but seem not to be considered worthy of notice in your correspondence.

DR FEATHERSTON, in replying to Mr O'Rorke says:—

The Government seem to be under the impression that Messrs. Brogden's emigration was an aid and assistance to me, whereas it was in point of fact a serious hindrance to the conduct of emigration by the Government. The Messrs. Brogden were formidable competitors with me in the field of emigration, for the terms which they offered were such as I should not have been justified in offering on the part of the Government. Emigrants having the terms offered by the Messrs. Brogden, naturally declined to accept the lower terms offered by the Government. I was so fully conscious of the disadvantage under which the Government was laboring by this competition that I placed the services of my whole staff at the disposal of Messrs. Brogden, with a view of enabling them to complete the contract for the despatch of 2,000 emigrants within the shortest possible period, more especially as I was aware that it was absolutely essential for the construction of railways in contemplation that a large proportion of the emigrants should be of the class known as "navvies." It is scarcely fair, therefore, on the part of the Government to deduct from the number of emigrants sent out by me those known as "Brogden's men."

In consequence of the representations made to me by the General Government, that they were afraid I was starving emigration by not offering sufficiently liberal terms, and that, provided population could be poured in, the cost was of secondary importance, and likewise

their positive instructions that I should make the terms as liberal as those offered by any other Government, I very unadvisedly offered not only free passages so far as money payments were concerned, but to abolish the system of promissory notes altogether. I had no sooner promulgated these new regulations (on the 10th March) than I perceived that I had committed a grave blunder, and at once (on the 17th) cancelled them, intimating at the same time to the sub-agents that all promises made under these ill-advised regulations would be faithfully fulfilled; for I had no sooner abolished the system of promissory notes than I felt I had seriously compromised the Government, both in regard to past and existing emigration contracts. For instance, the Messrs. Brogden might have reasonably complained that while they had been called upon to give their own promissory notes at the rate of £10 per adult on all emigrants introduced by them, emigrants were being introduced without being required to pay any part of their passage money, or to give any promissory notes. The parties with whom I have contracts for the introduction of Germans, and Scandinavians would have had an equal right to make a similar complaint. And further, it would have rendered it difficult for the Government to collect the promissory notes already given to emigrants. I may add that judging from my own experience, emigrants as a rule do not object to give promissory notes in payment of their passage money. I therefore, for these reasons, admitting the blunder I had made, withdrew the regulations of the 10th March, and substituted those of 17th, of which you have already received a copy. The Hon. Mr O'Rorke will find by a return forwarded to the Government that his complaint with respect to the non-appointment of agents, and the inadequacy of the advertisements in the newspapers of the South of Ireland (in the justice of which I quite concur), has now been remedied. At the same time, I must repeat that I am not responsible for the actions of peripatetic agents sent home by the Government, in whose appointment I have been allowed no voice, and who usually act in defiance of my instructions. I would in conclusion add, that being now in a position to judge of the future prospects of emigration in this country, I do not for one moment share the gloomy anticipations which are constantly being put forth by a section of the Colonial press, and which appear to have somewhat alarmed the Government.

We republish from the "Thames Advertiser" the following article on the administration, or more properly the want of administration, of Immigration. The length of the article is enough to deter many on glancing at it to pass it unread, but it is certainly worthy of perusal:—

"It is to be hoped that before the present session is brought to a close some leading member of the House will endeavour to raise a distinct issue on the general administrative ability of the present Ministry, and more particularly as regards the reckless manner in which the immigration portion of their policy has been carried out. It may be, as our Wellington correspondent has told us that 'the Ministry are strong, and they know it, and the Opposition are weak, and they know it,' and that there would consequently be little hope of carrying an hostile motion against the present occupants of the Treasury benches; but the discussion which would be raised by such a motion might lead to great good ultimately, because it would be the means of drawing public attention to a matter which will not bear the light of publicity. It is now time the immigration department began to show something like business order and method in carrying out of a most important work, for there has been ample time to gain experience, and abundance of public money wasted in the purchasing of that experience. It has indeed been dearly bought by this colony, for we have had three years of the most complete chaos, and yet no attempt appears to have been made to reorganize the department from disorder, or to determine the exact position and powers of the Agent-General; nor has any earnest effort been put forth to amend the working of the administrative machinery, so that it might be made more useful and less expensive. We all know that during the past year there has been a great public outcry against immigration, and especially against the class of immigrants sent out and the character of vessels which were employed for the purpose of bringing passengers from England; and this agitation was apparently not without good cause.

"The whole story of the blundering and muddling of immigration matters is told in the correspondence between the Agent-General and the Government, which has been printed and presented to the Assembly. There are two sets of papers—the one containing letters from the Agent-General, the other containing letters and memoranda to Dr Featherston; and although as a general rule, state papers and official despatches are exceedingly heavy reading, the papers before us are well worth perusing, as they are made readable by a liberal sprinkling of personalities, and an interchange of polite snubs between a servant and his masters—between Dr Featherston and the Government. The Agent-General does not hesitate to tell the Ministry that they have meddled and muddled, and boldly asserts that they have plunged the Colony into a serious annual expenditure which is 'wholly unnecessary,' whilst they give such contradictory orders, and show such ignorance of previous instructions, that it is impossible to understand the mind of the Government. On the other hand Mr O'Rorke declared that the action of the Agent-General has not met with the approval of the Government, and then in several letters he proceeds to defend the Ministry against the attacks of the Agent-General, and declares that 'It is not an ordinary state of affairs for a Government to have to defend itself from the attacks of its own officers; but seeing that you take credit to yourself for whatever is economical, in the conduct of your agency, whilst you attribute all its waste and extravagance to the Government, it is right to consider whether your apportionment of praise and blame is correct.' Mr O'Rorke then discusses the several appointments that have been made by the Government, and declares that Dr Featherston had full power to dispense with the services of the men who were 'wholly unnecessary,' and he also draws attention to the manner in which the Agent-General has set aside definite instructions with respect to the introduction of the small farmer class of immigrants for settlement on the confiscated lands. There has yet been no time for an answer from Dr Featherston