

Far from crumbling under the burden of the future lives of dozens of people, Ranstead went quietly on, answering letters, giving the truth as he saw it, and then, arranging parties of people to emigrate to New Zealand at a reduction in fares. The letters to Ranstead from prospective emigrants are illuminating.

‘Our ages are 26, 28, and 31 respectively. We are coalminers, having worked for Andrew Knowles & Son for nearly 20 years. We are used to hard work and plenty of it.’

‘I am sick of England’s poverty.’

‘I am 24 years of age i work 58 hours a week Wages 22/6 Holidays one week per year.’³

‘I am 39 years of age . . . We are all in the Best of health Although I have done over 30 years hard work I really feel none the worse for it.’

‘It gives me great pleasure to have the opportunity of writing to you when I consider the way in which you have introdue in the clarion your favorite New Zealand which has gone a favourite land of mine’s by reading your letters & I may say my Friend also . . . We are able to do anythink in the line of hard work & have been so since we were twelve years of age in the coalmines.’

‘In the unlikely event of my finding conditions uncongenial, I would be in a financial position to return to England – a consummation, however, devoutly to be dreaded.’

‘Having a wife and six young children I am desirous that they should have a Better and freer life than they have at present, with more security of living without the perpetual worry which is inseperatable from our present highly strung Commercialism.’

‘As a young man about 30 years of age & unmarried it has always been my desire to work under more humane conditions but have found they don’t exist here. I have worked with the Railway Co with the Corporation of Glasgow & with a shipbuilding Co in the mines & now I am with a Sewing Machine factory but they are all much about the same. Dividends is their only aim which is sweated out of the worker in a most unchristian way. Still this is Holy Scotland the land of Churches. I am tired of this unnatural country.’

Some letter-writers had a more specific interest. One of Ranstead’s NZ articles⁴ in the *Clarion* had been about the Federative Home⁵ just out of Christchurch, run by Professor Alexander Bickerton,⁶ a lively, good-hearted eccentric who had the power of creating devoted disciples. Ranstead’s imagination was captured, and, as usual, his pen carried his enthusiasm. Readers were stirred, and wrote to him.

‘Your article on the Federative Home was most inspiring. What are the qualifications necessary to admission?’

‘If I am not too audacious, I should be delighted to join Professor Bickerton’s Federative Home. I understand the Prof has started two or three industries, and is likely to want more labour for the manufacture of Carbo-celluloid buildings. Do you think he would give me employment? I should be willing to start at bottom wage, and he would find me a ready learner . . .’

‘Seeing Professor Bickerton is about to start to manufacture paper there might be a chance for a few papermakers out there.’

All in all, Ranstead saw in NZ and described in the *Clarion* enough to start a stream of settlers which, by 1903, numbered well over 1,000. ‘One man of the original party has brought out over twenty people