

REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS

APPOINTED TO INQUIRE INTO CERTAIN MATTERS CONNECTED WITH THE IMMIGRANTS BY THE SHIP “ENGLAND.”

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

We, the Commissioners appointed to inquire into and report upon all the facts concerning the outbreak and existence of small-pox and of any other infectious or other disease on board the ship “England,” during the voyage of that ship from England to Wellington, and particularly into the compliance or non-compliance by all and every the persons and person liable or chargeable in that behalf with the law relating to or affecting passenger ships in so far as the same affects the said ship “England,” and into the fitness of the said ship for the conveyance of immigrants, and the provision made for the medical and other treatment of such immigrants, and into the actual medical or other treatment of persons infected with small-pox, or infected with any infectious disease, or ill with any other disease or bodily ailment whatsoever, having proceeded to make the inquiry intrusted to us, and having taken evidence thereon, after careful deliberation have agreed to the following Report.

It will be convenient to class the observations we have to make under the following heads :—

- I. COMPLIANCE WITH THE PASSENGERS ACT, AS AFFECTING THE SHIP
“ENGLAND.”
- II. OUTBREAK AND EXISTENCE OF DISEASE ON BOARD.
- III. TREATMENT OF THE IMMIGRANTS.
 - (A.) Their treatment generally.
 - (B.) The provision made for their medical treatment, and their actual medical treatment.
- IV. CONCLUSION ARRIVED AT.

Upon the evidence taken we propose making comments as we proceed; but before entering on these specific matters, a short statement of the purpose of the voyage can most appropriately be given here.

The “England,” a vessel of 860 tons register, was engaged by the New Zealand Government to bring out immigrants to this Colony, the engagement of the ship having been entered into with Messrs. Shaw, Saville, and Co. of London who had chartered her from the owner (Captain Harrington) as a general ship. The immigrants were 102 in number, reckoning as 81 adult persons, so that the “England” was a “passenger ship” within the meaning of the Passengers Acts. She also had cabin passengers, and carried a general cargo. The vessel left Gravesend on the 8th December last, and arrived in Wellington on the 9th March, after a passage of ninety-two days. On the voyage there were sixteen deaths from various causes, and two births. The whole of the evidence taken is attached hereto, by way of appendix, together with copies of such of the documents produced as seemed to us material to the inquiry.

I.—COMPLIANCE WITH THE PASSENGERS ACT, AS AFFECTING THE SHIP “ENGLAND.”

It will be seen that this involves the fitness of the ship for the conveyance of emigrants, which may be disposed of at once by saying that the “England,” both in capacity and seaworthiness, was fully adequate to the conveyance of the people she brought with her, and that if she had not been loaded with cargo between decks she could easily have carried a larger number. On this voyage the ship was commanded by Captain Harrington, who is also owner, and who appears