

intention of the Government to submit others to public competition as early as they can safely do so without deranging the labour market. To this end you have already been left free to make such terms as to passage as shall in your judgment be sufficient to insure that supply of labour which the Government have indicated, and they confidently rely on your using every exertion to carry out the spirit of the instructions on this subject which have been from time to time communicated to you.

W. GISBORNE.

No. 14.

MEMORANDUM for the AGENT-GENERAL, London.

(No. 76, 1871.)

Public Works Office, Wellington, 27th December, 1871.

REFERRING to the memoranda which have been forwarded to you in reference to immigration, and more especially to that numbered 54, which pointed out the urgency that existed for a large and immediate immigration, especially during the year 1872, and drew your attention to the desirability of extending the shipping contracts to more than one owner or firm, I enclose a letter which has been written by the Resident Minister for the Middle Island on these two subjects.

I have already so strongly urged the necessity of a large supply of labour being at once introduced, in consequence of the extent of the railway and other works which are now in course of being undertaken, that I feel it unnecessary to add anything in support of Mr. Reeves' remarks; and while I think with that Minister that advantage would accrue if the shipping for immigration and railway plant were in the hands of several firms, I must repeat what I have before written,—that the Government wish you, in this matter of shipping supply, to exercise the widest discretion.

W. GISBORNE.

Enclosure in No. 14.

The Hon. W. REEVES to the AGENT-GENERAL, London.

Office of the Resident Minister for the Middle Island,
Christchurch, 23rd December, 1871.

SIR,—

By the last mail you may probably have heard of my appointment as a member of the Executive. Since then I have been gazetted as Resident Minister for the Middle Island, and have been specially charged with the administration of the Public Works and Immigration Act in this part of the Colony.

At present I have been able to do little more than inaugurate my department by opening an office in Christchurch, and entering into preliminary negotiations with the Superintendent of Canterbury for taking over the work of immigration, and arranging the mode in which the new lines of railway about to be opened shall be worked. I am happy to say that I have hitherto met with the most cordial assistance from His Honor Mr. Rolleston.

I propose to visit Otago for the same purpose during the ensuing month, when I anticipate a similar reception from His Honor Mr. Macandrew.

As you are doubtless aware, immigration has been reduced of late years to a very low ebb in Canterbury, only 964 adults having been introduced during the fifteen months ending 20th December, 1871, of whom 376 were single women. At the same time it is only right to inform you that, owing to the general stagnation of trade, and consequently lack of enterprise, the labour market has been fairly supplied and wages kept at an even level. The recent extraordinary rise in the price of wool has already led to a general revival of confidence, and must soon bring about a renewal of enterprise and an improved demand for labour. As a proof that this is already commencing, I may mention that the last two batches of immigrants have all been engaged at full wages, within two or three hours after the admission of employers into the barracks.

I anticipate during harvest that labour will be found scarce both here and in Otago.

Recent telegrams received from you lead to the supposition that we shall receive no appreciable number of immigrants from you until the commencement of next spring, or say about September, 1872, when a steady supply may be expected. By that time I look forward to a steady and increasing demand for labour, as the joint result of the commencement of public works and the renewal of commercial activity.

It will be the purpose of my department to make full preparation for the reception and distribution of the immigrants as they arrive. I shall await with interest the receipt of letters conveying intelligence of your proceedings on the Continent and in England.

I enclose a letter from the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency Company, relative to the shipping business between London and this Colony. Apart from the question of the individual interests of this or that firm or company, I consider the subject of sufficient general importance to deserve your special attention.

However necessary it might have been, in times past, to entrust the shipping business of any part of the Colony to one particular firm, I think the time for such an arrangement has long passed, and that its continuance can only serve to hamper the progress of commerce and impose a burthen on the public. Though not personally engaged in commercial affairs, I have long been aware that the monopoly enjoyed by Messrs. Shaw, Saville, and Co. has exercised an adverse influence on public and private interests, and has tended to divert our trade, to some extent, into the hands of the Victorian merchants.

I think, therefore, that if the large freight requirements of the Government can be used in the direction of opening the shipping trade, and inducing other ship-owners of repute to send their vessels to New Zealand, a very great boon will be conferred on the public.