

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE

No. 33.

MEMORANDUM for the AGENT-GENERAL.

(No. 66, 1872.)

Public Works Office, Wellington, 6th June, 1872.

REFERRING to your letter of the 7th March, No. 168, in which you enclose copy of contract made with Messrs. Louis Knorr and Co., for procuring and shipping from Hamburg 2,000 Scandinavian emigrants, I have the honor to draw your attention to the following suggestions:—

The main defect in the contract is that there is no specific arrangement for your exercising that supervision over the selection of the emigrants which the Government deem to be absolutely essential. In this, as in all other foreign emigration, the supervision should be most exact, and some officer should be appointed by you to examine and approve or reject the emigrants before embarking.

The Government are aware how great the temptation is to approve emigrants who have arrived at the port of embarkation, rather than expose them to the hardship which may result from their being rejected; but as the Government is not responsible for that hardship, your officers must be instructed firmly to refuse passages to any who may be physically or mentally unfit for the requirements of the Colony. However vigilant this examination at the time of embarking may be, it must necessarily be far from efficient, and it is therefore extremely desirable that you should take steps to have a proper examination before the emigrants are informed that their applications have been approved.

Although it is too late to alter the contract so far as regards the present season, yet care should be taken in future to retain the power of regulating shipments. Under the contract, Messrs. Knorr and Co. are at liberty to send the whole 2,000 out whenever they please; and while the Government have every confidence that you will insist that the shipments are spread over a reasonable period, yet it would be desirable to have the power of doing so specified. The Colony can readily absorb a certain number per month, but it would prove very inconvenient were six or eight vessels containing the whole number to arrive—to put an extreme case—within the space of a month.

I notice that the Contractors “agree to receive” from every passenger £5 either in cash or in promissory notes. In your letter of the 16th November, you excepted single women from payment, but I presume that you have since altered your intention in that respect. As I have already informed you in a separate memorandum (No. 65), that the Government are desirous for reasons there given that you should amend your regulations for the United Kingdom by granting free passages to single women, I need only remark that if the payment hinders in any way the immigration of Scandinavian females, you will be good enough to discontinue it in their favour also, and at the same time include as “single women” all the girls in families from the age of twelve. I further notice that while in the “Regulations” forwarded in your letter of 7th March, No. 170, both for the United Kingdom and Scandinavia, the payment by bills is double the amount required to be paid in cash, the emigrants to be selected by Messrs. Knorr and Co., are only to pay the same amount in either case. As the Government have a decided objection to placing Scandinavian immigration on better terms than that from the United Kingdom, they desire that this discrepancy may be at once harmonised. I am, however, in some doubt as to the meaning of the phrase “agree to receive,” on which the above remarks are founded; but if it means “undertake to obtain” (as I presume it does), it would be better in future to adopt this latter phrase in preference to the former.

As nominated immigration is now in full force in reference to Germany, that class of immigrants should be included in the shipping arrangements, if it is not already comprehended in the proviso by which Messrs. Knorr and Co. engage to convey the emigrants selected by other Agents than themselves.

W. REEVES.

No. 34.

MEMORANDUM for the AGENT-GENERAL.

(No. 67, 1872.)

Public Works Office, Wellington, 6th June, 1872.

IN acknowledging your letter of the 7th March, No. 175, containing the result of your efforts to obtain competition for the shipping required for the conveyance of emigrants and railway plant, I have the honor to inform you that, while the Government fully appreciate those efforts and express their gratification at the reduction you have effected both in the cost of passage money and freight, they nevertheless regret to find that you are obliged to admit that the Colony is, for the present at least, in the power of a single firm.

W. REEVES.

No. 35.

MEMORANDUM for AGENT-GENERAL, London.

(No. 69, 1872.)

Public Works Office, Wellington, 6th June, 1872.

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 4th April, No. 206, in which you report the arrival of Messrs. Birch and Seaton. With regard to the claim made by Mr. Birch for £50 for expenses incurred on his journey to England, and which you state you do not feel yourself justified in paying, the Government is of opinion that no such claim can be reconciled with the instructions given to Mr. Birch, which were that he was to leave Dunedin “by the first suitable vessel sailing from Otago.” The payment already made to Mr. Birch, of £100 for the voyage, is a limit which the Government does not, therefore, feel it right to exceed.

I am sorry to learn that you consider some misconception exists on the part of Messrs. Birch and Seaton as to the terms and conditions upon which they have been engaged and despatched to England, and that you have found considerable difficulty in availing yourself of their services.