

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE AGENT-GENERAL, LONDON.

II.—LETTERS FROM THE AGENT-GENERAL.

NOTE.—*The letters advising the execution of orders for Railway Plant have with a few exceptions been omitted, but the details of the material arrived and on its way are, for convenience, Scheduled and inserted, with the Orders sent to the Agent-General, in Paper D.—No. 1.*

No. 1.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

(No. 43.) 7, Westminster Chambers, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W.,
13th November, 1871.

SIR,—

I already find it is impossible to conduct emigration satisfactorily on the conflicting conditions and terms of the different Provinces; but I have it in contemplation to establish a uniform system for the whole Colony, based upon the principle adopted in regard to Scandinavian emigration. Before doing so I purpose having a conference with the Agents of the various Provinces, and two or three other parties I have already employed in feeling the emigration pulse. Any arrangement I may make, though acted upon at once, will of course be subject to the approval and sanction of the Government.

I have, &c.,

I. E. FEATHERSTON,
Agent-General.

The Hon. W. Gisborne, Wellington, New Zealand.

No. 2.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

(No. 44.) 7, Westminster Chambers, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W.,
14th November, 1871.

SIR,—

I trust by an early mail to be able to inform you that I have succeeded in very considerably reducing the passage money of emigrants and the freight of railway plant.

But I am to a certain degree precluded from taking any decided action in the matter until I know the fate of the "Brogden contracts," and whether it has been decided that the construction of railways and other public works shall be undertaken by the Government. In the latter case, a reduction in the rate of passage money and freight of from 15 to 20 per cent. upon present rates may, I think, be safely calculated on.

A similar reduction may be anticipated in the cost of railway plant, if the Government is enabled to send large orders instead of small ones, for which it is difficult to obtain tenders except at absurdly high rates.

The emigration and the sending out of railway plant must be worked together. If the Government guarantee a certain number of emigrants (as they can do if emigration is carried out on a considerable scale) and a certain number of tons dead weight and measurement, a ship requires very little extra cargo; and I see no possibility of sending out a large quantity of railway plant at a reasonable rate, except by sending it in emigrant vessels. The latter will reduce the freight of the former, and the former will reduce the passage money of the emigrants.

The arrangements I have made for German and Scandinavian emigration will very materially assist in effecting this reduction.

I have, &c.,

I. E. FEATHERSTON,
Agent-General.

The Hon. W. Gisborne, Wellington, New Zealand.

No. 3.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

(No. 47.)

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, 15th November, 1871.

With reference to your memorandum No. 13, dated 5th August last, in which you enclose copy of a resolution of the Provincial Council of Canterbury, relating to the despatch of ships with emigrants direct to Timaru, I have the honor to state that I have made careful inquiry, with the object of ascertaining whether it is possible to give effect to the resolution, and I regret to be compelled to report that, except at an extravagant expense to the Government, I should not be able to make the desired arrangement.

The principal difficulty arises from the objections, and in some instances the refusal, of shipowners to allow their vessels to discharge passengers in open roadsteads. It is alleged that great danger attends this proceeding, and that underwriters charge excessive premiums both on ship and cargo so destined.

Under these circumstances, I have thought it right to continue to send the Canterbury vessels direct to Lyttelton. The Government will, I hope, concur with me in the opinion that it is better to pay the comparatively small expense of sending to Timaru a proportion of the immigrants imported direct to Lyttelton, than to incur the grave risks which, I am led to believe, would attend the debarkation of passengers from off the town of Timaru.

I have directed Mr. Ottywell to collect eligible applicants for passages, with a view to their