

Enclosure in No. 30.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORT on Ship "Ocean Mail."

SIR,—

Immigration Office, Wellington, 10th February, 1874.

We have the honor to report the arrival, on the 2nd instant, of the ship "Ocean Mail," with 244 statute adult immigrants on board, five children, equal to one and a half statute adults, having died during the voyage. As soon as possible we visited the ship, and having ascertained that there had been some cases of scarlet fever amongst the children, and that one girl was then in hospital with that malady, we considered it right to send the vessel to quarantine for a short time, in order that the immigrants' clothing and luggage might be thoroughly disinfected and cleansed, and the ship's 'tween-decks cleaned out and painted. We considered it was very necessary that this should be done, for although we are aware that scarlet fever is not a new disease in this town, we did not think it prudent to admit a vessel with such a large number of children (130) into the port with that disease actually on board.

Our instructions to the captain and surgeon-superintendent having been carried out with alacrity, we were enabled to inspect the ship on Friday last. We found her a very fine vessel, and well suited for the conveyance of immigrants. On visiting the single women's compartment we found the arrangements exceedingly good. One great advantage the "Ocean Mail" has over most other vessels is the arrangement for enabling the single women to get on the poop direct from their own compartment without going on the main deck: owing to this, they can be kept entirely separate from the other immigrants.

The hospital, water-closet, and bath-room, were each well arranged and convenient, being under the poop, but we regret to say the plumber's work was very defective. (See extract from surgeon's journal attached.) This compartment was lighted and ventilated by four side ports, part of the saloon skylight, and a large ventilator, which had been cut through the deck. There were alley-ways all round the berths, with a passage up the centre of the compartment. The married people's compartment was lighted and ventilated by eight side ports, sixteen deck-lights, a skylight over part of the main hatch skylights each side of the foremast, and one before the galley up through the house on deck. There were alley-ways round the berths, and the passengers in this compartment had the advantage of having the use of both the after and main hatches. The hospital and issuing-room for the married people were on each side of the main hatch.

This arrangement is much the same as in most other vessels which we have inspected and reported upon. The single men were located under the fore hatch, they had two deck-lights; and two side ports. Their hospital, was on deck, but as it had not been required for the single men, the doctor very judiciously decided on using it as a fever hospital for the children, on the first appearance of that disease. The masts of this ship are ventilators, and, as far as we could learn no effort had been spared to make her thoroughly well ventilated and lighted. Her height 'tween-decks is 7 feet 9 inches. The fittings, which appear to be very much the same as in all emigrant ships, were all landed on the quarantine station. The passengers' galley was large and well found, and we were informed that the condenser had worked satisfactorily during the voyage. After inspection, the ship was towed up to the wharf by the Government steamer "Luna."

On Saturday, the 7th instant, we inspected the immigrants, having ascertained that all their washing had been completed, and our instructions as to disinfecting and cleansing generally carried out. They appear to be a cheerful and contented lot of people, and expressed themselves as well satisfied with their treatment during the voyage and on the island. When asked if they had any complaints to make, their response was "Three cheers for the doctor," and no one immigrant ever hinted at a grievance. We were pleased to learn that the only saloon passenger was a lady, the authorities in England having objected to the conveyance of male saloon passengers owing to the annoyance and trouble they cause, and we are told that several applications for passages were refused. We append an extract from the journal of the surgeon-superintendent, every word of which is worthy of serious consideration, as his suggestions appear to us to be thoroughly practical, and are borne out by the statements of the immigrants themselves. Dr. Hay is eminently well qualified to take charge of Government immigrants, having previously made a voyage to Canterbury; and we feel confident that the prevention of a very serious outbreak of scarlet fever amongst the children was mainly attributable to his judicious treatment, and we were pleased to learn that he had received the cordial assistance of Captain Watson. The immigrants were all landed on Saturday immediately after our inspection.

In conclusion, we have much pleasure in recommending the payment of all gratuities.

We have, &c.,

ALEXANDER JOHNSTON, M.D.,	} Commissioners.
H. J. H. ELIOTT,	
JOHN HOLLIDAY,	

OBSERVATIONS by Dr. HAY.

THE "Ocean Mail" ought to have left London on the 6th November, 1873, but not being ready she did not leave till the 8th, and then she was by no means ready for sea.

What work remained to be done had to be done while we were lying off Gravesend, and in such a hurry that it was not properly finished. The locker-seats very soon separated from the bunks, and the single women's water-closet leaked at every joint in the pans, waste-pipe, and stop-cocks. Fortunately there was a plumber amongst the passengers who put it to rights after a great deal of trouble. The deck-lights all leaked, the hatches leaked and there was no proper covering provided for them, the baker's trough leaked, and there was no place provided for the baker to work in.

The water-cans supplied to the passengers were perfectly disgraceful: although new, nearly every one leaked, and the passengers not only lost their water, but we had great difficulty in keeping the