

Under the circumstances, we are again compelled to ask your reconsideration of our position, and to press our claims for the remission of passage expenses, and all other disbursements in connection with our emigration.

The passage charges include—

|                                                        | £      | s.     | d.  |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------|-----|
| Promissory notes to Government .. .. .                 | 18,240 | 0      | 0   |
| Payments in cash .. .. .                               | 97     | 10     | 0   |
| Interest on promissory notes to 28th February, 1874 .. | 1,275  | 12     | 0   |
|                                                        | <hr/>  |        |     |
|                                                        |        | 19,613 | 2 0 |

And our other disbursements are as follows, viz.—

|                                                                                               |       |        |       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|--------|-------|
| Ship's kit for emigrants .. .. .                                                              | 1,791 | 15     | 0     |
| Outfit, railway fares, dock dues, medical examination, &c.                                    | 9,619 | 13     | 9     |
| Agency expenses for collecting emigrants, printing, advertising, journeys, commission .. .. . | 1,679 | 9      | 10    |
| Immigrants' maintenance in New Zealand, boat hire, &c.                                        | 3,759 | 0      | 6     |
| Loss of interest on advances to men to 31st December, 1873 .. .. .                            | 708   | 16     | 10    |
|                                                                                               | <hr/> |        |       |
|                                                                                               |       | 17,558 | 15 11 |

|                                                                                                           |         |         |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|-----|
| Total of outlay, exclusive of additional interest on promissory notes, accruing from time to time .. .. . | £37,171 | 17      | 11  |
| Less repayments by workmen according to last advices ..                                                   | 2,766   | 15      | 3   |
|                                                                                                           | <hr/>   |         |     |
|                                                                                                           |         | £34,405 | 2 8 |

We note that in a memorandum to the Cabinet, No. 66, April 1, 1873, the Minister for Public Works says: "The only thing which has kept the rates of labour from rising to rates ruinous to the various interests in the colony has been the shipment of so much labour by Messrs. Brogden;" and we feel assured that this testimony is supported by facts, and that the advantage to the country of our large number of selected labourers, and their families, dispersed through the various provinces of the colony, contributing to its revenue, and employed in developing its resources, can hardly be over-estimated.

The following return, received from our firm by last mail, will show you to what extent, in point of numbers, the country has been benefited by the introduction of our workmen, viz.,—

|                                        |       |
|----------------------------------------|-------|
| Number of working men sent out .. .. . | 1,299 |
| Number working for the firm .. .. .    | 76    |

Number distributed throughout the colony working for other employers 1,223

We have a grave charge of complaint against colonial employers for enticing our men from their employment, and in several instances engaging the immigrants on landing, notwithstanding the employers were made aware of the engagement the men had entered into prior to leaving England. Our agent at Dunedin, referring to this subject, writes: "October 20th, 1873. Immediately the men were landed at these works, every artifice was resorted to by farmers and others to induce them to quit the firm's employ, and engage in farm labour, &c. Higher wages were promised, and every means used to decoy the men away, and in the greater number of instances with success. The men, on the other hand, do all in their power to avoid the repayment of their promissory notes; and the proof of this assertion lies in the fact that of the whole number of immigrants who originally landed in Otago, only five continue in the employ of the firm."

Our engineer on the Dunedin and Clutha railway works also reports that "The working of the immigration scheme in this province (Otago) has met with even worse success than that of Marlborough; for at the time of the landing of the immigrants per "Bebington," "Lady Jocelyn," "Christian McAusland," "Zealandia," and following vessels, the labour market was by no means full, and a great many of the farmers in both the country districts adjacent to Dunedin, and more remote, enticed many of the men away by offering them 40s. to 48s. per week, and board and lodging. The honesty of the greater part of the men was not proof against this opportunity of getting rid of their obligations to the firm. There is no reason to doubt that the debt to the firm with which our men landed in this country is that which prompts them to attempt at once to get employment at the hands of some other employer."

We have no wish to multiply similar reports from other provinces, showing the gain to the country from our imported labour, but we cannot help complaining of the recent action of the Government in entering into direct competition with us in the labour market, thus rendering it impossible for us to complete our engagements within the stipulated time. Our recent contract for completion of certain works at Auckland and Onehunga within the next three months, was entered into on the supposition that we should have only the ordinary demand for labour to compete with; but we regret to say that our exertions are paralyzed by the withdrawal of our men for service in the railway corps on the Waikato extension—the Government offer of the highest current wages, with lodging, accommodation, and other inducements, rendering our efforts to retain our workmen wholly abortive.

In urging our appeal, we must again reiterate that the importation of our immigrants was undertaken by us, not from any desire of ours to engage in this work, but at the urgent request of the New Zealand Government, in order to prevent the withdrawal of labour from the various