

1874.
NEW ZEALAND.

PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION OF IMMIGRATION.

CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO THE PROVINCES ASSUMING LOCAL CONTROL.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency

No. 1.

CIRCULAR to SUPERINTENDENTS.

SIR,—

Immigration Office, Wellington, 14th October, 1873.

I have the honor to inform you that it is the desire of the Government to arrange with the Provincial Governments to take charge, as far as may be possible, of immigrants on their arrival in the several Provinces, and to investigate and report upon the arrangements, &c., for and during the voyage of each vessel.

I have, therefore, to ask whether you are willing to take such charge, upon the following conditions:—

1. That you act in conformity with the instructions you from time to time receive from the Minister for Immigration.
2. That, subject to the last condition, you be guided in the usual manner by the advice of your Executive.
3. That the Immigration Officer be under your direction, but still be at liberty to communicate directly with, and to receive communications directly from, the Minister for Immigration, should occasion for such direct communication arise.
4. That you do not incur any expenditure on behalf of the Department, without authority for the same.
5. That you take charge of the immigration barracks and depôts, and the quarantine buildings; the Immigration Department providing a fair sum to meet necessary expenditure.

Should it be deemed advisable, as it no doubt will be, to establish depôts for immigrants in the interior of the Province, I should rely upon your aiding the Government to do so at the least possible expense, both in respect to obtaining buildings cheaply, and the general management of the depôts.

The Government do not, by these proposals, deprive themselves of the right to deal directly with the question of special settlements. They are, however, at present of opinion that such settlements can best be founded with the active aid and co-operation of the Provincial Governments; and they are not indisposed to entertain proposals with the object of founding such settlements.

When the labour market is better supplied, it will be important to establish general labour exchange offices, upon the plan of those which have been found beneficial in various parts of the United States. At present, however, the demand for labour is so great, that elaborate machinery of the kind is not required.

I suggest for your consideration the appointment of unpaid Boards in various parts of the country, composed of ladies and gentlemen who gratuitously will give their services for the purpose of receiving immigrants on their first arrival, and giving them such friendly aid and counsel as it may be in their power to render. It is difficult to over-estimate the importance of creating a favourable impression on the minds of immigrants on their first arrival. First impressions are proverbially lasting, and based on those first impressions will, in a large majority of cases, be the recommendations the immigrants send home to their friends to come out or stay where they are.

It is not proposed to discontinue the services of the Immigration Commissioners, but they will be required to report to you, sending at the same time a duplicate to me. I have to express the hope that, should you undertake the proposed duties, you will keep me promptly and fully supplied with information respecting the manner in which the immigrants are brought out, and their health and comfort attended to.

You are aware that it is part of the duty of the Immigration Officers to receive nominations for immigrants, and to see to the collection from immigrants of amounts due under their promissory notes. It may be desirable to leave it, for the present, an open question whether these duties of the Immigration Officer should be performed in direct communication with this Department, or under the instructions of the Provincial Government. Upon this question I shall be glad to be informed of your opinion.