

No. 131.

The Hon. the MINISTER for IMMIGRATION to Mr. J. W. MITCHELL.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 25th October, 1873.

I PROPOSE instructing Immigration Officer, Dunedin, to send down one hundred of the immigrants that next arrive to Bluff. I hope this will be of service.

J. W. Mitchell, Esq., Invercargill.

JULIUS VOGEL.

No. 132.

The UNDER-SECRETARY for IMMIGRATION to Mr. J. SEATON.

SIR,—

Immigration Office, Wellington, 28th October, 1873.

A voucher has been received in this office for the sum of £140 7s., claimed by yourself for services rendered as emigration agent in Great Britain, and for your return passage to this Colony.

The Agent-General having advised the Government that you had ceased to conduct any business in connection with his Department upon May 31st, 1873—up to which date your receipts for salary are to hand—the Hon. the Minister is unable to authorize any further payment upon this account until the Agent-General has been further communicated with, which, I am instructed to say, shall be by the next mail.

The amount of £50 for return passage to the Colony has been duly certified here, and will be passed for payment forthwith.

J. Seaton, Esq., Dunedin.

I have, &c.,

C. E. HAUGHTON.

No. 133.

Mr. J. SEATON to the Hon. the MINISTER for IMMIGRATION.

SIR,—

Portobello, Otago, 24th November, 1873.

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of a letter from your office in reply to a claim preferred by me for the sum of £140 7s., still owing, for services rendered as emigration agent, including cost of return passage to the Colony. I am under the impression that the claim made has been misunderstood, otherwise the Government would not have decided to refer the matter to the Agent-General.

I admit that I have been paid up to the time stated (31st May, 1873); indeed, the voucher forwarded claims from that date only, when I ceased to act under the Agent-General. But not having been appointed by him; I did not then, and I do not now, consider that my engagement with the Government terminated at the date mentioned.

At the time the Agent-General agreed to permit me to return home, I had written him desiring to be informed of the terms on which passages were to be granted to emigrants (as I had been kept in ignorance of the condition in force for some months), and demanding either to be supplied with the information necessary to carry on the work, or to terminate my engagement, as I would no longer be a party to the squandering of the means of the Colony in the way they were being done.

I am satisfied if the Agent-General had considered he had any option in the matter, I never would have been permitted to engage in the work. I may mention, *en passant*, that he (Dr. Featherston) told me that he considered that I ought to have been paid from the day of leaving New Zealand; that Mr. Friberg, who had been sent on a similar mission, had received payment from the date of his appointment; and that he (Dr. Featherston) never knew an officer of the Government being asked to travel on his own time before; but that the matter was not on his hands, but lay with the Government.

When I accepted the appointment, I understood from the Superintendent of Otago, who arranged the whole of the terms with the Government—I never having been communicated with direct except on two occasions: the first was a letter appointing me, on the assumption that I had business of my own taking me to Britain; the second was after Mr. Macandrew had telegraphed to Wellington, stating the Government were under a misapprehension, as I had no intention of visiting Britain unless under some such appointment as the one proposed;—he (Mr. Macandrew) informed me that the Government were not prepared to give more than £350 per annum, with travelling allowance. On my hesitating to accept the appointment on such a salary, he urged me not to put any more obstacles in the way; that he would write to Dr. Featherston, and recommend him to make it £400, which he was sure he would do; and that it was understood I would have to remain at least three years. I made my arrangements accordingly. On arriving in London, when asked by the Agent-General how long I intended to stay, I explained the whole of the circumstances under which I was engaged, and that I intended to remain three years, or longer if he desired me. It was during this conversation that he informed me that he intended to write the Government regarding the cost of my return passage, as he expected difficulties would arise when the time came that I should go home.

I cannot, therefore, think that the Government could have understood the nature of my claim, as it is quite evident that all connection with the Agent-General and myself ceased on the 31st May. Further than that, he wrote and told me that an allowance would be made to defray cost of my return passage, which has not been done, although I am informed in the letter from the Immigration Office, of the 28th ultimo, that the cheque would be sent forthwith. I was twenty months to-day away from home, and have only been paid for fourteen. I therefore think, instead of the claim being considered unreasonable, and further delay proposed before settlement, that under the circumstance I was entitled to some compensation for the inconvenience I was put to, as I never would have consented to go on the condition that I could be dismissed at a moment's notice. I therefore think, as the Government appointed me, they are the only parties who can put an end to the engagement.