

reviewed in detail the evidence supplied by the despatches of the then Minister, and the reports of the Commissioners who examined the several ships despatched by me between the months of September, 1873, and the month of June, 1874, amounting in all to forty-eight vessels. I submit that the present is a time when I may with advantage, in continuation of that letter, review, for my own guidance and the information of the Government, the similar evidence which has reached me, as to the character of the immigrants since despatched, in the correspondence of your department.

2. I feel bound, however, in the first instance to express the great gratification with which I have heard that, at the last circuits of the Supreme Court, the Chief Justice at Auckland, Judge Johnston at Wellington, Judge Richmond at Nelson, and Judge Chapman at Dunedin, all bore testimony from the bench to the character of the immigrants despatched to the colony in such large numbers by this department. No conceivable evidence can be of greater weight with the Government and people of the colony than the words of the Judges of the land; and no recognition of the care and zeal devoted by the officers of this department to the selection of those who already form such a considerable proportion of the population of New Zealand can be so satisfactory to me. I shall have occasion to refer to the terms of almost invariable commendation which the Commissioners who survey the ships on their arrival often bestow on the physical and moral character of the immigrants, as manifested by their appearance and by their conduct on the voyage. But the examination of the Commissioners is necessarily rapid and superficial; and the people as they arrive are, I am happy to learn, soon absorbed in the ranks of labour in the interior of the country, and the authorities at the port of arrival then know them no more. The true test of a good immigrant is his promptly becoming a good colonist, a useful citizen, bearing his share in the development of the resources of the country, and not a charge on its criminal calendar. It is for this reason that I am proud to be able to acknowledge the testimony borne by their Honors the Chief Justice and Judges Johnston, Richmond, and Chapman, that the 58,500 immigrants despatched by this department not merely augment the numbers, but are being absorbed without prejudice to the prevalence of law and order among the population of the colony.

3. The last letter of your predecessor to which I referred was that which contained the report of the Commissioners who surveyed the ship "Buckinghamshire," which arrived at Port Chalmers on the 29th May, 1874. The next which reached my hands was that on the "Ballochmyle," a favourable report in all respects. The Commissioners who surveyed the "Rooparel," which arrived at Auckland on the 30th of May, report, "The immigrants by this vessel generally appear to be of a satisfactory description, and their conduct, while on board, is very favourably spoken of." The report on the "Schiehallion" states that the condition of the vessel is satisfactory, but that they had received complaints of want of efficiency on the part of the ship's constables. The report on the "Scimitar," debatable on other grounds, in no way reflects on the character of the immigrants by that ship, which I believe to have been unimpeachable. Of the people embarked by the "La Hogue," the Commissioners say, "We are pleased to be able to report very favourably of the immigrants as a whole; the fact that there has been no difficulty in disposing of the immigrants by the last two ships speaks well for the character of the people." That on the "Cartsburn" says, "The immigrants by this ship are a superior class, and will readily meet with engagements." The report on the "Stonehouse" mentions, in particular, that "The single women are well reported of, and their appearance satisfactory." The reports on the "Lochawe" and the "James Nicol Fleming" are in general terms satisfactory. That on the "Hereford" says, "Health of the immigrants good; character very good." That on the "Hindustan" says, "The people, with few exceptions, appear to be suitable for the requirements of the colony;" and the arrangements on board are highly praised. The reports on the "Northampton" and "Halcione" are in general terms favourable. On the former ship a certain amount of illness prevailed; but the Commissioners report that "the arrangements were quite satisfactory," and on the "Halcione" "all that could be desired." Of the "Waikato" the report praises the general arrangements, and describes the immigrants as "a fair sample," while taking exception to some of the single men. The reports on the "Sussex," "Peter Denny," and "Miltiades" are in general terms satisfactory. The immigrants by the "Carrick Castle" are described as "all of the labouring class, and on the whole better fitted to meet the requirements of the district than those previously sent out." Those by the "Adamant" are said to have received "an excellent character for cleanliness, cheerfulness, and general good behaviour; they appear to be a useful class, well selected, and likely to be serviceable to the colony." On the other hand, the Commissioners, while reporting in favourable terms of the arrangements of the "Conflict," expressed an opinion as to the immigrants that "many of them should not have been selected as immigrants to the colony." Those by the "Reichstag," which arrived about the same date, are described as "a very fine body of people;" and those by the "Peeress" as "a class very suitable for the wants of the district." The report on the "Winchester" is favourable, except in regard to the ventilation of part of the ship, a subject to which I give an increasing share of attention. The reports on the "Eastern Monarch," "Marie Bahn," "Corona," and "Otago" are all of the same satisfactory character; or if there be complaints, as in the case of the "Marie Bahn," they are regarded by the Commissioners as not of a serious nature. The report on the "Canterbury" says that the people "appear to have been selected with great care." Of the "Cathcart," the Commissioners say they are "pleased with the class of immigrants by this ship, more particularly the single women." The immigrants by the "Euterpe" are described as "a fine healthy lot of people." On the "Carisbrooke Castle" there was an outbreak of measles, but the report is otherwise satisfactory on all points; so, with the exception of some complaints as to stores, is that on the "Oxford." In the despatches of your predecessor, my attention is directed to the fact that the report on the "Tweed" is "very satisfactory;" and that on the "Strathnaver" is described as also "on the whole satisfactory." The Commissioners who surveyed the "Merope" report that "the single men, for the most part, are well-selected agricultural labourers, from the West of England; the single women also appeared very suitable. The married men, chiefly from the West of England also, were of a good class; but the proportion of mechanics was too large." In regard to this latter complaint, however, as to the excess in numbers of mechanics, I find by your letter of 29th October, No. 322, that when you referred to his Honor the Superintendent of Canterbury on this point, he replied, "I should be very sorry to send any away at present. There is no real discontent." The report on the "Gutenberg" is favourable