

No. 4.

The Hon. J. VOGEL to the AGENT-GENERAL.

(No. 176.)

SIR,—

Immigration Office, Wellington, 24th June, 1874.

With reference to your letter No. 1093, of 20th March, 1874, relative to a complaint received by you from the New Zealand Shipping Company of the conduct of the surgeon-superintendent of the "Ballochmyle," I have the honor to inform you that I submitted the whole matter to His Honor the Superintendent of Canterbury, and that His Honor, after due inquiry, has expressed his opinion that Dr. Smyth stands acquitted from any intentional wrong doing, and that no deduction should be made from the amount of his gratuity. I have accordingly authorized that it be paid in full.

I forward herewith copies of the correspondence upon the subject, in which you will observe that the question is raised as to the propriety of the surgeon-superintendent being required to attend upon the crew and passengers other than emigrants without any remuneration from the owners. Under the present form of charter-party it may be held to be his duty to do so, for he signs the articles as an officer of the ship. It is a matter of very great importance to obtain for emigrants the services of medical officers of character and experience, and therefore care should be taken to secure as far as possible their position and comfort on board the ships, and their receipt of adequate remuneration for services rendered. I suggest to you that it would be advisable in future contracts that if required to perform the duties of surgeon of the ship as well as surgeon-superintendent of the emigrants, these officers should receive a certain remuneration from the owners, the amount in such cases to be arranged with them by yourself; the owners to have the option of employing, if they think fit, another medical officer to attend upon their crew and passengers.

Whilst upon this subject, I may observe that my attention has been directed to the fact that the cabins allotted to the surgeons are not fitted up for them, but that these officers, inexperienced frequently in shipping details, find upon embarkation only the four walls of the cabin, without even a bunk fitted up, and have in a few hours, at considerable expense and trouble, to procure the requisites for the voyage. I think this should be amended in future, and the bunk, and a suitable table, shelves, &c., provided, and the surgeons upon appointment informed what articles it will be necessary for them to obtain in order to complete their personal furniture for the voyage.

I have, &c.,

JULIUS VOGEL.

The Agent-General for New Zealand, London,

No. 5.

The Hon. J. VOGEL to the AGENT-GENERAL.

(No. 184.)

SIR,—

Immigration Office, Wellington, 30th June, 1874.

I forward herewith copies of the following documents relative to the s.s. "Atrato," which vessel arrived at Port Chalmers upon the 8th June instant:—

1. Report of the Immigration Commissioners at Port Chalmers.
2. Report of the Immigration Commissioners at Lyttelton.
3. The Lyttelton Commissioners remark upon the overcrowding of this ship, stating that in one dark corner were berthed six families including twenty-two children. There appears to me in this instance no possible excuse for the overcrowding generally, or for such an arrangement so likely to prove dangerous to the health of the emigrants. The officers of your department must have had ample opportunities, under the circumstances of the ship putting back into port, to make themselves thoroughly acquainted with the locating and berthing of the passengers, and should have insisted upon a proper supply of light and air being available for all of them.

3. I quite concur with the Commissioners in their suggestion that the laying on of a vessel containing emigrants for two ports is a thing to be avoided. I have already upon more than one occasion given you my views on this subject, notably in the case of the "Mongol," and I must again impress upon you that only very exceptional circumstances can justify such a course, which in every way results in great inconvenience and no inconsiderable extra and unnecessary expense.

4. Should necessity arise for again shipping so large a number of emigrants in one vessel, which I do not think is generally advisable, I agree with the Commissioners that it is very desirable that a second medical officer should be placed on board to assist the surgeon-superintendent. Had the "Atrato" suffered in proportion to the "Scimitar," for instance, from the outbreak of infectious disease, the attendance upon the sick would have been absolutely beyond the physical power of one individual.

I have, &c.,

JULIUS VOGEL.

The Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

Enclosure 1 in No. 5.

PORT CHALMERS IMMIGRATION COMMISSIONERS' REPORT on s.s. "Atrato."

SIR,—

Port Chalmers, 10th June, 1874.

We have the honor to report that the s.s. "Atrato," with immigrants for Otago and Canterbury, arrived in port on the 8th inst., having made a passage of sixty-four days, including five days' detention at the Cape of Good Hope. Measles having prevailed on board on the passage, the ship was placed in quarantine, pending the decision of the Board of Health. The Board having met next morning, the ship was admitted to pratique, and orders given to remove the Otago immigrants from the ship to Quarantine Island for a few days, for the purpose of washing their clothes before being removed to Dunedin.