

on the "Scimitar," together with the various letters enclosed therein, to the members of the Commission for their information, and I now transmit copy of a letter I have received from them in reply, in which they state that "upon the whole we see no reason for varying the opinions expressed in our report, or modifying the recommendations made."

As it appears to me that no advantage will be gained by a continuance of the correspondence upon this subject, I beg you to consider it closed with this communication.

The Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

I have, &c.,

H. A. ATKINSON.

Enclosure in No. 95.

FURTHER REPORT of ROYAL COMMISSION on Ship "Scimitar."

SIR,—

Dunedin, 6th May, 1875.

We, the Commissioners appointed in the case of the ship "Scimitar," have perused the letters of the Agent-General and the various papers accompanying them, which have been forwarded to us, and upon the whole we seen no reason for varying the opinions expressed in our report, or modifying the recommendations made. Dr. Hosking's evidence was frankly given here, while everything must have been fresh in his recollection. His statement made before the Commissioners was written by the clerk at the time, and then and there read over to and signed by the witness. The Commissioners were therefore justified in founding upon it, and are now warranted in refusing to set it aside because the witness's recollection of what he said became afterwards defective. An additional lapse of time took place, whereby the vivid reminiscences of an arduous voyage may have been toned down, and it is not unlikely that the fear of giving offence in London may have operated on his mind in inducing him to make the denial the Agent-General reports he did. Whatever he may deny now, there is no doubt that the evidence signed by him is exactly as it was voluntarily given before the Commissioners.

2. It appears to the Commissioners that the Agent-General has taken up a wrong position in this matter. There is no getting rid of the fact of the unusual amount of sickness and mortality on board the "Scimitar," occurring in unusually favourable circumstances as regards qualifications of ship and officers, as well as a quick passage. The Commissioners, from the evidence they had before them, attributed this to (1) the large number on board, (2) imperfect ventilation, and (3) unsuitable dietary for children, having aggravated any latent tendency to disease; and had no hesitation in recommending, as the chief preventives in the future, an efficient medical examination, (1) before acceptance, and (2) on entry at the depôt.

The evidence of various witnesses goes to establish that the medical examination is not what it ought to be. Captain Fox says that one-third of the immigrants were a "puny lot," and that more care should be exercised in the selection. The Commissioners consider that there is unfortunately abundance of evidence to show the want of proper care in the selection and shipment of the immigrants. The argument used by the Agent-General, and drawn from the state of the health of England generally, may be turned the other way. Admitted that the facts shown by the Registrar-General's returns are correct, do they not point to this, that in such a low condition of the general health of the country greater than usual care was under the circumstances necessary in the selection and medical examination, to obviate the mischief likely to follow? We see no reason to change our opinion that more care was advisable in the case of the "Scimitar" than was exercised, and the sanitary condition of England at the time does but confirm us in that opinion.

3. Of course it will not be considered for a moment that we presumed to throw any reflection on the Agent-General or his department. We had the benefit of obtaining a knowledge of results here unknown to him, which led us to form the conclusions at which we arrived, and to make the recommendations we did. These were made with the view solely of advantage to the colony in the future conduct of immigration, and we naturally expected that these recommendations would be heartily supported by the Agent-General instead of being opposed or repudiated. Whatever view the Agent-General, in the discharge of his duty to the colony, may take of the matter, there is no getting rid of the facts proved leading to the opinions already formed, and we have to deplore generally that a number of worthless characters, as well as criminals, lunatics, paupers, prostitutes, and diseased persons, have been landed in this province as free immigrants, the majority of whom would have been at once rejected if there had been a careful selection and thorough medical examination in the first instance. It is a positive fact that the names of certain ships have become a by-word, and create a laugh in the Police Courts. The circumstances have led to some of the immigrants denying they came out by the notorious vessels.

We have, &c.,

JOHN BATHGATE.

A. CHETHAM STRODE.

THOS. MORLAND HOCKEN.

The Hon. the Minister for Immigration, Wellington.

No. 96.

The Hon. H. A. ATKINSON to the AGENT-GENERAL.

(No. 137.)

SIR,—

Immigration Office, Wellington, 1st June, 1875.

I have the honor to transmit herewith copies of the following documents relative to the ship "Cicero," which arrived at Lyttelton upon 19th May:—

1. Immigration Commissioners' report.
2. Surgeon-superintendent's report.
3. Certified list of births and deaths.