

1875.

NEW ZEALAND.

IMMIGRATION.

REPORTS OF MR. C. HOLLOWAY TO THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS' UNION.

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

No. 1.

MR. C. HOLLOWAY to the EXECUTIVE COUNCIL of the AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS' UNION.

GENTLEMEN,—

It is with feelings of very great pleasure that I meet you here to-day. We meet not as strangers, but as friends and brethren, united together by one common bond of brotherhood, to endeavour by every available means to promote the comfort, happiness, and well-being of the too long neglected farm labourers of our country. I was very early identified with this grand movement, and laboured for a considerable time in the Oxford and adjoining districts with very encouraging and satisfactory results. Yet notwithstanding the success which crowned our efforts, it was found to be necessary (on account of the determined opposition of the farmers) to make more strenuous efforts for the permanent improvement of the working classes—hence, our attention was turned to emigration. Emigration became a necessity; it furnished the key to solve the difficulties of our position. If, as is often asserted, the statement be true that we have a surplus population, then the fact that the British nation is in possession of a certain number of colonies, which are governed by our laws, blessed with our glorious institutions, whose land laws are liberal, whose soil is productive, whose climates are healthy and suitable to the English constitution, and whose area affords ample room, not only to absorb the surplus labour, but the whole population of Great Britain; and when we add to this the fact that several of these colonies are at the present time soliciting their share of the noble-hearted and strong-armed farmed labourers to enrich their respective countries; such knowledge as this at the present time is of the utmost importance, and should urge the leaders of this great movement to push on emigration to the utmost, and never rest content until every labourer in the United Kingdom is upraised to his proper position in society, by being placed in easy and comfortable circumstances, either in his own country, or by emigration to one of our colonies. Feeling fully convinced at an early stage of this movement that emigration was one of the principal means to be adopted for the permanent advancement of the farm labourer, and acting upon this conviction, I was led to discuss the question at some length with C. R. Carter, Esq., then on a visit to my district; the result of which was, I was appointed by the Agent-General of New Zealand to visit that fine colony, for the purpose of reporting upon its resources and capabilities. The arrangements made were such as would not involve the Union in any expenses connected with my visit, and I am happy to say were of such a nature as met with the general approbation, not only of my own committee in Oxford, but also of the National Executive Committee in Leamington, of which I was then a member. My way being thus clear, I left England on the 23rd December, 1873, in the steamship “Mongol,” and after an unprecedented quick run of fifty-two days, we anchored in Port Chalmers, Province of Otago, New Zealand, on the 13th of February, 1874. Unfortunately, having sickness on board, we were placed in quarantine. After seven days, we were released, and I proceeded at once by steamer to Dunedin. While on my way I was introduced to his Honor the Superintendent of Otago, who received me most kindly, giving me a most cordial and hearty welcome to the colony. I at once explained to him the object of my visit. He deeply sympathized with the underpaid and ill-fed farm labourers of England, and promised me to do all in his power towards helping on the great object I had in view in visiting New Zealand.

THE OBJECT OF MY VISIT

Was to ascertain, from personal observation, what are its resources and advantages, its climate, and the capabilities of the colony; then return home and report fully, honestly, and faithfully to my fellow-labourers my own views as to whether the inducements held out by New Zealand to intending emigrants were such as to justify our sending out a large number of our farm labourers, with the view of their settling down in the colony, the certainty of improving their circumstances, and thus make it their permanent home.