

1877.

NEW ZEALAND.

IMMIGRATION TO NEW ZEALAND.

(LETTERS TO THE AGENT-GENERAL.)

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

No. 1.

The Hon. the MINISTER for IMMIGRATION to the AGENT-GENERAL.

(No. 145.)

SIR,— Immigration Office, Wellington, 20th June, 1876.
Referring to my letter No. 144, of 2nd June instant, in which I transmitted copy of reports relative to the ship "Countess of Kintore," I have now the honor to forward, for your information, copy of correspondence with the General Manager of the New Zealand Shipping Company, upon certain suggestions made by Dr. Davidson, the surgeon-superintendent of that vessel.

The Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

I have, &c.,
H. A. ATKINSON.

Enclosure 1 in No. 1.

The UNDER SECRETARY for IMMIGRATION to the GENERAL MANAGER, New Zealand Shipping Company, Christchurch.

SIR,— Immigration Office, Wellington, 3rd June, 1876.
I have the honor, by direction of Major Atkinson, to forward herewith, for your information, an extract from the report of the surgeon-superintendent of the ship "Countess of Kintore," lately arrived with immigrants at Port Lyttelton, having reference to the subject of fire at sea, and making certain recommendations in connection therewith. Dr. Davidson has made several voyages in charge of immigrants to this colony, and Major Atkinson feels assured that, in a matter of such importance as that dealt with, the suggestions of a practical officer will be read with interest, and receive due attention at the hands of the Company.

The General Manager,
New Zealand Shipping Company.I have, &c.,
E. O. GIBBES,
(for the Under Secretary for Immigration).

Enclosure 2 in No. 1.

EXTRACT from REPORT of SURGEON-SUPERINTENDENT, "Countess of Kintore."

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The next question on which I desire to speak is the all-important one of fire, and the means to be adopted for its prevention, its early discovery, and its extinction.

What precautions are taken against the occurrence of fire on emigrant ships? Many so far as the emigrants are concerned, none as regards the crew. Locked lamps are provided for the emigrants' compartments, and smoking and the use of matches are prohibited there. For the officers, the crew, the apprentices, and the additional staff (baker, cook, and condenser-man), who are carried on these ships, no locked lamps are provided, and an inducement to burn naked lights is given by placing on board, under the charge most probably of one of the apprentices, who is called the storekeeper, a large number of emigrants' lamp candles, which very soon find their way into all the quarters occupied by the crew. Smoking also is permitted at all hours in their compartments.

The additional staff to which I referred above are as a rule berthed with difficulty, the great probability being that no certified berths are provided for them previous to sailing. On board the "Countess of Kintore" these men were placed in the lower fore-castle, an apartment on the lower deck, entered by means of a hatch from the upper fore-castle, used mainly as a sail-room and general store-room, and into which no daylight could enter. It was lighted by naked oil lamps. On the morning of April 13th, when the ship was hove-to in a heavy gale, the fire-bell rang occasioning much