

"DEAR SIR,—

"Hamburg, 14th February, 1876.

"We received in due course your telegram advising the arrival of the 'Shakespeare,' for which we were extremely obliged; at the same time, it advised us that your Government has stopped all assisted emigration to New Zealand. This very unpleasant news was confirmed by a letter from Mr. Kirchner of the 9th instant. You are well aware that we have so far worked under your contracts with small profits against serious losses and great difficulties. We now expected to reap our well-deserved profits; the more so, as the flow of emigrants to your country having now assumed a steady course, we had no more to apprehend a deficiency of emigrants in the number to complete a full load for a respective ship. Messrs. Kirchner and Matthei both informed us that they had abundant applications and engagements to fill completely our ships. We understand that for the present those emigrants are only to be forwarded to whom Messrs. Kirchner are under an engagement. Apparently that will require three or four ships, and we shall be glad to have this confirmed by you. In the meantime, we can only point to the great loss we shall suffer by the present stoppage independent thereof, and we sincerely hope the same will be removed by an early resumption of the business agreed upon between us.

"We find you have communicated with the German Government, which we much regret, as it will be sure to cause annoyance and difficulties. In every case, it will be quite necessary to add that emigrants already under engagement will receive their free passages as before. Anything else would place all the agents in danger of fine and possibly of imprisonment.

"We remain, &c.,

"R. M. SLOMAN.

"The Hon. I. E. Featherston, Esq."

5. The Agent-General replied to this letter on the 26th of February. In the interval of nearly a fortnight which had elapsed since his receipt of Mr. Sloman's letters, he had become seriously apprehensive that undue claims were being contrived against the Government; and it was at this time that the correspondence between him and Mr. Kirchner, referred to in paragraphs 9 to 12 of my memorandum of the 23rd instant, took place. It is also to be noted that on the day before the following letter was written, the Agent-General received the Hon. Major Atkinson's telegram, repeating his instruction to stop foreign emigration in the following terms:—"What measures taken carry out telegram stopping emigrants certain provinces? Send no more foreign ships."

His letter to Mr. Sloman was written at Brighton, and the copy which I proceed to quote is marked, "From memory," written immediately after letter was posted.

*The Agent-General to Mr. Sloman.*

"MY DEAR SIR,—

"66, York Road, Brighton, 26th February, 1876.

"I have delayed answering your letter of the 14th instant, in the expectation of receiving from Mr. Kirchner the information he promised to send me immediately on his arrival at Darmstadt some three weeks ago. This information he appears from a letter just received to have some difficulty in affording. I have informed him that I can only grant free passages to those whose applications he has indorsed with his approval and acceptance. I have requested him to forward to me all such applications so indorsed, with the least possible delay. In the meantime, I have instructed him not on any account to take up ships.

"There are only one or two points in your letter to which I need refer:—

"1. You say that 'Messrs. Kirchner and Matthei both informed you that they had abundant applications and engagements to fill completely your ships;' that 'you understand that for the present those emigrants are only to be forwarded to whom Mr. Kirchner or Mr. Matthei are under an engagement,' and that 'apparently that will require three or four ships;' and you add that 'you shall be glad to have this confirmed by me.'

"I have quoted this paragraph in full, in order at once to dispel the misapprehension under which you appear to be labouring. Far from confirming such arrangement, I must beg you distinctly to understand that I do not in any way recognize Mr. Matthei as being authorized to engage and accept emigrants. Mr. Matthei, and any other local agent acting under Mr. Kirchner, may select and submit emigrants to Mr. Kirchner for his approval. If they do more than this, they act at their own risk and peril. The power of approving and accepting applicants is vested in Mr. Kirchner solely and exclusively, and this power is limited: he must exercise it with discretion, and in accordance with the instructions, views, and intentions of my Government conveyed to him by me. Mr. Kirchner was informed in May or June (last) that the Premier, then in England, had decided upon abolishing free passages, and reverting back to the system of cash payments and promissory notes, and was made aware that notices to this effect had been printed and issued on the 1st July. And although these notices were subsequently withdrawn, the Government, in their Official Handbook and other publications, announced that they reserved the right, at any time and without notice, of abolishing free passages. Mr. Kirchner was warned not to commit the Government to free passages to any extent or for an indefinite period.

"2. You express your regret that I have 'communicated with the German Government, as it will be sure to lead to annoyances and difficulties.' You forget that it was the German Government that communicated with me. They first addressed to me in writing certain general inquiries, and subsequently, in a personal interview, still more detailed and searching inquiries. I at once recognized that they had a perfect right to require the fullest possible information respecting emigration from Germany to New Zealand, and I gave it frankly and without any reserve. Neither the Foreign Office here nor my own Government would have approved of any other course. Amongst other matters, I gave both verbally and in writing the number of Germans sent—the different terms under which they were sent. I explained the position of Mr. Kirchner—that of his local agents, all holding, I understood, emigration licenses from the Government—my shipping arrangements at Hamburg—the decision of my Government to discontinue free emigration—in short, there were few points not touched upon. I believe that it will soon be admitted that by this candour and unreservedness I have acted entirely in the interests of those concerned in the emigration.