

No. 20.

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

(No. 60.) 7, Westminster Chambers, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W.,
 12th January, 1877.

SIR,— I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 231, of 26th October last, and in compliance with your request I herewith transmit report of the Despatching Officer upon the alterations in the charter-party. Previous to the receipt of your letter, he had prepared comparative statements with reference to the two shipping contracts—namely, the one described in the Premier's telegram of April 21st last, and the one the provisions of which were sent with your letter No. 127 of May 5th last, but which have now been superseded by the contract of November 16th last.* I transmit a copy also of these statements, as they may be useful for the purposes of reference. In accordance with your request that the quantities of extra stores put on board the ships sailing prior to August last may be furnished, the Despatching Officer gives the same at the end of his report of January 9th. In connection with this matter, I may mention that subsequent to the writing of my predecessor's letter, No. 519, of 6th July last, the Board of Trade officers required the placing on board an extra supply of meat, so that the meat scale should be in conformity with the Passengers Act. The dietary scale of the contract of the 16th November is still deficient in this respect by two ounces a week, and this will have to be made up, as hitherto, by the addition of two ounces of preserved meat to the Wednesday's ration, for which I will arrange accordingly.

*D.—No. 3, 1877.

The Hon. the Minister for Immigration,
 Wellington.

I have, &c.,
 JULIUS VOGEL.

Enclosure 1 in No. 20.

Mr. E. A. SMITH to the AGENT-GENERAL.

7, Westminster Chambers, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W.,
 9th January, 1877.

SIR,—

In pursuance of your instructions that I should report on the alterations in the charter-party, I beg to state that the following appear to be the principal points calling for observations thereon:—

Clause 3.—The following has been omitted: "and all provisions and stores as well for passengers as crew shall be supplied by the same firm." The retention of this is very desirable, as although subject to the most careful examination, it may happen that some of the articles supplied by different firms may vary in quality, and although both may be good, there may be a sufficient difference between them as to cause complaint to be made if one were issued in lieu of the other; it also frequently happens, when the passengers' and crew's stores are supplied by different firms, that they are not ready for examination on the same day, thus necessitating a second survey and consequent waste of time. Her Majesty's Emigration Commissioners for many years required the provisions for crew and passengers to be supplied by the same firm in all the later ships chartered by them, and there never was any objection raised thereto, although, perhaps, scarcely two ships belonged to the same owners.

Clause 7.—The insertion of "In all cases where the deck hospital is under the same ceiling as the galley and a condenser, there shall be a compartment between them and the hospital," is an important addition. There is no compulsory stipulation for all the hospitals and dispensary being on deck, and although I entirely concur in the recommendations on this head so frequently made by the Immigration Officers in the colony and by surgeons-superintendent, I have no power under the charter-party to insist upon more than one hospital being on deck; and it is only occasionally that a ship is offered where the option is given me of any deck accommodation beyond what I can enforce under the charter-party.

Clause 17 (18 in first schedule of charter-party of 16th November, 1876).—The alteration by the insertion of "an adequate supply," instead of a fixed allowance, of ale and wine for the surgeon, was not, I think, desirable. In the later copy of the contract it stands as it previously did—viz., defining the quantity of each which the surgeon can claim. This, in my opinion, is the preferable plan. The provision in the later copy of the contract, sanctioning a payment to the surgeon in lieu of an allowance of ale and wine, may, I think, be subject to abuse. I regret that the latter part of this clause, which provided for the payment of head money for the cabin and other paying passengers, has been omitted. They are always a source of great trouble to the surgeons-superintendent, much more than any others, and I think that he is justly entitled to be paid for them.

Clause 21 (22 in first schedule, 16th November, 1876).—The scale of meat is still below the scale required by the Passengers Act, the latter requiring 52 ounces weekly per statute adult, Schedule A providing only for the issue of 50 ounces weekly. This has hitherto been arranged for by an additional quantity of preserved meat being put on board, and by the issue of 8 ounces thereof on Wednesdays, instead of 6 ounces as provided for in Schedule A of the present charter-party.

I would also suggest that suet and raisins be issued on the same days as the salt beef, and that 7 ounces of raw flour be issued at the same time. By the scale in Schedule A, one ration of raisins is to be issued on Thursday, and one ration of suet on Wednesday and Saturday, without any provision for flour to mix with them. I would also suggest a return to the issue of 4 ounces of biscuit daily, reducing the issue of flour in proportion. The present quantity of flour to be made into bread is a very large quantity for the baker to make every day and in all weather.

Again, the peas should be issued on the same days as the pork. This is so done on Tuesdays, but on Fridays there is a ration of peas issued, the pork being a Saturday's ration. This last issue of peas has apparently been inadvertently left as a Friday's ration (as that was the pork-day under the old dietary scale), when the scale was altered by the Hon. the Minister for Immigration, in his Despatch No. 338, of the 18th November, 1874.