

In Dr. Featherston's despatch to the Hon. the Minister for Immigration of the 26th December, 1873, he writes as follows:—"Mr. Kirchner some time since intimated his intention to resign his appointment, and expressed his readiness to enter into the service of the New Zealand Government. . . . After some correspondence I met him by appointment on the 7th instant at Geneva, and found him quite ready to enter into an agreement to procure during the next two years a number of emigrants equal to 4,000 statute adults, for an agency fee of £1 per adult; this agency fee to cover salaries or fees of sub-agents, travelling allowances, cost of advertising, &c.; but he stipulated that he should be allowed to charter Mr. Sloman's ships in case he should be unable to engage the requisite tonnage elsewhere. He had already ascertained that Mr. Sloman would place most of his vessels hitherto employed in emigration to Queensland at his disposal. Being naturally unwilling to enter into further relations with Mr. Sloman, I desired him to inform Mr. Sloman that I could only agree to this condition on his undertaking to complete Messrs. Louis Knorr and Co.'s contract. To this communication I have within the last few days received a reply from Mr. Sloman expressing his readiness to do so, stating that the non-requirement of promissory notes from the emigrants had removed one of the objections of the German Government, and the chief difficulties in the way of fulfilling Messrs. Knorr's contract."

Dr. Featherston had verbally sanctioned this, and a formal authority to waive requiring promissory notes appears to have been sent to Messrs. Knorr and Co. on the 31st of the same month.

In the despatch above referred to, Dr. Featherston states that "early in the present year the Agent-General of the Queensland Government had entered into a fresh contract with Messrs Louis Knorr and Co. for 3,000, which the Government had instructed him to determine, provided the contractors would consent to cancel it. . . . Finding that the Queensland Government is still anxious to be released from their recent contract, I have informed Mr. Daintree that I am prepared to take it over if he and Messrs. Sloman and Co. can come to terms; and in the event of their doing so, I have agreed to meet him and Mr. Kirchner in the course of a few days, to settle the details of a proposed arrangement. Should I succeed in completing all these arrangements, the total number of emigrants contracted for will be in round numbers some 7,000 adults, to be sent out during the next two years—namely, 1,500 under my agreement with Messrs. Knorr and Co., 1,500 under the Queensland contract, and 4,000 under my arrangement with Mr. Kirchner."

It will be noticed that Dr. Featherston at this time contemplated all these emigrants being despatched within two years.

Mr Kirchner at once entered into communication with Mr. Sloman, and arrangements were ultimately come to.

Pending these negotiations, Dr. Featherston, by letter under date of the 12th March, 1874, offered Mr. Kirchner the agency for New Zealand, "to procure and superintend the shipment of emigrants from the continent to that colony," offering him the same terms that were allowed him whilst he acted for Queensland—namely, "a fixed salary of £400 and travelling expenses, and refundment of all other outlay, such as agents' commissions, advertising, office charges, &c., the agreement to date from the 1st April ultimo, and to remain in force until the completion of my two contracts with Messrs. Louis Knorr and Co., or their successor, for the conveyance of, respectively, 2,000 and 1,615 emigrants." Dr. Featherston adds, "After the expiration of the above two agreements, I shall expect you to superintend the selection and shipment of 4,000, for the conveyance of whom you will contract with Messrs. R. M. Sloman and Co., of Hamburg, your agency to be fixed at £1 per adult, which amount is to include all other charges." Mr. Kirchner accepted Dr. Featherston's offer by a letter under date 22nd March, 1874. The arrangements concluded with Messrs. Sloman and Co. are explained in Dr. Featherston's despatch from Hamburg, of the 14th May, 1874, to Sir Julius Vogel:—"1. Mr. Sloman, of this city, has undertaken to complete the contract entered into between myself and Louis Knorr and Co. in 1872, subject to certain modifications not of any material importance. 2. The deed transferring the emigration contract between the Government of Queensland and Louis Knorr and Co. to the Government of New Zealand has been duly executed. The number of emigrants to be sent under this contract is equal to 1,600 statute adults. 3. As soon as these two contracts are completed, Mr. Kirchner will commence to carry out the agreement into which he has entered, to procure during the ensuing two years 4,000 emigrants. 4. Mr. Sloman has undertaken to provide tonnage for the conveyance of these 4,000 emigrants, at the rate of £14 per statute adult."

In his despatch of the 17th May, 1876, to the Hon. the Minister for Immigration, Dr. Featherston writes, "When I took over the Queensland Government contract in 1874, it was on the express understanding that the contractor, Mr. Sloman, should complete it within eighteen months from the date of its assignment to me, the period of its completion determining on the 14th November, 1875. Had that contract been duly completed, I was under an engagement consequent thereon to enter into a new contract with Mr. Kirchner, by which he should be bound to select and ship 4,000 during three years from the date of the fulfilment of the Queensland contract, and Mr. Kirchner was to be bound under this agreement to arrange for passages in Mr. Sloman's ships; but my arrangement with Mr. Kirchner was made strictly contingent on the conclusion by Mr. Sloman of the transferred Queensland contract in due time. During the period of the fulfilment of the Queensland contract, I agreed to give Mr. Kirchner a fixed salary of £400. After the fulfilment of the Queensland contract, he was to receive, under my consequent new arrangement with him, in lieu of salary, a fixed commission of £1 per approved statute adult." The transfer of the Queensland contract was effected by the cancelment of that contract, and Mr. Sloman and his partner Mr. Losener entering into a contract with Her Majesty, on behalf of the colony and Dr. Featherston, whereby Messrs. Sloman and Co. bound themselves to convey within eighteen months from the date thereof, from the port of Hamburg to any safe port in the colony, to be selected by the Government or the Agent-General or Mr. Kirchner, any number of statute adults not exceeding 1,615, and any number of children, under one year old, relations of such adults, at such times as should be appointed by Mr. Kirchner, with a proviso that not less than 500 statute adults should be conveyed in any one year.

During the negotiation which resulted in this contract, Messrs. Sloman and Co. wrote to Mr. Kirchner, returning the draft proposed contract, which, subject to some slight modifications, they said