

You will learn from a perusal of the above documents that the voyage of the "Bebington" was an extremely unfortunate one from the commencement, and that the surgeon-superintendent and captain had to contend with a great deal of discontent amongst the immigrants, owing in a great measure to the unsuitability of the vessel for the service. I must refer you to the report of the Royal Commission upon this vessel in 1873 (D. 1, 1873, page 14), wherein it is stated that, from a personal inspection of the ship, the Commissioners were of opinion that the "Bebington" was not a fit and proper vessel for the transport of emigrants, &c., and you will observe that this opinion is concurred in by the Immigration Commissioners at the port of Auckland, who recently inspected her. Under these circumstances, I have to request that you will furnish me with a full report from the proper officer as to his reason for again recommending so unsuitable a vessel for the conveyance of emigrants to this colony. The Commissioners also remark upon the scanty outfit of many of the immigrants. This should also be reported upon by the officer concerned.

With regard to the bad quality of the flour, and the short supply of coal, I have deemed it right to make a deduction from the second moiety of the passage money payable to the contractors. The sum of £85 has accordingly been deducted from this account.

On referring to Sir Julius Vogel's letter of 29th June, 1874, forwarding report upon the ship "La Hogue," you will observe that many of the omissions and irregularities which were then complained of still exist. I would also inquire why clause 4 of that letter, recommending the use of certain books and forms, has not been given effect to.

From what I can learn, the captain and surgeon-superintendent of this vessel have both performed their duties satisfactorily and to the best of their abilities; and in forwarding you Dr. Russell's diary, I do so with the hope that his valuable remarks and suggestions will receive every consideration from you. This gentleman has now made three voyages to this colony in medical charge of Government immigrants, and in each instance has he been highly commended by the local officers who have inspected the vessels under his charge.

The Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

I have, &c.,

H. A. ATKINSON.

Enclosure 1 in No. 3.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORT ON SHIP "BEBINGTON."

SIR,—

Auckland, August, 1876.

We have the honor to report that we inspected the ship "Bebington," J. P. Holdich, master, from London, on the 7th instant. In consequence of this vessel having been in quarantine from 15th July to 5th August, all the fixtures had been removed previous to being admitted to pratique. Although some improvement has been effected in the ventilation since this ship was condemned in Wellington in 1873, the side scuttles have not been increased to the number then stated as required, and the present increased ventilation is badly distributed. The compartments were sufficiently large and light except the married compartment, which must have been quite dark if the hatch was covered. The few samples of provisions produced (the stores having been nearly all consumed) for our inspection were very good. The captain stated that he condemned twenty-four barrels of the original stock of flour; the sample produced was very bad and unfit for food: this was replaced by a quantity purchased at Algoa Bay. The ventilation was sufficient according to the requirements of the Act, but badly distributed; the after compartment had six side scuttles, and the centre compartment (married people) only three. The following is the distribution of ventilation:—Two quarter hatches abaft saloon always open; two large air scuttles through saloon deck opening on main with glass frames; four small ventilators in main deck, two on each side of saloon; one ventilator just abaft companion hatch; twelve deck "bull's-eye" lights; and one side-light scuttle on port side. Six side-light scuttles, three on each side; two small cowl ventilators in main deck, and one in fore-companion hatch. One side-light scuttle on port side, and two on starboard; one air scuttle made in deck after ship sailed; one skylight in main hatch; one skylight in after hatch; one air scuttle on each side of deck-house, raised after ship sailed—original height above deck about 6 inches, and raised to 3 feet 6 inches when at sea. We notice that the same error still exists in the combings of the temporary ventilators as reported by the Commissioners in 1873, when this vessel was condemned.

There were sufficient tanks on board with fresh water in case the condenser failed, but a very great oversight was committed by the emigration authorities in England allowing this vessel to leave without sufficient coals, there having been barely enough to work the condenser to Algoa Bay.

The suction hose was lost early on the voyage, consequently no exercise could be carried out in conformity with the regulations, and if fire had happened in the hold the consequences must have been very alarming. The captain states he had nothing on board with which to make a new suction hose, but he procured one at Algoa Bay.

In consequence of the collision in Channel on leaving England, the waste pipe of port urinal was carried away. This should have been replaced when ship put back to Portsmouth. Some inconvenience was experienced in consequence, and general complaints were made by the immigrants. The doctor states, "The water-closets were not good, those forward receiving a very insufficient supply of water, and requiring constant attention. The tank supplying them was too small to give force of water in the pipes."

The original hospital accommodation was insufficient, and the captain was obliged to purchase timber at Algoa Bay to construct another, which, from its position, must have been very badly ventilated. The immigrants were landed from Quarantine Station on Saturday, the 19th instant. They were all asked individually if they had any complaints.

The principal complaints were relative to the bad flour, and not having any bread on the voyage until they reached Algoa Bay. The doctor considered it was not fit for food, but the captain was unable to issue better until they arrived in Algoa Bay, when he purchased a supply, a sample of which was produced, and was very good.