

and, more particularly as regards the first named, are difficult to induce to move from their position in this country.

Although not obtaining such high wages as they would in New Zealand, they are obtaining higher than they did in former years, and with that, as a very general rule, they are disposed to be content, and not risk a change which involves the discomfort of moving, and of a long voyage to, what is to them, an unknown part of the world.

Again, as regards the agricultural labourer, it has been found expedient to limit the period during which emigration is carried on to certain months of the year, and these months are the very ones during which there is most demand for the agricultural labourer in this country namely, during the two months preceding harvest, during harvest itself, and during the two months following that season. During the months when the agricultural labourer as a class mostly feels the result of a scarcity of employment, emigration to New Zealand is closed to him.

The want of continuity in keeping up the stream of emigration throughout the year increases to a certain extent the difficulty of obtaining the most suitable emigrants.

As regards Scotland specially, I am assured by Mr. Andrew that an advantageous opportunity is missed of obtaining a good number of farm labourers, &c., from Scotland, in consequence of emigration to New Zealand not commencing earlier, as the "term" time at which engagements are made in Scotland commences in May, and farm labourers then make engagements for six months. To take advantage of this would require vessels to be despatched early in June, thus arriving in the colony early in September. A similar opportunity is missed as regards the "term" time in November.

The Australian Colonies which carry on emigration, despatch ships throughout the year, diminishing the number perhaps sent out during the winter and spring months—one or, at the outside, two ships per month are all that are sent; whereas during the New Zealand emigration season at least one ship a week has to be despatched, in order that the emigrants required should arrive in the colony within the time specified.

I do not mention these considerations for the purpose of myself recommending any change in the system of limiting the emigration to a certain season of the year, as it is more within the province of those within the colony to form an opinion;—whether, for the sake of perhaps obtaining a better class of emigrants, and probably a larger number of single women, it is expedient to make any alteration.

But I would venture to state that it is of importance that instructions as to the number and description of emigrants required for the season in each year should be furnished to this office as early in the year as possible. If the first emigrants have to arrive in the colony in October, it would be desirable that this office should receive the particulars as early in April as possible.

Referring to the *Timaru Herald's* remarks in connection with an advertisement that appeared in the *Times*, but which was not issued by this office, it is desirable, before I close this letter, that I should briefly explain the process by which the selection of emigrants is made, in order to show that the system of selection which the writer deprecates, and which would be manifestly unsatisfactory, does not exist. All applicants have first to fill up an application form giving particulars as to age, occupation, &c. If they are found to be *prima facie* eligible, a form is issued containing printed forms of certificates as to the character and health of the applicants, the first of which has to be signed by persons who know the applicants, and the second by a medical man, and added to them is a certificate to be signed by a magistrate or clergyman, certifying to the authenticity of the signatures to the first-named certificates.

In addition to these, written testimonials are required, showing that the applicants are experienced in the duties of the occupation to which they state they belong, and special inquiries are in many cases made direct to the employers, or others signing the certificates. If the applicants reside within a reasonable distance of this office, they are required to call and see the Secretary to the department, and Mr. Holloway has personal interviews also with a large number. All applications are finally decided on, either at this office or at the Scotch Agency, and the forms of those applications introduced by Local Agents are as rigidly examined, and the conditions as strictly adhered to, as in the cases of those who apply direct to this office, or direct to the Scotch Agency.

I may mention here that, of the 5,027 sent out last year, 2,496 were introduced through the Local Agencies, 841 were nominated, and 1,690 applied direct to this office or to the Scotch Agency; but the application of the whole number were finally decided on either at this office or by the Scotch Agency.

The emigrants embarking at Plymouth are carefully inspected by the Despatching Officer of this department and by the surgeon-superintendent of the ship at the depôt before embarkation, the latter of whom has to give his certificate that all who embark are, so far as he can judge, in good health, of sound mind, and free from any bodily defect likely to impair their usefulness in the colony.

As regards the emigrants embarked at the Clyde, the medical inspection there, in the absence of a depôt, is not made under the same favourable circumstances as at Plymouth. At both ports there is a final inspection by the Imperial Government medical officer.

I have made this letter bear the character of a defence of the operations of the department, but I am bound to say that I rather assume than otherwise any censure on your part upon the nature of those operations. The passage in the *Timaru Herald* and Dr. Coward's remarks may have been written on the spur of the moment, and on the incitation of exceptional misconduct on the part of some of the immigrants. On the other hand, there is a remarkably conspicuous approval of a large portion of the emigrants contained in the report of the Commissioners and Agents already alluded to. I am confident too that you will not fail to recognize the impossibility of keeping a large body of emigrants free from all objectionable persons.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Immigration,
Wellington.

JULIUS VOGEL,
Agent-General.