

No. 49.

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

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, 25th March, 1879.

Referring to your letter No. 261, of the 23rd December last, and to my letter No. 136 of 10th February, which letter was despatched before the receipt of the former, and by which you will observe that the system of remuneration to Surgeon-superintendents had also been the subject of consideration on my part, I am glad to observe that you approve of the principle indicated in your letter—namely, that of paying the medical men who remain in the New Zealand service an increasing rate of remuneration.

After giving the matter further consideration, and comparing the rates paid by the Australian Governments with those hitherto paid by the New Zealand Government, I have concluded to recommend for adoption the following scale of remuneration—that is to say: 10s. per soul (instead of per statute adult as hitherto) on all immigrants landed in the colony, such rate to be increased by 1s. 3d. for each succeeding voyage, up to a maximum of 20s. I would propose to do away entirely with the £50 gratuity now paid on arrival in the colony; and, instead of the £50 payable to the surgeon on his return to England, I would propose that the Government, if they approve the re-appointment, pay in the colony for the actual cost of his return passage to England.

If you approve of this, will you be so good as to send by cablegram the code word “Waterloo,” so as to enable me to commence the new system of payment with the despatch of the first vessels of the emigration season. Meanwhile, I shall allow such surgeons as have served over four voyages, if any leave before I obtain your reply, the extra allowance mentioned in your letter No. 261 of the 23rd December.

Referring to your remarks contained in your letter No. 260, of 21st December, I need scarcely assure you that my uniform practice, in the appointment of surgeons, is to give preference to those who have been previously engaged in the New Zealand service, and who have fulfilled the duties satisfactorily. In fact, I have always considered that the Government are equitably under contract to give preference to surgeons recommended for re-appointment. Whenever there are none of the staff surgeons available, the names of the most eligible are taken from the list which is kept at this office, of the candidates who have already furnished testimonials, and, after inquiry and personal interview, the most eligible are selected, preference being given to those who have already had medical experience at sea.

I have, &c.,

JULIUS VOGEL,
Agent-General.

The Hon. the Minister for Immigration, Wellington.

No. 50.

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

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, 25th March, 1878.

Referring to my letter No. 1,141, of December 19th, and to that portion of the Hon. the Minister for Immigration's letter No. 260, of December 21st, 1878, which deals with the question of the shipment of rails, I have the honor to further report as follows:—The notice mentioned in my above-mentioned letter, which, after waiting since September, and after also vainly endeavouring to induce the New Zealand Shipping Company to allow me to make my own shipping arrangements, I served on the Company, was dated December 4th, and required them to provide four ships to convey cargo from London to the colony—namely, one ship for Auckland with 1,700 tons, one ship for Wellington with 1,900 tons, and two ships for Port Chalmers with 2,700 tons, such ships to sail not later than the 18th January.

The result of this was that the Company failed entirely to meet my requirements, inasmuch as on the 18th January no portion of the rails had been shipped, owing to the Company not having provided ships. One vessel, the “Minister of Marine,” was named by the Company in December for the conveyance of the rails for Auckland, but she was not ready for loading until the end of February, and the bills of lading have not yet been received. A large quantity of rails were thus kept waiting for her either in trucks or barges, causing risk of damage by rust, and giving the manufacturers ground for complaint, inasmuch as they could not be paid until the rails were shipped, and they rendered themselves liable for demurrage to the barge owners. As regards the Wellington rails, they were shipped by the “Western Belle,” and in other small shipments, but the whole shipment was not completed until the middle of February.

In the case of the Otago rails, I consented not to insist on the Company carrying out the strict terms of my notice, as regards shipping from London, thus enabling them to ship that portion of the rails manufactured at Cardiff direct from that port. But at this date there still remains at Middlesbrough 1,100 tons, for which the Company has not as yet named any ship.

I referred to Messrs. Mackrell the question of my power to act, under clause 24 of the Shipping Contract, and charter a ship for the conveyance of these 1,100 tons from some other persons.

I transmit herewith a copy of Messrs. Mackrell's opinion thereon. At their advice I have again served a formal notice on the Company, requiring them to provide the shipping for the rails still unprovided for; and the Manager in reply, dated 21st instant, has intimated his readiness to provide the necessary tonnage, but has not yet named any particular vessel for the service.

It will probably be nearly a month from this before this lot of rails will be shipped, so that it has taken the Shipping Company some seven months, under continuous pressure, to provide tonnage for the conveyance of about 12,000 tons of railway iron.

I trust that this delay has not caused much inconvenience in the colony, though I fear it may have done so. At any rate it has placed me in a very unsatisfactory position with the manufacturers, who had a right to expect that far greater expedition would be used. I again repeat the opinion, that