

I beg to state, with reference to Captain Roberts's remarks as to defective ventilation, caused by the close bulk-heads used for the purpose of dividing the married compartment from the compartments of the single men and single women, I have always endeavoured to arrange the ventilation of ships so that the ventilation of each compartment should be complete in itself, and I consider it most undesirable that the foul and heated atmosphere of one compartment should pass into another, which would be a necessity were the ventilation of the whole between decks dependent upon the air-funnels in the fore and after ends of the ship.

With regard to the water channels, or gutter-ways, which are now common to most iron ships, and which are fitted with scuppers to carry off into the bilges any water that may get into the between decks: I think it very possible that these are frequently used for the purposes stated in the report; but even if these water channels were filled up with cement, scuppers must still be left in them, and rather than fill up these gutters I think it would be preferable to turn up the ends of the pipes leading from the scuppers so as to form a syphon or trap, to prevent any smell coming back again through the scuppers; and if the surgeons were to see that carbolic acid or some other disinfectant were run into the bilges occasionally, and shortly afterwards pumped out, there would be no reason to fear an outbreak of typhoid fever from such cause. To simply cover these water channels with wood would only add to the danger, as there would then be certainly an accumulation of filth in the gutter-ways under the wood. Typhoid fever is commonly understood to arise from malaria, or from dirty habits of the persons attacked; and, as the first outbreak in the "Hermione" was in a family named G——, portions of which family were located in different compartments in the ship, it does not appear to me that the foulness of the gutter-ways could have been the predisposing causes in each case.

Again, it is stated that two or three of the seamen were attacked in a similar manner, and they could not have been affected from the foulness of the gutter-ways, as they were far enough removed therefrom. If the foulness of the bilges had been the cause of the outbreak, it appears to me that the number of cases would have been more numerous, as nothing is said in the report, either of the captain or surgeon, of any steps having been taken to purify the bilges.

With regard to the substitution of flour, suet, and raisins when desired by the emigrants, for meat, I can see no reason why this should not be done; but it should at all times be carried out on the written requisition of the surgeon, who should be responsible for any change in the dietary scale provided under the contract.

EDWD. A. SMITH,
Despatching Officer.

No. 54.

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

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, 1st May, 1879.

I have the honor to report as follows, as to the proceedings of my department during the month of April:—

On the 25th April the "Orari" sailed from Plymouth for Lyttelton with 162 souls, equal to 135 statute adults, for Wellington; 19 souls, equal to 18 statute adults, for Hawke's Bay; 9 souls, equal to 7 statute adults, for Nelson; 9 souls, equal to 8 statute adults, for Westland; and 20 souls, equal to 17½ statute adults, for Taranaki: being a total of 291 souls, equal to 246½ statute adults, including 55 single women.

The principal portion of the emigrants by this ship is composed of persons nominated by their friends in the colony.

The ship "Napier" sails for Port Chalmers from the Clyde next week, taking a number of nominated emigrants and single women for Otago.

The following vessels have also been engaged to take emigrants, and to sail on the dates given:—

May 28th: the "Fameth" for Auckland, from Plymouth. May 30th: the "Rakaia" (taking emigrants for Wellington and Hawke's Bay), for Wellington, from Plymouth. June 4th: the "Glenlora" for Lyttelton, from Plymouth. June 4th: the "Nelson" for Port Chalmers, from the Clyde.

The last-named vessel I advised in my last monthly report as having been engaged. The three first-named have been laid on in pursuance of the instructions contained in the Hon. the Premier's telegram of the 8th April.

From the date of my last report the number of applications for passages and information respecting the colony continued to increase to such an extent that as many as 1,000 letters were received in one day. I found it expedient, therefore, to withdraw all the advertisements, and, on receiving the Hon. the Premier's telegram stating that I was to arrange for the year for only 2,000 emigrants in addition to the 1,000 already ordered, I was compelled to stop accepting any more families or single men, as the number already approved will probably be sufficient to provide the number required.

The number of nominated persons wishing to obtain passages has also very much increased, and to these, of course, I give priority.

I propose to make a special arrangement with the New Zealand Shipping Company to lay on two of their passenger ships, to take a special class of emigrants who propose to settle and farm in New Zealand, and who will take with them a moderate amount of capital. There will be only one class of passengers taken, and the accommodation will be superior to that given to ordinary emigrants, but not equal to that of saloon passengers. The cost will be about £23, of which, in cases I approve, I propose to contribute a portion—say, about £10. I propose also to utilize Mr. Reed's and Mr. Berry's services in obtaining the right description of persons to go out by this opportunity. I have every reason to believe that a very useful body of colonists will be introduced into New Zealand by this means.