

49. I observe that in that letter of 12th June, 1873, which you refer to, you say, "We have sent out 1,299 adult males, and according to our most recent advices we have 525 working for us. The remainder are mostly remaining in the country, engaged at other work, and we have been unable to recover any appreciable amount of their promissory notes from them?"—Yes, that return was prior to April, 1873, and before we had commenced the monthly form from which this extract is made. Even then there were more than 700 fewer men at work for us than we had sent out.

50. In your letter dated 10th July you state the amount of your outlay, including passages, outfits, &c., to be something like £39,000?—Yes, less the extra £5 charged on the promissory notes for passage money.

51. You did not receive anything in cash from the immigrants themselves?—No; it was all outlay on our side.

52. It was in December, 1872, after you became aware that there was some dissatisfaction with regard to the agreement that you handed over your promissory notes to the Government?—Yes; on 21st December, 1872, we handed in the promissory notes under protest. At that time we had finished all our arrangements and knew that we should not send out any more immigrants.

53. Had any application been made to you for these promissory notes prior to you handing them in?—Yes.

54. Have the whole of the notes been paid?—No; but the Government have deducted the whole of the money for passages and interest from the amount due to us by them. The total amount is £20,739 15s. 10d. [*Vide statement C attached.*]

55. That sum is exclusive of the amounts you had to pay in sending the immigrants from one part to another?—Yes. We have paid the cost of transporting the immigrants from one Port to another ourselves. The amount we have paid in that way is £767 9s. 6d. That expenditure was rendered necessary in consequence of our not having work to give the immigrants when they arrived in the colony. We have asked the Government to return that money to us, because we consider it is justly due to us. We hold that, in sending out immigrants, we were only complying with the request of the Agent-General, and, having brought them out, we considered that we were bound to find employment for them; therefore, we took them from one port to another. The total amount of the promissory notes is £39,241 16s. 4d., and the amount recovered is £5,192 18s. 7d. gross, less expenses of collection, &c. [*Vide statement A attached.*]

56. I observe that there is a considerable sum set down for stamps for the promissory notes?—Yes, there is; but we knew nothing about the necessity for restamping the promissory notes when we took them; and, in fact, in some cases we lost money when we took action in the law courts in consequence of not having stamped the notes again in the colony.

57. Taking interest and everything into consideration, you calculate that your total loss is £47,103 0s. 8d.?—Yes. [*Vide statement C attached.*]

58. Are you in a position to say whether, in the execution of the works, you derived any advantage or benefit from the introduction of these immigrants?—We certainly did not; but I am willing to admit that the introduction of some 2,000 people to the colony would have some influence on the labour market, and would cause an average reduction in the wages throughout, and we would have the benefit of that in the same manner as other people. The only difference in our case would be that we had to bear the entire cost of bringing about the reduction. At the same time, if the Government had brought out these immigrants, we should have received more benefit than we did.

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WEDNESDAY, 13TH JULY, 1881.

Mr. A. BROGDEN, examined.

59. *Mr. Travers.*] I believe your firm intended to have sent out men to carry on your works, irrespective of the arrangement made with the Government?—To a certain extent we did. Here is a letter written by Mr. Henderson to our firm in London on the 27th October, 1871, in which, after detailing other things, he says, "Should Mr. James Brogden telegraph to you that all is arranged, and to send men, &c., out, please allow one of your people to see and arrange with the first good ship coming out passages for housekeeper, servant, and children." On the 25th November, 1871, my brother wrote me. I will read an extract, but the whole letter will be put in. After mentioning that it was the intention of the Government to give us contracts to a million sterling, he says, "We should disturb the labour market materially if we proceeded to make railways and draw upon the present resources of the colony in labour to a large extent, and so disorganize industries of various kinds. Holding this in view the Government wish to limit our payment to the working navvies, for a days' labour of eight hours, to the sum of 6s. per day. Now we find this varies in different provinces from 6s. to 10s.: in the proximity of gold-mining they pay 10s. per day readily; in places where labour is not in demand it is possibly 7s. 6d. to 8s. per day. The Government prohibit the employment of Chinese labour. Hence the Government advise that one person or firm should control the labour market, and thus the idea gains currency that we should have all the public works. I have, of course, done all I could to further this idea. Then, the Government also wish us to import men, with a view to their employment on the public works and to their future settlement in the colony; hence they desired me to consider an immigration scheme in connection with our works. I decline to take any risk or responsibility without your approval and consideration; I have therefore arranged to refer you to Dr. Featherston on this subject. I shall mention this more in detail presently, and meantime refer back to the negotiations for works. A lengthy agreement was submitted as to our importing immigrants: the substance of it was that we should receive from the Government £15 per adult for all persons imported; that we should import 2,000 men, who would possibly have some 4,000 women and children attached and connected with them; that promissory notes should be given for the passage-money, repayable, in equal sums at two, three, and five years, to us by deduction from wages, and have 20 acres of settlement (fair or good land) land allotted, for which they would have to pay £1 per acre, in the course of two, three, and