

five years, with the power to take up an equal amount of land if they had paid for the first lot in one year after arrival. I found that much better terms were being offered than those proposed to us, in the case of immigrants coming independently, and applying to the Agent-General in England. The Agent-General has discretion to pay the whole passage-money, and give the right to land above mentioned, or he may insist on £5 of the £15 passage-money being paid by promissory note of the immigrant. I find that about 50 per cent. of the immigrants after arrival disappear, and leave their engagements unfulfilled, although they are promised in addition four days a week employment at 5s. on public works (roads, &c.) for one year. I thought we could have worked the matter out; that the Government would take the risk as they impose a limitation as to the price to be paid for labour. I therefore thought, as we shall have to get labour imported, it would be better that you arrange with Dr. Featherston a means of their being sent out under the general terms the Agent-General in England is empowered to act upon, at least until you hear further from us here. I do not intend we should run risks, but I see we shall require men. I shall be anxious to hear what you have done or, proposed with Dr. Featherston. I would be glad to have information as to the operations of Thomson Bonar, and others, who are conducting schemes of this kind, and information as to their progress. We should get the Government Agent-General to pay the full passage-money of the men we require. Remember also that, in the case of promissory notes given, a particular form is required; these are to be indorsed by the Government, and drawn on a private firm, so as to be legal and reclaimable in New Zealand. Dr. Featherston has some experience in this, as in Wellington Province alone he was party to a loss occasioned to the extent of £40,000 on account of persons who repudiated their promissory notes or who absconded. We propose to get 2,000 adult males, at £15 passage-money, £30,000; 3,000 others (wives and families), at £15 passage-money, £45,000; 1,000 children at £7 10s, £7,500: total £82,500. The item to be paid by the Government, but promissory notes to be given by the immigrants, and we were to collect the moneys from the men. We should be paid the total sum, and collect in two, three, and five years; but we could not agree as to the Government taking the risk of absconding persons. We to pay 6s. per day eight hours. Deaths to be covered by insurance by the New Zealand Government, so that the matter remains for you to act on, until we feel assured by the terms of the Government offer that we can submit a proper offer here for the above operation."

60. Do I understand your arrangement with the Agent-General was that they were to be sent out upon Government terms?—The Agent-General was quite willing they should be sent on those terms. We also intended to send them out on whatever terms we could send them out—Government terms, or any other terms. We should certainly have sent out 500 or 600 at our own cost.

61. At that time the Government terms were the payment of £5 per man?—Yes. It would have cost us £3,000 or rather more.

62. Was that intention of yours altered after the agreement with Dr. Featherston was made?—Naturally, when we wrote the letters of February and March we were not alive to the fact that negotiations for enlarged immigration were begun from this side, and were to be continued in London. We thought Dr. Featherston only wanted our help.

63. It was your intention to have sent out 500 or 600 men, and you could have done that at a cost of about £3,000?—Yes.

64. You now come down to your letter of the 10th July, 1873, which you addressed to the Agent-General?—Yes.

65. You had an interview with him prior to that letter being sent?—Yes.

66. Had you any conversation with him with reference to the loss you had sustained?—Yes. As I mentioned before, the letter of the 12th June, 1873, was really a reduction to writing of the subjects discussed at that interview.

67. Now, at that interview, what took place? What was said on the part of the Agent-General in reference to this?—Between the 12th June and the 10th July I saw the Agent-General again, and he asked me to give him the exact figures, which was done. On the 10th July I saw him, and he told me he should be writing to the colony, and should recommend the Government to agree to our proposals.

68. That is your letter of the 10th July, which is printed in the proceedings of the Committee of 1873?—Yes. You must, in fact, read the two letters of the 12th June and 10th July together.

69. Do I understand that the letter of the 10th July, 1873, from the Agent-General, which you wish to have produced in full, is the one which you understand to embody the recommendation you refer to?—Yes.

70. *The Chairman.*] That is the letter from the Agent-General to the Government?—Yes. On the 11th July, 1873, we wrote from London to Wellington: "A friendly meeting took place on Tuesday last between the members of the firm and the Agent-General to discuss the emigration agreement, Mr. Hall, ex-Minister, being present. The result is the letter to the Agent-General (copy enclosed, 10th July) I and Henry Brogden were informed by the Agent-General yesterday that he was quite prepared to indorse the proposal of the firm, and will recommend the Government to accede to it in his despatch by the present mail."

71. *Mr. Travers.*] I assume you rested satisfied with that assurance?—Naturally.

*Mr. Dick:* Will Mr. Hall be asked to substantiate that?

*The Chairman:* He will be asked to attend.

*Witness:* Some time followed, and in the interval the inquiry before a Committee of the House was held here. Then, in the early part of 1874, after we became aware of the resolution of that Committee, we frequently tried to see Dr. Featherston, who at that time was very ill and not always visible. We did see him again, and wrote a letter dated the 25th March, 1874: "Referring again to our emigration agreement, you will remember that, in our interview with you and the Hon. John Hall in June last, certain proposals for an amicable settlement were discussed, which were afterwards embodied in our letters of the 12th June and the 10th July, and it was agreed that you would recommend the Government to accept our offer. Not having received any reply to our communications, our Mr. James Brogden waited upon you on the 18th March to ascertain if you had received despatches from the Government