

Government?—Yes; that is so. I may say that statement can be verified by reference to Parliamentary Papers, D.-4, 1873, pages 2 and 3.

410. Did you have any experience with reference to the collection of the promissory notes?—Yes; as regards the money actually collected.

411. And you know by reference to the books that a comparatively small amount has been recovered under them?—Yes.

412. You know nothing really as to the collection of the moneys?—No; Mr. Billing had that in hand entirely.

413. *Hon. Mr. Richardson.*] You stated that the men told you on board the vessel they would not work for the firm on arrival, having found out they came on different terms from the Government immigrants. When you arrived here, did you take any steps to inform the firm of that, before the immigrants left the vessel?—I am not positive. I did, no doubt, explain the nature of the discontent expressed by the men.

414. It is a very important point. Can you state whether you really did or did not tell the firm?—I have no doubt I did.

415. Do you know what steps they took on your representation?—No, I do not remember that. As regards the “Halcione” men, not any steps were taken, as the majority of those men went to work.

416. *The Chairman.*] You stated Government immigrants came in that vessel who paid £5 cash, or giving notes for £10 for their passage?—I am speaking off the book. I believe it was either £8 or £10 by notes. I know it was £5 cash. The parliamentary papers will give the information.

417. As you were on the vessel I thought you would positively know the exact amount?—I would not like to speak positively as to the figures. It was either £8 or £10.

418. Five pounds cash or either £8 or £10 in notes?—Yes.

419. Not both?—I think not.

420. Under what terms had Messrs. Brogden agreed with their immigrants?—They gave promissory notes for £15 per statute adult.

421. What ship was that?—The “Halcione.”

422. Those terms were similar to those given after the agreement was signed?—Exactly so.

423. None were sent out on more favourable terms before the agreement was signed?—No.

[Application was made by Mr. Cave that the original letter of the 10th July, 1873, from the Agent-General to the Hon. the Colonial Secretary might be produced to the Committee, on the ground that if any memoranda were written thereon such memoranda might afford information to the Committee as to the grounds on which such letter was withheld from the previous Committee in September, 1873; and, further, that the Government might be requested to furnish, for the information of the Committee, a return showing the sums recovered by the Government in respect of the promissory notes given to the Government by the assisted and nominated immigrants referred to in Return D.-4, 1873.]

WILLIAM THACKER, examined.

To Mr. Cave: I live in Lloyd Street, Wellington. I am a carter. I came to Wellington in the “Jessie Readman” in 1872. I was engaged at Leamington by Brogden’s agent. I brought my wife and six children: four under Messrs. Brogden, and two girls of thirteen and fourteen under the Government by assisted passages. I gave a promissory note. There were some Government immigrants in the same ship. They paid £5 each. When I got here I went to work for Messrs. Brogden, over across the road against the baths. Because there was no railway work for us, we went on the road. The railway work was stopped. We worked a day and a half there, then I went to work for a miller; but I worked for Brogdens afterward on the Hutt line. I paid about £10 or £11 off the promissory note. It was deducted from the wages.

424. *Mr. Cave.*] Did the firm ever sue you?—Yes; and got judgment. I was never bankrupt.

425. When you left the firm, whom did you work for?—I worked for the Government on the line as ganger and platelayer.

426. When working for the Government, why did you not pay the balance?—Because I told Mr. Henderson, when he could not give me any more work, that I would not pay. I told him if there was no more work I would pay no more money; and, that as he had broken the contract with me, I would not pay him.

427. Was that the only reason?—I did not think it hardly proper we should have to pay when Government immigrants were coming for nothing at that time. I thought I had paid enough.

428. You paid £11 out of £63?—Yes.

429. Whom do you work for now?—For myself.

430. *The Chairman.*] You told Mr. Henderson you would not pay any more. Why not?—Because he broke the contract with us in not finding us any work. We signed our agreement for two years.

431. You signed to serve two years, they to find you two years’ work?—Yes; they to stop one-fifth of the wages.

432. You considered they broke their bargain with you?—Yes; they could not find us any work.

433. That was the reason you left their service?—Yes; I worked till the work was finished, and heard then there was no more work.

434. *Mr. Turnbull.*] You heard of New Zealand at Leamington?—Yes; the agent for Brogdens was there.

435. There was no Government agent there?—No.

436. And you did not know you could get out any cheaper?—Two of the children came out as assisted immigrants.

437. Did it not occur to you you were paying more than the Government was charging?—I did not know the Government were taking them out till we got to London, and then it was too late, because I had signed everything.