

541. Quite independent of any benefit that the Messrs. Brogden might have received?—Yes; at that time the Government were very anxious to get immigrants to come to the colony

542. Is it not a fact also that the number of immigrants brought out by Messrs. Brogden bore a large proportion to the number brought out by the Government during the same time?—I am not in a position to say that, because I retired from the Government before the arrangement was made.

543. *Mr. Bell.*] You do not suggest that the Messrs. Brogden were to import immigrants other than those whom they would require for their own work?—I think that was part of the agreement.

544. Then the men whom they were to import would be men independent of the class of men which the Government would require for other purposes?—Yes. The arrangement for railway contracts with Messrs. Brogden was not so large as was anticipated.

545. But the benefit you obtained was the use of these men after the Messrs. Brogden had done with them?—We thought these immigrants would settle in the vicinity of the railways.

546. But the benefit which you anticipated would be the use of these men after Messrs. Brogden had done with them?—Yes.

547. Was not the point of difference between yourself and Mr. James Brogden this: that you could not agree with Mr. Brogden in regard to taking the risk of immigrants absconding?—Yes, I think so. Messrs. Brogden wanted, if I recollect aright, the Government to take the risk, and the Government wanted Messrs. Brogden to take it.

548. *Mr. Turnbull.*] From your memorandum of the 25th November, 1871, Mr. Brogden appears to have taken no risk in the matter. You say, "The Government offered Mr. Brogden to take off 10 per cent. of the amount paid for passage-money from the promissory notes he was to give you, to cover his risk, but he would not accept. He continued saying he must be put upon the most favourable terms; in other words, that he for the whole of his immigrants must have terms as favourable as the terms granted by you to immigrants direct, but he to be at liberty to make with his immigrants what arrangements he pleased, irrespective of the arrangements made between the Government and him. I enclose for your guidance the draft of the agreement proposed for Mr. Brogden's signature, but which he declined to agree to"?—Yes; but the end of the memorandum shows that the Government had no responsibility. I am not able to say from memory what risk the Government took: there was an agreement entered into between the two parties, but I know that the draft agreement was objected to by Mr. James Brogden at the last moment. It was sent Home, and referred to Messrs. Brogden's firm there.

549. *Hon. Mr. Dick.*] When the Government entered into this agreement with Messrs. Brogden for the bringing out of immigrants, did you consider that Messrs. Brogden were guaranteed against loss in carrying out the arrangement?—No, not at all.

550. You just looked upon it as a contract which the firm took in this colony, and in which, if they made a loss, it was their own fault?—Yes, exactly

551. Are you aware of any misrepresentations that were made to Messrs. Brogden?—No; I would not have been a party to anything of the kind. There may have been misconception on the part of Messrs. Brogden, but there was no intentional misrepresentation on the part of the Government.

552. *Mr. Travers.*] Did the Government, in submitting the agreement that they did submit, suppose it was one calculated to entail a loss on Messrs. Brogden?—That was not our opinion; but, of course, we were not guardians of their interests, and we thought they were quite able to look after their own interests. At any rate, we did not think that they would sustain any certain loss by carrying out the agreement.

553. *The Chairman.*] Does the memorandum of the 25th November, 1871, give a full account of the negotiations entered into with Mr. James Brogden on the subject?—That memorandum was written to explain the views of the Government on the subject.

554. And therefore we may assume that it would contain all the facts?—Yes.

555. Were you in the Ministry when the letter was received from the Agent-General, signifying that the immigration contract of the 27th June, 1872, had been entered into?—I do not think so. I have no further knowledge of the matter as a Minister.

EDWIN HIBBERD, examined.

*To Mr. Cave:* My name is Edwin Hibberd. I live at the Upper Hutt. I came in the ship "Halcione" with my wife and three children. I came as one of Messrs. Brogden's immigrants. They paid for us, I believe, £45. I was supposed to pay for all. There were Government immigrants in the same ship. I do not recollect the number. During the passage the Government immigrants were treated better than we were. If I wanted even a little vinegar they would not give it me or sell it for money. If we went to complain about anything we were taken no notice of, but if the Government immigrants complained to the captain the matter was always put right.

556. You think you were not treated so fairly?—I am sure we were not.

557. When the ship arrived, did you go to work for the firm?—Yes, for some time—two days over at the Bay—but I could not support my family on the wages.

558. How long did you work with the firm, then?—Two or three weeks, on and off.

559. And then you went to find work for yourself?—Yes.

560. Did they sue you on your promissory note?—Yes.

561. Did you pay anything?—No, I could not, and support my family. I could not see any possible way of making any progress. I thought we should have some land.

562. Did you become bankrupt?—Yes.

563. How long after being sued?—Directly

564. You never attempted to pay anything?—No.

565. And you never paid anything?—No; I think they stopped half-a-crown from my wages.

566. You left working for the firm because you were dissatisfied with their stopping money on account of the passage?—Decidedly. It was little I earned, and I could not get the children food if part of it was stopped.