

1853-4.

VICTORIA.

IMMIGRATION.

DESPATCH AND REPORT

ON THE SUBJECT OF

IMMIGRATION.

LAI'D UPON THE COUNCIL TABLE, BY THE COLONIAL SECRETARY,

BY COMMAND OF

HIS EXCELLENCY THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR,

AND

ORDERED BY THE COUNCIL TO BE PRINTED.

17th January, 1854.

By Authority:

JOHN FERRES, GOVERNMENT PRINTER, MELBOURNE.

SCHEDULE.

DISPATCH (No. 138), dated 19th September, 1853, addressed to His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, by the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for the Colonies, conveying a reply to the Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council on Immigration.

REPORT, dated 23rd July, 1853, of the Commissioners of Emigration, in answer to the Report of the Select Committee.

Downing-street,
19th September, 1853.

SIR,

I have received your Despatch, No. 47, of the 6th of March last, accompanied by the Report of a Committee of the Legislative Council on the conduct of immigration.

2. Having referred this document to the Emigration Commissioners, I enclose for you^r July, 1853. information a copy of the Report which they have submitted to me in reply.

3. I can assure you that I approach this subject with every desire to consult the wishes of the Colonists. Upon the wants of the Colony and the steps most advisable to be taken there, too much weight cannot be attached to the opinions of the Committee of the Legislature; on the other hand, I think it will be difficult for any one to peruse the Report which I enclose without perceiving that, on a variety of questions of management in England, the Committee would probably have been led to a different judgment if they had been in possession of fuller and more correct information. Agreeing as I entirely do in the principle of non-interference from England in matters of detail in the Colonies, I would suggest that neither would it be judicious to attempt to dictate from Victoria the details of a service in England so extensive, complicated, and varying in its nature as that of emigration.

4. I am happy to see that the Committee are favorable to a vigorous prosecution of this service, and the Commissioners are in possession of the requisite authority for the purpose.

5. On the classes of emigrants most wanted in the Colony, a subject on which the authority of the Committee must be conclusive, it is gratifying to perceive that their recommendations have been in substance anticipated, and I trust that the results will have been satisfactory. But in advising the removal of the restrictions aimed against admitting a large proportion of young children, the attention of the Committee can hardly have been drawn to the records of past emigration. No one, I apprehend, will read the appalling list of mortality from this cause furnished by the Emigration Commissioners, without feeling the fitness and indeed the absolute necessity from motives of humanity of the rule intended to guard against this evil. It was one of the earliest precautions suggested by watching the course of emigration, and of none has the propriety been confirmed by a larger experience.

6. Into some matters of detail which follow I need not enter here. For the reasons which shew that to increase the powers of the Commissioners, local agents would be likely to inflict great injury on intending emigrants, without giving any advantage to the public, and that to add to the number of ports of departure would raise the price of shipping, and multiply establishments without conferring the benefit which is supposed on passengers, I may refer you to the Commissioner's Report.

7. Another suggestion of detail is offered by the Committee at the instance of Mr. Ballinghall, one of the witnesses from whom they received evidence. Mr. Ballinghall, it would appear, has long entertained a conviction that all the merchant ships of Great Britain are built erroneously, and that they ought to be of the same construction as vessels of war, which are destined to carry heavy batteries, and resist the shot and shell of enemies. So persuaded is Mr. Ballinghall of the importance of his scheme, that he believes it to be an object of dread to the British Government on account of the loss of revenue which it would occasion in diminished marine insurances. For many years he has advocated his views to persons of influence in trade and shipping, but without success. Unable to procure the voluntary adoption of his opinion, he suggests that the Emigration Commissioners should be ordered to offer a preference to merchant ships built on his plan, for although none such yet exist, he says that such is the competition in England that they would soon be built. This suggestion the Committee have sanctioned with the weight of their authority, and recommend that it should be carried into effect. Of the sincerity and public spirit of Mr. Ballinghall in urging his opinions I do not entertain a doubt; but I think it will be seen on reflection that his proper weapon is argument addressed to the classes whom his propositions concern, that it would not be warrantable in a Government to endeavour to compel those whom he cannot convince, and assuredly that it is not for the interest of the Province of Victoria to enter into a contest with the whole commercial world in order to force the adoption of the sanguine views of a private projector.

8. With regard to the supposed payment by Victoria for a ship which took emigrants to Twofold Bay in New South Wales, it was merely by adventure that in one of the Commissioner's Reports this vessel was alluded to as charged to Victoria. No such mistake was made in fact.

9. Respecting the sum of £129,000 which the Committee describe as totally unaccounted for, no sufficient information is afforded to admit of giving a clear answer. I presume that allusion must be made to the amount which for some time remained in discussion between the Governments of New South Wales and Victoria after the separation of the two Colonies. If so, you are aware that this matter of account has since been adjusted, as described in my despatch of the 22nd of April last; and it is scarcely necessary to say that the Emigration Commissioners had nothing to do with nor any power of interfering in discussion between the Colonial Governments of New South Wales and Victoria.

10. Turning now from the questions of detail, I proceed at once to the conclusion of the Committee, that the whole existing system of Emigration is unsound, and that the only safety for the Colony is to return to what is called the Bounty System. This conclusion is stated chiefly to rest—

1stly, On the total want of responsibility in the administration of so large a fund; 2ndly, the entire absence of accounts since 1847; 3rdly, the trifling point which I have just noticed about Twofold Bay, and the unsettled dispute with New South Wales, over which it must be remembered that the Emigration Commissioners had no control; and 4thly, the supposed inability of the Commissioners to procure emigrants, whilst at the same period crowds were offering to pay a great portion of their own passages by Mrs. Chisholm's ships.

11. If by the complete absence of responsibility in the administration of the fund the Committee mean an absence of due pecuniary responsibility, it is enough to answer that every shilling of the Commissioners' expenditure is rigidly scrutinised by the Commissioners of Audit, under the stringent powers conferred on that Board by various Acts of Parliament, and that not an item, however small, is passed without the production both of vouchers and of an express written authority for the expenditure incurred. If, on the other hand, the Committee are to be understood as meaning a want of general responsibility, I have merely to observe that the Emigration Commissioners are answerable to the Government, and are subject to the same penalties as all other public servants for any neglect or mal-administration in their office; that their reports are in constant course of production to Parliament, and through that channel to the public; and that their whole credit depends on the ability and success with which they serve the interests of the Colonies for which they act. Whatever may be the estimate formed by the Committee of the force of these motives, and of the sense of public duty on the part of officers selected by Her Majesty for a position of high trust, at least they constitute a more effective responsibility than would be obtained if the business were transferred, as is contemplated in the Committee's Report, to an indefinite number of private adventurers.

12. The absence of accounts since the year 1847 appears to be an error of fact. You will perceive by the statement in the 31st paragraph of the Commissioners' Report that accounts up to the end of 1849 had been transmitted to the Colony, a year and a half before the Committee made their Report, and that accounts to the middle of 1851 had been despatched from this country four months before they made their Report. In February of this year the accounts were completed, and despatched up to the end of 1852.

13. In pointing out the inability of the Commissioners to obtain emigrants as the result of the preceding causes, the Committee have been deceived as to the state of the facts. Mrs. Chisholm is a lady whom it is impossible to name without adding an expression of respect and admiration; and it appears that much to her credit she had despatched about 1000 emigrants to the Colony in the course of the year and a half preceding Mr. Chisholm's evidence before the Committee; but the number of emigrants despatched by the Commissioners in the course of the single year 1852 was 34,000. Far from the inability which is supposed to procure emigrants, their only embarrassment was the impossibility of disposing fast enough of the overwhelming number of candidates. They had in their office at one moment as many as 18,000 applications.

14. Considering then how completely the Committee were misled in the several facts on which they rest their proofs of the unsoundness of the existing system, I trust that less regret may be felt at the objections which I must point out to the recurrence to that of Bounty. The Committee indeed have only advised its renewal "freed from its former defects." But how these defects are to be removed is not pointed out, and I fear that they are inseparable from the system itself.

15. The first theory was that private persons in the Colonies should be allowed to send for their own immigrants, and should be repaid the cost when the people safely reached the Colony. This appeared a plausible scheme at first sight, but in point of fact, gentlemen residing at the distance of New South Wales had no peculiar facilities for selecting, fitting out, and despatching laborers living in the United Kingdom. They had to cast about for others to do the business for them, but the only others who had a motive to transact it, were ship owners, who looked for a return in the profits of their trade in the conveyance of the passengers. Hence it soon came to pass that one party sold, and the other bought permissions which were useless to the one and valuable to the other.

The Bounty Orders, as they were called, became notoriously vendable commodities, and the fortunate procurer of one of them from the Colonial Government, could put the price into his pocket without any further trouble or risk whatever. But it is needless to say that the money which was thus appropriated without the performance of any service could not but be covered in the price paid for emigrants and that it constituted so much clear loss to the public. I take for granted that no one would propose the revival of this abuse.

16. The next plan was that the business should avowedly be committed by the public to the hands of ship owners. There was the inconvenience however that the very same men who by their experience and connections, might be eminently qualified for supplying good ships, were totally

unversed in the mass of miscellaneous business which has to be transacted in procuring, selecting, advising, and controlling the equipment of emigrants. Moreover serious responsibility attaches, it must never be forgotten, to those who communicate with the humbler classes on these questions; a single unauthorized or thoughtless word of encouragement to a poor man who is deliberating on emigration, may induce him prematurely to throw up his means of livelihood and lead to his total ruin. The mistakes of persons in narrow circumstances on a point of this kind may be irreparable, and it is the more incumbent on the Government to watch over their interests with solicitude, that the victims themselves are not in a position to make their complaints effectually heard.

17. The evils which might otherwise have been apprehended, were for some time avoided by contriving on one ground or another, to confine the business in the hands of one or two respectable firms who by this exclusive privilege were constantly increasing their experience, and were also placed under a stronger sense of responsibility, thus attaining in a less perfect form the very advantage which is derived from the direct employment of a Public Board. But by degrees other merchants complained of this virtual monopoly, and it became necessary to throw the business more open, and the inherent faults of the system were not slow to reveal themselves.

18. The result was, that every party concerned was a loser. Intending emigrants were exposed to suffer from the incautious communications not possessed of the requisite experience and knowledge; unduly stimulating pictures of the state of the Colonies might be presented to them by private agents eager to fill their employers' ships, and in cases of complaint there was no well-known administration, liable to be strictly called to account on which to come for redress. Ship owners on the other hand were saddled with a very unsuitable responsibility. After they had honestly and well furnished excellent ships, and good provisions, they were subject to find themselves refused all payment for their passengers at the sheer will of one or more public officers in the Colonies, because more perhaps from inexperience than intention they had not procured people equal to the standard considered right in the Colonies. Before the practice came to an end, serious discontent had been excited in some of the ship owners who had largest dealings in Emigration on account of the heavy pecuniary losses which were inflicted on them upon this ground; and it is probable that before long the best and most trustworthy firms might have been driven out of the trade. It is no very bold assumption to suppose that ship owners must be much better pleased to make their profits, as they now do in the pursuit of their proper business of finding and victualling the vessels, leaving to others the choice of the passengers. And as to the Colony itself, whatever might have been the case whilst the service was confined in the hands of a few houses, thus imitating as far as possible the existence of a Government Department, it will probably not be questioned that complaints of the quality of the emigrants became far more frequent when the business was really thrown open to a larger number of private firms.

19. On the other hand the Board which now exists has for a long course of years devoted all its energies to this subject. The Commissioners are well known to have introduced in the equipment of vessels and the other arrangements for the voyage, progressive improvements which have materially increased the healthiness of the Australian passage—in the last six years, as is casually mentioned in the enclosed Report, they have sent out upwards of 97,000 passengers without the loss of a single life by shipwreck or other disaster at sea. They have established a credit amongst ship owners which greatly increases the resort to them for custom, and by that means gives the Colonies the benefit of an enlarged competition; they are as a conspicuous Public Department, in a position calculated to inspire confidence among clergymen, magistrates, proprietors, and others, who are likely to have influence among the emigrating classes, and with the aid of all these combined advantages they have the means of executing much more successfully than could be expected under any other circumstances, the task of conducting the emigration which is constantly expanding and contracting with the ever varying wants and resources of the Colonies. My belief is that it would be an unfortunate day for the Colonies when they threw away so many advantages. Independently of Colonial interests, I must also remark, that as has already been noticed in the course of this Despatch, so many as 18,000 applications have sometimes been lying in the office of the Emigration Commissioners at the same moment, and that the number of their letters frequently amounts to seven or eight hundred in a day, and consequently that looking to the duty which we owe to the people of this country, it appears to me that a most serious responsibility would be undertaken by that Government which should consent that the business of informing, dealing with, superintending the equipment, and regulating the movements in this country of such vast multitudes, should be thrown into the hands of an indefinite number of private and irresponsible agents.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

(Signed)

NEWCASTLE.

Lieutenant Governor La Trobe,
&c., &c., &c.

Colonial Land and Emigration Office,
23rd July, 1853.

SIR,

WE have to acknowledge your letter of the 9th instant, enclosing two Despatches from the Lieutenant Governor of Victoria respecting Immigration. In the first of these, he transmits the Report of the Committee of the Legislative Council on the future conduct of Immigration; and, in the second, a series of statements showing the prospects of the Territorial Revenue.

A.—No. 40, b.

2. The Committee report that the Colonial funds ought to be applied in paying the entire expense of sending out at once as large a number of Immigrants "as the funds devoted by law to the purpose" (meaning of course the Immigration moiety of the Land Fund) will admit. They consider that the Immigrants should be principally taken from rural districts, and that at least one-third of the passengers by each ship should consist of married men and their families, with a preference to those which contain a large proportion of females;—that of the married men at least one-half should be masons, carpenters, wheelwrights, cabinet makers, bricklayers, and blacksmiths; and the other half farm laborers. The remaining Immigrants they consider should be single women of good character with at least a preference for those suitable for domestic service. They further recommend that no division of families should be tolerated, and that no limit should be imposed on the number of children in each family, that families should not be refused on account of the age of the father or mother, unless that age exceeds 60, and that widows and widowers of good character with their families should be accepted; and they desire that more power should be given to local agents, and that ships should be despatched from various ports.

3. They also recommend, by implication, that ships should not be employed to carry more than about 400 Immigrants, and that our tenders should announce that a preference should be given to ships "constructed on the principle adopted in ships built for the Royal Navy."

4. They think the unsoundness of the present Government system of Emigration is strikingly proved by the evidence before the Committee, and in proof of that view draw especial attention to the following points:

1. The total absence of responsibility in the administration of so large a fund.
2. An entire absence of accounts since 1847.
3. A sum of £129,000 being totally unaccounted for.
4. Emigrants having been sent to Twofold Bay in New South Wales at the expense of Victoria.
5. The want of sound information respecting Emigration among the working classes in England, and
6. The long delay which occurs in referring every question to a Central Board in London. By the last two defects they account for our supposed inability to procure Immigrants at a time when crowds were offering to pay a portion of their own passages by Mrs. Chisholm's ships. Finally, they consider that the bounty system should be re-established, both because it empowers the Colony to withhold payment on ineligible emigrants, and because they conceive it would save a year now lost in the transmission of money to London.

5. We proceed to report on these suggestions seriatim.

6. In the first place we are desired to send out at once as many Emigrants as can be furnished with passages from the Immigration Moiety of the Land Fund. The Committee have not examined the state of that fund or recommended any specific rate of emigration, and we have, therefore to estimate the amount of the Fund from a comparison of our own expenditure with the financial statements of the Immigration Agent transmitted in Mr. La Trobe's Despatch, No. 46.

7. In the tables furnished by Mr. Grimes the whole proceeds of the Emigration moiety of the Land Fund, from the separation of the Colonies in 1851 till the end of 1852, amounted to £418,344, and for 1853 they are estimated at £369,571, making together £787,915.

8. From an estimate enclosed in Mr. La Trobe's Despatch, it appears that the Colonial authorities expect that the expenditure and liabilities incurred before the end of 1853, will exhaust the whole of this sum except £126,556. In other words they contemplate the expenditure of £661,359 before that period.

9. But it will be seen by our report of the 10th ultimo, that our expenditure and liabilities on this account then amounted to £410,500.—They now amount to somewhat less than £425,000.

10. The expenditure in the Colony for 1853 is estimated at £54,317; and placing the whole of that expenditure from 1851 at £100,000, it will follow that £136,359 would remain to be expended by the Board during the four and a half remaining months of this year. The result would be exhibited in the subjoined table:—

	£.
Expended by this Board up to the present time (say)	425,000
Expended in the Colony up to the end of 1853 (say).....	100,000
To be expended by this Board before 31st December, 1853	136,359
	£661,359
Total expenditure	£661,359
Add balance to be left in hand at that period.....	126,556
	£787,915
Total receipts	£787,915

11. We have already taken up as many ships as we should be able to fill up to the middle of August; and the sum of £136,359, which thus remains to be expended (and of which nearly £100,000 is now in our hands), would suffice during the remaining four and a half months of 1853, to send out about five ships a month, at the rate of £6000 a ship. We would therefore request the Duke of Newcastle's permission to carry on Emigration to Victoria, if possible, at that rate. We shall at once resume our endeavours to collect emigrants, which, pending the receipt of this long promised Report, and our consequent uncertainty as to the wishes of the Colonists, and the amount of funds which would be placed at our command, we were obliged to slacken.

12. We may, in passing, point out, that as the Colonists of Victoria have determined to carry on this large immigration, without attempting to obtain any payment from the immigrants,

it cannot be expected that any emigrants who are eligible for Victoria will go to New South Wales, on the terms proposed by the Legislative Council of that Colony. The alternative will therefore be between abandoning that scheme, and sending to New South Wales merely those classes of families or emigrants who are ineligible for Victoria. On this subject, however, we shall have to submit a separate Report.

13. The rules laid down as to the trades, sexes, and ages of the emigrants, we had long forestalled in all their main features. Our emigrants are principally selected from the rural districts, and from the trades named by the Committee. A certain number of married men with their families are placed in every ship, the remainder being single women, and families in which the sons outnumber the daughters are rejected. The result has been that the composition of the Emigration to Victoria during the first six months of the present year has been as follows:—

Males	2211
Females	4321

Total ...	6532
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We may add that the number of unmarried males above the age of 14 has been only 324, and that these have been almost entirely sons in eligible families. The abandonment of children by parents, which is reprobated by the Committee, is prohibited by our regulations, and the prohibition is enforced with the greatest practicable strictness.

14. The changes which would result from the recommendations of the Committee are these. The list of occupations deemed eligible by the Committee is more confined than that suggested by Mr. La Trobe in his Despatch of the 10th of August, 1852, or than that which we have ourselves acted on. This is a point on which our sole duty is, that of conforming ourselves to the wishes of the Colonists, and we shall at once act on the decision of the Committee till otherwise advised from the Colony. We should, however, point out that every fresh restriction imposed on our selections will add to the difficulty of reviving the emigration.

15. With regard to emigrants whose ages approach 60, we imagine that we shall be substantially carrying out the views of the Committee, by requiring a deposit of £1 from Emigrants under 50 years of age, and of £5 from those between 50 and 60.

16. With regard to widows, our present practice is to accept them (if in other respects eligible) when the family is such that the younger members may be expected to support themselves in the Colony in case of the (sole) parent's death. This limitation could not, we think, be withdrawn, without exposing the children to an improper amount of risk.

17. In the case of widowers, we shall so far relax our rules as to accept them when the composition of their families renders it advisable for the Colony.

18. To the abandonment of our rule, as to young families, we must decidedly object, and we cannot but be surprised that the Committee should have recommended it in so unmodified a form. We should indeed have inferred from recent information, and especially from Mr. Childers's Report of 30th June, 1852, that large families of young children were unacceptable to employers of labor. We conclude from the Report of the Committee, that this would have been an erroneous inference as far as regards Victoria. But there is another and much stronger objection drawn from the mortality which has occurred in several emigrant ships, and to which the Committee themselves allude. Whenever a serious mortality has occurred, it has, with rare exceptions, taken place among the children. We select a few ships as instances of this almost invariable rule:—

Name of Ship.	Total Number of Deaths.	Number under 4 years of age.
Borneuf	85	74
Warrata	46	33
Araminta	24	19
Marco Polo	50	45
Irene	34	33
Chance	45	35

The result on the year's emigration was, that while among the emigrants above four years of age the mortality was about 1 in 60, it was among those under that age nearly 1 in 5.

19. The Duke of Newcastle is aware that during 1852 we endeavoured to relax our rules in the direction (although not to the extent) indicated by the Committee, but the facts we have above stated compelled us to recur to our original strictness, and we cannot doubt that it will be impossible to secure a healthy character for the emigration unless a rigid rule be laid down, and firmly adhered to on this point. Our present rule, which allows two children under seven, and three under ten years of age, is not, we think, at all more stringent than is necessary for this purpose. As, however, the rule may at first sight appear not precisely accommodated to the evil, we should perhaps explain that as persons under fourteen count as half adults, or in other words are only allowed $7\frac{1}{2}$ superficial feet each in Australian passenger ships, the admission of large numbers of persons of that age would tend to that over crowding which is one of the causes of mortality: our rule is therefore intended to limit this number, by limiting the number first of those who are not yet of a useful age, and next of those who are most subject to sickness and death on the voyage.

20. In regard to the proposal to increase the powers of local agents, the Committee do not indicate to what class of agents they advert, or in what respect they would wish their powers extended: nor do the portions of the evidence (queries 630, 631, 632,) referred to by them throw much light on the question. We can only conjecture that they consider that our local selecting agents (of whom during part of last year we had no less than 60,) ought to be empowered to accept emigrants without the necessity of referring their applications to the Board in London. Such a course, however, would be productive of great embarrassment. The local agents, who are paid by a bonus upon each emigrant sent out to the Colony, on their selection, are under a pecuniary inducement (and it is very desirable they should remain so) to furnish as many emigrants as possible; but if they were authorised to accept finally, there would be no protection against their sending up to our depôts ineligible persons. The consequence would be that either those persons, ineligible as they were, must be sent out to the Colony, or, after having sold all their little property, they must be sent back to their homes, though innocent of any fraud, at the expense of the Land Fund, and to their own very great dissatisfaction. No doubt the system if allowed to continue long enough to educate all the agents might become less inconvenient: but long before this could happen, it would have given way under the mass of well founded complaint to which it would have given rise.

21. We need hardly point out that our opinions in this matter are not grounded on theory, but on long and very troublesome experience of the mistakes and inconveniences to which emigrants and those who select them are liable; and, while ourselves entirely deferring to the judgment of the Colonists respecting the nature of their own wants, we cannot help suggesting that they on their parts will be liable to fall into mistakes if they endeavour, on the imperfect information to which alone they have access, to regulate the complicated details of the selection and embarkation of emigrants at so great a distance.

22. Nor do we think anything would be gained by despatching vessels from a number of different ports. Ships carrying emigrants carry also a considerable quantity of cargo, and they are therefore obtainable most cheaply at the great ports where the trade with the Colonies to which they are proceeding is ordinarily carried on. Those ports in the case of Australia are Liverpool and London; and we now despatch our emigrant ships either from Birkenhead, which is opposite Liverpool, or from Southampton and Plymouth, which are in the direct track from London. If we are to despatch ships from other ports, we should have not only to multiply our emigration Officers and Depôt establishments, which would involve considerable expense, but also to pay the additional freight for sending the ship from the port at which she loads her cargo to the port at which she is to take in her emigrants. We may add, that last year when during the great press of emigration, we extended our advertisements for ships so as to include the Clyde in the ports of embarkation, we only received one tender for that port which we were able to accept.

23. And on this point it is worth observing that the spontaneous emigration to America, which of course is regulated by the joint interest of the emigrants and shipowners, shews a tendency not to disperse itself over the different ports of the United Kingdom, but to concentrate itself at Liverpool, or in other words that it is found cheaper to bring the emigrants to the ships than to send the ships to the emigrants. So much so is this the case as regards Ireland, that the emigration from Irish ports at which there are emigration Officers, fell, in the five years between 1847 and 1852, from 85,616 to 41,441, while in the same period the emigration from Liverpool increased from 134,522 to 229,099.

24. Nor would the proposed changes obviate the delay with which emigrants are said to be dissatisfied. When that delay exists, it arises not from the nature of our machinery, but from the simple circumstance that the Emigration which we are authorised to conduct, though sometimes large, is always limited, and that the number of applicants exceeds the number which we are ordered to send out. In the course of last autumn we had at one time 18,000 applications in the office; but it was impossible, even at the rate of twelve ships a month, that these persons could be sent out without waiting for some months till their turn came. No doubt the consequent delay was a great inconvenience, but it is inherent in the nature of the service. The only question is, whether it is least mischievous before or after the emigrant's acceptance by this Board. A long and careful observation has led us to the conclusion (with the grounds of which it is hardly necessary to trouble the Duke of Newcastle) that a delay in *accepting* the emigrant is on the whole less inconvenient, and less calculated to unsettle him, than a delay in *sending him out when accepted*.

25. The Report contains two more suggestions of detail.

26. With regard to the size of the ships employed by us, we would refer to our Report of the 11th of February last, which states that we had discontinued the employment of two-decked ships.

27. In the suggestion that in advertising for tenders we should announce a preference for "ships constructed on the principle adopted in vessels built for the Royal Navy," we cannot concur. We conjecture from the evidence that the principle here alluded to is that of filling in the spaces between the beams with solid wood, as is the case in ships of the Royal Navy. No merchant vessels, we believe, are at present so built, and we cannot hope that the announcement in our tender of an indefinite preference for a class of vessels which do not at present exist, would call these into existence. Nor do we think that the experience of our own Emigration shows a necessity for such a precaution against shipwreck, since of 350 ships which had been chartered by us in the six years ending with 1852 only one, the *Marion*, had been lost; while of the 97,600 Emigrants embarked in those ships, not one had lost his life from shipwreck. On these grounds we have declined to adopt the suggestion when it has heretofore been made to us. It will be seen by the evidence attached to the Committee's Report (queries 962, 963, 964) that the author of

the proposal explains its want of acceptance on other and almost whimsical grounds. He considers that Government discountenances his proposal lest by decreasing the risk of sea voyages it should decrease the Revenue derived from "Marine Insurances." "I am of opinion," he says, "that Government countenances the loss of £3,000,000 annually in order to get this annual half million of Revenue."

28. We now come to the points in which the present system of Emigration is said to be unsound.

29. We scarcely understand what is meant by the total absence of responsibility in the administration of the Emigration Fund. Perhaps the Committee refer to the circumstance that the Emigration Fund being Crown revenue is under the direct control of the Executive. Yet this, though it might be alleged to be the *cause*, could hardly be quoted as an *instance* or *evidence* of the "unsoundness of the Government system of Emigration." We hardly know therefore, what observation to make on this allegation, except to state that every item of our expenditure is strictly scrutinized by the Audit Office in this country, who ascertain that we have sufficient authority for all our payments and examine our modes of procedure and the accuracy of every even the smallest payment; that statements of our receipts and expenditure are periodically forwarded to the Colony, and that we believe the instructions from the Secretary of State which regulate our proceedings, to be for the most part communicated to the Colony to which they relate and frequently printed for Parliament.

30. The second proof of unsoundness is "the entire absence of accounts since 1847."

31. We have to state that copies of our accounts were sent to the Colony at the following dates.

Accounts.	Date of transmission to the Colony.
June, 1848.—December, 1849.	5th January, 1850.
January, 1850.—June, 1851.	19th March, 1852.
July, 1851.—June, 1852	8th January, 1853.
July, 1852.—September, 1852.	29th January, 1853.
October, 1852.—December, 1852.	7th February, 1853.

We can only imagine that the accounts up to the separation of the Colonies in July, 1851, which were forwarded to the authorities in New South Wales on the 5th January, 1850, and the 19th of March, 1852, had not been communicated to the authorities in Victoria up to the 13th of January, 1853, when the report of the Committee was agreed to. It will be observed that the accounts from the separation of the Colonies to December last, were forwarded in or before the following February.

32. We could have wished, however, that the transmission of our accounts had been more prompt. The cause of the delay will be gathered from the subjoined statement of the sums which have passed through our hands during the last thirteen and a half years. From this, it will be seen that about the year 1848 an increase of our expenditure commenced, which has proceeded to such an extent that our receipts in the last half year are literally one hundred times the average half yearly receipts of the seven years ending with 1846.

Year.	Amount.
1840.	11,900.
1841.	5,900.
1842.	21,800.
1843.	7,600.
1844.	1,400.
1845.	23,400.
1846.	7,300.
1847.	55,800.
1848.	325,300.
1849.	214,600.
1850.	236,700.
1851.	339,800.
1852.	525,000.
Half year, 1853.	540,000.

There has been consequently a rapid and enormous increase in the business of the Accountant's Department, with this peculiarity, that we could not tell from year to year whether it would not fall back to its former level. Hence has resulted a continued struggle to meet this increase with an inadequate staff. And this has obliged us continually to postpone longer than we could have wished matters which were not of an urgent nature; among the rest the transmission of accounts to the Colonies. We trust with this explanation the degree of delay which

has taken place will not be deemed to be unreasonable, still less an indication of a general "unsoundness of system."

33. The third and fourth points are that a sum of £129,000 is unaccounted for, and that Emigrants sent to Twofold Bay, in New South Wales, have been paid for by Victoria.

34. Of the sum of £129,000 thus unaccounted for we know nothing. It appears by queries 433, 4, 5, 6, to be a question between the Government of New South Wales and Victoria. The Twofold Bay Emigrants were in a financial Report of this Board inadvertently treated as having been charged to Victoria. But in point of fact, no such mistake was ever made; they were really charged as they ought to have been, to New South Wales.

35. The remaining criticisms of the committee we would beg to transcribe as they indicate considerable misapprehension respecting what has passed in this country.

"Other defects may also be pointed out, among which the evident want of sound information among the working classes in the United Kingdom stands pre-eminent; and the long delay that occurs in referring every question to a Central Board in London. These causes among others, your committee think are sufficient to account for the inability of the Commissioners to procure Immigrants, while at the same period crowds were offering to come and pay a great portion of their own passages by Mrs. Chisholm's ships."

36. With regard to the statement which concludes this extract we observe in Mr. Chisholm's evidence, given in August, 1852, (queries 20, 21, 22,) that during the preceding nineteen months four ships chartered by Mrs. Chisholm, had arrived in the Colony with about 1000 Emigrants on board, and that that lady had frequently had to refuse 100 applicants a week. But during the year 1852, this Board despatched, not 1000, but upwards of 34,000 Emigrants, and at one time (as we have said), had in our office 18,000 applications for free passages.

We state this not with the slightest intention to depreciate the results which Mrs. Chisholm has accomplished without any aid from Public Funds, but for the sake of pointing out that the contrast drawn by the Committee is calculated to suggest a very erroneous view as to the actual facts of the case. In truth, while the Committee supposed that we were suffering under an inability to procure Emigrants we were absolutely overwhelmed with a flood of applications, which had obliged us to arrest the operations of our selecting agents more than four months before the Report of the Committee was agreed to.

37. We would also point out what are really the causes of our inability to procure emigrants:—The first is, the necessity of conforming to the rules suggested by the Colonial authorities, or required by prudence for the selection of emigrants. If we were relieved from these, we might have attracted to our own ships without difficulty a large number of those who have made application to Mrs. Chisholm, and probably a still larger proportion of the 44,000 persons who have left England for Australia at their own expense. But we need hardly point out the immense loss which would have been caused to the Colony by paying the passages of all these persons who have now reached Australia without any cost to the public.

38. Next, the absence of full and timely notice respecting the intentions of the Colonists is a most material impediment in maintaining a steady supply of applications. To create a desire for emigration among the laboring population, is a work which requires a large machinery to be set in operation, and even with that machinery, cannot be effected at once. It requires that agents should be appointed—that they should learn their work, and that they should communicate with the laboring population; and these again require time to ponder the matter, to persuade their families, to collect a little money, and to make arrangements with their employers and landlords. In all these operations months soon slip away, and till they are gone through, the machinery is not in full work. But it does eventually come into full work; and if it is nearly adequate in its infancy, it inevitably becomes in its maturity overwhelming. This was the case last year, when the mass of applicants became such as to compel us to close our office against further applications. Nor have we been able to re-open it, because, till recently, we have been uninformed as to the intentions of the Colonists in Sydney and Victoria. Now the work will have to recommence. The same difficulty will be experienced, enhanced by the season of the year, and the general demand for labor throughout England. But this difficulty will be owing, in the main, neither to the absence of information in the laboring class, nor the delay of a reference to London, but partly to the present prosperity of the working class, partly to the stringency of the rules of selection, wisely, as we think, suggested from the Colony; and partly to the circumstance that our machinery has been necessarily stopped for some months, and cannot be brought into full operation.

39. Finally, the Committee express their opinion, that "there is no safety for the Colony but to return to the bounty system, freed from its former defects." This is not a question for us to discuss. If the opinion of the Committee should be adopted at any future time, this Board will be relieved from a great amount of very arduous work, and we can only express our hope—we cannot add our anticipation—that it will be as great an improvement on the present system as the Committee anticipate.

We have, &c.,
(Signed)

T. W. C. MURDOCH,
FREDERICK ROGERS.

H. Merivale, &c.,
&c., &c., &c.