

THOUGHTS  
ON  
EMIGRATION  
AND ON  
*THE CANADAS,*  
AS AN  
OPENING FOR IT.



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IN the following observations, I believe I have ventured upon new ground.

My leading point is, that in realizing an extensive emigration from the Mother Country, directed to this part of the world, the settlement of all or even of the greatest part of the Emigrants, on British territory is not essential, and that by continuing to clog ourselves with this condition, we shut up, or at least neglect the boundless opening for absorbing emigration which Canada presents in another way. She is, in fact, the readiest door to the immense habitable regions of the interior of this continent—a door which, if once unbarred can never be shut, whoever may claim the nominal supremacy of the central countries.


To produce some arguments for opening it, as a powerful and profitable mean of promoting emigration, is the design of this little Essay.

My residence on the banks of the Ottawa, in a very new part of the country, and frequent intercourse with new Settlers, led to the reflections, on which my positions have been formed. I may say, I have, for many years, had a *near* view of the object. But while that circumstance gives me some encouragement in submitting my ideas to the public—still, I ought to do so with the greatest deference; for, although my situation may have enabled me to look at some points with advantage, yet it may have, at the same time, excluded me from much information that would have been necessary in treating a subject of such general interest.

CHARLES SHIRREFF.

*Fitzroy Harbour, River Ottawa, }  
April, 1831.*

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**T**HE continued and increasing emigration from Great Britain and Ireland, may be described as the spontaneous effort of an overgrown population to relieve itself. It is a movement of the people independent of their rulers ; still its object is legitimate. It is a measure of necessity—not of discontent, and although it may be difficult, perhaps impossible, to give it altogether a systematic form, yet it may be for the interest of the country to regulate and encourage it. It bears a more favorable character than many of those irruptions or emigrations which occurred in former times. It arises neither from a desire of foreign conquest nor from oppression at home. Its origin may, in fact, be traced to the benevolent spirit of our institutions, to

due freedom of individual exertion and enterprise, under laws which afford equal protection to every subject. These and other favourable causes, have produced a rapidity in the increase of the inhabitants, which does not take place in countries shackled and retarded by arbitrary sway. The fields of employment have consequently become crowded, and the labouring classes are looking abroad for more room, and means of subsistence. An emigration under such an impulse, resembles a stream from an overflowing fountain, which may be guided, but cannot be stopt.

“ Whatever difference of opinion may exist as to  
 “ the most advantageous mode of transferring the re-  
 “ dundant population of the British Islands to her  
 “ transatlantic dependencies, the importance and  
 “ utility of this measure to the empire seems to be  
 “ manifest. Indeed such are the circumstances that  
 “ require it, that they are not to be controled by any  
 “ power within the State. The question is not whe-  
 “ ther emigration, and emigration to a large extent  
 “ from the British Islands shall take place or not, but  
 “ how it shall be directed, so as to be most condu-  
 “ cive to the relief of the State, to the permanent  
 “ well being of the emigrants, and to the advance-  
 “ ment of the general interest of the Empire.”

“ The diversities of opinion entertained by en-  
 “ lightened men on the other side of the water upon  
 “ this subject plainly shew that it is not yet fully

“ understood. At the same time, in the collision of  
 “ opposite opinions truth will doubtless ultimately be  
 “ struck out.”

“ Great Britain has under her immediate con-  
 “ trol a larger quantity of unsettled cultivat-  
 “ able land in every climate than ever belonged to  
 “ any nation.—Her capital exceeds what has ever  
 “ before been accumulated by one people. She  
 “ has in various portions of her metropolitan  
 “ states a redundant population. There are here,  
 “ then, all the elements of unparalleled happiness, and  
 “ power for her people. How shall these several  
 “ elements be combined to the attainment of these  
 “ ends. By what process shall this capital be made  
 “ to irrigate these now unproductive lands, and both  
 “ be made conducive to the relief of her suffering  
 “ subjects, to the extension of her letters and institu-  
 “ tions, and to the consolidation of her power?—  
 “ This is a problem of infinite difficulty. It must  
 “ however be susceptible of solution. •Directed as the  
 “ public mind is now to this subject, each year must  
 “ bring us new accessions of knowledge concerning  
 “ it, and the time cannot now be far distant when we,  
 “ of the present age, shall look back with surprise at  
 “ our present controversies and errors on the subject  
 “ of emigration and new settlements.”\*



I do not bring forward this paragraph in the vain confidence, that I am able to solve the problem, which the writer of it has so comprehensively stated, but as my best introduction to a few thoughts on the subject, sent forth, if not with the hope, at least with the wish, that they may elicit some sparks in that “collision of “opposite opinions by which truth will ultimately be “struck out.”

Much of the difficulty which attends emigration, may, it is possible, arise from attempting to regulate it by one general system. Uniform or fixed principles will, however, ill apply to a subject so wide and varied, and on none will the truth more distinctly appear, of this maxim. “We “are governed by circumstances—we cannot govern “them.” The impression is so universal that every individual who belongs to a body of Emigrants, must become a farmer, that the words emigrant and settler are now almost synonymous terms.

This idea arises from the fact that new colonies present scarcely any other occupation besides the cultivation of the lands. But we have not perhaps attended sufficiently to the change of circumstances in some of those countries resorted to by emigrants, nor have yet allowed ourselves to be governed by it.

Canada at one period held out little other prospect of employment or subsistence but the labour and the produce of her soil. Hence the plans for emigration

directed thither have referred exclusively to settlement. But the case is now altered. Canada is still a desirable opening for emigration, and perhaps the most eligible under the British Dominion—but not merely as a field for settlement, which from her limited habitable extent, she can only be for a few years. The importance of her local position is opening upon us, and ought to lead to a different and more enlarged plan of action. Extended along, and enclosing the outlet of the only chain of waters which penetrates to the heart of this Continent from the Atlantic, she commands the easiest access to its rich and extensive interior, to which emigration must ultimately be, and in fact, is now much directed. It is the natural course, from which it is vain to think of diverting it. Instead, therefore, of Canada being the final resting place of the Emigrants, she can be considered only as a temporary shelter to thousands of them, who will not stop short of the Western States. And it would seem as absurd, under these circumstances, to confine our views on emigration entirely to settlement, as would be the conduct of an extensive landholder, who opposed or neglected the formation of roads through his property to some great mart, from the paltry consideration of the soil they might cover. The great and leading object respecting Canada, now appears to be, to form her into a convenient avenue to the spacious abode behind her. More relief might be given

to the mother country, and even the settlement of the Colony more effectually accelerated by giving the Emigrants encouragement and support in operations conducive to that end, than by attempting to arrest their progress by the gratuitous offers of land and temporary subsistence. The latter is, no doubt a temptation, but the mere grant of land does not give an assurance of immediate support. Many of the Emigrants have neither capacity nor the means to cultivate it. Hence, although lands have been free, nearly as air, in the Colonies, yet they have been very slowly occupied, and Great Britain and Ireland continue to be oppressed with an over-stock of inhabitants, who remain in poverty at home, rather than cross the Atlantic, at what they conceive to be a venture or uncertainty. The bulk of them require defined and immediate means of earning a livelihood upon their arrival, and consequently many who come to our shores go forward to the States in quest of it.

I have already said, we cannot prevent a great proportion of the Emigrants from looking to the Western regions as their ultimate destination; but it seems quite possible to adopt measures by which this country may receive far more benefit from them on their way than it does at present. To use a homely metaphor, Canada may be made, as it were, to sift the emigration, but the sieve is at present too coarse or too open, the corn as well as the chaff go through it. There is little to arrest the attention of a substantial



Emigrant or induce him to remain in the country. There is yet no general spirit of improvement in active operation. The interior parts settled recently, and almost entirely by needy and ignorant people, remain nearly as forbidding and inaccessible as ever, devoid of good communications either by land or water. Time will no doubt remedy these untoward circumstances. Capital and enterprise will be generated in the country, and produce their effects on the North, as we now see them doing to the South of the Saint Lawrence. But a combination of circumstances, fortunate at least for Canada, seems to point out the way in which an extensive system of improvement, particularly in her communications, may be commenced immediately. The necessity under which the mother country lies to facilitate the emigration of her superfluous inhabitants is every day more acknowledged ; and after attentive consideration of the subject, I am convinced that in no way can this effort be so beneficially and effectually directed for both countries, as in offering Emigrants employment on public works in the Canadas.

In forming settlements here of large bodies of the lowest classes direct from England or Ireland, it is evident that their previous habits and prejudices could be little disturbed, and might long continue to clog the prosperity of the districts so peopled, and perhaps that of the whole Colony. Whereas in disposing them as labourers, Government

would only have to deal with a few thousands at a time, \* who would successively give way to new comers, and disperse among the older inhabitants. Many would ultimately find their way beyond the Colony, and none would remain in it as a distinct body. Though it seems necessary, in adopting such a system, to reject no applicant for labour, yet the rate of wages held out would be an efficient means to regulate the extent of the operations. In general the wages should perhaps be little more than a bare means of subsistence, in order that nothing might be kept in the way of the dispersion of the emigrants ; at present considering the general disposition of the lower classes to emigrate, one shilling and six pence per day would probably be sufficient, but the allowance might be arranged annually as circumstances required. I do not apprehend that the winters of Canada would be found any impediment to the continued operation of this mode of assisting emigration. The weather in winter is seldom such as to preclude out door labour, and it is decidedly the best season for some kinds of work, particularly for the carriage of heavy materials, so that in the process of forming roads, canals and fortifications on the most substantial principles, an ample fund of winter employment would be found in quarrying, macadamizing, &c. &c.

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\* It is scarcely necessary to remark—but it ought to be kept always in view when speaking of a body of Emigrants—that only one-fifth of the number may be supposed to be labourers, the rest women and children.

It may be argued against this mode of forwarding emigration that it could not be carried to sufficient extent, and that a much greater number might be settled on lands, than could be employed on public works. In looking, however, over the Reports of the Emigration Committee, and other publications on the subject, I do not find it stated in a manner sufficiently particular, where such a body of emigrants, as it is thought necessary to send off, could be placed. It is said that in Nova Scotia there may be two million acres of good land, and in New Brunswick about as much more still unoccupied. But these quantities would go but a short way, and the Canadas must therefore be resorted to, where room would be wanted for a population exceeding that of both the Provinces.

The great inconvenience and expense which must attend an attempt to establish such a multitude as settlers, from the immense space they would cover, have not, in my humble opinion, been fully weighed. They cannot be driven into the woods, and allowed to range at will, like cattle. The country must be prepared for them. Supposing half the land to be fit for occupation, and allotting one hundred acres to each family; for a million of emigrants, or two hundred thousand families, not less than sixty thousand square miles must be divided and surveyed into six hundred townships. Roads and bridges must be formed, and churches, court-houses and jails, &c. erected. Superintendants and Clergymen; Magistrates and other officers

of justice must be established, with every arrangement necessary for the preservation of peace and good order, and all this must be accomplished in the short space of six or eight years. It would be a speed in the progress of settlement, and in the organization of Society infinitely beyond any thing ever yet heard of, either in ancient or modern times.\*

I must say, it appears to me quite demonstrable that in a country where so much useful work may be done, a large body of emigrants may be introduced more safely, more conveniently, and even more cheaply as labourers than as settlers. As the former they would be gathered into groups, easily accommodated and kept under control. As the latter, they would overspread, and saturate the whole land. Little as these Colonies may be now thought of, they would then be still less worth preserving. Great Britain may no doubt exist, and even prosper without them, but she could not soar so high. They are part of the wings she has spread in ascending, and ought to be kept healthy, vigorous and steady.

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\* To any other country, the difficulty of transporting such numbers in so short a space of time, would also be a formidable objection—but this, in the direction of the North American Colonies, is obviated by the lumber trade, the great importance of which, as an auxiliary to *any* plan of emigration, I have never yet seen sufficiently noticed in any of the public discussions on the subject. It has been remarked that the lumber business may give employment to emigrants upon their arrival in the country, which it no doubt does, in as far as it increases the demand for labour. But the empty vessels starting from every port in England and Ireland for American timber is a facility which emigration never possessed at any former period. In fact the Emigrants from Ireland may, by means of this trade, reach the port of Quebec at as little expense, and with less trouble, than they can pour into the streets of London.



The advocates for the mode of immediate settlement have been encouraged by the success which attended the two bodies of Emigrants already brought out from Ireland ;—but the favorable results of transient experiments bearing no proportion to the extent of the measure in contemplation, is a foundation far too narrow and dangerous to build on. The evils or distress arising from irregularity and sickness, can on a small scale, be rectified or alleviated, but as it is increased, they may accumulate beyond all remedy. A piece of mechanism of the greatest magnitude may be perfectly represented by a model of the most diminutive size, but when human beings are the materials, the springs of action are too diversified to be reduced to uniform and unerring movements. A case, therefore, in which precedent is wanting, and which involves the interests of so many of our race, deserves the gravest consideration. In handling it our safest guides must be the rules and principles which have been found, from general experience, most suitable and beneficial in establishing or regulating the Societies of civilized life.

Every Emigrant who enters Canada, does not become a settler or farmer. Many remain mere labourers, and are fit for nothing else ; and thousands of the million which it is proposed to collect from the dregs in England and Ireland, so far from being capable of managing a farm, will be unable to regulate their own conduct. How can it be expected, that men who have



never been accustomed to look beyond the wants of the present moment, brought direct from the haunts of idleness and dissipation, and whose very title to enrolment is that vagrancy to which they have been habituated, should all at once become a body of peaceable, prudent, industrious, and persevering husbandmen. Such a transformation could only be the work of supernatural influence, and were it not that the idea has been entertained by so many intelligent men, whose range of information has been much more extensive than mine, I should be led to look for such a happy consummation only in the regions of Utopia.

With regard to the gratuitous mode of assistance proposed, I must also venture to differ from the respectable opinions in favor of it, already before the public. Would it not be providing the means of idleness rather than those of labour? We should not at home think it a good mode of encouraging industry to make the common people independent of it, even for a limited period, and why should we expect it would be so in the woods of Canada. We may, perhaps, form a better judgment by considering the measure more closely. In a million of Emigrants, 200,000 may be supposed of age fit for labour, but as they are all exempted from it for one year, or furnished with the means of being so, it is not improbable that at least one-fourth part of them may take the benefit of the indulgence. Thus fifty thousand years of individual labour would be lost, or there would be wasted

funds adequate to the support of five thousand men for ten years at useful work. This cannot be considered an extravagant calculation, for although one fourth of the number might not remain in an absolute state of inaction, yet the general effect on the whole body of the all-pervading principle of indolence encouraged by this gratuitous aid, could scarcely be less. Thus the measure would be commenced with the prospect of millions being spent to no purpose, or rather to a bad purpose, that of engendering habits of idleness and dissipation, or of strengthening those already formed.

We may hold out the most flattering prospects of future advantage as an inducement to industry, or we may announce in the strongest terms the inevitable approach of want and misery as the fruits of idleness, still we shall find that nothing will be generally effectual in producing constant labour, but the goad of continual necessity. Is it not universally acknowledged that gratuitous assistance is neither beneficial nor efficacious excepting in cases of sickness or other causes, which may prevent the possibility of personal exertion? A Quaker once set an able-bodied pauper, who had applied to him for relief, to remove a heap of fuel from one corner of his yard to another, and that he might enlarge his charity, he lengthened the job, by ordering the beggar to carry it back again. Whether this story be founded on a fact or not, it is an admission of the principle that wherever it is possible,

employment should be the only channel of relief, and many years must elapse before we are reduced to such unproductive expedients in Canada.

In my native Country, where the common people, from the general diffusion of education, are supposed to be more intelligent, and consequently more considerate than others, I always found that as wages rose, industry subsided. If a man even of sober habits, who had the command of his time, by being employed on piece work, could earn sufficient for his subsistence in a part of the week, he generally spent the remainder of it in idleness, or in very little exertion. Not one in a thousand thought of laying up in store against days of sickness or adversity. I may remark here that it might be better for the labouring classes to be paid daily, if it were practicable, instead of weekly or monthly. In manufacturing towns, the day of pay is generally a day of dissipation, and the earnings only of a week, received at once, are, very frequently, too much for good management.

Said, an old Divine—"Human nature is an arrant scoundrel—it must be perpetually watched, and kept in fetters." This may be harsh language, but it is sound philosophy. When at home, I once had a man in my employment who could easily earn above thirty shillings per week. His wife having complained that he spent his wages in drunkenness, I prevailed upon him to allow the greatest part of them to be paid direct to his family. This arrangement was kept

for some time, until he was laughed out of it by his companions, and insisted on drawing all his wages himself, fancying, as he told me, he could be satisfied with the portion that had been allotted to him. I refused, however, to discontinue a practice, which seemed to work so well, both for himself and his family. He then left my service, and went into another on the same rate of wages, but his family were destitute; and after some months of weekly struggle between his reason and appetite, in which the latter generally gained the victory, he put a violent end to an existence become insupportable from the want of some check to supply the place of that self-command which he had lost.

That so great a proportion of the human species must labour daily for their daily bread is an ordinance of infinite wisdom. It has influence sufficient to enforce very general obedience. It is invested with more authority as a guardian of the peace, than the highest magistracy. It acts as a perpetual and universal restraint. The system is nearest perfection when the labourers receive their pay upon the performance of their task. Had they to look forward to a precarious or prolonged issue, they would sicken at the distance or uncertainty of the prospect, and turn aside, oftener than they do, to unlawful means for present gratification. Even the cultivation of a farm, short as the period of return may appear to those of other habits, would require more patience and perseverance than



many among such a mass of emigrants would possess. Employment as labourers would be more congenial to them. No new order of things would take place. It would only be a change of country, without any great or sudden alteration in the condition of the individuals, and many of them, by a gradual operation, would become successful settlers, who would have failed entirely, if they had attempted it on their first arrival.

Mr. Wilmot Horton in his inquiry into the causes and remedies of Pauperism, gives up the idea, which had been entertained, of Government demanding repayment of the advances made to the Emigrants, chiefly upon the principle, that the outlay ought to be considered as “an economy and not as an expense,” in as much as the Paupers would be got rid of, in the way he proposes, at a less expense than must be incurred for their maintenance at home. His calculations and reasonings on this point are satisfactory\* and they lead moreover to this further considera-

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\* Inquiry into the causes and remedies of Pauperism, page 28.—“Supposing it then to be admitted that there were in Ireland a population of 1,000,000 persons, who were not wanted for any purposes of production, consisting of 200,000 able bodied men, 200,000 women, 600,000 children, and supposing they were maintained at the very lowest rate of human existence, £3 per ann. or 2d per day, they would at that rate cost the national revenue £3 000 000 sterling, per annum, at 4 per cent, is the interest of £75 000 000 sterling. If the state were to advance £16 000 000 sterling, I consider that these 1 000 000 persons could in the course of six years be located in our North-American Provinces, under an expenditure of that amount. The interest of that sum of £16 000 000 sterling, at 4 per cent. would be £640 000 sterling, per annum. If therefore, the saving to the state, from the abstraction of the redundant population be such that the £16 000 000 of capital may be replaced with interest, before, by the physical laws of nature, the same amount of Pauperism can be reproduced, the outlay ought to be considered as an economy and not as an expense.



tion, that while the unemployed part of the population remain at home, in their present scattered and disorganized state, the means by which they must be supported are not at the control of Government. But when these paupers shall be formed into a body for emigration, the fund for their temporary subsistence must necessarily assume also a distinct and manageable shape, and may be applied to the purpose in any manner that may be thought most expedient. If it should therefore appear that there are important public works in the Canadas ripe for execution, on which the Emigrants could be employed, there can be no objection to that fund being used in improving and strengthening the Provinces, if the case be, or can be made out that the object of assisting the Emigrant so far from being lost sight of, is hereby more effectually secured.

But we may take a more particular view of this country, and consider what works might be undertaken for these important purposes.

In the plans which may be necessary for either the defence or improvement of Canada, we have only to make a judicious use of the means and facilities already provided by the hand of the Creator, and these are so abundant that the duty of the projector is reduced to great simplicity. On this singular field, nature has in many places so nearly finished her designs, that there is hardly any room for the exercise of ingenuity. The relative situation of Canada points out at

once the immense advantages to be attained by the improvement and completion of her natural water communications, which seem to be formed expressly for the purpose of connecting the great Lakes of the North-American Continent with the Ocean. The Welland Canal, as an opening from Lake Erie, is a great step toward this object. Completing the Navigation of the Saint Lawrence, has been long in the contemplation of the public, and another line of improvement has been commenced along the River Ottawa, which cannot fail, from the figure of the country, ultimately to lead to the junction of that fine River with Lake Huron.

The idea of a communication with Lake Huron by the Ottawa, may be new to many, but the increase of inhabitants in the direction of this River, the improvement of its navigation already in progress, and the rapid advance of settlement in the North-Western Territories of the United-States, combine to suggest it.\*

The Ottawa is often called, and with propriety, the *Grand River*. It far exceeds in size any other altogether within the limits of Canada, and it is by nature peculiarly suited to navigation. In place of an unremitting flow, its current is gathered into falls and

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\* The practicability of this communication has been in a great measure ascertained in a journey undertaken by a son of the writer, in the Autumn of 1829, a detailed account of which is inserted in the 2d vol. of the Historical and Literary Society of Quebec, under the title of Topographical Notices of the Country lying between the mouth of the Rideau and Penetanguishine, on Lake Huron.

rapids at particular spots—and the river forms, throughout its course, a succession of lakes and smooth channels, so that by the improvement of these short obstructions, which may be called natural locks, it could be ascended with the greatest facility. About three hundred miles above Montreal, the Ottawa, by the most authentic information, approaches within a hundred miles, in a direct line, of the North-Eastern extremity of Lake Huron. The intervening tract is the lowest in that part of the country, and a considerable portion of it is occupied by the extension of Lake Nipissing. The French River, flowing Westward from that Lake to the Huron, is so favorable for navigation, that the fur traders frequently ascend it in bateaux, carrying several tons. There appears therefore, to be every natural facility for effecting a communication in this direction. It may also be remarked, that the Ottawa does not join the Saint Lawrence, until the latter has penetrated so far into the Lower Province, as to secure to us the entire and exclusive possession of this important outlet.

But it has been said that the time is not yet come for such extensive undertakings in Canada, that the advantages which could yet be derived from them, would not be, in any measure, proportionate to the expense.

In countries which have been long occupied by civilized nations, improvements of any description are

for the accommodation of communities already established, and consequently they have not that appearance of prematurity which is attached to them in this new part of the world, where they are intended often to precede population and encourage settlement.

When society has attained to full growth, its pace becomes steady and its measures more deliberate. But the rapid and lively movements of this new continent indicate the vigor and the hopes of early life. She has not yet assumed the heavy and regular steps of a country laden for ages with the effects of industry and enterprise, and we should be cautious in censuring as premature, any project which is likely to conduce to her advancement, for although the objection may not be supported with solidity of argument, yet it tends to cool and to discourage. It is a damper of every operation, an excuse for indolence and indecision, and the protector of a procrastinating disposition that would steal from Canada the very time which may have been "set to favor her."

But all grounds for such a charge against improvements on the Ottawa with a view to its junction with Lake Huron, will be done away when we observe, that the object is not merely to encourage settlement or population in Canada, but also to come in contact, by a direct communication with a population already formed, and increasing with unparalleled rapidity.

The spirit of enterprise which pervades the people of the States is truly remarkable. It is evi-



dently the hand of Providence at work to replenish with intelligence and civilization a portion of the earth, which until now has been only a wild and uncultivated shelter for scattered barbarians. The history of the world does not exhibit, at any former period, such rapid and gigantic strides in the spread of population. The salubrity of the climate and the fertility of the soil in the Michigan and North Western Territory seem to counterbalance their great distance from markets, and they are now filling with inhabitants. It was remarked lately in the New-York Observer, that

“ it is interesting to observe what a rush of emigration is now crowding into this Territory (Michigan).

“ The districts already surveyed and in the market, are filling up by swarms.

“ The North West Territory, bounded East by Lake Michigan, North by Lake Superior and other waters, and West by the Mississippi, is a wide region, and destined soon to attract the attention and enterprise of Emigrants, &c.”

It is to these regions, as I have already noticed, that our Emigrants will chiefly point, and it may be the best policy Government can adopt, to employ them on their passage, in opening up such communications through Canada, as will not only afford them temporary support, but would be the means of securing the trade of the population which is gathering along these inland seas, surrounded by coasts extending some thousands of miles; for while Great-Britain keeps



possession of her Colonies, she commands the principal and only direct navigable entrance to them.

An opening from Lake Huron by the Ottawa, would change the very aspect of that part of the country. Instead of being the most remote section of the States, the extensive shores of the upper Lakes would become a front with convenient water communication, nearer by some hundred miles to markets and the ocean, than a great proportion of the territories which now form the Union. The writer in the observer goes on to say that the "North-West Territory will possess  
 " the superior advantage of being always able to elect  
 " between the markets of New-York and New-  
 " Orleans." But an opening by the Ottawa, will give that Territory access to a better market than either of them, at less than half the distance. These favorable circumstances would not for a moment escape the notice of a people alive to every local advantage, and the very commencement of our operations would be the signal for accelerated motion to the tide of emigration already directed towards the Lakes. Before the completion of the work an increased population would occupy their shores in expectation of the benefits to be derived from it, and a foundation would be laid for such additional trade to Montreal and Quebec, as would soon place them among the greatest emporiums of the North-American Continent.

Thus, from the peculiar form and situation of Canada, she may reap advantage from the fields of her

neighbours, as well as from her own, if her internal communications be improved, and ready means of conveyance be formed to her sea ports for the produce of the Western Countries.

The circumstance of our rivers being closed by ice for several months in the year, has, in comparing them with the Ohio and Mississippi as outlets for the produce of the interior, been stated as a disadvantage. But this severity of season gives to the Saint Lawrence markets a great natural and consequently permanent superiority, far overbalancing the interruption in the navigation, for in climates like that of Canada, the necessaries of life always bear a much higher value than in the luxuriant countries nearer the equator. In descending the Mississippi, the produce would successively enter regions of greater fertility and plenty. But in its way through these colonies, it is evident the case would be reversed.

A direct navigation to Lake Huron, by the Ottawa, might also afford advantages in a political point of view. The Bay of Penetanguishine is well adapted for settlement. The lands belonging to the Canada Company on the Lake will not remain unoccupied, and from the description given of that part of the country lately explored (as before noticed) it seems to possess every inducement to settlers. The soil is good, and the situation healthy, being well supplied and intersected with rivers and lakes of the purest water. We may therefore very soon have population

and property to defend on that frontier, and this direct passage would evidently give great additional facility to military operations. It might even have a favorable effect on our political relations with the United States, by increasing their inducement to remain at peace with us. It is well known that the last war was very unpopular in that part of the Union bordering on Canada, and it is evident that a still stronger interest to maintain a friendly intercourse with Great-Britain, would be felt in those Western parts of the country, which would be so dependant on this outlet for the disposal of their produce.

The Rideau Canal was projected to prevent such enormous expence as was incurred during the last war, in conveying military stores to Lake Ontario, and the time may not be far distant, if we do not provide against it, when we may have to fight our way from Kingston to Lake Huron by a circuitous navigation, or to drag our stores over land as formerly, and at a similar cost. In short, if this channel be formed, benefit would accrue to the Canadas in proportion to the increase of population on the Upper Lakes, but if it be neglected, a contrary effect must be produced, for settlements in that direction, without a direct access to them, would in the event of hostilities, be a source of expense and inconvenience, and even in time of peace they would be productive of little or no general benefit to the Colony.

But these are mere hints of what may be done in Canada ; a very cursory view of the country will convince us that the objects of improvement are almost inexhaustible, and that as one is pursued another will present itself. The construction of roads may be spoken of, as a very important department of Emigrant employment, and would be particularly suitable, as it might be carried on with a very small proportion of tradesmen. Principal roads in various directions through the Provinces, if substantially made, would form for years, an extensive means of providing for Emigrants,\* and the immediate tendency of such extended operations would be the increased employment of labourers throughout the country by individuals. In fact, the effect of the whole measure here recommended would be a rapid acceleration of agricultural

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\* We have a good precedent for the expenditure of public money on roads. I allude to those formed by Government in the Highlands of Scotland. Their beneficial *political* consequences have been felt, and their great convenience and utility in other respects have given celebrity to their projector or superintendent, whose name has been handed down to posterity in the following Irish distich.

“ If any man had seen these roads before they were made,

“ He would have held up his hands and blessed General Wade.”

But with regard to other public works, the expence of the Rideau Canal may be stated as an objection. I do not, however, consider it a precedent—for although none should be commenced, but such as shall, ultimately be of real use to the country, yet it is to their progress and not to their completion, that we look for immediate relief and benefit. They may, therefore, be carried on, altogether on different and more frugal principles.

In the projection of the Rideau Canal, it was the wish of Government to obtain as speedily as possible, a ready access to Lake Ontario, and it is expected that Col. By, will, this season, fulfil that wish in the most complete manner. He may challenge the records of history to produce a work of such magnitude, executed with more celerity and perfection. Nor is it, by any means without its use as an inducement to settlement. That interior part of the country is now filling rapidly. It may be said, that by means of the Rideau Canal, the Military settlements and others on the Ottawa, and I may add the Eastern Townships in the Lower Province, the country is getting into shape. Hitherto, it has been nothing but a strip of population from Amherstburg to Kamouraska.



labor, for the increasing encouragements and facilities of every kind must induce the farmers to take advantage of the annual influx of cheap labor from the mother country, and her exertions for the support of the Emigrants would consequently become every year less necessary.

But it must not be forgotten that those exertions in the view of giving support and facility to emigration, are or may be made by Great Britain on the principle of economy. Mr. Horton's view is evidently correct, and would justify an outlay on a most liberal scale, quite independent of any question respecting the policy of expenditure on the Colonies. Looking at it however, simply as improving them, such outlay might be justified as safe and advantageous for the mother country. It has been said that contributing to the prosperity of Canada, so far from being a benefit to Great Britain, must have a tendency to hasten a separation by making the former more independent. But however much our local legislators may disagree on some points, yet I cannot conceive it possible that any man, who is capable of looking at the circumstances under which this country is placed, could, for a moment, seriously contemplate an attempt to assume independence. Capt. Hall has stated distinctly, the advantages our colonies possess, and has remarked, that, "united with the mother country, they enjoy a degree of happiness far greater and more secure than any nominal independence can



“ ever place within their reach.” This is no doubt correct—but unfortunately, when “ nominal independence” can be got sight of, it proves in many instances an *Ignis Fatuus*, in the pursuit of which, substantial advantages are cast away, and it is often discovered when too late, that the plain and solid path has been forsaken, that the ground has become hollow and slippery, and that the object is nothing but a phantom. Canada, is however, peculiarly exempted from this temptation, for although Great Britain were to lavish upon her all the riches of her treasury, in strengthening her at every point, she never could enable her to stand alone—she could never confer upon her the power of protecting her own interests on the ocean. Canada can furnish every material for the formation of a navy, but she could never maintain one. Nature has placed obstacles in her way that cannot be removed. Hermetically sealed by the season, for one half of the year, the power that has possession of the seas could with great ease perform a like office for the other half. Her foreign trade must be always carried on by the shipping of those nations who have the whole year for their navigation. Her strength lies in her internal resources and inland communications, and her safety in never dreaming of “ nominal independence.” It is, while the present political arrangements of this continent exist, entirely beyond her reach. She has only the alternative, of continuing to grow in respectability, as an important

part of the British Empire, or of sinking into insignificance, by becoming a back portion of the United States. We might therefore, even on this ground, expect a proportion of the unemployed capital in England to be vested in useful works in Canada. The claim rests on the intimate and almost indissoluble connexion between the two countries, on that indivisible interest which must always subsist among the component parts of a kingdom.

But even admitting the possibility of separation, it by no means follows that Great Britain would lose the fruits of her expenditure on the Provinces. Her enlightened policy has placed her on vantage ground in every political movement, and the established character of her people has given them a preference in every market. The general confidence thus inspired is not only the guardian, but is perhaps now a great source of her prosperity. If then, she bring Canada forward by improvements and population, if she open up her resources, and form her into what is called in mercantile phrase a good correspondent—she may then, with perfect safety leave her to the freedom of her own will. Canada might throw off her allegiance, but her merchants could not so easily get quit of the universal impression, that in the markets of no other nation would their interests be intrusted with so much safety or to so much advantage. Another passage may be quoted from the same author, as pointedly corroborative of these principles. In speaking of

the policy of Great Britain towards the Colonies, he says “ the cards, to use a common expression are in  
 “ our own hands, and we have only to play them well  
 “ to secure all the advantages which it is possible to  
 “ hope for. The secret of the game which is quite  
 “ simple, may be always found. It consists exclusive-  
 “ ly to consult in good faith, the genuine interests of  
 “ the Colonies, for be these what they may, they can  
 “ by no possibility fail in the long run to be ours  
 “ likewise.”

Whatever view, therefore, be taken of this mode of encouraging emigration by public works in Canada, it appears that the money so expended will, by no means, be lost to England. In short, the point of conclusion at which I wish to arrive is this, that in the prosecution of an extensive plan of general improvement, the difficulties attending emigration would, in a great measure, disappear. The emigrants would be supported, and the interests of both the Mother Country, and the Colonies promoted, rather by the diversion of an unavoidable expenditure, than by any additional outlay. If these views be correct, Great Britain has only to take advantage of the concurrence of favorable circumstances, which present themselves in the direction of Canada, as an opening for emigration. To what other country could she send with so little effort, or without diverting a single ship from its usual trade, fifty or sixty thousand emigrants annually? Or on what field could she employ them to so much purpose,

with such a certainty of their not returning, nor yet continuing to be a burden on the State? for while no further inducement was held out than mere subsistence, they would gradually disperse on the unbounded field before them, leaving room for a perpetual succession.

I am far, however, from putting these questions, in the assured confidence, that the means I am endeavoring to point out, are the best, or most effectual, which can be recommended. But I would humbly venture to hope, that the premises laid down, will justify me in submitting, as one scheme by which relief from a surplus pauper population may, in a good degree, be obtained,—the preservation and encouragement of the Colonial Lumber Trade,\* as a most essential ingre-

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\* The check given, in the Imperial Parliament, to the question on the Colonial lumber trade, has probably set it at rest for ever. But I am led to make some remarks on the arguments made use of, when it was under public discussion, by finding they are likely to damp some individuals connected with the trade. They entertain fears, that government may yet endeavour to suppress it, if the loss to the country be really so great, as it appears to be, by the statements which have been made.

In order to place our trade in as unfavorable a light as possible, the anticolonists blend two things, which should, certainly, be kept separate. The actual expense of an article, in its production, is altogether distinct from that which may be imposed on it as a tax. The latter is a mere discretionary measure, which may be adopted or not, as may be considered expedient. If government can do without the additional revenue, which would be obtained by transferring the timber trade entirely to the Baltic, so much the better. But if the money must be had, Parliament has only to do, what it has done in many instances already, endeavour to find it in some other way, which may not be so inconvenient, nor felt so severely.

There is a confusion in the idea of stating a reduction of any part of the revenue, as a public loss or expense, especially when that reduction has been made for a particular purpose, and yet the deficiency of the duties on timber since the year 1810, has been charged against the Colonies, as a loss they have occasioned to the country, of not less than twenty millions sterling!!

The Honorable Calculator has not, however, gone far enough. To have given his statement full effect, he should have exercised his arithmetical powers upon the next, as well as upon the last twenty years, and he would have probably found, in combining interest with the principal, that, at their expiration, the Colonies shall have "cost the Country" a sum little short of a hundred millions!



dient in any system of emigration, doing away the difficulty and great expense of conveyance, which must otherwise be met,—the adoption of the necessary steps to ascertain the most useful and important works, for the improvement and defence of this country, and of a general plan of operation, for their execution,—and then offering publicly to the labouring poor, immediate employment at a certain rate of wages, on

Let us suppose, that in the minor adjustments, at the period when Magna Charta was framed, a branch of the Crown revenue was cut off, by the reduction of a tax on some particular article, and if we calculate what might have been the amount collected, had the levy continued, without any alteration or modification, from the days of King John to the present time, we may find, upon the very same principle now applied to the Colonies, that the unlucky article has “cost the country” a much greater sum than would be required to wipe off the national debt !

That the Colonies should find a market in the Mother country for their timber, has been considered essential to their prosperity, and in the year 1810 it was of no small importance to Great Britain, to obtain the timber from them, being shut out from almost every other means of supply. The arrangements which were then made, were upon the principle of public welfare, and it is, therefore, by no means correct, to state the consequent deficiency in that particular branch of the revenue, as a positive loss to the country, or to consider that the Colonies, since the above period, have “cost the Country” a sum, which might have been collected on the Baltic timber, if the trade had continued as formerly. It can only be said, that this particular article has not contributed so much to the exigencies of the State, as it might have done, if these arrangements had not been thought of more consequence, than the deficiency occasioned thereby in the revenue, which has been, or could have been made up from some other quarter.

The question really appears to lie in a mere nut shell. The actual cost of the article is all we have to consider, in comparing the difference of expense between an importation from the Baltic and the Colonies.

The prices of timber in our colonial ports, and in those of the Northern countries of Europe, are nearly on a par, so that the additional expense consists entirely of the difference in the rate of freight, being about twenty shillings per ton. It, therefore, must be evident that upon the importation from the Colonies in 1829, of 600,000 tons, the sum expended above what would have brought that quantity from the Baltic, could not be more than £600,000. This is the only loss, if it be one, that can be wrung out, in whatever way the question be twisted.

The sum added in consideration of inferior quality is certainly compen-

their arrival in the Colony. These measures, with perhaps assistance to the most destitute in crossing the Atlantic, might open a prospect of amelioration in the condition of the lower classes, and it may not be presumptuous to expect, that they would tend much to take from them, every cause of complaint, or excuse for idleness.

sated by the Colonial timber selling at a lower price—more, however, from prejudice, perhaps, than good reason. I have heard this fancied inferiority stated as a disadvantage or inconvenience to Great Britain, but it is the first time I have seen it reduced to figures, as a charge against the Colonies. I should have supposed, if the consumer could get the Colonial timber thirty shillings per ton cheaper than the Baltic timber, and could make it answer his purpose, it would turn out a saving, rather than an expense. Nor need it even be admitted, that the difference on the freight, is an actual loss to the Country. If our Colonial timber were carried in foreign bottoms, it might be so, but as our own shipping are exclusively employed, it is only removing money from one pocket to another.

Those advocates whom the Northern Powers have found in the Councils of Britain to plead their cause against her own Colonies, have prudently kept out of view, a rise in the price of their timber, every sixpence of which would indeed be a real loss to the country, and which would inevitably take place, if the supply from the Colonies were checked. This is put out of all doubt by the fact, that the mere agitation of the question, had that effect, to a certain degree, both in the Baltic and English markets.

But if it could even be obtained somewhat cheaper from the Baltic, (which, however, there seems no good reason to admit,) the additional sum which might be paid on the importation of Colonial timber, should only be viewed as a general subscription over the whole nation, falling lightly on every individual, for the important purposes of encouraging the Colonies, in their rapid advance, as a most extensive market for British manufactures, and of furthering the interests of the ship owners, a body on which, above all others, depend the prosperity and independence of the Empire.

## POSTSCRIPT.



SINCE the foregoing observations were committed to paper, I have seen the published accounts of the first debate on the Emigration Bill, and notice, with pleasure, that employment is to be the chief mode of assistance. The adoption of that principle seems almost to render the publication of these sheets superfluous. But under the honest (though perhaps mistaken) conviction, that a more enlarged plan of operation than that proposed is necessary, I have still resolved not to suppress my views of the subject, and shall venture to add, with due submission to those whose means of examining it are greater than mine, a few short remarks in immediate reference to the measure in contemplation.

The rate of wages which may be given in encouraging emigration by employment, is perhaps of more importance than may at first be supposed. That of *2s. 6d.* per day seems to have been determined upon, as something below the wages common in the country, which are rated as high as *3s. 9d.* It is true that from *3s.* to *4s.* is often given in harvest, and for summer work in the Towns; but the wages of farmers' men, in regular employment, are generally from five to eight dollars per month, and ten dollars are consi--

dered high, even in most parts of the Upper Province, so that after adding the expense of board, about one shilling per day, the average throughout the year appears to be considerably under 2*s.* 6*d.* But there seems to be no particular cause for keeping up the wages of emigrants dependant on public assistance, as high, or nearly so, as those common in the Colony, while there are certainly many reasons for reducing, as much as possible, the expense upon each individual.

This will hardly be disputed, if we cease to consider the settlement of all or most of the labourers in the Colony as essential, our object in that case being rather to encourage than to prevent their dispersion ; but even continuing to aim at their settlement here, I am persuaded that a high rate of wages will, on the whole, rather retard than forward it. Labourers seldom save money when on public works, at any rate of pay. A very small proportion would be so enabled to obtain the means of settlement, and a still smaller would actually settle in the Colony.

But while high wages would do real benefit only to a few, they would have the bad effect of concentrating the emigrants around the Government works. The general wages of the country, if not raised would be kept from falling, as they necessarily ought to do upon such an accession of cheap labour, and there being thus no particular encouragement (from a fall of wages at least) to open additional opportunities of employment among the inhabitants, this pub-



lic channel of relief would soon become stagnant and ineffectual, or be carried to an oppressive extent. Low wages, on the contrary, would incline the emigrants to spread over the country, to depend more upon the farmers, and look to Government only as a last resource. Country employment is, after all, more valuable for them than that of public works, where there is every temptation to spend ; while the farming labourer being boarded with his employer, cannot, in fact, avoid the accumulation of his wages for months, whatever he may do with them afterwards, and he often receives them in the very materials of settlement, viz : land, stock, grain, &c.

It may be said, that in arranging the wages of emigrant labour, a long and possibly idle winter ought to be considered, and that a certain rate, above that of mere subsistence, may be necessary to induce a sufficient emigration, to relieve the Mother Country. But, the above reasoning, if correct, will also answer these objections. A few might, but the greatest number would not save against winter, had they even the power to do it ; and in enlarging individual employment (by withdrawing every thing like competition for labour on the part of Government) we shall open up a far more powerful source, both of support in winter, and general encouragement to emigration, than high Government wages could prove to be.

But perhaps the strongest reason for keeping the wages under the common rate is, that in that way

alone, the system of relief or assistance by public work could be thrown equally open to all emigrants—a principle which seems almost indispensable, in any way the subject can be viewed. The principle of *unlimited* employment may, at first sight be startling, but it may not be found very formidable in carrying it into operation. It would no doubt be impracticable on wages of 2s. 6d.  $\frac{1}{2}$  day, but at a shilling less, might be found easy.

If works were opened under the superintendence of government, it might be very difficult to persevere in a distinction with regard to applicants for labour, in whatever quarter the funds may have been raised. It is not the usual policy of our government to give exclusive facilities, and in practice it would probably be found impossible, to leave the voluntary emigrant and his family on the road, while the transported pauper was relieved. The practicable way seems to be, to retain the principle of Parish relief, as to low wages, but offering them freely to all, and public works conducted on such a plan in Canada, are not likely to be overburdened with men, while there is so much scope on her own fields, and on those of her neighbours, for individual enterprise. This mode of proceeding would simplify the whole measure, and confine all its arrangements to the Colonies, where, if employment were certain, emigrants would not fail to find their way in sufficient numbers, without the interference of government.

But it is evident that this unlimited principle cannot be followed, if the measure be confined to Parish contributions.

It is reasonable and practicable, that each of the Parishes should pay the expense of the transport of their own paupers. Upon their landing, however, in this country, the local distinctions are lost sight of, and the evil or inconvenience being generally felt, ought to be met on general principles. And here, I cannot refrain from again calling to my aid Mr. Horton's proposition, that in doing so effectually there will ultimately be, not an expense, but a saving to the British Nation. If this argument were properly enforced by influential men, it would go far towards reconciling the public mind, to those general and extensive measures which may be necessary to procure the relief which is wanted in the Mother Country.

There is another view to be taken, embracing a motive for an unlimited plan of employment, which may have weight at home, and that is the influence it would have on the character of the emigration.

In the course of the debate it was announced, that an increasing independent emigration to Canada was going on, amounting, last year, to nearly thirty thousand individuals, which was advanced apparently as a proof that little more was wanting than partial facilities. But we can, with probability, suppose the existence of an emigration, of even one hundred

thousand annually, and yet of such a nature as to leave as many unemployed in the Mother Country, as before it took place, for a great proportion of them might have been, in one way or other, employers of the poor. The actual relief at home last year was, possibly, not great, for it is generally acknowledged, that a body of emigrants never before landed in Quebec, of comparatively so respectable appearance, which is one plain reason why they "*were absorbed,*" or at least disappeared, with so little inconvenience to the public.

This would be a matter of less consequence, if we could make sure of the settlement of the better sort in the Colonies, as their funds might soon be as effectually turned towards the relief of the British poor as formerly, and although a spirited system of improvement by roads and otherwise, would be the means of detaining a much larger proportion of them than remain at present, yet considering the peculiar situation of this country, it is unsafe to depend much upon such a result.

In a general and continued emigration it is the undoubted policy of the Mother Country to aim at keeping back her better classes, and letting go her lowest, but as direct restraint cannot be applied to the one, the fullest rein ought to be given to the other. The word of Government insuring employment and subsistence in Canada to every comer, would certainly have a very great effect in exciting the effort of emi-



gration among labourers, and hope would naturally brighten the more distant prospect, beyond the moderate, but sufficient provision immediately held out. In short, a general stir would be created, precisely among the right description of people, and those having a real stake in the country, either in England or Ireland, would surely not be backward in assisting them across the Atlantic, while the necessity existed for thinning the population.

In taking this view of the subject, I do not think, I am, at all, losing sight of the particular interest of Canada, for no measures that Government can adopt, will altogether prevent the better classes from following the tide, and such general improvements set on foot, might, as I have already stated, lead many to settle in the Colony, that would otherwise leave it. Thus, although they could not be kept within the Mother Country, they may still be retained in this part of her dominions.