

CANADA.

Report of the Agent
for Emigration.

The prosecutions which I have found it necessary to institute against masters of vessels for infringement or evasion of the provisions of the law, have been six in number. In five of these cases I have recovered penalties to the extent of 90*l.* sterling; the particulars of each having been specially reported to your Excellency, as also to the Commissioners of Emigration, I do not conceive it necessary to enter more fully into them, than by stating the heads of the charges, and the decision of the magistrates, with the amount of penalties awarded; viz. barque "John Francis," from Cork, for issuing unwholesome provisions; master fined 20*l.* sterling. Brig "Mary Ann," from Bideford, for evasion of the 3d section of the Imperial Act; master fined 15*l.* sterling; the master, however, absconded and the penalty was not recovered. Brig "Coxon," from Cork, for evasion of the 25th clause; master fined 20*s.* sterling. Barque "Florence," from Plymouth, for neglecting to issue the proper allowance of water according to law; master fined 5*l.* Barque "Constitution," from Belfast, for issuing unwholesome bread, and not serving out the proper allowance of water; master fined two penalties of 25*l.* each, 50*l.* The barque "Champlain," from Baltimore, was prosecuted for issuing bad and unwholesome biscuit; the magistrates, however, dismissed the case, as the evidence for the defence satisfied them that the master, who had used every precaution to procure good bread, had been imposed upon by his baker. The collector of customs at this port caused the master of the barque "Jane Duffus," from Glasgow, to be fined in the penalty of 40*l.* for having an excess of eight passengers over his complement. This is the first penalty which has been imposed under the new Act, at this port, for this offence; and I have no doubt that it will have the desired effect of putting a stop to an evil which, under the former law, was of frequent occurrence.

The season of 1843 was the first in which the new Passenger Act has been in operation. It is satisfactory to find that the cases of infringement have been few; and I have every reason to hope, that it being now so generally and extensively known among the masters in this trade that the provisions of this Act will be strictly adhered to in every instance, and the result of all the prosecutions entered during the past season having been in favour of the Crown, that the number of complaints of this kind will be greatly diminished for the future.

The care with which the Act has been framed seems to have secured a provision against all attempts to impose on the emigrant; and there can arise few cases in which the recourse afforded by it will prove insufficient. I cannot, however, refrain from alluding to the case of the "Mary Ann," from Bideford, reported to your Excellency in my letter to the Chief Secretary, of the 28th July last, enclosing the report of the Crown officer who conducted the prosecution, a copy of which will be seen at Paper No. 11, page 22, of the Appendix.

The facility with which the penalty imposed in this case was evaded, by the withdrawal of the master, would appear to require amendment in the Act; for it appears a hardship that an action should hold good only against the master, who, in many instances, is not the guilty party, and which appears to have been the case in this particular instance. The master, acting, in the majority of cases, as the servant of the owner of the vessel, cannot consistently refuse to comply with the orders he may receive. It would seem, therefore, that the penalty should, in the first instance, as in the case now, be recoverable from the master; but, in the event of his withdrawal, the ship should be held responsible.

The number of emigrants who have been aided in their emigration by their landlords or parish authorities is, in proportion to the emigration, greater than that of last year.

In Paper No. 7, page 13, of the Appendix, I have endeavoured to set forth the number assisted from each country. From England, the numbers were 914; Ireland, 360; and Scotland, 1,051. Of those from England, 659 were sent out under the superintendence of the Poor Law Commissioners, and were well and amply provided for; and received the usual landing money, under the superintendence of this department; the remaining 255 received partial assistance from their respective parishes, paid to them previously to their leaving home, to enable them to emigrate. These were generally industrious tradesmen and agriculturists, with large families, who, from want of employment, were induced to emigrate. Their means, however, were barely sufficient to enable them to reach this port; and they all required assistance from this office, to enable them to proceed to their respective destinations.

The few emigrants from Ireland all landed very poor. The assistance given them, so far as I could ascertain, was a free passage, and 5*s.* each, to assist in providing provisions. They, with few exceptions, required relief on their landing here, to enable them to proceed to their friends. They were chiefly from the county of Kilkenny. The Scotch emigrants, with the exception of 36, who were aided in their emigration by his Grace the Duke of Sutherland, were from the ports of Glasgow and Greenock, and were all members of emigration societies. It appears that 28 societies were established during the early part of this year, in Glasgow and its suburbs, comprising in all 3,354 persons; of this number only 1,015 were enabled to emigrate, owing to the limited state of their funds; and a balance of 70*l.* sterling was remitted to this department by the committee in Glasgow, to be applied in aid