

Miramichi, 5th September 1827.

My dear Sir,

I HAVE received your favour of 8th ultimo, containing certain queries relative to the effect which the present system of emigration from the mother country to the British Colonies has had upon this place; when I say the present system, I allude to the recent measure of the Government at home in suspending the operations of the late Act of the British Parliament imposing certain restrictions and obligations upon the masters and ship-owners, in the conveying and exporting of emigrants to these colonies; and in reply I beg leave to observe, that as the enforcing of these parliamentary restrictions and obligations were attended with the most salutary and beneficial consequences to the poor emigrants, so the doing away with them must be attended with the most serious evils: at all times ships arriving at this place with emigrants were apparently too much crowded, and contagious or epidemic disorders were very frequently the consequence, but since the suspension of the above-mentioned restrictions upon the masters and owners, the state of the emigrant on his arrival is deplorable and heart-rending in the extreme; little or no attention is apparently paid to their health or comfort on board the vessel, but as many as can possibly be stowed into the vessel are embarked; in fact the only inquiry that is made or object looked to, by those concerned in the exportation of those unfortunate people (if I can judge from the situation of the human cargoes that have arrived this season), are simply whether the passenger can pay for his passage, and lay in his sea stores; indeed as relates to the ship-owners and masters, it is altogether matter of speculation, and very little better than the slave trade; the consequence is, that an overwhelming number of the most miserable and squalid race of emigrants ever beheld, have this season been landed upon our shores penniless; many of them diseased and unable to work, by which means the country is inundated with the scum of the population at home, half of them paupers shipped off, we have too much reason to believe, in many cases by the police of many of the towns at home, to free themselves from the burden of supporting their own poor. Diseases and distempers of the most virulent and appalling nature are thus introduced among the population of the country, and so far from the country deriving benefit from an increase of population thus produced, it is literally looked upon by the inhabitants, from woeful experience, as a curse upon the country so severely have they felt, and so severely do they continue to feel, the direful effects of the evils thus introduced among them; in truth the present system of emigration, as far as we can at present judge, is only calculated to exchange or transfer the miseries, arising from a redundant population, from the old to the new world, merely changing the scene of distress, infesting the country with a set of worthless and depraved characters, and burdening the inhabitants with additional poor-rates. I think I am within bounds, when I say one half of the emigrants that have arrived here this season, who have remained in the country, are now dependent upon the bounty of the inhabitants for their subsistence. I do not mean by what I have said to discourage emigration in toto, but merely to point out the dreadful consequences, both to the emigrant and to the inhabitants of the country they emigrate to, under the present system. I at the same time do not hesitate to say, that I am clearly of opinion, that two or three hundred emigrants well selected, men of sober, steady and industrious habits, might be advantageously located annually upon the wilderness lands in this part of the province, if sent out under the auspices of Government, say with two years or eighteen months' provisions in advance, less will not do. Emigration upon such a system would be of infinite service, and soon be the means of replacing our black forests with fields of corn, and fill the country with a hardy and robust peasantry; the climate healthy, the lands easily cultivated, and agriculture simple. Emigrants of this description, and with such encouragement, cannot fail to make a comfortable livelihood. I have thus given you my ideas upon this subject, formed principally from observation and from information I have been able to collect from those who are aware of the manner in which these emigrants are picked up and shipped off in the old country. I believe what I have said is quite in unison with the opinion of all the principal inhabitants of this place, certainly with all with whom I have conversed upon the subject.

I remain, my dear Sir, yours truly,

(signed)

A. Street.

Richard Simonds, esq.

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Fredericton.

Enclosure,  
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