

NEW BRUNSWICK.

These are, first, the form in which the lots are laid out. These are said to be sometimes as much as seven miles deep and only 30 rods wide.—Secondly, the sale of large blocks to land speculators, who obtain them not for improvement, but for re-sale—and, Thirdly, the want of a continuity of survey, by reason of which settlers are dispersed and divided.

5. I agree with the committee, that any defects of this kind which may exist, must be of an injurious tendency. In so far, however, as regards the first and third of the points adverted to, viz. the shape of the lots and the want of a continuity of survey, it can only rest with the Executive Government of the province if satisfied of the prevalence of these evils, to supply the remedy by an alteration of its present regulations and instructions.

6. The separation of the settlers, in consequence of the accumulation in private hands of large tracts, held not for improvement but for re-sale, is an evil which it is more difficult to deal with. One safeguard against it might be afforded by a much higher upset price. And I can quite believe that the price of land might advantageously be raised, notwithstanding the lower rate at which it might be bought elsewhere, provided that the purchase-money were spent on roads and on other improvements which would make the land more valuable to the real settler, so that the increase of price to him would be nominal. But from the tenor of the opinions which have often been expressed from the province, I am aware that no increase of price is likely to be deemed admissible there; and it must be admitted that such an increase would not remedy the evil which already exists, even though it should prevent its recurrence. The only measure which would attain both objects would be the imposition of a small tax on land applicable to local purposes, such as exists in the Northern States of the Union and in the province of Canada. This measure, if feasible, is one which can emanate only from the local Legislature, but which it is competent to that authority to pass at any time, if judged by it to be requisite for the public interest.

7. Besides pointing out the defects which I have above examined, the committee give their opinion in favour of a plan* of settlement suggested to them by Mr. Beckwith, of the Land Department, of which the principal features are, that the land should be disposed of in small lots, and that the settler should only pay one-fourth of the price in money, contributing the remainder in labour on the roads. This is a scheme which in various forms has often been suggested from New Brunswick, and which, in some cases, that will be within your knowledge, has been actually tried.

8. I need scarcely mention the objections of a general character to sales of land upon credit. They have been repeatedly urged in those treatises which have most authority on the subject of colonization, and have been often reproduced in public documents. In Lord Stanley's despatch of the 3d of February 1843, and in the previous papers therein referred to, he pointed out these objections as applicable to some plans which were then contemplated in New Brunswick, and he again referred to them in a later despatch, of the 28th of September 1844, upon certain new land regulations at that time devised by the Council. Nevertheless, Lord Stanley stated that, as they were recommended on such high authority, he would not desire them to be cancelled, but would leave it to the Governor to act upon them, until experience should show whether or not they were advantageous to the province.

9. I am not aware, however, that any very distinct report was ever made by your predecessor of the extent to which these rules were acted upon, or of the consequences which may have ensued. From his despatch of the 27th of April 1847, I gathered that the Legislature objected to incurring any expense for the formation of such settlements. I can only state that the whole subject having been referred to the local authorities, I am not aware of the existence of any instructions from home that would interfere with the trial of any experiment which may be shown to the satisfaction of yourself and of the Legislature, if a vote of public money be required, to be advisable.

I have, &c.

(signed) Grey.

* See page 21.

Parl. Paper, 291,
1843, page 153.

Parl. Paper, June
1847, page 15.