

PRINCE EDWARD
ISLAND.

Bannerman has replied, that the object of the Act was to diminish rather than increase the tax on emigrants, and that the duty imposed on the master, of preventing the landing of any passengers until certain conditions had been complied with, was also enacted in the Act of 1848, and was not then objected to.

3. In respect to the first point we would beg to observe, that the tax imposed by the Act of 1848 was,—

On every passenger or emigrant	-	-	-	-	8	4	sterling.
If placed in quarantine for 5 days	-	-	-	-	16	8	—
If placed in quarantine for 10 days	-	-	-	-	25	0	—

For indigent or impotent emigrants, or men over 60 and women over 50 years of age, either double tax or a commuted tax of 10s. each. All these taxes were doubled on emigrants arriving after the 1st of September, and trebled on those arriving after the 1st of October.

4. The tax imposed by the Act of the last session was on every passenger or emigrant (including cabin passengers) arriving between 1st April and 1st of October, 12s. currency, equal to 10s. sterling; on those arriving between 1st of October and 1st of April, 18s. currency, equal to 15s. sterling, with an addition of 5s. currency, or 4s. 2d. sterling on emigrants placed in quarantine for five days, and 10s. currency, or 8s. 4d., on those placed in quarantine for ten days. The additional tax on emigrants arriving between the 1st of October and the 1st of April may, however, be commuted for a bond to repay any expenses incurred within twelve months on account of such emigrants. We subjoin a comparison of the two Acts in a tabulated form, as the readiest means of bringing the difference between them clearly into view.

General Tax.		If placed in quarantine for 5 days.		If placed in quarantine for 10 days.		If arriving after the 1st of October.	
1848.	1851.	1848.	1851.	1848.	1851.	1848.	1851.
8s. 4d. sterling.	10s. sterling.	16s. 8d.	14s. 2d.	25s.	18s. 4d.	25s. and 16s. 8d. between 1 Sept. and 1 Oct.	15s. or bond for 12 months.

5. We should hardly ourselves take the same view as Sir A. Bannerman has expressed of the effect of these alterations, because, although the tax of 1851 is less heavy on emigrants placed in quarantine or arriving after the 1st of September and 1st October, and upon indigent and impotent and aged emigrants, it is heavier on healthy emigrants arriving between 1st April and 1st September, which in every emigration must be expected to constitute the bulk of the emigrants. We should have little doubt that the aggregate sum received on an average of years would be greater under the tariff of 1851 than under that of 1848. And it is to be remarked, that the Act of 1848 did not contain the special clause making cabin as well as steerage passengers liable to the tax. But it was not only or principally with reference to the previous Act of Prince Edward Island that we questioned the policy of so high a tax, but rather, as we intimated, with reference to the similar tax in the adjoining provinces and the neighbouring states of the Union. We annex an extract from our last colonization circular, showing the amount of the tax in the other British North American provinces; and we may add, that in the state of New York the tax is 1½ dollars or 6s. 3d. sterling.

6. Secondly, in regard to the penalty imposed on the master for allowing passengers to land until certain conditions have been complied with, it is no doubt true that a precisely similar clause was contained in the Act of 1848, and not then objected to. It will be remembered, however, that the Act of 1848 was passed in Prince Edward Island, as similar Acts were passed in the other British North American provinces, under peculiar circumstances. The frightful mortality which had occurred among emigrants during the preceding year, and the contagion which they had imported with them into the countries which received them, joined to the apprehension, then general, of a return of the sickness and mortality in 1848, appeared to justify and require measures of unusual strictness for the protection of the settled inhabitants of the colonies. Accordingly precautionary Acts were passed by the Legislatures of Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia, as well as Prince Edward Island, and were allowed to go into operation. These Acts, however, have since been modified in Canada and New Brunswick in those parts which were most calculated to restrict emigration. It appeared to us, that the clause to which we referred, though justifiable when there was a risk that a large number of destitute emigrants might be thrown into Prince Edward Island, was scarcely required now that emigration has returned to its ordinary course; and considering the importance to Prince Edward Island of obtaining an accession to its population and capital, we thought our duty, in considering the Act of last session, to point out this as one of the clauses which seemed calculated in some degree to discourage the resort of emigrants to the island.

We have, &c.

T. W. C. MURDOCH.

C. ALEXANDER WOOD.