

its application would be attended with great difficulty, and would become the object of every description of jobbing, and at last it would probably be impossible to secure its appropriation to its legitimate purpose. But if not so appropriated it would in reality be a boon, not to the emigrant, but to the landlord or parish, which, but for the grant must have borne the expense. It would, besides, have a most injurious effect, since, by raising extravagant expectations, as to the future intentions of Government, it would paralyze all individual exertion.

For these reasons I am of opinion that no attempt should be made by Parliamentary grant to pay the passages of emigrants. The inducements to parishes and landlords are sufficiently strong to make them undertake the burthen, and they know better how to apply their means than the Government could possibly do. But I am not the less of opinion that Parliament may very fairly be expected to contribute towards the expenses of emigration, and I shall now point out the several objects to which I think such a contribution should be principally directed.

From the weekly reports from time to time transmitted to your Lordship, from Mr. Buchanan's present report, and more than all, from the report of the medical superintendent at Grosse Isle, which accompanied my despatch of the 26th ultimo, your Lordship will perceive the necessity of taking steps to ensure to emigrants more ample protection and assistance, both before and during their passage. This may, to a certain extent, be accomplished by amending the present Passengers' Act, and making more effectual provision for its future enforcement; but other measures will likewise be necessary, to which I shall presently call your attention.

You will observe, that of the emigrants who proceed to Canada, a large proportion, even when they embark, are insufficiently provided with clothes, with bedding or provisions; that in many cases they have about them the seeds of disease, arising from the destitution and misery in which they have been living previous to embarkation, and that as a necessary consequence great sickness and mortality occur on the voyage, and immediately after their arrival in Canada.

Against destitution and, to a certain extent, disease, on the part of the poorer emigrants, it is impossible altogether to guard; but from the reports to which I have referred, it is evident that a great part of these evils are caused by the fraudulent practices on the part of passenger agents, by the rapacity of the ship charterers, and by misconduct of the officers during the voyage. Here, then, is the first object for which Government assistance is required; viz. to increase the efficiency of the Government agents at the outports, and to put down the

system of kidnapping which is said to be practised by travelling passenger agents. If this be done, and if the emigrant agents and custom-house officers do their duty, scenes such as those described by Dr. Douglas cannot recur.

I take it for granted that the existing law would be sufficient to punish the frauds practised by passenger agents; but if not, a provision should be introduced in the Passenger Act to meet that case. Strict care should likewise be taken in every instance where an emigrant vessel is detained beyond the time appointed for her sailing, to enforce the 14th clause of the existing Act against the master. The emigrant agents by making it their practice to visit the places where emigrants are generally lodged when waiting for their passage, and by attentively observing the proceedings of the passenger vessels at their respective stations, might, I conceive, easily perform this duty. I would further suggest to your Lordship whether some steps might not be taken, either by the Government, or in communication with the municipal authorities at Liverpool, to provide accommodation for emigrants resorting to that port to embark for America.

For the protection of the emigrant during the passage, Mr. Buchanan has, in the Appendix to his report, suggested several alterations of the Passengers' Act; in which, so far as they regard the further limitation of the number of passengers in proportion to tonnage, the prohibition of the sale of ardent spirits, the enforcement of the penalties in a summary way before the local magistrates, and the extension of the Act to all vessels carrying steerage passengers, I entirely concur. Of the importance of the last of these provisions the Report before me affords full proof, it appearing that in the case of the "———" the clearest evidence of misconduct on the part of the Captain and the un-seaworthiness of the ship was of no avail, because the number of Passengers was less by four than that allowed by the Passengers' Act. I must presume that it was from this circumstance only that the vessel was allowed by the emigrant agent at Glasgow to proceed to sea in so un-seaworthy a state.

The third and fourth clauses of the Passengers' Act, if faithfully complied with, would appear sufficiently to regulate the provisioning of emigrant vessels.

The fifth clause imposes on the officers of customs the duty of seeing that the preceding clauses are obeyed, but I regret to state that this duty is notoriously neglected; and I am not aware that any censure has ever followed that neglect. In order, however, to ensure greater vigilance in future, I would suggest that at all ports where an emigrant agent is stationed, the customs' officers should be directed not to give a clearance to any vessel coming within the purview of the Passengers' Act,