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Copy of a DESPATCH from Sir Thomas Cochrane to Viscount Goderich,  
dated 25th September 1827.

Government-House, St. John's, Newfoundland,  
25th September 1827.

My Lord,

IN the month of May, a vessel named the "Freedom," arrived from Waterford in Ireland, partly laden with salt, and having a number of passengers on board in a very sickly state, several of whom died on the passage, and a number were landed in a most deplorable condition.

Other vessels laden with passengers have since come in, either bound direct to this port or on their way to Qubec or Halifax, more or less similarly afflicted by disease, which has been communicated to the lower orders of people in this town, spreading itself in the first instance in a manner to excite much alarm; but I am happy to say the deaths only amount as yet to eighty-one, and all serious cause for apprehension has ceased.

Of the vessels that have thus brought passengers and disease to this port, I will now have the honour of bringing two of them under your Lordship's more immediate observation; the first is the "Freedom," a small brig, burthened only 119 tons; the accompanying particulars contained in two reports from the surveyor of navigation, will more fully depict the state of that vessel than any detail of mine can give, nor will any remarks from me be necessary to excite your Lordship's sympathies in learning that fellow-creatures have been so inhumanly dealt with as the poor wretches embarked on board this vessel; but it is incumbent on me to state to your Lordship, that from every information I at the time received, of the condition of these people either oral or in writing, I do really believe there are not many instances of slave traders from Africa to America exhibiting so disgusting a picture, and that the affecting narratives which the public prints so often detail of the state of slave vessels boarded by British cruizers would apply in all its force to the case of the "Freedom," and might with almost equal truth have been published to the world by any foreign vessel of war, that unfortunately might chance to have fallen in with her; and I have no hesitation in assuring your Lordship, that the most favourable account that reached me of this vessel, admitted of no sort of comparison between her and a French slave brig, captured by me four years ago, when in command of a frigate on the Leeward Island station.

The second vessel is the brig "James," of Waterford, bound to Halifax, having on board 164 passengers, 21 of whom, and 4 of her crew, were ill with typhus fever on her arrival, and who put in here for want of provisions. There is no complaint made of the room in this vessel for the number of persons on board, but the system adopted in her, and which now very generally prevails, of making the passengers supply themselves with provisions during the voyage, is one which calls for your Lordship's serious consideration. Many of the individuals who came out in these vessels probably never saw one before, and all of them are totally ignorant of the necessary provisions to lay in for so uncertain a voyage as that of crossing the Atlantic; and even were the stock of each calculated on first sailing to meet the longest passage, it may with as much reason be expected that sailors, if supplied each with an adequate allowance for a voyage round the globe, should make it last until their return, as that these ignorant people should economize their provision for the period it was provided for; and it is to be apprehended that some serious consequence will ensue if the present system is permitted to continue, for a vessel named the "Maria" came in under similar circumstances to the "James," with the addition of the passengers in a state of mutiny, several of them in irons, and the master armed to protect his own provision from seizure by the remainder.

Until the year before last the Passenger Acts applied to Newfoundland, except in the case of hired servants, when another Act was passed, from the operation of which Newfoundland and the Labrador were altogether expressly excluded; upon what principle such exclusion took place, or at whose instigation His Majesty's government were induced to make the exception, I am entirely ignorant; and I have little doubt but false representations must have been made on the subject, by those persons who make a trade of importing paupers here in the spring, and pro-