

The Legislatures of Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick respectively have passed homestead exemption laws. The former has also devoted large tracts of land for the behoof of actual settlers, in free grants of one hundred acres each, with permission to purchase an additional one hundred acres at fifty cents an acre. Though these terms are not precisely similar to the homestead exemption and free-grant system of the United States, they are presumed to be equally favorable. Your Committee doubt not that the terms will be altered or modified, should it be found in the interest of settlement to do so. The new policy, so far, appears to be liberal and progressive, and may be held as justifying a claim for adjustment by persons in arrears to the Government on account of purchased lands in the comparatively recent settlements, but which lands, for various reasons, are of little real value.

The mode in which the mineral lands in the Dominion are to be disposed of, and the obligations imposed by the Governments, with regard to the manner of working these lands, will very much affect the number of mining immigrants, as well as the flow of capital necessary for the development of our mineral resources.

The mode of disposing of these lands should be at once inviting and encouraging; therefore, your Committee desire to express the hope that the public policy in regard to them will be quite as liberal as that which appears to have succeeded in the United States. By the investment of capital in extracting the treasures of the mines, a consuming population necessarily follows, so that, besides giving value to that which has no value while hidden in the earth, a home market is opened for the produce and manufactures of the country.

All which is respectfully submitted.

GEORGE JACKSON,  
*Chairman.*

Committee Room,  
Ottawa, 12th May, 1868.

(A.)

GOVERNMENT IMMIGRATION OFFICE,  
Quebec, 26th April, 1868.

SIR,—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 20th instant, expressing the desire of your Committee that I should offer my views upon matters relating to immigration generally, and more particularly with regard to that branch of the subject affecting the annual expenditure of public money in conveying indigent foreign emigrants to their destinations in the neighboring States.

In connection with this most important question, I beg leave to observe, in reply, that the system of affording the pauper emigrant assistance in transport, in vogue up to the present time, has received the attention of the various political heads of this Department, and of the late Chief Agent of Emigration, Mr. Buchanan, for some years past. It has, moreover, formed the subject of investigation and report by former Parliamentary Committees, and even as late as June, 1866, the then Minister of Immigration (Honorable T. D. McGee), proposed introducing a Bill before Parliament, with the object of making the masters of foreign vessels responsible for the care of their poor. This Bill, however, which was referred, in its preliminary stage, by the Minister to the Chief Agent for his opinion, was subsequently withdrawn, upon the grounds embodied in the following memorandum:—

“GOVERNMENT IMMIGRATION OFFICE,  
“Quebec, 7th July, 1866.

“I consider the restrictions laid down in the proposed amendments too general in their character and intent.

“The Act, in my opinion, should apply exclusively to emigrants from continental ports, who are avowedly destined to the Western States of America.

“I should very much regret to see any embargo whatever placed upon emigrant ships from the United Kingdom.

“I should prefer to be vested with discretionary power, enabling me to forward, at