

Enclosure in No. 2.

CANADA.

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SIR,

Quebec, December 27, 1847.

I HAVE the honour to submit for the information of his Excellency the Governor-General a Tabular Return (A), showing the number of emigrants who have been admitted, discharged, and who have died at the Grosse Isle Quarantine Hospital Establishment for the season ending 3rd November.

To enable a comparison to be drawn between the proportion of sick this season with that of former years, I have added a Table (B), exhibiting the number treated in hospital since 1833, a period of 14 years, with the per centage of sick and deaths each bears to the total number of emigrants arrived.

These returns will show that, while the emigration of this year has been more than double that of any previous year, the sickness and deaths have been in a much greater proportion.

In the conclusion of my Annual Report of last season, I remarked, that "from the experience of many years of the causes which produce disease among emigrants, I am persuaded that next season the number of sick will exceed that of any previous year. The partial failure of the potatoe crop last season (1845) caused much sickness; its almost total failure in that country and the north of Scotland this season (1846) will have the effect of pouring upon our shores thousands of debilitated and sickly emigrants." The result of the past season's emigration has more than fulfilled my prediction. Two causes, which could not have been foreseen, have conspired to augment beyond all calculation the number of destitute and diseased emigrants.

The first of these was the enactment of a law by the general government of the United States, which, by limiting the number which each passenger vessel could carry, made the cost of a passage so high as virtually to exclude all but those having a certain amount of means of their own. A law previously in existence in the State of New York, which obliged the master or owner of a vessel bringing passengers to give bonds, that no emigrant brought out by them became chargeable to the commonwealth for a period of two years after their arrival, was more strictly enforced.

The effect of these laws was to turn the stream of pauper emigration to the British provinces. I estimate the accession to our emigration this year through the operation of this cause at from 30,000 to 40,000.

Another cause of the increase this season has been the application to Ireland of a poor-law. To avoid the enormous expense which will attend its execution in some parts of the country where destitution abounds, many landlords have given free passages to those having claims on the land. In selecting these, they have, naturally enough, abstained from choosing the young, strong able-bodied labourer, but have sought to rid their estates of helpless widows with large families, cripples unable to work, aged persons, the confirmed idle and lazy, and those whose constitutions had been enfeebled by previous sickness and destitution. Such was the character and description of many of the settlers sent out from the ports of Liverpool, Dublin, Cork, and Limerick, as more particularly described in my official reports at different times during the past season.

I will enter upon a detailed statement of the operations of the season.

On the 4th of May, the usual hospital staff left for the island, with the addition to the establishment of an hospital steward, one orderly, and one nurse, the duty of the apothecary and steward having previously been performed by the same person, 50 new iron beds were ordered, and double the quantity of straw used in former years for bedding was purchased before leaving town. An additional building was ordered and commenced immediately. These preparations were deemed sufficient for the commencement, as the greatest number of sick had in former years arrived in the months of July and August. The hospital accommodation, as it then existed, was amply sufficient for 200 sick, the average of former years never having attained half that number requiring admission at one time.

On the 14th of May, the barque "Syria" arrived from Liverpool, which port she left on the 28th of March, with 243 passengers. On mustering them for inspection at Grosse Isle, I found that nine had died on the voyage, and 52 were lying ill with fever and dysentery. The sick were landed at once and placed in hospital, and the seemingly healthy were landed with the baggage at the sheds. The day after they were landed it was found necessary to send 21 of these to hospital, and each day others fell ill until the 28th, on which day 125 were patients in hospital.

On the 19th of May, five days after the arrival of the "Syria," the barque "Perseverance" and ship "Wandsworth," both from Dublin, arrived, the former having 62 and the latter 78 cases of fever and dysentery out of 310 and 527 respectively; these were all landed, the sick placed in hospital, and the healthy in the sheds to wash and purify. The passengers of both these vessels were principally tenants from the estates of William Wandesford in Kilkenny. In the "Perseverance" nine had died on the passage, and in the "Wandsworth" 45; being in one vessel about 3 per cent., and in the other 10 per cent. The passengers of both ships were from the same estates, equally provisioned, and I can only account for the greater mortality in the "Wandsworth" from the circumstance of the master of this vessel being unused to the conveyance of passengers, and unacquainted with the necessity of enforcing cleanliness and regularity, he was in all respects a steady, careful seaman. The sickness in both these ships was said by the masters to have been caused by their passengers ravenously devouring the bread-stuffs supplied by the vessel, having previous to their embarkation suffered from starvation. The sick from these two vessels, with those admitted from the "Syria," and a few from the "Jane Black" from Limerick, filled our hospitals at once to overflowing, and afforded just