

EMIGRATION.

Mr. WILLIAM S. O'BRIEN. — In bringing forward the motion of which I have given notice, I feel that I can advance no claim to the attention of the House, founded upon my own ability to do adequate justice to the subject which I have undertaken to submit for its consideration, but I confidently ask for that attention, on account of the intrinsic importance of the subject itself. It wants, indeed, the stimulating excitement which belongs to party questions, and which never fails to produce a full attendance of Members in this House; but there surely cannot be presented for the deliberation of the representative assembly of an empire possessing such vast colonial dominions as belong to Great Britain, any question more worthy to engage its most anxious consideration than the inquiry whether, by a well-regulated system of colonisation, it may not be in our power at once to relieve the necessities of the population of the mother country, and, at the same time, to extend the resources and promote the aggrandisement of our colonial empire. Every motive which can influence the human mind to honourable endeavour impels us to entertain this question with earnest solicitude. There is no more legitimate kind of national pride than that which exults in viewing our country as the parent of many nations, whose future greatness is destined, hereafter, to bear witness to the wisdom and the energy of the people who founded them. And, whether we consult the impulses of humanity or the dictates of self-interest, we cannot better occupy our time than in considering whether colonisation does not afford us the means of succouring the distressed, and giving bread to the hungry, by an application of the national resources which promises to ourselves a constantly accumulating return.

I shall not, upon this occasion, allow myself, however inviting be the theme, to dwell at large upon those general advantages of colonisation which obviously present themselves to every reflecting

mind. It needs no argument, on my part, to prove that, to a country whose prosperity depends mainly upon commerce, and the motto of whose trading interests is "ships — colonies — commerce," colonisation offers the surest means of securing that prosperity; that, in planting colonies, we employ our shipping, — open markets for the produce of our industry, in which we are met by no jealous rivalry, by no exclusive tariffs, — and are enabled to bring back, from every quarter of the globe, the productions which belong to each peculiar clime. It is sufficient to adduce one fact alone, in illustration of the benefits which result to commerce from colonisation. In 1838, the whole amount of our exports to the great empire of Russia, peopled by a population of between fifty and sixty millions of souls, was only 1,663,243*l.*, whilst, in the same year, the exports of the United Kingdom to our Australian settlements, containing a population not exceeding 150,000 persons, amounted, in value, to 1,336,662*l.* Viewing this subject in reference to another consideration of the utmost importance to the well-being of society, it is necessary for me to do no more than simply to advert to the obvious reflection, — that, inasmuch as popular discontents have, at all times, and among all nations, originated, for the most part, in the physical privations of the mass of the population; in so far as we are enabled, by colonisation, to diminish and mitigate those privations, to such an extent do we obtain a new guarantee for the preservation of peace and order in the community. I cannot, however, refuse myself the satisfaction of contrasting the policy which we, the friends of colonisation, advocate, with that which has too often found acceptance among the rulers of mankind. It is an undoubted fact, attested by history, that statesmen have frequently plunged nations into war solely for the purpose of engaging, in external strife, the active and restless spirits which are to be found in every population, under the fear that, if not thus employed, their