

CANADA.

Report of the Agent
for Emigration.

press amongst the recent immigrants; and the certain, although perhaps slow, approach that the country is making towards the establishment of just relations amongst its various interests, encourages the hope of an early return of favourable prospects for all classes of the population. The general depreciation which affects agricultural produce deters the established settler from extending his "improvements," by means of hired labour; but on the other hand, it permits the labourer to undertake settlement on waste land with smaller resources, and offers him comparative facilities in his subsequent progress. Though the wages of the latter, therefore, remain less in amount than they have been in former years, it will not necessarily follow that he is to be confined for a longer period to his dependent occupation. I venture to anticipate, on the contrary, that the prospects of relief which industrious and frugal immigrants have formerly seen, in their removal to this country, will remain still open to them; and that, if occasional revulsions and temporary difficulties are not to be wholly prevented, the province may yet anticipate continued means to maintain the natural internal movement, by which the labourer of energy and moderate intelligence has always, hitherto, been advanced to the condition of an independent settler.

In this favourable view of the probable future state of the province I am entirely borne out by Mr. Hawke, chief agent for the western section, whose Report on this subject, copy of which will be found in Appendix, Paper No. 12, has been already transmitted to your Excellency.

Mr. Hawke's experience, and his immediate connexion with that portion of the province, enable him to offer an undoubtedly accurate view of its condition and prospects; and his observations are well worthy the attentive consideration of all persons proposing to emigrate to this colony.

In the conduct of the business of the department in my charge, I have constantly kept in view the necessity of a strict economy. This has been practised as well in the arrangement under which immigrants generally receive superintendence and advice, as in the distribution, to those who require it, of the assistance that I am empowered to afford. In performing these duties, also, the chief agent for the western section of the province, and the local agents at the several points, have made every exertion to keep the expenditure as low as possible. The nature of the direct relief afforded, however, and the manner in which the funds raised under the Provincial Act are required to be appropriated, in some measure tend to increase rather than to diminish the proportion which the claims for assistance bear to the annual immigration. I cannot fail to perceive that the aid afforded by the department in the inland transport of persons unpossessed of the means themselves to defray its expense, is, in many instances, counted on by the emigrant previously to his departure from Europe; and particularly, that persons already in the province, and acquainted with the liberality of the Government in this respect, transmit to their families or friends sums sufficient only to defray their passages to this port, instructing them that on arrival they are to practise deception, and through it obtain what may be necessary for their further progress. I trust the experience and assiduity of the officers of the department are sufficient to protect it from extensive injury in this manner; but I may adduce these facts, as discouraging the expectation that the proportionate extent of the claims to which it is subject will be diminished for the future.

A circumstance also connected with this subject may be alluded to as threatening increased proportionate expense of transport. In the course of the season I had occasion to bring to your Excellency's knowledge the enhanced charges made by the forwarding establishments at Montreal. Since that time, the competition has been even further lessened; and the result may be an advance upon the last established rates. If such should take place, a material difference in the amount of expenditure under this head must be found in a future season of equally extensive immigration.

Your Excellency's caution, that the disbursements of the department should be, on no account, permitted to exceed its resources, was strictly attended to. The comparative early closing of some of the inland agencies, and some other measures of restriction on the outlay, succeeded in confining it to the legal amount; and the financial statements which are furnished in the former part of this Report, show that a balance will remain unappropriated, on the discharge of all the liabilities incurred to the close of the year. The smallness of the amount unexpended, however, will suggest to your Excellency, that had the season presented an immigration at all correspondent to that of the previous year, the appropriation of the Imperial Parliament, in aid of the Provincial Emigrant Fund, must have proved insufficient completely to effect the object to which it is directed; and that a want of funds at the disposal of the Emigrant department would have permitted much distress.

The circumstances under which the province is now placed, in reference to its means of advantageously employing a large immigration of the poorer classes, are certainly far from favourable; and it may be expected that the contraction of the field for labour has become well known in Great Britain and Ireland. I am aware, also, that the remittances made through the banks and other channels of communication, by settlers in this country, to their connexions at home, to enable them to emigrate, are diminished greatly in their amount. On the other hand, the causes which tend to produce in the classes of mechanics, manufacturing operatives, and labourers, of Great Britain and Ireland, the disposition to emigrate