

P A P E R S

RELATIVE TO

EMIGRATION TO THE BRITISH PROVINCES

IN

N O R T H A M E R I C A .

(No. 11.)

No. 1.

COPY of a DESPATCH from Earl GREY to the Earl of ELGIN.

Downing Street, 31st December, 1846.

MY LORD,

EMIGRATION.

No. 1.

IN consequence of the distress which unhappily prevails in Ireland and parts of Scotland, a very large emigration may be expected at the earliest moment when the season will admit of it. Her Majesty's Government, therefore, have deemed it incumbent upon them to deliberate on the measures best calculated to prevent either suffering amongst the emigrants, or any undue pressure upon the provincial resources.

In the emigration which takes place annually from this country to North America, including the United States, and which amounted last year to 90,341 persons, and has this year, during the first three quarters, amounted to 110,196,\* it would appear that a large proportion of the people consists of persons proceeding to join their friends, who in many cases have remitted the means of transit to those by whom they are followed. In these instances it may be expected that no difficulty will arise. The newly-arrived emigrants will disperse themselves throughout the various localities where their friends are already established, and where, from the manner in which they are sent for, it may be presumed that they will find the means of subsistence.

Another large proportion of each year's emigration consists of detached families, or small parties of persons having no particular destination, who spread themselves over the country in quest of employment, and many of whom adopt no permanent residence until after they have had sufficient time to save, out of the earnings of their labour, the means of purchasing for themselves a moderate extent of land. This also may be regarded, so far as it goes, as a wholesome course of proceeding. It enables the emigrant, when he is able to acquire land, to maintain himself till it can be rendered productive, and it affords him time to become acquainted with the nature and peculiarities of the country before undertaking any cultivation on his own account. In this point of view, the feeling which prompts large numbers of emigrants to travel about the country in pursuit of wages, and only at a comparatively later period to choose their permanent homes, may be considered as one extremely well suited to the peculiar nature of the country to which they have proceeded.

There is, however, another description of emigrants for whom also it is very desirable to ensure suitable facilities, but for whom at present no provision is made. By the accounts which reach Her Majesty's Government, it would appear that large parties of people, assisted by their landlords or by persons interested in their condition, would gladly emigrate in company from the same neighbourhood, if they could have a reasonable prospect of being settled together after their arrival; and there seems reason to suppose, that could measures be devised for securing this

\* The numbers were:—

	North American Colonies.	United States.	Total.
1845 . . . . .	31,803	58,538	90,341
First three quarters of 1846	42,404	67,792	110,196