

the growth of the population, which has been considerable, the average means for their maintenance from the production of the fisheries have not increased, while the system which has charged the relief of the needy upon the general revenue derived from indirect taxes, has erroneously treated the subject as one with which only the Executive Government, for the time being, are concerned, instead of regarding it as that which the interest, no less than the duty, of every member of the community demands to have dealt with upon sound principles. I am not ignorant of the difficulties which surround this subject; but I would submit to you, for consideration, that we have it in our power, first to endeavour to develop additional applications of industry, and at the same time strive to establish checks to abuses in the administration of poor relief, which can hardly be sufficiently controlled while it is allowed to be a duty charged solely upon the Executive Government. I cannot too strongly urge upon you the wisdom of making each District responsible, as far as possible, for furnishing and administering relief to its own necessities, from local rates. By such means, the details of which, I believe, it would not be difficult to devise, thriftiness of administration may be accomplished, which we shall fail to secure by any other mode.

As encouraging the application of industry in new directions, a proposition will be submitted for your consideration for affording some inducement to resume the Mackerel Fisheries and the Cod Fishery on the Banks. These have latterly been entirely neglected by the British fishermen; but there is good reason to believe they would prove to be not less remunerative than in former years, if the necessary capital should be devoted to the collection of the wealth they can afford.

Besides giving attention, however, to the possible provision of more extended employment for our people in those maritime pursuits which have hitherto formed almost the only object of their energies, the altering condition of the Colony calls for such effort as can be made to foster improvement in Agriculture and the other branches of husbandry, and to attract to those occupations the surplus population who, it is becoming obvious, do not find certain or regular maintenance in the Fisheries.

I commend to your thoughtful consideration that much might be done to encourage the breeding of Sheep, for which this Island affords excellent pasturage; and there is little doubt, from experiments already made, that the cultivation of Flax, which is always in demand for textile fabrics, might be established with profit. Judicious assistance to the Agricultural Society, in promoting these objects, might be attended with most valuable results.

A subject not altogether unconnected with the observations I have offered, is the annual provision for Highways, which I would suggest should be made permanent. The formation and repair of Roads are a service which can scarcely with advantage be treated as a contingent expense; and under any circumstances, no benefit can be derived by the repetition in each succeeding Session of the same enactments, which