

Favourable report from Mr. Buchanan on the North American Emigration of 1838.

It is gratifying to perceive by Mr. Buchanan's report on the emigration to Canada in 1838, that he states the people to have been generally supplied with ample stores and sufficient pecuniary means; and further, that he is able to report that no disease whatever had been noticed amongst the emigrants of that year.

I have offered elsewhere any other observations which suggested themselves to me upon a perusal of Mr. Buchanan's report.

Increase of Australian emigration in 1838.

The emigration to the Australian settlements in 1838 exhibits a remarkable increase. It had reached a greater number in the preceding year than at any previous time, and amounted to 5,054; but in 1838 the number of emigrants was 14,021 to these colonies generally, and 10,189 to Sydney, being twice as many to that place alone as had ever been known before to all the Australian settlements together.

Proportion of that increase effected by public aid from the colony.

Of this accession of numbers in the emigration to New South Wales, nearly 6,500 were embarked under the direct superintendence of the Government, while, through the separate encouragement afforded to private persons by the bounty paid in the colony, one ship-owner alone has published that he sent out so many as 2,280, so that it may perhaps be reasonably assumed that the number of persons who departed for that colony by means of aid from its public resources, either direct or indirect, cannot have fallen short of 9,000.

Some remarks on the degree of its importance.

The total population of the colony at the last census, taken in July 1826, was 77,096. After making every allowance then for the increase of population in the interval between that time and 1838, and on the other hand for the casualties which may have occurred amongst the people embarked from this country, it may be assumed that the addition effected by the assisted emigration of 1838 must at the least have amounted to one-tenth of the whole population.

Now from the effect of this influx of emigrants on the scarcity of labour the proportion of children must of course for the present constitute a material deduction; but with regard to their influence on the moral condition of the colony, which has lately excited so much attention, it is to be observed, first, that the emigrants by public aid are made to consist as far as possible of an equality of the sexes, favourable therefore to a rapid progress of their number, while the convict population is composed in the most unfavourable manner possible for that purpose; and, secondly, that with respect to the moral character of the colony, there is not the youngest child amongst the emigrants which, if it belongs to honest parents and connexions and is likely to be brought up in honest habits, is not as much entitled as any adult to be reckoned on the side of the gain to the community. And I may here observe that, especially with reference to the present consideration, and not, as has been erroneously supposed in the colony, for the sake of relieving particular tracts of country, pains have been taken, not merely to obtain people of fair character, but people known to one another, and neighbours at home, so that the character they had borne here they might be the more anxious and the more likely to sustain abroad. Some allowance then may require, in one point of view, to be made for the admixture of young children; but when the circumstances I have just mentioned are taken into account, it will probably be admitted that an addition of one-tenth to the whole population of a colony, effected within a single year, is no contemptible operation.

Reduced proportion of young children.

With respect, however, to the proportion of young children just alluded to, there is one statement which I ought perhaps to make. I have always kept an account of the numbers per cent. in each ship of adults, of children between seven and fourteen, and of children under seven; and since taking the management more into the care of this office in 1838, it has been made a constant object to increase the rate of adults, and to diminish the rate of the youngest children, who are the most liable to sickness and mortality on the voyage, and of course the longest in becoming useful after reaching the colony. The children between seven and fourteen may be considered comparatively unobjectionable.

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