

In all systems of settling new lands the strictest economy is to be observed, and the rule to be applied is for the lands to supply their own means of improvement as far as they possibly can. This may be accomplished in the fertile lands and moderate climate of the upper province; but in Lower Canada, and also in New Brunswick some assistance is absolutely requisite, and it is only the poorest classes who will lead the way into the woods. It does not appear necessary at present to go further into details, which, if wanted, may afterwards be explained. It would however be well to appoint different agents to reside in the country, either from provincial-born subjects or those who have been some years in the colony. If people of some capital or better education could be induced to embark in the undertakings, it would be very desirable; nor would it be of trifling import if some encouragement could be extended to the Canadian seigneur, or some modification of the old French mode of settlement be adopted, not at variance with our laws and customs; for it is to be observed by their mode of settlement that they establish a denser population, a people more attached to their soil, more exclusively so to their own habits, and those habits the natural supporters of the monarchical system; and that it is the only part of the continent of North America where this is the natural tendency of social institutions. But when we view a country to be redeemed from the wilderness to a state of agriculture by the gradual advance of lot by lot, without an original investment of capital or improved education, or in fact controlling minds or superior classes to direct, lead or concentrate public feeling, it is to be feared that such a mode of procedure would be in hostility to the best interests of *our* institutions.

But with the Americans such a retail occupation of the wilderness is by no means objectionable, as it harmonizes with their habits of progressive advance;—First, settlement of any kind attracts attention to the district, then speculation creeps in, and various interests get engaged in it; enterprising young men of the professional classes soon follow; villages grow up; and if anything like commercial enterprise can take root, the bank completes the machinery of social life.

An impulse so sudden is not to be expected in the Provinces; the better classes who go on, mostly come from different parts of the mother country, and require some time to understand themselves. They take up lots for individual occupation, have no idea of speculating beyond their own farms, so that there are no means of concentrating energy for public purposes; and the district, however numerous its inhabitants, seems to be without any common principle of action. In the absence of such exciting causes Government, seems more called upon to set the machine in motion; but the call is still louder, from the number of emigrants now annually going to North America. In the year 1830 there can scarcely be less than 50,000 gone to the Provinces and the United States; and from appearances at home and the general satisfaction of those who have departed, it is morally certain to be capable of great increase. In the two years of 1827 and 1828 about 29,000 emigrants arrived in Canada, and scarcely any settled there. In 1830 about 25,000 arrived, and nearly 10,000 are supposed to have settled. The course now found to be in progress is, that those who settle write to encourage others to come out, and frequently remit funds to aid them. Such has doubtless for many years been the practice of those settling in the United States; and if the current could be turned into the Provinces, it would be attended with results of great national advantage.

I hope to be excused for the length of this Report, and especially for dwelling upon subjects apparently of small importance, or upon such as Government may already be possessed of.

The instructions upon which I embarked upon my mission from the late Right Honourable Secretary were in a great measure verbal, who enjoined upon me to communicate freely and fully with the Governors of the different provinces, and to obtain from them, and all other sources, whatever information I could, for the use of His Majesty's Ministers, as to the agriculture, soil, commerce, resources and capabilities of the Provinces, especially with a view to their means of receiving emigrants, and the best mode of locating them.

And if my attempts at the performance of this duty should meet the approbation of the Right Honourable Viscount Goderich, I shall esteem myself particularly fortunate, and subscribe myself with great respect,

His Lordship's very obedient and very humble servant,

John Richards,  
Commissioner.