

EMIGRATION.

Extracts from a Letter from Lieutenant-Colonel Cockburn to the Right Hon. R. W. Horton.

18, Half-moon street, Sept. 18, 1827.

SIR,—On the 3d of April I landed at Halifax, and immediately put myself in communication with Sir James Kempt, to whom I submitted my instructions, &c. His Excellency stated that, in his opinion, the numerous grants of land already made in Nova Scotia, (settlers having been placed in nearly every advantageous part of it) would preclude the possibility of finding any disposable tract adapted to the purposes of extensive emigration. * * *

Of the total amount of land still remaining at the disposal of the Crown within the Province, and which, according to the Surveyor-General, may be estimated 3,789,000 acres, no one tract can be found containing more than 40,000 acres fit for cultivation.

The large space remaining vacant in the Counties of Annapolis, Shelburne, Queen and Lunenburg, all accounts agree in describing as generally intersected with lakes, ponds, rocks, and barrens; and the ungranted lands in Cumberland, particularly in the neighbourhood of the Cobequid mountain, though well timbered, are known to be rocky, and but little sought after. Were emigrants, however, to be sent out in small numbers, there are doubtless, some parts of Nova Scotia well calculated for their reception. The township of Maxwelton, in the District of Pictou, for instance, contains, according to the statement of Mr. Grerar, the Deputy-Surveyor of the District, 40,000 acres of good vacant land, and easy of access, either from the Gulf of St. Lawrence, or the Atlantic Ocean. The County of Sydney, including the adjacent parts of the County of Halifax, Mr. Wentworth Taylor, the Deputy Surveyor of the District, states as containing 120,000 acres of good vacant land, which are also well situated for settlement. * * *

Great part of the foregoing information was acquired subsequent to my first leaving Halifax; previous, however, to so doing, I had heard and seen sufficient to convince me, that New-Brunswick afforded a much finer field for extensive emigration than Nova Scotia. * * *

I proceeded on the 10th of April, on my journey towards New-Brunswick, by the way of Windsor, Annapolis, and Digby, which afforded me the gratification of seeing a succession of beautiful and extensive settlements. * * *

On the 13th of April, I reached St. John, New-Brunswick, where I was detained until the 16th, owing to the river not being considered sufficiently clear of ice to admit of the steam boat going up, and the road being at this season (as I believe it is at all others) next to impassable. This delay was the more to be lamented, as Sir Howard Douglas was at Fredericton, and I felt averse to making inquiries within the limits of his Government previous to having obtained his authority for so doing. The time, however, was by no means lost, for, through the kind attention of Mr. Wedderburne, Secretary to the New-Brunswick Agricultural and Emigrant Society, I was put in possession of some interesting and useful facts respecting the progress of several emigrants who had been placed upon their lands, under his immediate observation.

On the 27th of April I reached Fredericton, and was received by Sir Howard Douglas with that cordiality and kindness which are the best and most gratifying assurances of future co-operation and support. The heads of all his public departments were in like manner ready and anxious to afford every information in the line of their respective departments; but to Captain Hurd, the Surveyor General of the Province, and to Mr. Baillie, the Commissioner of Crown Lands, my thanks are more particularly due; indeed, I know not how sufficiently to express my acknowledgements for the important and continued assistance they afforded me; no means were left untried—no exertion spared by them to supply me with the best and most extensive information; in fact, they seemed identified with the service I was employed on, and as deeply interested in its success as I was myself. Thus aided in the inquiries I had to make, the period of my stay at Fredericton was materially lessened; and on the 23d of April, backed by the fullest approval of Sir Howard Douglas in all I was doing, (for His Excellency entirely agreed as to there being every reason for preferring the tract between Peticoudiac and Miramichi to all others for commencing on,) and provided with every description of information judged likely to be useful, I crossed the Saint John

river, and proceeded on my journey. I should mention, that amongst the documents taken with me from Fredericton, was a map of New-Brunswick, compiled with the minutest care from the records, plans, and reports, in the different offices, and the oral information of persons best acquainted with the nature and description of the lands throughout the province. This map, which was prepared in the Surveyor-General's Office for the express purpose of assisting the description of inquiry I was employed to make, proved of the greatest service; and a copy of it made out in like manner, under Captain Hurd's immediate direction, was sent forward with my letter of the 15th June. Mr. Baillie and Captain Hurd would have accompanied me through the parts of New-Brunswick I had still to visit, if their official duties could have been so arranged as to have admitted of their so long absence from the seat of government, without danger of inconvenience to the public service. The risk, however, was thought too great, and it was therefore arranged that Mr. Smith and Mr. Beckwith—the former, the confidential assistant in the Surveyor-General's Office, the latter, in the Crown Commissioner's—should be attached to my party, with directions to remain as long as I might find occasion for their services; and this was deemed the more requisite, not only from the very general knowledge possessed by those Gentlemen of every part of the province, and the consequent assistance they would be competent to afford, but with a view of enabling them on returning to Fredericton to explain the object and extent of any measure I might find it right to adopt, and thus, as far as possible, prevent the chance of misunderstanding, in the event of future correspondence with their respective departments.

Mr. Maclauchlan, (an officer on the half-pay of the late 104th Regiment, and distinguished for his great zeal and activity in Upper Canada, where he was severely wounded,) having been recommended by Sir Howard Douglas to fill the situation of superintendent, should emigration take place to any part of New-Brunswick, I judged it advisable to procure this gentleman's assistance during the remainder of my tour through the Province, deeming it of first rate consequence to afford him so favorable an opportunity of becoming acquainted with arrangements making in reference to a service, the details of which, if it ever took effect, were to be placed under his superintendence; and well knowing, from his great capabilities and experience as a surveyor, that he was fully qualified to forward and take part in the inquiries I was making.

The distance from Fredericton to Chatham, the port and principle town on the Miramichi river, is about 120 miles. There is a road, such as it is, the whole way; the first 45 miles of which, by the side of the Nashwalk river, and over what is called The Portage, are the worst. We were, nevertheless, very glad, on arriving at the upper part of the south west branch of the Miramichi, to avail ourselves of water conveyance for the remaining seventy-five miles; and by dint of perseverance, and a determination to get the better of all difficulties, succeeded in reaching Chatham on the night of the 25th of April. A great portion of the country we had passed through during this part of our journey had been lately settled, and afforded constant opportunities of acquiring the best information as to the wants, progress, and capabilities of the settlers, by seeing and conversing with them on the very spots they were laboring to improve. On these occasions I never failed to inquire their opinions as to the advantage a person would have, if placed on lands with assistance similar to that, which it is proposed should be advanced to those to be sent out by Government, and the power of such person to repay within a given time, the amount so expended in establishing him. To this inquiry the answer scarcely ever varied, and was as follows:—"Give him good land, and in five years he will be able to commence repaying you at the rate of five pounds a year, or more provided you consent to receive it in produce. I wish I had ever had such a chance." With respect to repayment in money, they were less confident, and when pressed on this point, seemed to think that the prevailing habit of barter transactions would render the fulfilment of any such arrangement very difficult and uncertain. During the continuance of my tour through the different Provinces, the above inquiry was repeated day after day, and hour after hour; and though the persons to whom it was made were of all the different ranks in society, the reply was so generally and entirely to the same ef-

fect, that I feel bound to believe the expectation it holds out would seldom fail to be realized, provided the experiment be made under the limits and precautions you have already suggested. Sir Howard Douglas had been good enough to send forward to Chatham, for the purpose of notifying my intention of visiting that place, and requesting that every information and assistance might be afforded me. No sooner, therefore, was my arrival made known, than all the gentlemen of the neighbourhood did me the kindness of calling to offer their services; and before I left Chatham, I really believe I had seen every person in any way acquainted with the quality of the lands for fifty miles round.

In such a mass of information, it is in no way surprising that statements somewhat contradictory were occasionally made. To have taken them all down in writing would have filled a large volume, and tended perhaps rather to confuse than explain. Sufficient will, however, be found noted in the general Remark Book, and other accompanying memoranda, to show that though the lands immediately fronting on the Gulf Shore, and through which the new line of road has for the present been opened, are of unequal quality, yet those in the rear of the road, and in a direct line between Richibucto and Peticoudiac, are generally considered good and fit for settlement. It is in this latter direction that the great line of communication towards Lower Canada must ultimately be laid out, so as to cross the rivers and streams where bridges can easily be thrown over them, reduce the distance nearly one third of its present extent, and by passing through a fine hard wood tract, avoid the lowlands, swamps, and barrens, described as occasionally occurring in the front. Although during the nine days I remained at Chatham, I was each day more strongly confirmed in the belief that the tract between Peticoudiac and Miramichi, general speaking, was of a description to answer the purposes of emigration, I still felt that nothing ought to be left to chance on so vital a point, and more particularly as it concerned a part of the Colonies which it was of such acknowledged importance to the whole to have settled; I therefore determined on sending surveyors through the woods, pointing out the course which each was to take; and directing them to adopt every means for ascertaining with the greatest possible accuracy, the quality of the lands they passed through; and to meet me again at Richibucto, with their several reports. The severity of weather which subsequently took place, unprecedented at so late a period of the spring, materially impeded the accomplishment of this part of my arrangements, and the receipt of some reports (extracts from the whole of which are herewith transmitted) was consequently delayed till after my arrival at Nova Scotia.

On the 4th of May I left Chatham, but, owing to contrary winds and bad weather, did not reach Richibucto until the night of the 9th, though the distance by land is only forty-five miles. The latter place, though by no means so populous as the former, is well settled, and I received from the inhabitants every possible assistance and attention. Letters were waiting my arrival from Mr. Maclauchlan, detailing the difficulties occasioned by the bad weather, and stating, that as the surveyors had been driven to seek shelter amongst the settlements, he was fearful I should have left Richibucto before the services required in the woods could be completed, and had therefore directed Mr. Beckwith and Mr. Jouett, after completing their surveys, to return direct to their homes, and send their reports from thence to await my arrival at Halifax. Of this alteration I by no means approved; however, all I could do was, to make the best arrangements within my reach for remedying the evil.

On the 11th of May I went up the Richibucto river, as far as it is navigable, stopping to obtain information at different places where settlements had been effected; and a finer water communication, for its extent, I never saw.

On the 14th of May I left Richibucto, and on the 15th I reached Shediac, from whence I proceeded to the Peticoudiac River, the first road practicable for wheels, which I had seen since leaving Fredericton. The land about "The Bend" (for so the place is called) was for a long time considered of inferior quality, and was thereby prevented from being settled as soon and as thickly as might otherwise have been expected. The importance of the situation, however, at last brought it into repute; and the soil now proves to be as productive as any in the Province. The number of houses which have lately been erected give it the appearance of a town;