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Nec aranearum sane textus ideo melior, quia ex se fila gignunt, nec noster vilior quia ex alienis libamus ut apes.

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The Railway.

MR. HOWE'S SECOND LETTER TO
EARL GREY.

5, Sloane Street, January 16, 1851.

MY LORD,

By reference to the published Report of the Commissioners for 1847, your Lordship will perceive that in that year of famine and disease, 17,445 British subjects died on the passage to Canada and New Brunswick, in quarantine, or in the hospitals, to say nothing of those who perished by the contagion which was diffused in the provincial cities and settlements. An equal number, there is too much reason to apprehend, died on the passage to or in the United States. In ordinary seasons, the mortality will of course be much less, and in all may be diminished by the more stringent provisions since enforced by Parliament. But bad harvests, commercial depressions, with their inevitable tendency to drive off large portions of a dense population, should be anticipated; and no regulation can protect large masses of emigrants, thrown into sea ports, from delay, fraud, cupidity, and misdirection. No previous care than prevent disease from breaking out in crowded ships, that are forty or fifty days at sea, to say nothing of the perils of collision and shipwreck.

Mark the effects produced upon the poorer classes of this country. Emigration is not to them what it might be made, a cheerful excursion in search of land, employment, fortune. It is a forlorn hope in which a very large portion perish, in years of famine and distress, and very considerable numbers in ordinary seasons, even with the best regulations that Parliament can provide.

The remedy for all this—simple, sure, and not very expensive—is the ocean omnibus.

Steamships may be constructed to carry at least 1000 passengers, with quite as much comfort as is now secured in a first rate railway carriage, and with space enough for all the luggage besides. If these vessels left London, Southampton, Liverpool, Glasgow, Belfast, Cork, or Galway, alternately, or as there might be demand for them, on certain appointed days, emigrants would know where and when to embark, and would be secured from the consequences of delay, fraud, and misdirection.

The Commissioners report, that last year the sum spent in "the cost of extra provisions and conveyance to the ports of embarkation, and maintenance there, amounted to £340,000." The cost of reaching the sea-ports cannot be economized, but the extra provisions and maintenance at the ports of embarkation would be materially reduced. But how much more would be saved? The average sailing passage from London to Quebec is 52 days; from Liverpool 45; from London to New York, 43; from Liverpool 35. The average passage by steam, from any of the ports I have named, need not to exceed—[to] Nova Scotia 10, to New Brunswick and Canada, 12 days; but assuming 43 days as the average sailing passage from England to America, and 13 to be the average by steam, let us see what the saving would be to the poor, even taking the present amount of emigration as a basis.

299,498 emigrants left Great Britain and Ireland for America, in 1849. A very great proportion of the Irish had a journey and a voyage to make to some English sea-port, before they embarked upon the Atlantic. But pass that over, and multiplying the number of emigrants by thirty, and we have the number of days that would have been saved to these poor people, if they had been carried out by steam. It is clear that they wasted 8,984,940 days at sea, in, to them, the most precious year of life, and the most valuable part of that year, which, estimating their labour at 1s. a day in the countries to which

they were repairing, would amount to £449,247.

The employment of ocean steam-ships for the poor would save all this, and it would put an end to ship-fever, disease and death. The Government of England expended in Canada and New Brunswick alone, in 1847, in nursing the sick and burying the dead, £124,762 sterling, the ocean omnibus, whether established by government or by a private association, would save all this in future. Restrictive colonial laws would disappear; and from the moment that there was a certainty that emigrants would arrive in health, however poor, the colonists would prepare their lands and open their arms to receive them.

The saving of expense and time on our side of the Atlantic would also be immense. These ships could run down the southern shores of the maritime provinces and land emigrants wherever they were required from Sydney to St. Andrews; passing through the Gut of Canso, they could supply all the northern coasts, including Prince Edward Island. They could go direct to the St. Lawrence, landing the people wherever they were wanted, from Gaspe to Quebec.

Knowing exactly when to expect these vessels, our people would send to England, Ireland and Scotland for their friends, and be ready with their boats and waggons to convey them off, without cost or delay, the moment they arrived.

We should thus have a healthy, almost self-sustaining British emigration, to the full extent of the existing demand for labor, even if no public works were commenced.

But much would soon be done, still without costing the British Government a pound, to extend the labor market. The moment that the arrival of healthy emigrants, at convenient points, and early in the season, could be counted upon with certainty, the Provincial Governments would lay off and prepare their lands for settlement, advertising them in all the British and Irish sea-ports. They would empower the deputy surveyors in each county to act as emigrant agents, and locate the people. They would call upon the county Magistrate to prepare at the autumn or winter session, returns, showing the number and description of emigrants required by each county in the following spring, with the number of boys and girls that they were prepared to take charge of and bind out as apprentices.

Proprietors of large unimproved tracts would soon, by similar exertion and kindred agencies, prepare them for occupation.

All this may be done by the employment of steamships for the poor; and they I am confident, might be drawn into the public service without any cost to the country. If it be objected that to so employ them would diminish the demand for sailing vessels, I answer no; but on the contrary; there would be an annually increasing demand for British and Colonial tonnage, to carry on the commerce and reciprocal exchanges that this healthy emigration would create.

But, my Lord, I am anxious to see these cheap steamers on another account: that they may bring English, Irish, and Scotch men and their descendants, from time to time, back to the land of their fathers, to tread the scenes which history hallows, or revive the recollections of early life, to contemplate the modern triumphs and glories of England, and contrast them even with those of the proud Republic beside us. This ennobling pleasure cannot be indulged in now, but at a cost which debars from its enjoyment the great body of the Queen's Colonial subjects.

Reduce the passage to 10 days, and the cost to five pounds, and thousands would come over here every summer, to return with their hearts warmed towards their British brethren, to teach their children to understand the policy of England, and to reverence her institutions.

So far, my Lord, you will perceive that I have suggested nothing which would involve her Majesty's Government in heavy expense; on the contrary, I believe that even the cost of emigrant steamers would be more than made up, either by a reduction of expense in the naval service, retrenchment of the cost of lazarettes and quarantine, or by the relief which a healthy system of emigration would at once give to some, if not all the branches of the public service which now cost £11,000,000 sterling. It would require but a slight calculation to show that the planting of half a million of British subjects in the North American provinces, where the duty on British manufactures ranges from 6½ to 12½ per cent.; and in the United States where it ranges from 15 to 100 per cent., would amount to more than the whole sum wanted to establish these steamers.

To illustrate this, I have made a selection from the United States' Tariff, of certain articles in which British manufacturers feel a deep interest. It embraces 110 articles and branches of manufacture, upon which the duties in Nova Scotia, with very few exceptions do not range higher than 6½ per cent.

[We think it unnecessary to enumerate the articles.]

A similar list might be made of East Indian and British Colonial staples and productions, with the endless variety of small manufactures which they stimulate, and to which these high duties apply.

I pass now to the only remaining topic, the formation of Public Works, of approved utility as a means of strengthening the empire,—developing the resources of the provinces—and as an aid to more rapid and systematic Colonization.

Having my Lord, in my former letter, entered largely upon this branch of the general subject, I need not repeat what that paper contains. Every mail brings fresh evidences of the feverish longing and intense anxiety with which all classes in the provinces look forward to the establishment of those great lines of inter-colonial and continental communication, which are not only to bind us together, and secure to the British provinces great commercial advantages, but which would, with cheap steamboats, reduce the Atlantic to a British Channel, and continue the strand in a few years to Lake Huron, and ultimately perhaps even in our own time, so rapidly does the world advance, to the Pacific Ocean.

The first 130 miles of this communication Nova Scotia will make, and amply secure the British Government from loss, should the advantage of its credit be given. We will do more—we will prepare our lands, collect returns, appoint an agent in each county, and repeal our taxes on emigrants; offering, on the best terms, a home to all who choose to come among us. If Her Majesty's Government have no objections to the employment of such portions of the troops as are not required to do garrison duty, we will give them a fair addition to their pay, or land along the line, to which in war their discipline would be a defence; thus saving to the British Government the expense of bringing these veterans back to England.

The ability of Nova Scotia to fulfil any obligations she may incur to the Imperial Government, may be estimated by reference to her past progress and present financial position.

Montgomery Martin in his late work, estimates the value of the province, in moveable and immovable property, at £20,700,000.—Without counting wild lands and property upon which labor has not been expended, we rate it at £15,000,000. This has been created in a century, by the industry of a few thousands of emigrants and loyalists, and their descendants. To the amount of shipping as evidence of a prosperous commerce I have already referred.

Within the 20 years from 1826 to 1846 the

population more than doubled, the tonnage rising, in the last ten years of this period, from 96,996 to 141,043 tons.

The exports rose in the 20 years from £267,277 to £831,071.

The revenue of Nova Scotia is chiefly raised from imports, the royalty on the mines and the sale of Crown lands. There is no property tax, or assessed taxes, except poor and county rates raised by local assessments.

Her tariff is the lowest in North America. Her *ad valorem* duty on British goods is 6½ per cent., that of Canada 12½.

All the liabilities of the province amounted on the 31st December 1849, to £105,643 13s. 1d. The Receiver General writes me that there has been an increase of the revenue during the past year of £15,000, which will reduce the liabilities to £90,643 13s. 1d. No part of this debt is due out of the Province. Province notes which circulate and are sustained by the demand for them to pay duties, represent £59,864 of the whole which bears no interest. Of the balance, £40,000 is due to depositors in the Savings Bank, who receive 4 per cent. The holders of Stock certificates, covering the remainder receive 5 per cent.

The public property held by the Government in the city of Halifax alone, would pay the whole debt, which could be extinguished by applying the surplus revenue to that object for two years.

The income from all sources fluctuates between £90,000 and £110,000. The permanent charges on this revenue secured to Her Majesty by the Civil List Bill, are £7,509 sterling. The balance is expended in maintaining other branches of the Civil Government, in opening and repairing roads, and promoting education.

We should make the interest of the loan we now require a first charge on this surplus, in the vent of the railroad not yielding tolls sufficient, which judging by the experience of our neighbors, we do not apprehend.

This surplus must steadily increase because, while population and revenue will probably double within the next 20 years, as it has done, almost without emigration or railroads, during the past 20, the expenses of the Civil Government will be but very slightly augmented.

The revenue could be, and if necessary would be, promptly increased, by raising the *ad valorem* duty, re-adjusting specific duties, or if even, that were necessary, to sustain our credit with the mother country, by a resort to a legacy, income or property tax.

The Government of Nova Scotia (exclusive of lands in Cape Breton) still retains 3,982,378 acres of ungranted Crown lands. These, if required, could also be pledged, or the net amount of sales of lands along the line could be paid over from time to time in liquidation of the loan.

The whole amount required is £800,000. The city of Halifax being pledged to the Provincial Government to pay the interest on £100,000, the whole amount that would therefore be chargeable on all sources of provincial revenue, the tolls on the railroad included, would be £24,500.

Although having no authority to speak for the other Colonies, I may observe, the province of New Brunswick which lies between Nova Scotia and Canada has in addition to her ordinary sources of revenue, eleven millions of acres of ungranted lands.—She might pledge to Her Majesty's Government the proceeds of as many millions of acres of these lands, along the lines to be opened as might be necessary, in addition to the pledge of her public funds to secure this country from loss. The troops might be employed, and settle in this province also. The lands pledged could be sold to emigrants, the British mails and soldiers would be transported at fair prices and the amounts might be