

difficulty which existed hitherto was that of finding means of transportation, and of enabling persons almost destitute here, and obtaining no demand for their labour, to get a position in other countries, where they could obtain that demand. I do not believe that any government scheme could have been so extensive as to affect that purpose; nor do I believe, if it had been so extensive it would have effected the purpose in the same way as this voluntary emigration. [Hear.] In the first place, if you laid out a hundred or two or three thousand pounds for that object, it would no doubt have been a very large sum; but I believe the sum which had been expended for the purpose, in the way I have mentioned, in one year, has been no less than £1,500,000 sterling. [Hear, hear.] No, I believe, if you had laid out £1,500,000, you would have found every species of abuse, that you would have carried many persons from this country with false characters, and that they would have been found such a curse by the United States and by our own provinces, that they would soon have put a stop to it, and have said,—“Don’t send to us the halt, the idle, and the crippled—the mere dregs of your population. If such is the character of your emigration, we must interfere and put a stop to it.” That I believe would have been the consequence of any great plan of emigration carried on by the Government. [Hear, hear.] I do not mean to say that in some cases, and under some particular circumstances, assistance should not be given by the government [hear, hear], but what I say is this—that seeing the people have found out for themselves that by transmitting small sums of money, they are able to bring over their wives, relations, and children to countries where their labour is of value, that it is better not to interfere by a government plan, which beside being a burden on the country from the sum taken from the taxes, would be in other respects a positive evil. [Hear, hear.] There is another species of emigration; and it is that which is sent out to our Australian colonies. It is an emigration of the other description to which I have alluded, and which goes very much to found new settlements or to increase the new settlements already established there. It appears that in 1848 and 1849 the emigration of this kind sent out 39,000 persons, or rather more than 18,000 a-year. In New Zealand also there has been a project started for forming a new settlement, called the Canterbury Settlement. There are already more than 12,000 Europeans in New Zealand, and I feel no doubt that there will be in a very few years a large emigration to that colony, and that New Zealand will be one of the most flourishing of our dependencies. [Hear, hear.]

I think, therefore, that as regards emigration generally speaking, and with, as I said, a reserve as to any particular measure and particular districts, we may look with satisfaction to the present state of this question, and that we may consider one of the great wants of this country—that of finding a vent for her increasing population—will be fully satisfied, without at the same time doing that of which I was apprehensive, and sending out people to colonies where their labour was not in demand and where their condition would be still worse than it was in the country from which they came. I have now stated the principal points, and indeed, nearly the whole of the question, of which I wished to put the house in possession with respect to colonial government. I have not attempted to do more than to give leading facts with regard to many important questions, (each of which might furnish matter of discussion for a night’s debate. I thought it might be useful for the house to have, however imperfectly, a sketch of the general state of the colonies and of the propositions we are about to ask you to agree to, as well as of the measures already carried into effect. The whole result of what I have to say is, that in the first place, whatever discontent—and in some places, well founded discontent, it must be owned—has arisen from a transition, painful to the colonists, from a system of monopoly, as regards the colonies, to a system of free trade, we ought not to attempt to go back in any respect from that decision, [hear, hear,] but that you should trade with your colonies on the principle that you were at liberty to obtain productions from other countries which may be produced there better or cheaper than in the colonies, and that the colonies should be at liberty to trade with all parts of the world in the manner which might seem to them most

advantageous. [Hear, hear.] That I say, must in future be a cardinal point in our policy. The next point, I think, is that in conformity with the policy on which you have governed your British North American colonies, you should, as far as possible, go on the principle of introducing and maintaining political freedom in all your colonies. I think whenever you say political freedom cannot be introduced, you are bound to show the reason for the exemption, and to show that the people are a race among whom it is impossible to carry out the free institutions—that you must show it is not formed of the British people, or even that there is no such admixture of the British population as to make it safe to introduce representative institutions. Unless you can show that, I think the general rule would be that you should send to the different parts of the world, and maintain in your different colonies men of the British race, and capable of governing themselves; men whom you tell they shall have full liberty of governing themselves, and that while you are their representative with respect to all foreign concerns, in their domestic concerns you wish to interfere no further than may be clearly and decidedly necessary to prevent a conflict in the state itself. I believe these are the sound principles on which we ought to proceed. I am sure, at least, they are the principles on which the present Government intends to proceed, and I believe they are those which in their general features will obtain the assent and approbation of the house. Whether in particular questions the house may not dissent from us—whether, with respect to the details of the bill, they may not come to a different opinion from us, is a question on which I do not wish to enter, and certainly I shall be glad if a better mode and better details be pointed out with regard to some of those measures. But what I say is, we should not be considering whether we should part with those colonies—whether we should make the connexion looser—or whether we should even leave them with less means of defence against foreign aggression. With respect to the question of military force, I shall reserve the discussion of that to a future occasion, when it will be more immediately before the house.

With respect to some of our colonies, my noble friend the Secretary of State has stated, that he thinks the force now existing might be safely diminished. But I believe these colonies will look to you for their defence in any foreign war, or against any foreign aggressor. (Cheers.) And I think you are bound to give it to them. [Hear, hear.] I think you are bound to maintain the means by which you will be able to give them that assistance. [Renewed applause.] I believe not only that you may proceed on those principles without any danger for the present, but there may be questions arising hereafter which you may solve without any danger of such an unhappy conflict as that which took place with what are now the United States of America. [Hear, hear.] On looking back at the origin of that unhappy contest, I cannot but think that it was not a single error or a single blunder which got us into that contest, but a series of repeated errors and repeated blunders—of a policy asserted and then retreated from—so again asserted, and then concessions made when they were too late—[hear, hear]—and of obstinacy when it was unseasonable. I believe that it was by such a course we entered into the unhappy contest with what were at the beginning of it the loyal provinces of North America. I trust we shall never again have to deplore such a contest. [Hear, hear.] I do anticipate, with others, that some of the colonies may so grow in population and wealth that they may say—“Our strength is sufficient to enable us to be independent of England—the link is now become onerous to us—the time is come when we think we can, in amity and alliance with England, maintain our independence.” I do not think that that time is yet approaching. [Hear, hear.] But let us make them, as far as possible, fit to govern themselves—let us give them, as far as we can, the capacity of ruling their own affairs—let them increase in wealth and population, and whatever may happen, we of this great empire will have the consolation of saying that we have contributed to the happiness of the world.

The noble lord resumed his seat amid great applause, after putting into the hands of the chairman a resolution for leave to bring in a bill for the government of the Australian colonies.