

## **Emigration – Colonisation.**

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LETTER OF THE BISHOP OF ST. JOHN.

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TO THE EDITOR OF THE FREEMAN.

DEAR SIR: – As it is nearly a year since the Emigrant Aid Association was formed in this City, it may be useful to address a few words to the public both here and elsewhere on its objects and the advantages offered through it, to persons wishing to settle on land in the Province of New Brunswick.

At the unanimous request of the Association I consented to act as its President for a time, though at considerable inconvenience, because I considered myself bound to do what I could for the success of an Association which is of the very highest importance both to the working classes, for whose benefit it was established, and to the general interests of the Province. – The contrast between the conditions and prospects of labouring men and their families who settle on land in the country, and of those who remain in the town depending on their day's work for their support, must strike us very forcibly. I have lived in different parts of New Brunswick, and have had opportunities of knowing its inhabitants well. In every section of the Province large and flourishing settlements may be pointed out, consisting of farmers who have arrived at comfort and independence, and who began life in the forest years ago with very little means to help them thro' their difficulties. They had many hardships to contend with in the beginning of their farming career, they had to work hard, and perhaps to bear with many privations incident to pioneer life in the woods, but as a general rule, all who have been sober, industrious and persevering have succeeded in obtaining for themselves and their children respectable independence. Their children grow up around them healthy and robust, inured to healthful and honest labour, and the aged parents in their declining years have generally the happiness to see these children settled around them independent farmers like themselves. How far different is the condition of the labouring

people who live in our cities and towns, and who do all the hard work in our saw mills, in our factories, in loading and unloading ships, in building railroads, &c., &c. We may find thousands of them hard-working, sober, industrious men, who have laboured and toiled thus for ten, twenty or thirty years, endeavouring to support their families, and who are no better off at the end of this period than they were at the commencing. Their position and future prospects, as well as those of their children, would be very different had they gone into the country years ago and settled on land. – By a few years of persevering labour and industry they might be sure of reaping, in addition to supporting their families, a rich harvest in the possession of a farm and stock worth hundreds of pounds, for which no man could claim rent or service, and which they may hand down as an inheritance to their children's children; whereas while they remain about cities living by their day's work they barely eke out what is necessary for the month or perhaps the day. A week's sickness leaves them often without the means of paying the rent of their poor tenements and consequently exposed to be turned out on the highway to become with their children inmates of the Alms House.

To arouse the laboring classes to a sense of their true interest; to point out to them the advantages of settling on land; to choose eligible tract of land, conveniently situated; to get them surveyed and prepared for the intending settlers, without expense or loss of time to the latter; to assist and direct emigrants on their arrival in St. Jon are the objects for which the Emigrant Aid Association was established. The Government of New Brunswick have yet millions of acres of good land at their disposal. – They are anxious for the settlement of the country, and offer those lands, to emigrants and others wishing to become actual settlers on the most advantageous terms. Any man eighteen years of age, or over, who owns no land already, may obtain one hundred acres on the following easy conditions: He must settle on the land; build a Log House which costs very little more than his labour, as he has nearly all the materials on his farm; clear give acres; work in making his own road to the amount of £15 currency, within one, two, or three years at the time most convenient to himself, and he will then get from the Government his grant or title, making him the owner of one hundred acres

in fee simple for ever. Thus a father and his sons – if he have one, two, three or more of them eighteen years of age or over – may have their two, three or four hundred acres together. Generally individual settlers are deterred from going alone into the heart of the forest where good land may be got on those easy terms, because of their isolation and because it may be a long time before they can have the advantages of churches, schools, &c. To obviate this objection and to encourage Associations, the Government offer to survey and open rough winter roads at the public expense through any tract of good land chosen. And our Association to co-operate with them, and encourage men of small means to become farmers, employ competent persons well acquainted with the country to explore and choose large tracts of good land, conveniently situated both as to railroad or water carriage, on which a large number may settle together, and in a short time have most of the advantages of old established localities. Then as soon as the people get located on these tracts of land, they begin to open up the country at once, their united strength and numbers enable them in a very little time, with some assistance from our Association, to have their church, their school, and the regular attendance of a Priest. Numbers of labouring men about this city and vicinity, encouraged by these advantages, have taken lots under the direction of the Association, – some of them are already settled on their lands with their families, others are making clearings to build and prepare for next year, and a great many more are kept back only for the present by the unusual depth of snow in the woods this winter.

I may remark here also that, all the tracts of land selected by our Association up to this time, can be reached by Steamer or Railroad in a part of a day, or a day at the [farthest], with the exception of the land near Woodstock, which is about one hundred and forty miles from St. John: and the Steamers go within a few miles of this place regularly. What a great advantage this is for the poor man with little means. In the United States people must travel generally one thousand or fifteen hundred miles out West before they can get Government land, and even then they must pay a pretty high price for it. Consequently, labouring men in the Atlantic cities of the United States cannot become farmers in that country unless they have a considerable sum of money

to pay for their farms and transport their families to them. But here in New Brunswick they require merely what will enable them to live until they reap the first crop. And I may add that I know many farmers through the country now in comfortable circumstances who began with only a few dollars. Getting their farms for nothing, they worked off and on, between their farms and the neighbouring settlers, who were able to employ them, and sometimes in the city, until they reaped a first or second crop, and thus gradually and perseveringly they became independent. Perhaps there is no part of America which offers the same advantages to the poor man and his children as the Province of New Brunswick, if he wish to improve his own and their social position by taking hold of the land. We sometimes hear objections raised as to the climate, and the length of our Winter, and the capabilities of our soil, but a mere healthy looking population cannot be found on the continent than ours, and the prosperous circumstances of hundreds of our farmers who began life in the woods some years ago with little or nothing, show clearly what the sober industrious farmers in this Province may arrive at. Emigrants from the old country, or people from other places wishing to settle on these lands, will find on their arrival in St. John, a committee of gentlemen, belonging to the Emigrant Aid Association, ready to afford them every information as to the best mode of proceeding, &c. If a number of Emigrants, friends or neighbours, wish to settle in the same locality, they have only to write through one of their number, before leaving home, to me or to the Secretary of the Association, J. R. Macshane, Esq., St. John, New Brunswick, stating the time at which they expect to arrive here, and every precaution will be taken to have a suitable tract of land ready for them on their arrival. I take a deep interest in this movement, because I am convinced it opens the way to a large and deserving class of society, to ameliorate both their moral and temporal condition, and it may draw from the contagion and evil influences of our large cities and towns hundreds and thousands of children, who are often from the necessities of their parents, allowed to grow up in idleness with all its attendant evils, and consequently in many cases are lost both to religion and society.

I am, dear Sir, faithfully yours,

† **JOHN SWEENEY,**

Bishop of St. John, H. B.

St. John, N. B. Jan. 21, 1861.

We gladly yield the first place in our columns to this letter of the Right Rev. the Bishop of Saint John, in which he gives testimony so valuable on a question of such importance to the people of this Province, of all denominations and conditions, and to all who seek to obtain by honest labour a home and an independence.

Testimony such as this should be made known as widely as possible. No one will imagine that the Bishop has any other object in view than to serve emigrants and those who, though years in the country, have never yet had the courage and the wisdom to seek an independence where alone an independence may certainly be won.

And the Bishop is no mere theorist; no mere retailer of the statements of others. He speaks from personal observation and experience, and when he describes what settlers have done, and what settlers may now do, his words must carry conviction to all who read them.

The Province of New Brunswick offers inducements and facilities of no ordinary kind to all who desire to settle on land and become owners of the soil. Its winters are cold; but its climate is healthy, and argues, fevers, &c., such as plague the backwoods settlers of Canada and the Western States are unknown; and besides, owing to the effect of the frost, which [pulverises] the soil, and to other causes, as much work can be done on a farm in the course of a year, as in countries of a milder climate. Nor is the Winter a season of gloom or suffering or idleness; on the contrary, it is generally the season of greatest enjoyment, and prudent intelligent farmers can always find profitable work to do which not be so well done at any other season.

The Province offers to settlers millions of acres of land – not wastes, nor barrens, nor the refuse of previous settlers – but fertile, well timbered, well watered, well located lands at a price merely nominal. The harbour of Saint John is one of the nearest to Europe, and the most accessible at all seasons: and within a few hours travel of this port lands infinitely superior to any in the New England States, and which the well

known Professor Johnston has shown to be more productive than the best lands in the State of New York and in the famous Western States, are now ready for settlers, while the city of St. John itself affords one of the very best markets in all America for agricultural produce.

It is indeed almost incomprehensible that a country so near to Europe, so accessible, so well watered, so fertile, has remained unsettled, while hundreds of thousands of people every year work their way at great trouble and vast expense to the Far West, thousands of miles from the Atlantic coast, to purchase lands at prices which many of them waste their lives in endeavouring to pay.

The Association of which the Right Rev. Dr. Sweeny is President was formed because it was seen that the difficulties in the way of settlement could be very much lessened; indeed almost entirely removed by organisation and union; for when the settler has no longer to face the wilderness alone, the difficulties and sufferings and even the very labour of settling are no longer the same.

The association has now several well selected blocks of land to which it invites settlers. The Bishop has explained how great are the advantages thus offered. In one of the counties also the Rev. Mr. Glass is endeavoring to form Presbyterian settlements, and thus the principle of combined action is spreading and the way of the settler is cleared of difficulties.

We have said that the port of Saint John is easy of access. A great number of vessels arrive here every Spring from Liverpool and the Clyde, and other English and Scotch ports.

The emigrants from all parts of the North of Ireland can sail direct from Londonderry for Saint John by a line of vessels which have been in the trade for several years, have brought out several passengers and always made good passages, and never yet, we believe, met with an accident. The passengers by this line may be sure of good treatment, and the expense of coming out is much less than if they go to Liverpool.

Some vessels are also to leave Galway for St. John, and these should also bring their quota to avail themselves of the opportunity now offered them of exchanging their

miserable state of dependence on landlord whims and political economy starvation doctrines, for the freedom and independence they may attain in this Province.

For in this Province the farmer pays no rents, no tithes, no grinding [exactions] of any kind. He owns his land in fee; its soil, its timber, its minerals and all; owes no man homage or fealty, and is as independent in all respects as it is possible for man to be in any country. They are much mistaken who because this is called a British Colony or Province fancy it to be a mere dependency, whose people enjoy no liberty or rights. The dependence indeed is in all respects merely nominal, and in return we enjoy the protection of an army and navy that cost us nothing. We pay no tribute to England in any shape; we elect our own Legislature who make our own laws, raise and expend our own revenue, and in nearly all really essential matters we do just as we please. We have no established church; no privileged aristocracy; in theory every man is equal to his neighbour, and in practice the only real distinctions are those which talent or merit creates. We enjoy as much individual liberty as the people of the United States and much greater freedom from license and disorder.

Thus we offer to all compelled to leave their own country in search of a home a healthy climate, fertile lands, free institutions, and competence and independence in means and in spirit to all industrious, intelligent, sober settlers; and all this in a country nearer to Europe than any part of the United States.

The letter of the Bishop will satisfy the most incredulous that we state only the facts, and that for men able and willing to work the road to independence is easier and safer than perhaps in any part of the world.

We have heard that there are many in the neighbouring States, where at present there is so much distress among the working classes, who intend to come here in the spring and apply for the lands of the Association. That there are many to whom such a change would be a great advantage there can be no doubt, and this letter of Dr. Sweeny's should be circulated amongst them as widely as possible. – We know that men eagerly seek work on the Railroads of the United States at wages from 80x. to \$1 a day, paid generally in truck, and to earn this pittance travel hundreds of miles to the place of

work, endure all the misery and demoralization of life in shanties, and run the risk of being plundered by sub-contractors and jobbers. Among the men who flocked from the United States to work on the Railroads in this Province at wages which, even in a time of depression, our labourers regarded as small, we saw too many proofs of the inevitable effects of such a mode of life on all who are doomed to it for even a few years. Broken-down, [decrepid], and often debauched looking, the older men presented a strong contrast to the healthy robust settler who probably came to America at [they] same time they did, but entered on a different career. The wonder is not that some desire to forsake such a mode of life as soon as possible, but that any enter on it who can avoid it.

In the United States it is difficult for the poor labourer even to become a landowner or to rise in any way. In this Province, however, a man only wants industry and a spirit of independence.

Men whose only ambition is to drudge in a factory, or a mill, or a hotel; to do the scavenger work of the streets, to earn a day's wages in the service of others, and live in filthy lanes and alleys, and losing all spirit and sense of religion and even of manliness, become willingly the dregs of society, had better perhaps go to New York or any of the large cities, or if they are there now to stay there; for the settler's life is not for such as them. They could not enjoy its independence or wait its slow and certain returns. But the emigrant who is wise should not [wilfully] doom himself to greater degradation and misery than that he flies, and New Brunswick offers him a certain independence if he [have] the industry and spirit to achieve it, and the Association of which the Bishop of St. John is President, is ready to bid him welcome, and to put him at once in possession of land selected with the utmost care, when he will find other settlers ready to counsel and assist him, and where he will never be troubled by landlord or proctor, and where he will enjoy the advantages of churches and schools, which but for the Association might have been for many years beyond his reach.