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This document is transcribed from a National Archives of Canada microfilm copy of Page 1 of the July 29, 1837 edition of The New Brunswick Courier (Vol V. No. 27) and recounts a debate in the legislature concerning the nature of support that might be provided to a group of newly arrived emigrants from Northumberland. With the assistance of the legislature these emigrants went on to found what would become known as Harvey Settlement.

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PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY —Fredericton
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DEBATES

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
Wednesday, July 19

LOCATION OF EMIGRANTS

The House went into Committee of the whole, in further consultation of His Excellency's Messages – Mr. Taylor in the Chair.

Mr. Speaker stated that the principal object of now going into Committee was to consider the Message of His Excellency relative to the English Emigrants lately arrived, and now in Fredericton. It appeared that those emigrants had been induced to come out to this country under expectations that had not been realised; and they had therefore applied to the Executive for relief. Their demands certainly were not very high, and they did not appear to be in a destitute condition. He (Mr. Speaker) did not think the Legislature could well grant them any money: and he supposed that the only way of relieving them would be by authorizing the Executive to locate them on some of the waste lands of the Crown, giving them a certain time to pay for the lands.

Mr. L.A. Wilmot thought that the Legislature should hold out some encouragement to induce those people to remain in the country; they were a fine, sturdy, healthy, robust, decent set of people, such as were seldom seen arriving as emigrants; and he would be very sorry to see them go away to the United States. — They were calculated to become valuable settlers, even if they had come with nothing in their pockets; because their health and industry were so much real capital brought into the country, which would be greatly benefited by their productive labour. He (Mr. W.) thought the Lieutenant Governor should be authorized to locate them on

crown lands; and if a small sum of money could be appropriated to provide experienced persons to teach them how to go to work in the wilderness, and form a settlement, it would be a very excellent thing; much more advantageous than if money were distributed directly amongst them. The greatest disadvantage which such people met with, in coming to settle in this country was that they did not know where to begin; they knew nothing about setting to work in the wilderness: and therefore the employment of a few experienced woodsmen to instruct them would be a great benefit.

Mr. Brown approved very much of the suggestions of the hon. and learned member for York; and thought
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that his plan was the only way, in which the House could hold out encouragement to poor emigrants; but such a mode would render them useful both to themselves and the country. If located in such a manner they would be a great acquisition of the Province. It should first be ascertained how many of them would be willing to settle in this matter; they should see the land, and then 2 or 3 experienced woodsmen should be appointed to take charge of and instruct them in their first proceedings, and then all their operations would be directed to advantage. But if they went upon new land without such direction and assistance they might kill one another in their inexperienced mode of using the broad axe and felling trees. The hon. member concluded, by describing all the process of clearing and settling wilderness lands.

Mr. J.M. Wilmot had understood that those people came out under the direction of the Nova Scotian and New Brunswick Land Company, expecting to receive land partially cleared, from that company; and if that land was good, they would do better by going there than by settling in the wilderness. It would never do to grant money directly to them; because that would be establishing a bad precedent. It was certainly very desirable to retain them in the country, if possible, but it was difficult to know what mode to adopt.

Mr. Hannington perfectly agreed with Messrs. L.A. Wilmot and Brown's propositions: these people were placed in special circumstances; they were a very useful and valuable class of persons, and the House were called upon to do something for them to prevent them being imposed upon. He would therefore cheerfully go with such a plan as had been proposed; and he thought the revenue could not be better applied, than in promoting such objects; as he was convinced that these emigrants were such as would be useful to the country.

Mr. Speaker thought the Committee should be a little cautious on this question. If the House now granted a sum of money to enable the Executive to locate those emigrants, it would be establishing a precedent from which they might afterwards be expected to afford similar assistance for all comers. It remained to be proved, whether these people would be valuable settlers; he thought the Irish emigrants were always the best settlers that came to the country; and he would like to see how these people had greater claims for assistance, than the poor Irish emigrants that were continually arriving without a penny in their pockets; for, certainly, they did not by any means appear to require aid as much as the Irish. He was not disposed, therefore, to grant money to people not in need: all emigrants had equal claims with them, and thousands had superior claims, from being more in want. He thought that these people had no idea of settling on wilderness lands, to endure privations, because they had expected to be located by the land company; and why should the House make any distinction between them and any other classes of His Majesty's subjects arriving in the same way? He (Mr. Speaker) would wish them to be retained in the Province, if possible; but it would be unjust to make any invidious distinctions in their favour.

Mr. Partelow perfectly agreed, that all emigrants had equal claims, and that every facility should be given to all alike to enable them to settle in the country. But these people were peculiarly situated: they had come out, under promising expectations held out by the directors and agents of the Land Company, and had thus been induced to leave comfortable homes for this new country; and when

they arrived, they found their expectations frustrated and the operations of the Company suspended; and therefore they had made a direct appeal of the Executive, for direction and relief. He (Mr. P.) therefore thought that something ought to be done to assist them; either by placing a sum of money at the disposal of the Executive, or by authorizing His Excellency to locate them as had been proposed; certainly such a valuable class of settlers should be induced to remain in the country. No doubt, all emigrants had equal claims but the great difficulty had always been, that poor emigrants on their arrival did not know to whom to apply. He (Mr. P.) thought that blocks of land should be laid out in different parts of the country, and placed under the control of local boards of commissioners, who should be authorised to locate good settlers on certain terms thereupon. In the mean time, this was entirely a new question; the House were for the first time applied to, to make the experiment; and therefore he was inclined to go with the proposal that had been suggested, to hold out encouragement for the settlement of the country; and to follow it up here after, if successful, in a similar way.

Mr. L.A. Wilmot said, that he had some documents in his hand that would throw a little light on the matter. — The hon. Member here read copies of the following papers: — 1. A circular address, published in England by the Land Company; holding out the most hyperbolical and extravagant inducements to persons to emigrate from Great Britain to this Province; — 2. A certified copy of a Letter from one of the Company's Agents, relative to these emigrants; — 3. A copy of the memorial of the emigrants themselves, to His Excellency, the Lieutenant Governor, on finding their expectations disappointed on arriving here. The memorial of the emigrants merely prayed His Excellency to locate them on a tract of land, to be cleared and improved by them, and to be sold to them at as reasonable a rate as practicable; to be paid for by installments within a given period; they required no pecuniary relief, but merely wanted a location for which they were willing to pay and to work. They did not look for cleared farms, but were willing to go into the wilderness and settle the country. They did not

come begging; their request was most reasonable, as they were ready to pay for their land by installments. There would be no invidious distinction, in granting this mode of relief; every good settler should be encouraged; but these parties certainly had peculiar claims, they would become valuable settlers and he (Mr. W.) hoped they would be assisted in the way they prayed.

Mr. Speaker replied, that if the hon. and learned member for York had favoured the Committee with the information which he had just communicated a little earlier, he (Mr. Speaker,) would have been quite willing to accord with the views of these emigrants, as far as they had set them forth in their memorial; he had no objection to afford them assistance, in the way of a loan.

Mr. End was glad that the opposition to this proposed measure was withdrawn. No matter what countrymen these emigrants were, whether English, Irish or Scotch; nay, even if they were from any other country of Europe, if they intended to settle in the Province, they were entitled to consideration. He (Mr. E.) thanked the Hon. speaker for his good opinion of Irish settlers; but as settlers, it should never be considered of what country emigrants were; if they were healthy, industrious, frugal and well conducted people, the House should shut their eyes against all kind of country predilections, and encourage them to become productive settlers. He had not seen those emigrants himself, but he had heard that they were clean, industrious, healthy people, and likely to become very valuable settlers; and he would therefore go cordially with any measure, to accord with the views of the Executive, in affording them relief. It was hardly fair to allude to the Land Company in this question; it was no matter to the Committee how these people had been deceived; if they had been so deceived the law of the land was open to them; but the question for the Committee to consider was that if they were willing to become *bona fide* settlers and did not beg anything, the Committee should meet their views. They appeared to have some little capital with them, and they would no doubt be a useful acquisition to the country; and the Committee should now do something for them, which they would not hereafter

be ashamed to look at as a precedent. — He (Mr. E.) had certainly long ago been very much surprised at the Land Company's advertisement in the Royal Gazette; he was astonished at its poetical and highly-coloured statements, as inducements for emigrants to come and settle on the Company's lands; and we was sorry that no person accustomed to writing
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for the press had ever done anything to expose the flaming descriptions in that document; for the whole concern was, in his opinion, the most Utopian scheme that had ever been projected. — He hoped the committee would now liberally and cordially respond to the humane call made upon them by the Executive.

Mr. Clinch, said, that it could not be denied that these people had superior claims on the Legislature: it appeared, they were anxious to settle on lands and go to work; while it was well known that most the emigrants to this country, and especially the Irish, came here only as way to the United States; the best of them always went off, and the worst and most useless only remained. But these people were of a different class altogether, and it would be highly proper for the committee to meet their views. He had always been averse to any particular measures of such a kind, because they were so difficult to manage satisfactorily; and even what might be done now would be only matter of experiment. But still the experiment should be tried; and he thought there could not be a better plan than what had been already pointed out.

Mr. Weldon, after detailing the circumstances under which these Emigrants had reached Fredericton and found themselves disappointed, observed that the present year was a peculiar one; it was a year of considerable distress, wages were low, business was greatly stagnated and a variety of circumstance operated, to prevent these persons from advantageously scattering through the Province. They were therefore placed under very peculiar circumstances, and as they had applied for so very reasonable a kind of relief, he thought it would be as well to make the experiment; and there could be no

better plan, than by placing a small sum at the disposal of the Executive, to be employed in locating them on waste lands, and letting them have the lands for a certain period, before any payment of the purchase money should be required. The assistance should be as a loan only and not a gift; and altogether, he (Mr. W.) very much approved of the suggestions of the hon. and learned member for York (Mr. L.A. Wilmot) and the hon. member for Charlotte (Mr. Brown) — With this view of the case therefore, he would move a resolution, to take the sense of the committee. The hon. member then moved a resolution, to the effect that, in the opinion of the committee, the emigrants in question should be located on Crown Lands, and no purchase money be required to be paid for — years; and that his Excellency should be authorized to expend a certain sum, not exceeding £ — toward locating them, in such a manner as his Excellency should deem advisable.

Mr. Speaker thought that the loan should be to the extent of the purchase money of the several lots of land; and that no grants should pass to the purchasers, till the money was repaid, otherwise there would be no security for the repayment.

Mr. Weldon replied, that the Executive would take care that the loans should be repaid, before passing any grants to the parties.

Mr. Street was well disposed to go with the resolution, to encourage such a class of emigrants because it was the best mode of promoting the settlement of the country; but still the committee should take care not to establish a precedent, which might afterwards be difficult to get rid of. He thought this resolution required some alteration; because it must be remembered, that the seventh section of the remedial bill, passed yesterday, providing a peculiar mode of granting lands to poor settlers, to which this resolution was directly repugnant, because it went to give these people a larger time for payment than that bill would allow. He thought, therefore, it would be better to place a sum of money at the disposal of the Lieut. Governor, to enable his Excellency to locate the settlers, by allotting them lands and paying the first installment for them as a loan; which would enable the

Executive to effect the object, without infringing on the spirit of the remedial bill; and he considered that the Legislature should hold out every encouragement to facilitate the establishment of such valuable settlers in the Province. The hon. member concluded by moving the following Resolution and an amendment: —

“Resolved, As the opinion of this Committee, that a sum not exceeding £ , should be placed at the disposal of His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, to be by him applied towards locating upon wilderness land in the Province, the Emigrants recently arrived in this country from the north of England, and now in Fredericton, in such manner as His Excellency shall deem most advisable to effect the above object.”

Considerable discussion followed this motion, some hon. members maintaining that the original resolution would not infringe upon the provisions of the remedial bill because that bill was not yet passed by the other branches, and therefore had not become a law; while others contend, that as there was no doubt that it shortly would become a law, and as the Civil List Bill, which allowed only the auction system, actually was a law, the amendment would be better than the original resolution; and finally, as all appeared to wish to afford the relief prayed for, in the best and most effectual manner. Mr. Weldon withdrew his resolution and Mr. Street’s was agreed to without division and the blank filled with “£200.”

The committee then took up the Message of Excellency, relative to the pecuniary relief he had been requested by petition to grant, and land afforded to the distressed inhabitants of Madawaska.

Mr. L.A. Wilmot moved a resolution, to the effect that, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, the House would make provision to indemnify his Excellency, at the next Session.

Mr. End said, that he believed the usual mode acted on by the Executive, and especially by Sir Howard Douglas, in cases of a similar nature was to call the Council together, and to issue a warrant under their advice; but, although that course had not been pursued in the present instance; yet he thought the emergency of the case was quite sufficient to justify the steps taken by His Excellency, Sir John

Harvey. The dictates of humanity were paramount to all other considerations; and, admiring His Excellency's prompt and efficient compliance with the prayer of the petitioners he (Mr. E.) cheerfully supported the resolution; and hoped the committee would equally approve this auspicious commencement of his Excellency's administration, and view it as a happy omen of the ready attention which would be paid by the Executive, to the true interests as well as to the necessities of all classes of His Majesty's subjects in this Province.

The resolution was then agreed to; and the chairman reported progress and the resolutions, etc.
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