Order Number 1331743

Scottish emigration to Canada 1749–1850

Herridge, Monte Carl, M.A.

The University of Texas at Arlington, 1987

U·M·I

300 N. Zeeb Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

SCOTTISH EMIGRATION TO CANADA 1749-1850

by

MONTE CARL HERRIDGE

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
The University of Texas at Arlington in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN HISTORY

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON
August 1987

SCOTTISH EMIGRATION TO CANADA 1749-1850

APPROVED:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the advice and constructive criticisms of Drs. Stanley Palmer, David Narrett, and Sandra Myres in the preparation of my thesis. Their aid was indispensible in its preparation. I would also like to acknowledge the help of John Alf of Southwest Office Systems, who kindly provided the Panasonic electronic typewriter-printer so that I could print my paper.

July 15, 1987

ABSTRACT

SCOTTISH EMIGRATION TO CANADA 1749-1850

Monte Carl Herridge, M.A.

The University of Texas at Arlington, 1987

Supervising Professor: Stanley H. Palmer

Scottish emigrants were an important factor in the British settlement of the Canadian colonies of North America. Scottish emigration began with the settlement of ex-military men. They were followed by their family and friends. This emigration influenced others to follow.

The Scots emigrated to the Canadian colonies in order to improve their lives because the economic situation in Scotland was not very good, and famines occurred regularly.

Many of the Scots were assisted in emigrating to Canada, either with a free passage or with free land grants. The British and Canadian governments, Scottish landlords and businessmen, and British assistance organizations aided the emigrants.

British government regulation of emigration helped the emigrants survive their journey. The regulations evolved

over many years from 1803 into the twentieth century.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Scottish emigrants were an important factor in the British settlement of the Canadian colonies of North America and played a major role in the growth of Canada. The British government began encouraging the emigration of the Scots long before it even thought of regulating it. The British government wanted settlers in the Canadian colonies in order to better establish a hold upon this area. Many of these early settlers were ex-military men and many were also Scottish. There were many Scots in British military units at this time due to poor economic conditions in Scotland. Settlement of Canada by ex-soldiers was of importance throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The Scottish emigration to Canada can be divided into two basic periods. The first period was that of 1749-1815 and the second was that of 1815-1850. The first period was important because it initiated the Scottish emigration and the settlement of the Canadian colonies. The second period of 1815-1850 was of the post-Napoleonic era. This period saw the emigration of more ex-soldiers, as well as many who had no choice because of economic conditions but to emigrate to a new land.

The British government's attitude towards this emigration was not consistent. Their attitude varied from approval

and encouragement to disapproval and discouragement. They would at some points support and subsidize emigration such as emigration by ex-soldiers. At other times they would attempt to discourage Scots from leaving Scotland because of disapproval of emigration by Scottish Landlords. The British government's position on emigration did have an effect on it.

The British economy played a part in emigration to other lands. The Scottish economy was weaker and more fragile than the English economy, so the problems there were worse. This weak economy often encouraged or forced many Scots to emigrate elsewhere in order to survive. The Scottish landlords attitudes also played an important part in the emigration of Scots. Many landlords wanted a cheap labor pool available, and many landlords wanted the poor tenants off their lands so that they could put it to more profitable use.

The emigration of Scots to the Canadian colonies was often affected by the regulations of the British government. The lack of early laws dealing with emigration and shipping often created problems which the British government took many years to correct. Shipping and emigration laws were passed by the British Parliament, and new improved versions appeared at intervals.

CHAPTER I

EARLY EMIGRATION UP TO 1815

An important factor in the British settlement of the Canadian colonies of North America was the emigration of Scottish ex-military settlers. Many of these ex-soldiers came from disbanded military units that were encouraged by the British and Canadian governments to settle in Canada. Other ex-soldiers were discharged from still active units. They were interested in taking advantage of the government's offers of land. early settlers were ex-military men, and many of these were Scottish. These ex-military settlers were not the most important in number, but their settlement in Canada created a British presence there that attracted many others. It was the emigration of Scottish ex-soldiers to the Canadian colonies that really started the movement of British subjects, especially Scots, to that part of the world. Ex-military emigration greatly influenced the emigration of Scottish civilians to the Canadian colonies. The British government wanted settlers in the Canadian colonies in order to establish a good hold upon the area.

There were many Scots in British military units in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries because of poor economic conditions in Scotland. Many of these were Scottish

Highlanders, most of whom had no desire to return to Scotland if they could improve their situation in life in the Canadian colonies. The Scots were interested in settling in Canada because they could also own their own land. They could not be landowners in Scotland, only tenants on small acreages. They also would be free of control by Scottish landlords and tacksmen. Tacksmen in Scotland at this time were middlemen between landlords and tenants. Settlement in Canada would be like beginning over again in a new world. So the reasons that caused many to join military units also caused them to to become colonists.

The soldiers often brought their families over, and their letters to relatives in the old country encouraged many others to emigrate to Canada. Scots, especially Highlanders, were used to close ties of family and community. Often, one group's leaving encouraged others to follow later.

The main periods of the settlement of Canada by the ex-military were:

> (a)the settlement of Nova Scotia beginning in 1749 and continuing through the Seven Years War period (b)the post-conquest settlement in Quebec by soldiers of Wolfe's armies
> (c)the post-American Revolution movement to the Maritime Provinces, Lower and Upper Canada of ex-soldiers and of the United Empire Loyalists groups
> (d)the immigration and settlement of veterans of the Napoleonic Wars in Canada West, the Maritime Provinces, and the Selkirk colony
> (e)the land grants to veterans of the Red River and North West Rebellions, and the South African War.[1]

---

[1]Robert England, "Disbanded and Discharged Soldiers in Canada Prior to 1914," The Canadian Historical Review, 27 (March 1946): 3.

The groups of ex-soldiers during the first four periods involved Scottish veterans. The land grants in the last period seem to have involved primarily veterans who were natives of Canada. However, there may have been some immigrants among these veterans. The settlement in Canada West and the settlement of the Selkirk colony will not be covered in this paper.

The early emigration by ex-soldiers in the eighteenth century to the Canadian colonies was just the beginning of the Scottish emigration to that area. Once started, the Scottish emigration continued, with some interruptions, into the twentieth century. The Canadian and British governments continued to encourage the settlement of ex-soldiers in the Canadian colonies up through the twentieth century. Soldiers were granted land either free or for low fees. However, the land grants of the later nineteenth century were not the same as the earlier grants. Before 1867 land was granted to soldiers in amounts based upon rank. After that date military land grants gave homesteads to ex-soldiers without regard to rank, and each man received the same amount of land. In the earlier periods of settlement before 1867 some had received excessive amounts of land because of their rank. Many grantees never made use of their grants, becoming either absentee landowners or disposing of their land to someone else. This was one of the reasons for the later equalization of the land grants. Another reason was that the Canadian

government wanted to prevent European-style feudal holdings from developing.

British emigration to the Canadian colonies began with the emigration of ex-military men. The first period of this emigration to Canada began in 1749 with the advertisement in newspapers that the Committee of Privy Council for Trade and Plantations would provide land, transportation and supplies to soldiers and sailors if they would emigrate to Nova Scotia. Undoubtedly some Scots were among these early settlers, but it was not until 1763 that they began emigrating in larger numbers. Nova Scotia came entirely under British control by 1755, when British and New England military forces captured Fort Beausejour from the French. The French settlers in Nova Scotia were deported the same year when they refused to swear allegiance to Great Britain. The French deportations left large areas open for British settlement. The British government wanted to send out more ex-soldiers to settle these lands because they felt that there were not enough settlers in Nova Scotia to defend the colony. Lieutenant-Governor Lawrence of Nova Scotia opposed this move. Himself a military man, Lawrence felt that soldiers would not make good settlers and colonists. In a letter to the Lord Commissioners of Trade and Plantations, Lawrence wrote:

> In having your Lordships Commands to do so, I have carefully and as well as I am able, considered what Lands may be fit for accommodating disbanded Officers and Soldiers- and I now lay before you a paper containing the names of

> such places as I conceive will be proper for such purpose ... But I fear the difficulty of forming them into Societies will be great; that the undertaking will be excessively expensive to the Crown; and that after all it will prove abortive for according to my ideals of the Military which I offer with all possible deference and submission, they are the least qualifyed from their occupation as Soldiers, of any men living to establish new Countrys, where they must encounter Difficulties, with which they are altogether unacquainted and I am rather convinced of it, as every Soldier that has come into this Province since the establishment of Halifax, has either quitted it or become a dram seller, upon the whole I am very much at a loss to point out to your Lordships, with any precision, any method of carrying out such a design into effectual execution, either with advantage to the disbanded Military or with Security to the Province.[2]

Lawrence much preferred to recruit settlers from the older American colonies to the south. He felt that they were better settlers and loyal to Britain. In various New England newspapers in 1758 and 1759 Lawrence made announcements about the availability of land in Nova Scotia in hopes of luring some of these people north.[3] Among the settlement projects was one begun by the Philadelphia Company. This company had two hundred thousand acres available and brought in Scottish, Irish, and American settlers.[4] These Scots among the early settlers of Canada were just the beginning of the Scottish movement, which gradually increased up through the nineteenth century until the Scots were one of the largest ethnic groups there.

---

[2]Ibid., pp. 3-4.

[3]Helen I. Cowan, British Emigration to British North America (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), p. 5.

[4]Ibid.

In 1763 Great Britain acquired French Canada as a result of the Seven Years War. The London government decided to go ahead with its plans for settling more ex-soldiers there. The reasons were the same as those involved in Nova Scotia. A loyal population of ex-soldiers in Canada would be available as a military force to defend the colonies if necessary. The British government also wanted Canada to develop into an area of sufficient economic strength to become a trading partner for British companies. Another reason for for encouraging the emigration of British settlers was to attempt to gradually assimilate the French population of Canada. These goals were only partly realized during the next century. Far fewer settlers emigrated to the Canadian colonies than the government had planned. The British government had also hoped that the settlers would all be Protestant, but this did not happen. Many settlers were Scottish Highlanders. A smaller number were Scottish Presbyterians. The British government was still anti-Catholic as it had been for centuries, and disliked having Catholic settlers in Canada. However, these Scottish Catholic settlers proved very loyal to the British government and held Canada against the United States in the Revolutionary War and in the War of 1812. There were many Scots in military units during these two wars. The Scots also proved to be good settlers.

After 1763, the British government disbanded a number of regiments in North America. The government offered free

land grants in order to encourage soldiers to settle in the Canadian colonies. At first, at the beginning of these land grants, Imperial Regulars and colonial militia received the following amount of lands: field officers, five thousand acres; captains, three thousand acres; subalterns, two thousand acres; non-commissioned officers, two hundred acres; and privates, fifty acres.[5] Each man was to receive his land "by warrant of survey wherever the applicant desired."[6] As colonization increased, within just a few years the size of these land grants was lowered for the commissioned officers: lieutenant-colonels, twelve hundred acres; majors, one thousand acres; captains, eight hundred acres; subalterns, five hundred acres; non-commissioned officers, two hundred acres; and privates, fifty acres.[7]

Many soldiers were swayed by this free land grant and chose to stay in Canada, where they saw a better future than could be had at home. Between the years 1763-1804 fourteen regiments of Colonials, Loyalists and Highlanders settled in the districts of St. John, Gagetown, Fredericton and Woodstock.[8] By the end of 1766 the Londonderry, Truro, and Onslow areas had almost a thousand settlers, and the population of Nova Scotia was about thirteen thousand.[9]

---

[5]Norman Macdonald, Canada, 1763-1841, Immigration and Settlement (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1943), p. 42.

[6]Ibid. [7]Ibid., p. 43. [8]Ibid.

[9]Cowan, British Emigration, p. 6.

In 1763 the British government instructed Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief James Murray of the colony of Quebec to offer veterans of the Seven Years War land "upon such terms, and under such moderate quit rents, services and acknowledgements as have been appointed in our other colonies."[10] Because of problems arising from land grants to officers in other Canadian colonies who did not make use of it, the government also told Murray to give ex-soldiers only as much land as they could actually use. According to the instructions, "Heads of families were to receive one hundred acres and fifty additional for members of their family to a maximum of one thousand acres. The governor was to have townships laid out and the lands advertised in the other British American colonies."[11]

Many of the Scottish officers in the British army during the Seven Years War were of the "tacksman" class. The tacksmen rented land from the landlords and in turn rented it out in smaller units to others. The tacksmen were originally required to give military service to the lord of the clan, along with a small rental fee for the lands they held. After the rebellion of the High landers for the Stuart cause in 1745, and its subsequent failure, tacksmen and tenants were no longer required to provide the clan lords with these military services. Instead, the lords became dependent upon money from the land rental. This dependence increased

---

[10] Ibid., p. 7. [11] Ibid.

considerably as time went by, with the tacksmen becoming basically the rental middleman between lords and tenants. There was also an increase in population in Scotland beginning at this time, along with increasing rental fees on land. Land clearances were beginning to make way for more profitable sheep and cattle. The Scottish landlords needed more money in order to avoid financial problems and also in order to maintain their high standard of living. They saw the tacksmen as parasites who took too much of the money from the tenants that they should have gotten instead. Many landlords forced or persuaded their tacksmen to leave. Other landlords did not wish them to go because when they left they often took with them many of the better off tenants who had capital. Changing economic and social conditions such as populations pressures and increasing rents convinced many tacksmen to emigrate with their tenants to the Canadian colonies. They felt that they could set themselves up as landlords there without the interference of the Scottish landlords. The tacksmen officers used the land grant rights they had acquired at the end of the Seven Years War to try to become landlords in the Canadian colonies.

The Scottish military settlements after the Seven Years War were important because most of the soldiers in the disbanded Scottish regiments decided to stay in the Canadian colonies. Many sent for their families or relatives from Scotland. Probably the best-known settlement of a military

unit in the Canadian colonies at that time was that of the Seventy-Eighth regiment, or Fraser's Highlanders as they were commonly known. In 1763 ex-soldiers of this regiment settled in various areas of Quebec and on the north side of the St. Lawrence at Mount Murray and Murray Bay in the county of Northumberland.[12] This group of Scottish ex-soldiers did not bring wives over from Scotland, but intermarried with the French population of the area.[13] By 1832 Mount Murray and Murray Bay had a total population of three thousand.[14]

During the American Revolution and afterward a large number of Scottish military veterans settled in the Canadian colonies. This period involved more ex-soldiers than had the earlier one. Not only Scottish regiments but also many American Loyalist regiments emigrated to Canada. Many of the Loyalist military units consisted of Scottish Highlanders recruited in the American colonies. These men were usually fairly recent newcomers to the colonies.

Hundreds of members of the families of the Loyalists soldiers involved in the American Revolution had already moved to the Canadian colonies during the war. About a thousand Loyalists went with Lord Howe in March 1776, when he evacuated Boston and went to Halifax in Canada.[15] By 1778 almost a

---

[12] Macdonald, Canada, 1763-1841, p. 43.

[13] England, "Disbanded and Discharged Soldiers," p. 4.

15 Engl

[14] Macdonald, Canada, 1763-1841, p. 44.

[15] England, "Disbanded and Discharged Soldiers," p. 4.

thousand Loyalist refugees were receiving relief from the government of Quebec.[16] The soldiers and the rest of the civilians followed after the end of the war. The Highlanders in most cases remained loyal to the British government because their leaders did so.

Many Scottish military units were raised in the American and Canadian colonies by leaders like Sir John Johnson, Colonel Allen Maclean, Colonel Guy Johnson (brother-in-law of Sir John Johnson), Colonel John Butler, Alexander Macdonell, and probably others. Some of these men were former British army officers who had settled in the North American colonies on land grants and had brought in Scots as colonists.

New York was a colony that had many Scottish settlers. Sir William Johnson of New York had brought a thousand settlers over from Scotland, some arriving as late as 1773. He settled these Scots on his lands. He died in 1774; and his son, Sir John Johnson, inherited these lands. When the Revolutionary War began in 1775, military units were raised among Johnson's followers and from other Scots in the American colonies. Sir John Johnson fled to Canada with three hundred Scottish followers in 1776 after he was threatened with arrest by the revolutionary government.[17] Johnson was made

---

[16]Ibid., p. 5.

[17]H. Stewart Wallace, The United Empire Loyalists, vol. 13, p. 37 in George M. Wrong and H. H. Langdon, gen. eds., The Chronicles of Canada, 32 vols. (Toronto: Glasgow, Brook & Co., 1922).

a colonel after his arrival in Canada. He recruited Loyalists into two battalions of five hundred men each.[18] These soldiers became known as the King's Royal Regiment of New York, or the "Royal Greens."[19] After the end of the war in 1783, these men settled with their families on the north side of the St. Lawrence River between Montreal and Kingston.[20]

Other military units of Scottish emigrants were raised for service in the American Revolution. Lieutenant-Colonel Allan Maclean, with the help of Colonel Guy Johnson, raised The Eighty-Fourth, or Royal Highland Emigrant, Regiment of two battalions in 1775. The first battalion consisted of former Fraser and Montgomery Highlanders living in Quebec and Nova Scotia. The second battalion was raised from Highland Scots who had just arrived in Nova Scotia. As an encouragement to recruits, the British government promised each volunteer two hundred acres of land for himself and fifty acres for each member of his family, "free of quit-rent and patent fees and all public burdens, exclusive of the land each was already entitled to as officers and privates serving in North America agreeable to the Regulations of 1763."[21] Soldiers could therefore obtain lands for service in both the Seven Years War and the American Revolution.

In 1783 many Loyalists left America for the Canadian

---

[18]Ibid. [19]Ibid.

[20]Ibid., pp. 37-38.

[21]Macdonald, Canada, 1763-1841, p. 45.

colonies. Lands were granted in Upper Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and what is now Ontario. In Upper Canada 3.2 million acres were granted to the Loyalists by 1787,[22] so this period of settlement was very important to the development of Canada. The American Revolution brought thousands of Scots to the Canadian colonies. Many of these would not have gone to Canada in other circumstances, but after fighting for the Loyalist side in the war they had no choice but to leave the American colonies.

Military units were often, but not always, settled together in townships in Canada. The Protestant members of a unit were settled in one township and the Catholic members in another township. Each township was laid out and sub-divided into two hundred acre lots. There were many problems in settling these people, and the British and Canadian colonial governments had to support many of the Loyalists until they could support themselves. It took several years before the Loyalist settlements became self-sufficient.

The Scottish military emigration to the Canadian colonies continued after the Loyalist period. The most important of the units to emigrate was the disbanded Glengarry Fencibles in 1803. These ex-soldiers were of the Macdonell clan of Scotland. Hundreds of members of this clan had already emigrated to Canada after 1783. The Fencibles

---

[22]Wallace, The United Empire Loyalists, p. 117.

were raised in Scotland in 1795 and sent to Guernsey, and in 1798 were sent to Ireland to serve under General Hunter. Hunter later became Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada. He liked the Fencibles and praised them highly as men and soldiers.[23] In 1803 Father Alexander Macdonell, Catholic priest for the Macdonells, approached the British government with a scheme to use his relatives as a settlement barrier in the Canadian colonies against the United States. They would also serve as a future military pool if needed. So, in 1803 Lord Hobart, Secretary of State for the Colonies sent these instructions to Lieutenant-Governor Hunter in Upper Canada:

> A body of Highlanders, mostly Macdonells, and partly disbanded soldiers of the Glengarry Fencible Regiment, with their families and immediate connections, are upon the point of quitting their present place of abode, with the design of following into Upper Canada some of their their relatives who have already established themselves in that Province.
>
> The merit and services of the Regiment, in which a proportion of these people have served, give them strong claims to any mark of favour and consideration which can consistently be extended to them: and with the encouragement usually afforded in the Province, they would no doubt prove as valuable settlers as their connections now residing in the District of Glengarry of whose industry and general conduct very favourable representations have been received here.
>
> Government has been apprised of the situation and disposition of the families before described by Mr. Macdonell, one of the Ministers of their Church, and formerly Chaplain to the Glengarry Regiment, who possesses considerable influence with the whole body.
>
> He has undertaken, in the event of their absolute determination to carry into execution their plan of departure, to embark with them and direct their course to Canada.
>
> In case of their arrival within your Government, I am commanded by His Majesty to authorise you to grant in the

---

[23]Macdonald, Canada, 1763-1841, p. 499.

> usual manner a tract of the unappropriated Crown lands in any part of the Province where they may wish to fix, in the proportion of 1200 acres to Mr. Macdonell, and two hundred acres to every family he may introduce into the Colony.[24]

However, the British government later changed its mind, partially because of resistance from the Highland Society of Scotland. The Highland Society was opposed to emigration from Scotland to anywhere, and used its influence to stop it whenever possible. This Society felt that any economic problems in Scotland could be taken care of so that emigration would be unnecessary. Even when economic problems could not be solved, the Society still opposed any emigration whatsoever. So the Macdonells were forced to leave in smaller groups over a period of years. By 1806 there were ten thousand Catholic Macdonells in Glengarry in Canada, and fifteen thousand by 1817, with virtually none left in Scotland.[25]

Scottish military veterans also played an important part in the next period of military emigration to the Canadian colonies. This was the emigration of Napoleonic War veterans. In 1814 the British government decided that it needed to ensure the loyalty of the Canadian colonies, especially Upper Canada, and protect them from the United States during the War of 1812. In order to accomplish this

---

[24]Stanley C. Johnson, Emigration From the United Kingdom to North America 1763-1912 (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1913), pp. 7-8.

[25]Macdonald, Canada, 1763-1841, p. 499.

Britain decided to grant land to military veterans to encourage them to emigrate to Canada. Lord Bathurst, secretary for war and the colonies, investigated the possibilities of using Scottish emigrants as settlers in Canada. They would not only help to hold Canada but would provide manpower for the military if necessary. Lord Bathurst approved the use of disbanded military units as Canadian settlers in 1813, but it was 1815 before anything was accomplished. These plans also included Scottish civilians. Officers were to receive two hundred acres, all others one hundred acres each.[26] This was considerably less than officers had received in previous land grants. Land grants gradually declined in size for all but privates. Part of the offer in the 1815 grant included transportation to the colony, rations for at least eight months, farm implements, tools, and "other comforts according to the necessities of the individuals."[27] The government required that each grantee not dispose of his land in any way until he had lived on and cultivated it for at least three years. A superintendent was appointed to take charge of the operation. The government also paid for roads to be built to the settlements.

After the military settlements of the Napoleonic War period there was not much in the way of larger military emigration to the Canadian colonies. Many military veterans

---

[26]England, "Disbanded and Discharged Soldiers," p. 9.

[27]Ibid.

stayed in Canada after their service was over. Other veterans emigrated there individually but not any military units settled as units there. These later veterans received land either free or paid small fees for it. But neither the British government nor the Canadian government made any great effort to encourage emigration of military veterans. The subsequent land grants to veterans were mainly given to native Canadian veterans of the occasional Canadian rebellions of the nineteenth century such as the Red River rebellion and the North West rebellion. There was also a grant for veterans of the South African War at the end of the nineteenth century.

The settlement of Canada by ex-soldiers never did succeed to the satisfaction of the British and Canadian governments. Part of the lack of success was because the British government probably expected too many results for the time and money they spent on financing and promoting the emigration of ex-military men and their families. The emigration was never organized and carried out efficiently enough. The government also changed its mind at times about supporting and financing this emigration. One example of this was when the Macdonells were trying to emigrate en mass to Canada in 1803. The government bowed to pressure from the Highland Society and canceled its support of the venture. However, the ex-military settlements did start emigration to Canada, because the veterans brought over their families and

encouraged others to also come over. These men constituted a beginning and gave an impetus to the subsequent emigration movement that would bring thousands more people to Canada.

Chapter II

EMIGRATION AFTER 1815

Emigration from Scotland increased greatly after the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815. A good proportion of it went to the Canadian colonies. There were several reasons for this increase: The gradual collapse of war-supported industries in Great Britain, safer sealanes, the disbanding of military units, increasing land clearances in Scotland, and increasing population. Famines in Scotland also caused an increase in emigration, but famines had been occurring there for centuries.

The collapse of war-supported industries such as the kelp industry struck Scotland especially hard. Kelp was used as a substitute to salt for many years. Thousands of poor Scots depended upon kelp-gathering to help them survive. Many of these people had been evicted by landlords and were living on small plots on the coast, where they raised potatoes and supplemented their income with money from kelp. Others lived in areas where landlords encouraged tenants to stay and harvest kelp. There was at first a gradual decrease in demand for kelp for its chemical content because of a new chemically produced soda substitute. Reopened markets after the Napoleonic Wars caused still less demand. In 1822-1823

the final blow to the industry came when the import tax on foreign salt and barilla was dropped. The value of kelp fell from ten pounds to two or three pounds a ton.[1] Thousands of Scots faced starvation after this price collapse, so they had no choice but to emigrate to other areas in Britain or the world in order to survive.

Other industries either collapsed or fell on hard times as the artificial stimulus of the Napoleonic Wars disappeared. The Scottish fisheries were one of these industries that declined. There was not much that the workers could do but either starve or emigrate. The Scottish weaving industry also suffered. Demand for weavers' products fell, forcing the weavers to resort to manual labor in order to survive. The weavers organized into societies and pressured the British government for aid in emigrating overseas. Taxes were lowered and import duties on many items were reduced or dropped in order to help the economy, but this only worked for a short time. Recovery took much longer. Many changes were occurring in Britain after 1815: economic, social and political.[2] There was a bad economic depression in 1819, and a bad monetary speculation and panic in 1825. Jobs were disappearing because of machines. Land clearances deprived

---

[1]Stanley C. Johnson, Emigration From the United Kingdom to North America 1763-1912 (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1913), p. 49.

[2]Helen I. Cowan, British Emigration to British North America (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), p. 172.

others of livelihoods. So there were plenty of reasons why many people were encouraged to look overseas for a place where they could make a better living, possibly own their own land, and be economically free. Lowland Scotland was in better condition than the Highlands because its economy was more advanced and diversified. Highland Scotland had a somewhat primitive economy and was unable to support its population as well as the Lowlands.

The decline of the economy forced a number of landlords to either begin or increase the evictions of tenants from their lands. Many had previously opposed emigration and evictions because they profited from the kelp harvesting in their areas. They wanted to keep a plentiful labor force on hand. They now saw evictions and emigration as a way to solve their problems. Many landlords paid passage overseas for their tenants in order to get rid of them. Landlord-aided emigration continued in large numbers up through the 1850s.

One event that had a significant effect on Scottish emigration to the Canadian colonies was the Potato Blight and Famine of 1846. This caused thousands of Scots to leave Scotland, going either to England or to one of the various British colonies around the world. The Irish also had the same problems, but theirs have been much more researched and is more well known than the Scottish famine. The Scottish famine was just as devastating as the Irish famine, although

the population loss was not as high. Famines in Scotland were not unknown before 1846. In fact, there had been periodic famines in various parts of Scotland for centuries because of crop failures and overpopulation. There were years of bad crops in Scotland from the late 1830s into the 1840s.

Many Scots subsisted primarily on potatoes which could be grown virtually anywhere, even in the poorest soil. Much of Scotland such as the Highlands had poor rocky soil that was not any good for regular farming. Potatoes had been introduced in Scotland in the mid-eighteenth century. Many of the poorest of the inhabitants immediately adopted potatoes in order to survive. The easy availability of potatoes, along with the better health of the people and the ensuing decline in the death rate, caused the population of Scotland to jump rapidly. This increase was a problem, for when a famine occurred the results were much worse than they would have been with a smaller population.

By the 1830s, even with the aid of the potato, the state of many poor Scottish Highlanders had become desperate. Even in non-famine years, many were on bare subsistence levels, surviving only because of the potato. Many had already emigrated by that time to various British colonies, especially to Canada. Emigration from the British Isles in the decade of the 1830s was more than double that of the previous decade. Over three hundred and twenty thousand

British, Scottish and Irish emigrated to the Canadian colonies in the 1830s.[3] Many Highlanders saw Canada as a place where they would be able to live and eat properly. In 1839 Dr. Thomas Rolph, a Canadian, informed the Duke of Richmond, President of the Highlands and Agricultural Society of Scotland, that emigration was the only thing that would help save thousands of Scots from starvation and terrible living conditions.

Every time a famine of any magnitude occurred in Scotland, emigration was given an impetus. A serious famine hit Scotland in 1836-1837, and only large charitable contributions totaling more than seventy thousand pounds by the public to buy food for the starving prevented a disaster.[4] The Highlands were affected the worst. The peat stocks used for fuel were destroyed by bad weather, forcing the people to burn their roofs for fuel.[5] The condition of the Highlands at this time is shown in a speech by Norman Macleod, Moderator of the Church of Scotland, who made appearances in London to ask for help for the Scots:

> There are many parishes without meal, and having no more potatoes than sufficient to keep the people in existence for a few weeks, while a fearful portion of them are without peat to burn, or an article of food to maintain

---

[3] Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, 1894-1899 (Emigration, vol. 28) (reprint ed., Shannon: Irish University Press, 1969), p. 572.

[4] John Preble, The Highland Clearances (England: Penguin Books Ltd, 1969), p. 163.

[5] Ibid.

> life except the miserable subsistence obtained from shellfish and sea-weed... The means of emigration they do not possess, and from their ignorance of the English language they cannot now compete with the myriads of Irish labourers who flock for employment to the Lowlands from whence the Highlanders now find themselves almost excluded.[6]

The people eventually recovered from this famine, only to find the next one in 1846 much worse than any they had seen before.

The Potato Blight began in Europe in 1845, hitting Denmark, Sweden, and Ireland. It affected Scotland that year only in the Lowlands. The Highlands were struck by the blight in 1846, first destroying the potatoes stored from the previous year in pits. The fields of growing potatoes started decaying in the summer, and by the fall the entire crop in Highland Scotland was gone.[7] With the food sources destroyed, no food was available for the starving people. The government, the churches, the cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, as well as the clan chieftains Macleod, Mackenzie and Mathieson organized relief for the famine victims. The famine, though, was too overwhelming for this relief to be of much help. Many died of starvation, and survivors fled the country. Some went to England, thinking that it would be better there. However, many of the starving Irish had the same idea, and there were thousands in England trying to find work in order buy food. Others went overseas. One hundred and six thousand people left Scotland in a year. The

---

[6]Ibid., p. 164. [7]Ibid., p. 173.

disaster was worsened by other factors. Some of the Irish were fleeing to Scotland to escape the famine in Ireland. Many went to Glasgow, where thousands died from famine fever. In Scotland there were other varieties of food grown like grain, beans, peas, cabbages and other foods. However, the farmers who grew these foods preferred to send their crops south where they brought higher prices.[8] So there was plenty of food to feed the starving people, but the farmers refused to keep it in Scotland where it was needed. As a result, food riots occurred in 1846 and 1847 in an effort by the starving to keep the food from being sent out of the country.

The blight of 1846 was followed by a severe winter, then by another potato blight in 1847 that was not quite as severe as the previous year's. The effects of these crop failures affected Scotland for the next five years.[9] It took many years for Scotland to recover fully. The people's poverty and lack of food did not disappear with the end of the famine. In 1847 three-quarters of the people in the Highlands were living on the little that the Destitution Boards gave them.[10] The Lowlands were less affected, since they did not depend on potatos as much. Cattle raising was much more important, and food crops were more diverse.

The increase in emigration from Scotland following the

---

[8] Ibid., p. 174.

[9] Ibid., p. 176. [10] Ibid., p. 185.

end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 continued up through the 1850s, reaching an annual average in that decade of 3,550.[11] It declined down to an average of approximately twenty-five hundred from 1861-1880, went up to about thirty-five hundred average in the 1880s, then declined again to well under two thousand a year average up through 1901.[12] The Scottish began emigrating to Canada again in large numbers begining in 1903. The average Scottish emigration to Canada from 1903-1911 was over twenty-two thousand a year, so the Scots still saw Canada as a good place to improve their situation in life even into the twentieth century.

---

[11] Johnson, Emigration From the United Kingdom, 347. and Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, 1894-1899, (Emigration, vol. 28), (reprint ed., Shannon: Irish University Press, 1969), p. 575. See also appendix of this paper.

[12] Johnson, Emigration From the United Kingdom, p. 347.

Chapter III

ATTITUDES TOWARD AND SUPPORT OF EMIGRATION

One important factor in the emigration of the Scots to North America was the attitude of the British government and the Scottish landlords and businessmen. The number of Scots emigrating depended upon the approval or disapproval and support or lack of support from them. Assisted emigration play ed an important part in the Scottish movement to the Canadian colonies. The evictions of thousands of Scottish tenants by the landlords was another important factor. During the period of 1749-1900 the British government, Scottish landlords, and Canadian government officials each had distinct attitudes toward emigration. These attitudes changed over the years because of various factors. British government policy was inconsistent over the entire period. Several factors affected this policy. One of the early factors was that in the late eighteenth century the British government strongly encouraged and supported military emigration to the Canadian colonies in order to establish a loyal population that would secure and defend the area. However, military emigration declined after the Napoleonic War period. The British government placed less importance upon military emigration from the 1830s on because Canada already had a

quickly increasing population. Since emigration of ex-military and government involvement in it were dealt with in the previous chapter, this chapter will concentrate on civilian emigration.

Another factor that came into importance during the Napoleonic Wars was the value of the Canadian colonies as a supplier of raw materials. When Napoleon put a naval blockade on Europe in 1806 and cut off British access to Scandinavian naval supplies Britain found that the Canadian colonies could provide all of the naval supplies that they needed for the British naval and commercial ships. The Napoleonic Wars ended in 1815 and put an end to the naval blockades, but Canadian timber was still in great demand in Britain. So the Canadian colonies continued to benefit from British purchases of raw materials and from the emigrants who sailed on the timber carriers on their return trip to Canada. So the British government found it of importance to support emigration to Canada during the wars and for a time afterwards.

There was also the important factor that the Scottish landlords' and businessmen's viewpoints on emigration were very influential upon British government policy. Scottish landlords and businessmen during boom years wanted to have a large reserve labor pool available. There were many coastal landowners who wanted a large population available because of the kelp harvesting. Kelp harvesting required a lot of manpower and was profitable for the landowners. It also

supported many poor Scots families until the collapse of the industry. This collapse occurred between the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 and 1823 when the import tax on foreign alkali products was dropped. So, many landowners who needed kelp workers told the government that they were opposed to emigration and asked that it be discouraged. However, many landlords in Scotland wanted to clear their lands of tenants in order to make way for cattle or sheep. They pushed for and encouraged emigration. They used their influence to persuade the British government to this same viewpoint. The government was asked to allow emigration to the Canadian colonies and to provide aid to the emigrants. This aid came in the form of free or low-cost land in Canada, possibly a free passage by ship, and maybe food support once they arrived in Canada. Because of the financial and social standing of these Scottish landowners and businessmen, the British government was inclined to listen seriously to their views and wishes.

The evictions of tenants on Scottish estates began in the late eighteenth century as sheep began replacing people as the inhabitants of the Highlands. After the beginning of the nineteenth century this clearing process speeded up as more Scottish landlords saw the advantages of sheep over masses of poor tenants. The clearances of the Scottish estates of unwanted tenants occurred in two main periods:

1782-1820 and 1840-1854.[1] Clearances and evictions still occurred between these two periods and afterward, but did not equal that of those times. Fifteen thousand people were evicted by the Duke of Sutherland between 1811-1820.[2] Many of these and others moved to the coast, where they survived on potatoes and the kelp industry. Others moved south to England to look for work and food. Still others emigrated overseas to the Canadian colonies and the United States. In some cases when tenants were evicted the landlords put them on board ships and sent them to Canada without giving them a choice in the matter. The Scottish landlords considered the poor people as being a "burden to themselves, to the proprietors, and to the government."[3]

The evictions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were an important factor in the number of Scots who emigrated to the Canadian colonies. Thousands left each year for overseas destinations. Most did not emigrate individually, but in groups. In 1826 a group of 229 Scots evicted from lands on the Isle of Skye had their passage paid to Canada by an unknown benefactor.[4] Two more groups, one of

---

[1]John Preble, The Highland Clearances (England: Penguin Books Ltd, 1969), p. 307.

[2]Janet R. Glover, The Story of Scotland (New York: Roy Publishers, n.d.), pp. 225-226.

[3]Preble, The Highland Clearances, p. 185.

[4]Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, 1826, (Emigration, vol. 1), Appendix, no. 14, p. 356, (reprint ed., Shannon: Irish University Press, 1969).

six hundred and another of 261, both evicted from farms on the Isle of Skye, petitioned the British government in 1826 for free passage overseas.[5] These were just a small part of the many poor Scots who were forced to leave their homeland because of evictions.

During the famine in Scotland in 1836 many landlords met to discuss petitioning the British government to aid the people to emigrate so that the Highlands could be cleared. This aid would also enable the landlords to avoid spending any more money on the poor. The demands were brought up before the British Parliament in 1841 when Henry Baillie, Member of Parliament for Inverness, asked for a Committee of Inquiry.[6] Baillie and his fellow landowners wanted Parliament to grant one hundred and twenty thousand pounds to help ship forty thousand Highlanders to Canada. Various businessmen and officials were questioned by the Committee. John Bowie, a Scottish businessman, was one of those questioned. He gave details of the conditions in the Highlands. He said that many people would like to emigrate if they could get someone to pay their passage. Bowie stated that since 1837 he him self had helped some 1850 Scots to emigrate.[7] Six hundred went to Australia and the rest to the Canadian

---

[5] Ibid., p. 357.

[6] Preble, The Highland Clearances, p. 199.

[7] Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, 1841 (Emigration, vol. 3) (reprint ed., Shannon: Irish University Press, 1969), p. 15.

colonies of Prince Edward Island and Cape Breton.[8] Bowie went on to list the cost of passage, food, clothing, and other expenditures necessary to get the emigrant to their destination. He then gave the Committee a list of the numbers of people from each area in Scotland who should be removed. The total number to be removed was 44,600.[9] This was out of a total population for those areas of 118,492.[10] Nothing was said about whether the inhabitants of these areas had been consulted about this scheme. Their approval was taken for granted.

The Committee released its report in June, 1841, agreeing that about forty-five thousand people needed to emigrate because of overpopulation. Nothing was said about agreeing to pay for this removal. The British government was the only entity that could afford to pay for this and it refused to do so for such a massive and expensive undertaking. The government had made grants over the years for emigration purposes, but not for the large amounts that this scheme called for. Sir Charles Trevelyan, Assistant-Secretary to the Treasury, told the Scottish landlords that it was their fault that their lands were "overpopulated and destitute."[11] Any support for large-scale emigration would have to come from other sources.

---

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid., p. 21. [10]Ibid.

[11]Preble, The Highland Clearances, p. 199.

Another factor in government approval of Scottish emigration was the attitude of such groups as the Highland Society of London and the Highland Society of Scotland. The societies had been "founded for the purpose of studying and improving Highland conditions."[12] These groups set out to oppose and stop any emigration from Scotland. These people disliked the idea of Scots wanting to leave their native land. To some of the Scots this seemed almost unpatriotic. They feared that the Highlands would become depopulated because of emigration. The Highland Societies lobbied the British government to discourage and not support any Scottish emigration. Another situation that bothered the Highland Societies and other groups was that many of the people emigrating carried a good amount of money. In the period of 1815-1821 some nineteen thousand people emigrated to Canada from Scottish ports. Not all were Scottish, though. Some were Irish. One-fourth of the Scottish emigrants brought money with them, so not all were poor. Many were small farmers who wanted a fresh start in Canada. One emigrant alone carried twelve thousand pounds to Canada.[13] The emigration of experienced farmers and the amount of money they were taking alarmed some in Britain. They saw it as a drain on the home country. They were willing to give up the poor,

---

[12]Helen I. Cowan, British Emigration to British North America (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), p. 22.

[13]Ibid., p. 53.

but wanted all others to stay.

When, in 1786, a Scottish newspaper reported that about five hundred unemployed Scotsmen were about to emigrate to Canada, the Highland Society of London set out to prevent it.[14] The Earl of Breadalbane headed a meeting of the Society in May, 1786 which agreed to try to stop this emigration and convince the Scottish nobility to support them.[15] However, the emigrants sailed for Canada anyway. Many of the Scottish landlords wanted to clear their lands of unwanted tenants and had no intention of supporting the Society. During the late eighteenth century the Scottish land clearances continued, and went on well into the nineteenth century. Emigration continued regardless of the Society's opposition and work. The Society encouraged the landlords to help their tenants find other ways to make a living. It also encouraged Highland farmers to try better agricultural methods. The Society asked the government and the landlords to build roads and waterways to help the Highland economy. However, no one was willing to pay for these measures, so nothing was done. The only accomplishment of the Highland Societies was to slow down the emigration of the Scots to the Canadian colonies and elsewhere.

The attitude of the government officials of the Canadian colonies was much different than the Highland Society. These officials wanted to strengthen their colonies with a

---

[14]Ibid., p. 19. [15]Ibid.

larger population. They asked the British government to aid and encourage emigration from Britain to Canada. The military settlements of the eighteenth century had helped, but they were not enough. The British government's attitude in the late eighteenth century was inconsistent, and some officials in it feared that emigration would harm the home country by depriving it of too many people as well as many who were needed because of their capital. So, although many wanted to help the colonies, they opposed encouraging emigration. Any colonists would have to come of their own accord.[16]

John Graves Simcoe, the Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, was determined to settle, strengthen and do whatever was necessary to hold and develop the colony. In 1792 he asked Henry Dundas, the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, to help encourage emigration to Upper Canada. Dundas wanted to help hold the colonies for Great Britain but opposed the emigration of British subjects, saying that a population composed of such people would be unstable.[17] He also said that "proper steps would be taken to put a stop" to emigration from the British Isles.[18] With officials in the British government with views like this it is no wonder that it took many years to build up a good-sized population in the Canadian colonies. Simcoe still hoped to encourage immigration into the colony and attract businessmen who would invest

---

[16]Ibid., p. 14. [17]Ibid. [18]Ibid.

in and develop Canadian industries. The other Canadian colonies had similar hopes and aims. In 1790 the Council of Lower Canada wanted to encourage European immigration. In 1791 the Quebec Agricultural Society asked that Scottish settlers be sent to their colony. In 1786 Quebec had provided lands, food, and transportation for the 520 Glengarry Scots to join their relatives already in the colony. These were the same Scots that the Highland Society of London had tried to prevent from leaving Scotland. The coastal colonies of Cape Breton and Nova Scotia also wanted immigration and investment so that they could become strong enough to compete with the United States commerce.

The Canadian colonies did not put forth a great amount of effort or money to increase or encourage emigration from other countries until the 1850s. From 1840-1842 Dr. Thomas Rolph had been stationed in England in the position of emigration agent but had accomplished very little. No replacement for him was appointed after he left the post. In 1854 the Province of Canada set aside money for promoting immigration there. Starting that year the Province began distributing pamphlets on emigration possibilities and conditions in Canada to various foreign countries, shipping companies, and newspapers.[19] The pamphlet for 1857 was titled Canada: A brief outline of her geographical position,

[19]Paul W. Gates, "Official Encouragement to Immigration by the Province of Canada," Canadian Historical Review, 15(March, 1934): 25.

productions, climate, capabilities, educational and municipal institutions.[20] By 1857 there were also emigration agents stationed in such sites in Canada as Quebec, Montreal, Toronto and Kingston.[21] These helped arriving immigrants and directed them to various destinations in Upper and Lower Canada.[22] Canada also had the Crown Lands Department advertise the lands that were available for low prices in order to attract settlers and keep other immigrants from going to the United States.[23] This government department also built roads to these lands to make it easier for them to be settled. Beginning in 1868 the Canadian government started spending large amounts of money to welcome immigrants and finance the immigration section of the Department of the Interior.[24] This averaged $328,000 a year during the period of 1868-1908.[25] So the Canadian government, many years after it should have started, did make an attempt to attract and keep immigrants. Most of the immigrants were Scottish, Irish, German, and Scandinavian.

Over the period 1763-1850 an increasing number of Scots emigrated to the Canadian colonies. The support of government agencies, landowners, and organizations in assisting emigration was important. It determined the number of people

---

[20]Ibid., p. 26. [21]Ibid. [22]Ibid. [23]Ibid.

[24]Stanley C. Johnson, Emigration From the United Kingdom to North America 1763-1912 (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1913), p. 99.

[25]Ibid.

who were able to emigrate.

Emigrants reached Canada by a variety of means. Some were able to pay their own way. Others were financed by landlords who wanted to get rid of unwanted tenants. Some were financed by the government. Still others were helped by one of the many emigration societies that had begun springing up in Scotland to help emigrants. Many towns that had too many people on poor relief were willing to pay for passage for unwanted paupers in order to get rid of them. Some Scots had monetary aid from relatives already in Canada in the form of paid passages. Even trade unions assisted some of their needy members to emigrate.

Probably the largest amount of financial support for emigrants came from Scottish landlords. Many landlords had been paying money to help the poor in times of need and famine, and were willing to pay instead to get rid of them. Scotland did not have a system of Poor Law emigration until the 1850s, so the landlords had to finance emigration themselves.[26] The landlords usually sent emigrants out in groups. In one case in 1839, John Bowie financed the emigration of twelve hundred and fifty Scots by asking landlords for money. He explained to a Parliamentary Committee in 1841 that the cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh each had committees

---

[26]W.S. Shepperson, British Emigration to North America (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1957), p. 40.

of destitution who wanted to send out emigrants.[27] Each emigrant was given ten shillings by the committees. Bowie applied to the proprietor of two estates for more money. The proprietor contributed more than the cities did. He gave the tenants the rest of the money necessary to emigrate and forgave all debts owed him by them.[28] Bowie stated before the Committee that many landlords provided all or part of the money necessary for emigrants to travel.[29]

Many other landlords in Scotland aided their tenants to emigrate overseas. Landlords aided one thousand emigrants from the islands of Harris, Uist, and Benbecula to emigrate in 1849.[30] Other Scottish landlords aided 3466 poor tenants to emigrate to Canada in 1851.[31]

A large amount of financial support for emigrants also came from the emigration societies in Britain. This was especially true in the late nineteenth century. There were many emigration societies, like the Self-Help Emigration Society, which from 1884 up through about World War I helped emigrants' expenses overseas. They sent out an average of four hundred people every year.[32] The East End Emigration

---

[27]Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, 1841 (Emigration, vol. 3) (reprint ed., Shannon: Irish University Press, 1969), p. 15.

[28]Ibid. [29]Ibid.

[30]Shepperson, British Emigration to North America, p. 47.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Johnson, Emigration From the United Kingdom, p. 77.

Fund and the Charity Organisation Society sent out many overseas, primarily to Canada.[33] Emigration and charity organizations sent out thousands every year, and by the late nineteenth century provided more financial support for emigration than the landlords.

In 1851 the British Colonial Land and Emigration Department began giving assistance and money to a number of emigration societies in the hope that they could raise some themselves and help more people to emigrate. The Skye Emigration Society, later called the Highland and Islands Emigration Society, was formed in 1851 to "procure help for those who wish to emigrate but have not the means of doing so, to afford information, encouragement and assistance to all whom emigration would be a relief from want and misery."[34] This Society was backed by the British government, the major landowners of Highland Scotland, various nobles of Scotland and England, and various business interests in Britain. The financing came from two sources. The public provided two-thirds and the Highlands landowners the other one-third.[35] The landowners were only too glad to support the Society and pay this money to get rid of unwanted people. Thousands of Scots were aided to emigrate to Canada and Australia. This Society was one entity where the government,

---

[33]Ibid.

[34]Preble, The Highland Clearances, p. 201.

[35]Ibid., p. 203.

the public, and the landowners cooperated in assisting emigration; though not all from the same motives. The public support was primarily from humanitarian motives.

Trade unions in Great Britain began financing the emigration of umemployed members in the 1840s. This continued up to the early twentieth century. This emigration accounted for hundreds each year. These unions were primarily in England and Scotland. They included unions for railroads employees, cabinet makers, printers, miners, iron founders, cigar makers, saddle and harness makers, engineers, and cotton spinners.[36] Scottish hand-loom weavers were another group. They were organized into societies similar to unions. Most of the societies and members did not have enough money to pay all of the expenses necessary for emigration. The Scottish weaving industry had begun to decline in 1820, and many weavers were forced to become common laborers. The societies began petitioning the British government for aid. For years the government refused to provide the weavers any aid. In the winter of 1829-1830 Sir George Murray, Secretary of the Colonial Office, finally agreed to provide some assistance.[37] He agreed to provide "free grants of fifty acres to each head of family, larger grants to leaders, and the service of an agent of government in placing the

---

[36]Johnson, Emigration From the United Kingdom, pp. 82-84.

[37]Cowan, British Emigration, p. 209.

emigrants."[38] The expenses were provided by charitable contributions from the people of Glasgow. In 1832 the Glasgow Emigration Society sent out more weavers to free land in Upper Canada. Weavers continued emigrating with the support of the societies and the public up through the 1860s.

Many Scots petitioned the British government for aid in emigrating to the Canadian colonies. Most asked that their passage be paid to Canada, because they could not afford it themselves. There were also some who petitioned for free grants of land in Canada. A number of these were former officers. Those asking for a paid passage to Canada usually described their needy state in hope of convincing government officials to help them. The majority of petitions were from groups of emigrants, which indicated that the Scots still preferred to emigrate in family and clan groups to the same destination. The landlords themselves also petitioned the British government for help in assisting the emigration of unwanted tenants. In most cases the government did not help pay anyone's way to Canada unless a special arrangement had been made, such as for a group of ex-military and their families. Ex-soldiers were granted land in accordance with the land grant laws. In 1851, the Board of Supervision that overlooked the Poor Law said that emigration would solve the problems in Highland Scotland but refused to give any money to help emigrants. The government's attitude on emigration

---

[38]Ibid., pp. 209-210.

assistance varied with time, and with which branch of the government that dealt with it. Local government in many cases was willing to pay out money to be rid of paupers who placed a burden on the taxpayers.

Even though the British government usually did not give aid to emigrants other than military, after 1815 some exceptions were made. Grants were made by Parliament for certain special emigration and colonization efforts. There were a number of grants made to settle "distressed" agricultural workers in the Canadian colonies and the Cape of Good Hope in 1821, 1823, and 1825.[39] Between 1819-1827, Parliament also occasionally granted small amounts of money to transport paupers to Canada.[40] There were other grants made, such as the annual Parliamentary grant beginning in 1845 to aid destitute emigrants arriving in Canada.[41] The government also made annual grants of money, starting in 1834, to pay for emigration agents in various ports in the British Isles. The British government's commitment to emigration regulation and occasional support is shown by the regular increase in the monetary provision by Parliament for these agents and the Colonial Department.

Another example of the British government's commitment

---

[39]Johnson, Emigration From the United Kingdom, p. 85.

[40]Shepperson, British Emigration to North America, p. 11.

[41]Johnson, Emigration From the United Kingdom, p. 86.

to emigration support came somewhat late. This was the establishment in October, 1886 of the Emigrant's Information Office. This office was created "with a view to giving accurate information to intending emigrants to the British Colonies."[42] The British Treasury also intended for it to be a grant-in-aid office that would stimulate "private effort and a supplement to the subscriptions of benevolent persons."[43] The Office's information work was to issue quarterlu circulars and handbooks that emigrants could refer to for needed information.[44] Later the Office began writing a monthly column for the Labour Gazette. The Office also dealt with inquiries from emigrants, passenger and shipping agents, and Colonial governments. By 1896 the Office's publications were available in most British cities in libraries and reading rooms. Notice boards were put up and free circulars were distributed.[45] In some cities such as Glasgow and Newcastle, branch offices were opened, usually at the public libraries. These offices answered questions and sold books. They were provided with colonial directories to aid inquiries.

The would-be emigrant in the eighteenth century started out with little or no aid from anyone, and by 1900 they had reached the point where any number of people or

---

[42]Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, 1894-1899, (Emigration, vol. 28), (reprint ed., Shannon: Irish University Press, 1969), p. 173.

[43]Ibid. [44]Ibid., p. 174. [45]Ibid., p. 177.

organizations would help him. This included not only financial aid but information. The governments of Britain and Canada would both gladly provide any information the emigrant might need, and if money was lacking, someone might provide that. So they were definitely much better off than at the early stages of emigration from Britain to Canada.

CHAPTER IV

EMIGRANT SHIPS AND GOVERNMENT REGULATION

During the period of 1800-1900, the British government regulation of the emigration shipping business to Canada was an important determining factor in the number of people who emigrated and their safety on the voyage. When emigration to the Canadian colonies began in 1749 there was no regulation of any kind. It gradually developed over the entire period of emigration to 1900. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the government perceived a need for some kind of regulation to help the emigrants arrive at their destinations in health. The resulting regulations were only partially successfull in accomplishing this.

The Scottish emigrants who were sailing for the Canadian colonies usually knew nothing whatever about ships. They saw ships as just the means of travelling from Scotland to their new homes in Canada. They were not aware that this lack of knowledge would hurt them. They just wanted to leave the old home country for a better life elsewhere. Many emigrants became ill during the voyage and some died. The fatality rate was usually high, sometimes as much as 15%. This high rate occurred during the years before the much more comprehensive emigration laws passed in 1828 and thereafter.

This high rate varied, depending on the condition of the ship and the attitude of the captain towards the emigrants. There was also the fact that some emigrants had more money to buy food and supplies than others who travelled with the bare necessities. Many ships packed aboard as many emigrants as they could hold in order to secure a larger profit. Many of the ships had inferior facilities and poor food; many were not built to hold passengers but cargo. Indeed, the ships were often timber carriers which loaded up with Canadian timber for the return trip to Great Britain. The ship-captains would put up temporary decks and berths for the emigrants.

There were large profits to be made carrying emigrants to the colonies. The Napoleonic Wars had cut down on these profits from the late eighteenth century up to 1815. The profits had greatly increased after 1815 because the wars no longer restricted sea travel. Also, many who were employed in the military and war related industries found themselves unemployed. Many of these emigrated overseas in search of a better life.

The ships' captains usually did not concern themselves with helping their emigrant passengers. Before 1803 there were not any laws regulating the emigrant traffic, though there were for the slave trade. So, there were many opportunities for abuse and bad conditions on board emigrant ships. One example of this occurred in 1773 when on a ship of three hundred tons there were four hundred and fifty

Highland emigrants confined in a space about sixty feet by eight feet by six feet for more than three months.[1] Each passenger was allowed one pint of bad water per day. Dysentery set in and twenty-three emigrants died during the voyage. On two other ships that travelled together to Nova Scotia in 1801 carrying Scottish emigrants, a total of seven hundred people were confined. The laws relating to the slave trade at the time allowed only 489 slaves in the same amount of space that these seven hundred were in.[2]

These problems were brought to the attention of the British and Canadian colonial governments, but for many years nothing was done about them. When the Highland Society began to complain about the deceitful tactics, advertising and other tricks that shipowners and shipping agents used to lure emigrants, the British government began investigating.[3] The British government already had an idea what was going on, because it received annual reports on emigrants from the Commissioners of Customs, and had received complaints about the situation on ships from Lord Cornwallis, the Governor-General of Ireland and from Charles Hope, Lord Advocate of

---

[1]K.A. Walpole, "The Humanitarian Movement of the Early Nineteenth Century to Remedy Abuses on Emigrant Vessels to America," Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, ser. 4, 13 (1931): 199.

[2]Helen I. Cowan, British Emigration to British North America (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), p. 23.

[3]Ibid.

Scotland.[4] The Treasury sent an engineer named Thomas Telford to investigate not only the problems on ships but the whole matter of emigration from Scotland. He reported on both matters to Parliament in May, 1803.

As a result of the problems and abuses that occurred in the emigrant traffic, a new law was passed to protect the emigrants and control emigration. Charles Hope prepared the Passenger Vessel Act for this purpose, and it passed through Parliament without opposition in 1803. According to one source, this lack of opposition was because the emigrant traffic was not yet large enough to involve as many profiteers as it would after 1815, when there was a vast increase in emigration.[5] According to the 1803 law there was a fifty pound fine for ships that carried more than one person for every two tons burden, "to sail without submitting to the Customs a muster of all on board, or without provisions sufficient to give a specified quantity of foo to each passenger."[6] Each ship was also required to carry a surgeon to keep an eye on the health of the passengers, and both the surgeon and the ship's captain were to hand over journals of the voyage to Customs officials in Britain upon their return.[7] Each ship had to give a bond showing that the ship

---

[4]Walpole, "The Humanitarian Movement," p. 198.

[5]Ibid., p. 201

[6]Cowan, British Emigration, p. 24.

[7]Ibid.

was seaworthy and was going to land at the destinations where it was supposed to land.[8] Customs officials also made an inspection before the ship sailed to ensure that everything on board was correct regarding the provisions of the Act.

This new law was the first of the passenger regulation acts passed by the British Parliament. New laws appeared at intervals over the rest of the century. A need was seen for laws to protect the emigrants from emigration agents, ship-owners, and ships' captains. Emigration agents derived a commission from each emigrant who bought a passage overseas. Most cared only for the profit that could be made from emigrants and they treated them like items of freight.

The one disadvantage of the Passenger Act was that even though it helped to ensure that emigrants could usually survive a journey, it made passages more expe sive. Thus, many people found themselves unable to afford to emigrate. There was a definite need for a passenger law, but it caused problems; especially for the poorest class of emigrants like many Highland Scots. Many were unable to afford either to stay in Great Britain or to emigrate elsewhere. This problem was one that future laws were unable to totally eradicate. There were petitions for aid to the British government for many years from many poor Scots who asked for either paid ship passages overseas or land grants in one the British colonies. Military veterans also petitioned for land grants.

---

[8] Ibid.

Because of the number of would-be emigrants who were unable to afford to leave because of the new law, and the number of those involved in the shipping business who stood to lose money because of this, there was pressure to relax or repeal the Passenger Act. The British government at first enforced the Act strictly. Gradually this enforcement relaxed for various reasons, so that after a few years the Act was being virtually ignored. There were some who profited from the emigrant traffic and who influenced or bribed officials to give them leeway regarding the Act. There were also the usual administrative problems involved in enforcing the law. Enforcing the law took a lot of time, money, and paperwork. Laxness gradually set in. Another problem in enforcing the Act was that passengers could be picked up at places where no government officials could stop them. Many passengers were taken on board ships at points along the Scottish coast, and let off at points in the Canadian colonies where there were no government officials.

The development of emigration laws and regulations was set back as a result of the pressure from business interests and emigration societies. The end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 caused a large increase in the number of Scots emigrating to Canada. By this time the emigration traffic had become much more profitable for shipowners and shipping agents. They protested the strict laws because these regulations reduced their profits. Thus in 1816 and 1817 the

British government relaxed the requirements of the 1803 Act. This caused an increase in the number of Scots emigrating to the Canadian colonies. Where the 1803 law had required that only one passenger be taken for every two tons burden the new revision put that at one passenger for every one and one-half tons. The new revisions also required that ships bound for the United States could only take one passenger for every five tons burden, in order to discourage emigrants who might intend to go there. The 1816 revisions also deleted many of the enforcement provisions of the passenger laws, thus making them almost worthless. The Treasury department reduced the amount of food that ships were required to provide emigrants.

This backwards step in emigration regulation was reversed in 1823 after reports about a number of serious overcrowding cases on ships, like the one in 1823 about a ship that went to Van Dieman's Land.[9] Therefore the Passenger Act of 1823 reinstated the 1803 provisions in order to prevent any more problems. These cases caused a renewal of complaints and led to a discussion in the British Parliament and the organization of an Emigration Committee in 1826. The chairman of the committee was R.J. Wilmot Horton, who was also Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office. The committee interviewed many people from the Canadian colonies and Great Britain to learn the full facts behind the emigration problems. These people were mostly businessmen and government

---

[9]Walpole, "The Humanitarian Movement," p. 203.

emigration officials. Many of the witnesses testified that the emigration laws prevented many people from emigrating because they increased the cost of a passage too much.[10]

After hearing evidence from these witnesses Horton introduced a new emigration regulation bill to Parliament in 1826. Horton resigned from office late that same year. So, he could not influence the committee or Parliament in regard to emigration after this time. The Emigration Committee in 1827 recommended to Parliament the repeal of the emigration regulations. The new emigration bill was not passed until 1828, so for a time there were no laws that regulated ship-owners and shipping agents. Beginning in June, 1827 ships packed aboard large numbers of emigrants without regard to any laws. Large numbers of emigrants set out for the Canadian colonies and took aboard ship whatever amount of food they felt was needed.

During this period a number of disastrous ship voyages occurred as a result of this lack of regulation. Because of unsanitary conditions and overcrowding, the brig James arrived at Halifax with a typhus epidemic on board.[11] Other ships arrived in Canada in the same state. The disease spread into Halifax itself and hundreds died. Because of these and other problems the Canadian colonial governments decided to take matters into their own hands.[12] They began enforcing their

---

[10]Cowan, British Emigration, p. 147.

[11]Ibid. [12]Ibid., p. 148.

own laws in order to protect themselves. They did not like to have paupers and sick people dumped on them by the emigrant ships. Some of the colonial governments collected money from some of the ship-captains to help support the poor and sick emigrants. It was several years later before formal laws were passed to this effect. The collection of money from ships angered the shipowners, who complained to the British Colonial Office. The Colonial Office was content to let the Colonial governments do as they pleased, and refused to stop them.

The complete lack of emigration regulations could not continue for long. In 1827 William Huskisson became the new Colonial Secretary. He received many reports of the terrible conditions on board the emigrant ships, and was determined to do something about it. He supported a new emigration bill in Parliament and fought for its passage over the protests of its opponents. Some of these opponents were shipowners. Others were people who believed in letting the emigration and shipping business operate without government regulation.

In 1828 Parliament passed a new Passenger Act to regulate emigration. The Colonial Office became responsible for carrying out the new law and enforcing it. One writer stated that the new Passenger Act "gives proof most strong of the newly awakened humanitarian conscience of the age."[13]

The new emigration law of 1828 ruled that three people

---

[13]Walpole, "The Humanitarian Movement," p. 207.

could be carried for every four tons burden.[14] Each person could take on board ship three cubic feet of property.[15] The Act also required a 5 1/2 feet distance between decks.[16] The ship was to provide each passenger with fifty gallons of water and fifty pounds of bread, with the emigrants to provide or pay for any food or water needed in excess of this minimum.[17]

However, there were several defects in the new law. The bill had originally read that there were to be two people for every three tons, but either a printing error or a last minute change resulted in it reading three people for every four tons.[18] This meant that too many emigrants could be crowded way too much on the ships. Another defect in this Act was that it had a loophole. It did not cover ships that carried passengers and cargo.[19] That meant that a ship could carry the correct number of passengers according to law, but could also cram on board as much cargo as would fit. This was bad for the emigrants, but no law applied in these cases.

---

[14]Walpole, "The Humanitarian Movement," p. 207, and Cowan, British Emigration, p. 149.

[15]Walpole, "The Humanitarian Movement," p. 207.

[16]Walpole, "The Humanitarian Movement," p. 207, and Cowan, British Emigration, p. 149.

[17]Walpole, "The Humanitarian Movement," p. 207.

[18]Walpole, "The Humanitarian Movement," p. 208, and Cowan, British Emigration, p. 149.

[19]Cowan, British Emigration, p. 151.

So the new bill improved conditions for emigrants, but stopped short of being fully effective in making the emigration voyages adequate and safe.

Another step in the development of emigration regulation began in 1827. That year Resident Agents for emigrants arriving in the Canadian began to be appointed. A.C. Buchanan was appointed Resident Agent for Quebec in 1828. He had thirty years experience as a passenger agent in Northern Ireland. He kept an eye on emigrants and emigration to Quebec and made an annual report to the British Colonial Office. He had to decide what his own duties were, since when he was appointed no one told him what they were. Probably no one in the Colonial Office was sure exactly what the job should be, other than in a vague way. As "His Majesty's Chief Agent for the Superintendence of Emigration in Upper and Lower Canada, Quebec",[20] Buchanan annually reported to the Colonial Office how many emigrants had landed in Quebec in the past year, where they had come from, what had occurred in his area that year, and what actions he had taken as part of his job. Buchanan left the position after seven years because of failing health and was succeeded by his nephew, A.C. Buchanan.

Buchanan's reports were detailed and included many items of interest. For example, in the 1836 report Buchanan

---

[20]Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, 1837 (Colonies: Canada vol. 8) (reprint ed., Shannon: Irish University Press, 1969), p. 3

included figures on the number of emigrants who had arrived during the last eight years. He also reported on where the various groups of emigrants settled and what their condition was upon arrival. In this report he mentioned specifically the number of emigrants who received financial aid in emigrating to the Canadian colonies and who provided it. One section of the report was an account of various problems with ship-masters and ship-brokers. Buchanan stated that there were a number of them who broke various sections of the Passenger Act.[21] The most commonly reported problem was the lack of water or substandard quality of it on shipboard. Buchanan reported that he remedied the situation "were it was found practicable, or notice has been taken, and the minutes entered on the books of this office, against the vessel in question."[22] He said that it was difficult at times to do anything to the ship-master because of various reasons: the hurry of the emigrants to leave for their settlement destination as soon as possible, lack of evidence, "want of written agreements with the captain or broker, and other unforseen and unavoidable causes."[23] The report also included information about the economic state of the Canadian colonies, the demand for laborers and artisans, and the possibilities for emigrants in Canada in the coming year.

British Customs officials were also responsible for

---

[21] Ibid., pp. 4-5.

[22] Ibid., p. 5. [23] Ibid.

some aspects of the regulation of the emigration traffic including enforcement of the laws at the beginning of the voyages in Britain. If parts of the law were being violated, or if complaints were made against a ship-master or owner in the Canadian colonies, fines were levied against the ship-master in Canada. However, these Customs officials found it impossible to prevent or deal with all the problems that occurred because of lack of manpower.

Still another step in the development of emigration regulations and improvement of the emigration traffic began in 1830. In that year Lord Goderich became head of the Colonial Office and Lord Howick became the Under-Secretary. They appointed a group of commissioners to gather and publish information that would be of use to emigrants.[24] These publications listed the price of a passage from various ports in Great Britain to various ports in the Canadian colonies, the cost and quantity of food needed, the details of the Passenger Act, and the names of authorities with whom to register a complaint.[25] Goderich and Howick also attempted to resolve any problems and complaints of the British North American colonial authorities. Goderich told the Lords of the Treasury that "had the Customs officials enforced the law, there would have been no cause for complaint," and requested that they do their duty.[26]

---

[24]Walpole, "The Humanitarian Movement," p. 212.

[25]Ibid. [26]Ibid., p. 213.

The Commissioners of Customs began enforcing the Passenger Act more strictly immediately upon being informed of this complaint by Goderich. They informed the ship-masters that they would be forced to obey the laws much more closely, and also ordered colonial customs officials to enforce these laws. The customs officials found it difficult, if not impossible, to comply, because they already had their hands full.

Another step taken by Goderich and Howick was a new tax in the Canadian colonies. This tax was levied on all immigrants in order to assist those immigrants who arrived in Canada in destitute condition. The Quebec Emigrant Society and the St. Patrick's Society of St. John both petitioned the Colonial Office and the colonial goverments in 1831 to tax the emigrant ships for this purpose.[27] In response, Lord Goderich in December, 1831 sent a letter to the governors of the colonies of Lower Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick stating that he wanted them to suggest to the Provincial Legislatures that a tax should be levied on all immigrants arriving in their colonies.[28] He wanted a double tax upon those immigrants who were found to have been on the ships illegally.[29] This immigrant tax was to come out of the

---

[27] Ibid., p. 210.

[28] Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, 1825-1832 (Colonies: Canada, vol. 6) (reprint ed., Shannon: Irish University Press, 1969), pp. 623-624.

[29] Ibid.

pockets of the immigrants themselves.

In his letter to the colonies Goderich also spoke of the complaints that had been made about the following problems: ships landing their passengers at different ports than scheduled; passengers running out of food and money because they were deceived about the length of the voyage and the time of departure; the crowding on board the ships; and the general misconduct of the ship-masters.[30] Goderich said that he hoped that such a law would, along with enforcing the Passenger Act more strictly, help control and direct the emigrant traffic more efficiently.[31]

The colonies of Lower Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick all passed laws approving this tax in February, 1832. The Acts passed by the colonial legislatures for this tax all called for a tax upon each immigrant of five shillings in currency, plus ten shillings in currency for each unauthorized passenger.[32] The length of legal force of the law varied in each colony. Lower Canada put an expiration date of May 1, 1834 on its law; Nova Scotia, July 1, 1835; and New Brunswick, no expiration date.[33] In each colony a certificate was required of the ship-master upon landing, showing that all passengers were legal emigrants. The Lower Canada and New Brunswick Acts both stated that two children under fourteen years of age were to be counted as one

---

[30]Ibid. [31]Ibid.

[32]Ibid., pp. 624-630. [33]Ibid.

passenger, three children under seven years of age to be counted as one passenger, and children under twelve months old not to be counted at all for immigrant tax purposes.[34] Fines were listed for any noncompliance with these new acts. The Tide-Surveyors at the Canadian ports were the officials responsible for collecting this tax from the ships.

The tax money was used to aid the immigrants in various ways. In Lower Canada part of the money was used to pay the passages of the poorest immigrants to Upper Canada, and the rest divided between the Emigration Hospital in Quebec, the General Hospital in Montreal, the Quebec Emigration Society, and the Montreal Emigration Society.[35] The government expected these hospitals and organizations to use the money to aid the needy emigrants. The tax law was extended after its first expiration, and continued into the twentieth century. The amount of tax varied from year to year, and the organizations receiving it also changed. By March, 1848 the tax had increased to ten shillings, and decreased to seven shillings and sixpence by 1849.[36] The money also came to be used primarily by the immigration department in Canada, still for the purpose of aiding needy emigrants. Beginning in 1856 the quarantine department was also funded with some of this

---

[34] Ibid.

[35] Stanley C. Johnson, Emigration From the United Kingdom to North America 1763-1912 (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1913), p. 134.

[36] Ibid., p. 137.

money.[37]

Because the new immigrant tax came out of the pockets of the immigrants many opposed it. Many emigrants and emigration societies feared it would prevent some from emigrating. This same idea probably also occurred to the Canadian colonies, which were interested in attracting more settlers, but they were more interested in preventing any burden upon their economy. Even though a decline in emigration would hurt the profits of the shipowners and ship-masters, they were able to find a way to make a profit off the new tax law. They charged the passengers five shillings in sterling, which was worth more than five shillings in British currency. In the early 1830s five shillings currency was equal to four shillings and two pence sterling, so ship-masters who charged five shillings in sterling made ten pence on each passenger.[38] The tax was cancelled for the year 1834 but many ship-masters still levied it on their passengers in order to make a bigger profit on the voyage. Buchanan recovered much of the money for the emigrants after he discovered what was going on. He threatened the ship-masters with legal penalties in order to recover the money. However, even with the tax the colonies still had a difficult time taking care of the emigrants.

One important development in emigration regulation

---

[37]Ibid.

[38]Walpole, "The Humanitarian Movement," p. 211.

occurred out of sheer necessity. In 1830-1831 there was a severe cholera epidemic in Europe, and it spread to Canada from the emigrant ships. Because of the high loss of life during this time, Canadian authorities set up quarantine hospitals in 1830-1831. One was at Point Levi, opposite Quebec, and a second one was built at Grosse Isle in Lower Canada.[39] It was decided that Grosse Isle was to become a permanent station for the reception of immigrants, so better buildings were erected.[40] The island was divided into three parts: the military and quarantine officer area, the hospital area, and the isolation and housing area.[41] This station lasted until a new one was begun in Quebec in 1902. In 1869-1870 another emigrant reception depot was constructed at Toronto, and in 1870 another was begun at the Point Levi site.[42] The Canadian government wanted these new ones for "distributing emigrants at the principal centres of the Dominion."[43]

The next step in the development of the regulation of emigration traffic occurred in 1833 because of the continued problems of dealing effectively with the emigration situation

---

[39]Johnson, Emigration From the United Kingdom, p. 160.

[40]Ibid., pp. 160-161. [41]Ibid., p. 161.

[42]Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, 1870 (Emigration, vol. 17), "Thirtieth General Report of the Emigration Commissioners, p. 8 (reprint ed., Shannon: Irish University Press, 1969).

[43]Ibid.

and the inability of the Customs officials to deal with it. The Colonial Office decided to appoint naval officers as agents in various ports in the British Isles. These agents were to enforce the Passenger Act, and advise and help emigrants in any way necessary.[44] They were to aid emigrants by arranging their passage for them, advising them in buying food for the passage, and helping them to evade profiteering confidence men who worked on the docks and preyed upon emigrants. The city of Liverpool had the first naval port agent, Lieutenant Robert Low, and other agents were appointed in 1834 once the initial success of the idea became clear. Low inspected all emigrant ships, and none were allowed to leave port without his certificate of clearance.

In 1835 the British Parliament passed yet another Passenger Act. This came about because many government officials saw that the regulation of the emigration trade was still not good enough. This new Act was the result of efforts by various government officials, including E.G. Stanley, the Colonial Secretary (for a short time) in 1834, and his successor, W.E. Gladstone.[45] A.C. Buchanan had a number of suggestions for changes that were needed. Lieutenant Low had also made criticisms and suggested changes. The new law stated that on all ships there were to be no more than three

---

[44]Walpole, "The Humanitarian Movement," p. 214.

[45]Ibid., p. 215.

passengers to every five tons.[46] One section said that if the ship were delayed after the scheduled sailing date the ship-master was to feed the passengers each delayed day or pay for food.[47] Other rules said that ships were required to land the emigrants at the scheduled port and no other place, and that food prices were to posted and not changed.[48] There were many other small rule additions in the new Passenger Act The new Act also detailed the rules regarding enforcement of the law and the penalties involved.

Another step forward in helping emigrants was also taken in 1835. A staff of immigration officials was added that year in order to help emigrants and to prevent criminals from defrauding them upon arrival in Canada.[49] This addition did help improve one aspect of the emigration traffic, but there was still much improvement needed.

The Passenger Act of 1835 was an important new step in the gradual development of emigration regulations, but it did not satisfy everyone. In 1839 Lord Durham made a report on the condition of the Canadian colonies. He criticized many things, especially the emigration traffic and the way it was being regulated. Durham claimed that the Colonial Office was not properly supervising the emigration in Great Britain and in the Canadian colonies.[50] He also claimed that the

---

[46]Ibid., p. 216. [47]Ibid. [48]Ibid.

[49]Johnson, Emigration From the United Kingdom, p. 165.

[50]Walpole, "The Humanitarian Movement," pp. 217-219.

emigrant traffic was not working very well because the Colonial Office was negligent, inefficient and unable to cope with the problems they encountered.[51] Some disagreed with this opinion and felt like John Fife, the Tide-Surveyor at Quebec. Fife felt that the emigration traffic situation would be very bad without the emigration officials in Great Britain and Canada. He saw that without any regulations the ship-masters and other profiteers would revert to their old habits.[52]

The British government saw that even though the 1835 Passenger Act was an improvement in regulating emigration, it still left something to be desired. A Colonial Land and Emigration Commission was formed in 1840 to improve emigration regulation and design a new Passenger Act that would work better than the old ones.[53] This Commission stayed in existence for many years. It made annual General Reports from 1842-1873 and prepared annual Colonisation Circulars from 1873-1877.

The Commission began making changes before the 1840 law was passed. One of the steps they took did not meet with total success, although it did help some. In January, 1841 the Commissioners requested that Lord John Russell, Secretary for War and the Colonies should communicate with the colonial

---

[51] Ibid., pp. 216-219. [52] Ibid., pp. 219-220.

[53] Ibid., p. 220.

authorities in North America about a new rule.[54] The Commission had directed the emigration agents in Great Britain to send passenger lists of emigration ships by fast mail-steamers to the emigration agents in the Canadian colonies so that they would know how many emigrants were on the way and so prevent any fraud or illegal passengers.[55] In a circular dispatch dated March 3, 1841, Lord Russell informed the governors of Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland of this new rule and enclosed a copy of the letter he had received.[56]

The Commission tried to improve the emigration regulation with measures like this one, but there were some obstacles that were very difficult to overcome. The main problem with any new rules was that they required more work for the already overworked government officials. In Halifax, Nova Scotia, there was not an emigration agent at this time, so the Collector of Customs had to do the work with the passenger list. The other emigration agents did the best they could even when short of time and help. The agents had a difficult time comparing the lists with the passengers on the ship, because of the large number of emigrants arriving. The reports required from emigration agents were difficult and time-consuming. In Quebec in October, 1841,

---

[54]Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, 1841 (Emigration, vol. 21) (reprint ed., Shannon: Irish University Press, 1969), p. 233.

[55]Ibid. [56]Ibid., p. 234.

Lieutenant-General Sir R.D. Jackson wrote to Lord Stanley in the Colonial Office that the returns were delayed because they were "so exceedingly minute and voluminous that it would be impossible, without increasing very greatly the establishment of the of the emigrant agent at Quebec."[57] Jackson also pointed out that the emigration season in the colony was only three months long, and began when the water was navigable in the spring.[58] In 1841 the total number of emigrants who arrived during this period was over twenty-eight thousand.[59] Jackson wrote that it was "physically impossible for the emigration agent at Quebec to keep an accurate count of such large bodies of persons, many of whom do not even land there; none of whom probably remain above a few hours."[60] During the week of May 22, 1841, ninety-two emigrant ships arrived at Quebec with fifty-four of them carrying over thirty[61] emigrants each. This shows the volume of traffic at this busy time of the season.

In 1842 the British Parliament passed the Commission's new Passenger Act. This Act was much more detailed and improved over the older Passenger Acts. The Act of 1842 required that the emigrants be fed by the ship, which meant that the passengers no longer had to buy food before they sailed.[62] Brokers who sold passages to emigrants were

---

[57]Ibid. [58]Ibid., p. 235. [59]Ibid. [60]Ibid.

[61]Ibid.

[62]Walpole, "The Humanitarian Movement," p. 220.

required to be licensed by the government, and more naval port agents were appointed to regulate more effectively the emigrant traffic.[63] The new Act still required, as in the 1835 Act, that there be no more than three passengers for every five tons of ship.[64] The space requirement was changed from five square feet for every passenger (going back to the 1828 Act) to ten square feet.[65] Efforts were also made to provide more advice and aid for emigrants.

The 1842 Passenger Act was an important step in the development of effective emigration regulation. It dealt with and provided for many of the problems that had and were likely to occur in emigration. The government was gaining more experience every year in dealing with these problems. Even so, the 1842 Act still was not as effective as it could have been in dealing with problems and abuses. Part of the problem was that the emigration service was still understaffed. The law could not be applied properly if there were not enough people to do the job. Parliament passed a minor amendment to the Act in 1847, and another one a little stronger in 1848. In the 1848 amendment the space requirements for emigrants was increased. The new requirement was for space for one emigrant for every two tons, and twelve square feet of space instead of the old ten feet.[66]

The emigration traffic situation grew out of control

---

[63]Ibid. [64]Ibid. [65]Ibid.

[66]Cowan, British Emigration, p. 165.

during the very large emigration period of the late 1840s. This situation revealed some of the problems and defects of the regulation rules and system. The emigration agents on both sides of the Atlantic did their best to cope with the overwork and other problems that had existed for many years, but they were overwhelmed by the emigration in this period. This was a period of famines in both Ireland and Scotland. Several tens of thousands of persons emigrated each year during this period. In February, 1848 the House of Commons in Great Britain was told that "of the 106,000 Irish and Scots who had emigrated in the previous year, 12,200 had died at sea or immediately after arrival, while a further 7,100 had failed to survive their journey for more than a few weeks."[67] The emigration situation improved once the large numbers of the very poor, starving and destitute famine emigrants subsided and emigration returned to more normal levels.

In 1851 the British Parliament appointed a Select Royal Commission to investigate the emigration traffic and write a report on how well the 1842 Act was working.[68] The report suggested some changes in order to make the Act more effective. One recommendation was the appointment of more staff members for the emigration offices so that the Passenger Act

---

[67]Janet R. Glover, The Story of Scotland (London: Faber and Faber, 1960, revised 1977), p. 294.

[68]Walpole, "The Humanitarian Movement," p. 224.

could be enforced better.[69] It was suggested that a steward should be on each ship to oversee the emigrants, that shipboard sanitation and berths be improved, and that lodging houses be established at some ports.[70]

The result of the Commission's work was a new Passenger Act in 1852 which was more detailed and comprehensive than past Acts. This was another important step in the development of emigration regulations. The old problem of mixed cargo and passengers was resolved with the defining of passenger ships as being "a ship carrying more than one person to every twenty-five tons burden."[71] Steamships were allowed to sail with two and one-half times the number of passengers that a sailing ship could take.[72] Many other changes were made to allow a greater measure of safety and healthiness for the emigrants. Berths on shipboard had to be six feet long and eighteen inches wide, and single men had to be separated from families.[73] The ship was required to carry sufficient lifeboats for the emigrants.[74] The ship was also required to provide stewards for the emigrants, a hospital area, and a medical man.[75] The problem area of Passenger embarkation, where confidence men took advantage of

---

[69]Johnson, Emigration From the United Kingdom, p. 118.

[70]Walpole, "The Humanitarian Movement," p. 224.

[71]Cowan, British Emigration, p. 166.

[72]Ibid., pp. 166-167. [73]Ibid., p. 167. [74]Ibid.

[75]Ibid.

emigrants, was also regulated. "Dock trustees were authorized to pass by-laws to regulate porterage and all aspects of embarkation."[76] The new Act stopped the abuse of passage extortion by requiring that passage brokers be licensed and that they use special forms.[77] The number of port agents was increased some in order to handle the increasing emigration traffic. The staff of these agents was gradually increased over the years.

There was a noticeable decline in the number of problems and abuses in the emigration traffic after the passage of the 1852 Act, and especially after more emigration staff members were hired.[78] This did not mean that the problems disaappeared. More problems and abuses were eliminated gradually during the rest of the nineteenth century by means of occasional new changes and additions to the Passenger Act. In 1853-1854 another Commission on emigration was appointed to check into the emigration situation. This resulted in yet another Passenger Act in 1855 that was more detailed and far-reaching than any passenger law in the past. This Act was so detailed that it did not leave much out. "Its 103 clauses of specifications included 11 pages of forms required for passenger lists, licences, and so on, 6 pages on brokers' contracts, 5 pages on passengers' rights."[79] The ship-master

---

[76]Ibid. [77]Ibid.

[78]Johnson, Emigration From the United Kingdom, p. 118.

[79]Cowan, British Emigration, p. 168.

was required to give a large bond to ensure good treatment of the passenger and obedience to the emigration laws.[80] The emigrant had much more space than provided for in previous laws. Each emigrant had eighteen square feet of space, seven feet between decks(finally enough room to stand up in), and many other minor services provided by the ship under the new law.[81] The ship was to carry a doctor to take care of the emigrants if more than three hundred passengers were on the vessel.[82] These laws were enforced better than the older laws were because of the increased number of officials.

The 1855 Act was so detailed and encompassing that only minor changes such as the amendments of 1863 were needed through the rest of the century up to 1894. The emigration staff found it difficult to do everything required under the law, and shipping companies complained of the increased trouble and expense.[83] The net result of the 1855 Act was a great improvement in regulating emigration and making it much safer. The development of steamships also helped considerably. Steamships helped because they were built better than sailing ships and made the transatlantic voyages much quicker. They gradually took most of the emigration trade away from the sailing ships.

The 1855 Passenger Act and all the changes and additions were superseded by a new comprehensive Merchant

---

[80]Ibid. [81]Ibid., p. 168-169.

[82]Ibid., p. 169. [83]Ibid.

Shipping Act in 1894.[84] This Act was not the end of many years of development and improvement of emigration regulation. Alterations and additions to the law were made well into the twentieth century.

The development of emigration regulation was a gradual process that took place during the entire nineteenth century. The need for regulation was seen in the late eighteenth century, but it was not until the Highland Society early in the next century pushed for it did the process begin. The early emigration laws were not very good or successful because they did not cover all the areas that needed regulation. They also lacked the necessary backup in manpower for enforcing the law. More comprehensive laws were gradually passed, and officials appointed to enforce them. By the end of the nineteenth century it became relatively safe for people to emigrate to to Canada and other countries because the laws regulating emigration were successful in keeping the traffic under control.

---

[84] Johnson, Emigration From the United Kingdom, p. 123, and Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, 1894-1899 (Emigration, vol. 28) (reprint ed., Shannon: Irish University Press, 1969), p. 451. See also Appendix.

CONCLUSION

Scottish emigration to the Canadian colonies was an important factor in the settlement of Canada. Scottish emigration to the area began with the settlement of ex-military men, followed by their relatives and friends. The British government encouraged this emigration in order to gain a secure hold on Canada. This emigration of ex-soldiers influenced many other Scots to follow them to Canada. Several other factors influenced this Scottish emigration.

One important factor in the movement of Scots overseas to the Canadian colonies was that many Scots saw emigration to Canada as a way to better their lives, even though many also went through hardship in order to get there. A new life in Canada was better for many of the poor Scots, who were in bad circumstances in Scotland. The economic situation in the Highlands was never very good. The primitive economy was not strong enough to support a very large population. Many Scots were poor and starving. In times of famine, which often occurred in Scotland, many people were even worse off. The famine that was the most important in terms of the effect it had upon the numbers of Scots emigrating was the famine of 1846, which was caused by the Potato Blight of that year. This caused a large increase in the number of people who emigrated to Canada. The availability of a land such as Canada,

where they could escape in search of a better life, was a lifesaver to many people.

The attitude of the British government and the landlords and businessmen was also important in the emigration of Scots to the Canadian colonies. The British government's attitude for or against emigration at any given time made a difference in the numbers emigrating. This was also true of the attitude of the landlords and businessmen. Many of these people wanted the poor lower class Scots to stay in Scotland to provide a labor pool, but others wanted them to leave because they considered them to be a drag on the economy.

Another important factor in the emigration of Scots to Canada was the assistance provided by the British and Canadian governments, Scottish businessmen, and the British public and assistance organizations. Without this assistance, the numbers emigrating to Canada would have been much lower.

The importance of government regulation of the emigration shipping cannot be overlooked. The emigration of Scots to Canada was hazardous to the health of the emigrants, and many did not survive the journey. The development of emigration regulations throughout the nineteenth century had an effect on the emigration of people to the Canadian colonies. Even though government regulation cut down on emigration by making it more costly, the regulation laws ensured that more people would arrive at their destinations safely.

APPENDIX

XVI.—STATEMENT showing in Detail the DESTINATIONS of PERSONS who left the *United Kingdom* for Places out of *Europe*, and not within the Mediterranean Sea, since the 1st January 1853, distinguishing English, Scotch, Irish, and Foreigners.

NATIONALITIES.	Annual Average, 1853–60. 8 Years.	Annual Average, 1861–70. 10 Years.	Annual Average, 1871–80. 10 Years.	Annual Average, 1881–90. 10 Years.	Annual Average, 1891–95. 5 Years.	1894.	1895.	1896.	1897.	1898.	Total for 46 Years, 1853–98.
To United States.											
Of British and Irish Origin:											
English	*24,400*	*36,511*	*54,975*	*90,919*	*74,201*	54,253	61,211	48,434	43,381	42,244	2,524,807
Scotch	*4,753*	*7,667*	*8,807*	*17,816*	*14,412*	10,151	13,244	10,535	9,121	7,372	476,898
Irish	*71,856*	*69,084*	*41,653*	*62,660*	*48,634*	39,597	52,047	39,952	32,822	30,878	2,688,667
TOTAL of British and Irish Origin	*100,999*	*113,262*	*105,737*	*171,395*	*137,177*	104,001	120,502	98,921	85,324	80,494	5,690,172
Foreigners	*12,059*	*22,937*	[illegible]	[illegible]	*73,355*	55,350	60,017	56,105	40,103	[illegible]	2,073,577
Not distinguished	*10,295*	*6,247*	*2,562*	*964*	*59*	80	113	110	531	550	181,970
TOTAL	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	*211,102*	159,431	195,632	[illegible]	132,048	[illegible]	7,951,719
To British North America.											
Of British and Irish Origin:											
English	*3,791*	*6,589*	*12,618*	*24,222*	*17,777*	15,558	14,099	12,802	13,442	15,050	575,002
Scotch	*3,550*	*2,434*	*2,581*	*3,519*	*1,717*	914	1,404	1,563	1,281	1,717	126,892
Irish	*8,085*	*4,008*	*2,578*	*4,451*	*1,235*	987	1,119	902	848	873	183,845
TOTAL of British and Irish Origin	*15,426*	*13,031*	*17,797*	*30,192*	*20,729*	17,459	16,622	15,267	15,571	17,640	885,739
Foreigners	*1,199*	*3,978*	[illegible]	*9,320*	*13,642*	6,102	5,670	7,270	7,040	9,813	288,241
Not distinguished	*3,351*	*2,516*	*89*	*4*	*87*	72	65	53	58	34	53,186
TOTAL	*19,976*	*19,525*	[illegible]	*39,516*	*34,408*	23,633	22,357	22,590	22,669	27,487	1,227,165
To Australasia.											
Of British and Irish Origin:											
English	*27,311*	*14,211*	*20,015*	*27,227*	*10,868*	9,251	9,328	9,219	10,396	8,635	915,817
Scotch	*6,820*	*4,233*	*4,107*	*4,409*	*1,460*	941	623	677	1,032	1,142	193,173
Irish	*11,523*	*8,292*	*6,195*	*5,548*	*1,309*	725	616	458	633	916	301,078
TOTAL of British and Irish Origin	*45,663*	*26,736*	*30,317*	*37,274*	*13,637*	10,917	10,567	10,354	12,061	10,693	1,410,068
Foreigners	*1,077*	*587*	*913*	*1,005*	*255*	207	217	347	315	204	36,940
Not distinguished	[illegible]	*607*	[illegible]	*4*	*10*	27	25	9	20	33	31,052
TOTAL	*49,674*	*23,930*	*31,311*	*38,373*	*13,902*	11,151	10,809	10,710	12,396	11,030	1,478,060
To all other Places.											
Of British and Irish Origin:											
English	*1,241*	*3,205*	*9,408*	*14,528*	*20,727*	20,528	27,900	32,382	27,439	24,750	469,534
Scotch	[illegible]	*474*	*1,070*	*1,675*	*2,657*	2,426	3,023	4,091	4,690	5,339	63,033
Irish	*627*	*474*	[illegible]	*789*	*788*	699	567	910	1,373	1,728	31,023
TOTAL of British and Irish Origin	[illegible]	*4,153*	[illegible]	*16,992*	*24,172*	23,653	31,490	37,383	33,504	31,817	563,590
Foreigners	[illegible]	*1,028*	[illegible]	*2,677*	*5,137*	5,373	7,914	13,233	9,384	7,785	115,041
Not distinguished	*2,576*	*1,584*	*1,890*	*3,106*	*3,723*	3,586	3,670	3,540	3,279	3,350	121,096
TOTAL	*5,307*	*6,765*	*15,122*	*21,075*	*33,032*	32,612	42,074	54,156	46,167	42,961	799,727
To all Places.											
Of British and Irish Origin:											
English	*56,803*	*60,517*	*97,050*	*154,896*	*123,573*	99,590	112,538	102,837	94,658	90,679	4,485,160
Scotch	*15,191*	*14,808*	*16,565*	*27,709*	*20,176*	14,432	18,294	16,866	16,124	15,570	859,796
Irish	*92,091*	*81,853*	*54,270*	[illegible]	*51,966*	42,008	54,349	42,222	35,678	34,395	3,204,613
TOTAL of British and Irish Origin	*164,085*	*157,188*	*167,891*	[illegible]	*195,715*	156,030	185,181	161,925	146,460	140,644	8,549,569
Foreigners	[illegible]	*28,431*	*50,270*	*95,354*	*92,920*	67,032	82,818	76,015	62,932	60,551	2,519,799
Not distinguished	[illegible]	*11,143*	[illegible]	*4,373*	*3,799*	3,765	3,773	4,012	3,888	3,978	387,303
TOTAL	[illegible]	*196,757*	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	226,827	271,772	241,952	[illegible]	205,171	11,458,671

364. From British Parliamentary Papers, Emigration, vol. 28,

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, 1825-1832 (Colonies: Canada, vol. 6), reprint ed., Shannon: Irish University Press, 1969.

Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, 1837 (Colonies: Canada, vol. 8), Shannon: Irish University Press, 1969.

Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, 1826 (Emigration, vol. 1), Shannon: Irish University Press, 1969.

Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, 1841 (Emigration, vol. 3), Shannon: Irish University Press, 1969.

Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, 1870 (Emigration, vol. 17), Shannon: Irish University Press, 1969.

Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, 1894-1899 (Emigration, vol. 28), Shannon: Irish University Press, 1969.

Secondary Sources

Cowan, Helen I. British Emigration to British North America, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961.

England, Robert. "Disbanded and Discharged Soldiers in Canada Prior to 1914," The Canadian Historical Review, 27 (March 1946): 1-18.

Gates, Paul W. " Official Encouragement to Immigration by the Province of Canada," Canadian Historical Review, 15 (March, 1934): 24-38.

Glover, Janet. The Story of Scotland, New York: Roy Publishers, n.d.

Johnson, Stanley C. Emigration From the United Kingdom to North America 1763-1912, London: George Routledge & Sons, 1913.

Macdonald, Norman. Canada, 1763-1841, Immigration and Settlement, London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1943.

Preble, John. The Highland Clearances, England: Penguin Books Ltd, 1969.

Shepperson, W.S. British Emigration to North America, Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1957.

Wallace, H. Stewart. United Empire Loyalists, vol. 13, in Wrong, George M. and Langdon, H.H., gen. eds. The Chronicles of Canada, 32 vols. Toronto: Glasgow, Brook & Co., 1922.

Walpole, K.A. "The Humanitarian Movement of the Early Nineteenth Century to Remedy Abuses on Emigrant Vessels to America," Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, ser. 4, 13 (1931): 197-224.