

CHAPTER 4

‘Disencumbering our crowded places’: theory and practice of estate emigration schemes in mid-nineteenth century Ireland

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Some thoughts and recollections came my mind with grief to fill,
The mountainside I recollect the farmers once to till,
The very spot on which I stood the farmers once did own,
But the landlord now possesses all the Mountain of Greaghlonge.
I stood awhile to ponder on the grief I could not hide,
From thoughts of friends so dear to me now scattered far and wide,
In Australia and America they seek another home,
And I'm in doleful reverie in the Mountain of Greaghlonge.¹

The schemes of assisted emigration which were adopted by private owners of landed estates in Ireland in the middle decades of the nineteenth century grew out of a discourse of political economy which was heavily influenced by the ideas on overpopulation of Thomas Malthus and his disciples. Many of their arguments which were rehearsed in the 1820s debates on emigration, echo through the correspondence on estate emigration in the mid nineteenth century.²

Although Malthus's allusions to Ireland were limited, his ideas on population have been centrally connected with the developing Irish demographic crisis of the nineteenth century. Malthus and his followers, however, were much more ambivalent about the contribution of emigration to his famous checks. The chancellor of the exchequer 1826 was skeptical about its long-term effectiveness for population control, advising observers to 'give up all notion of making great

1 'The mountain of Greaghlonge' local ballad, Carrickmacross, probably c.1850s, IFC S934, 271.

2 See H. M. J. Johnston, *British emigration policy 1815-1830* (Oxford, 1972).

holes in your population ... the holes would necessarily be filled up with alarming rapidity'.³ Emigration according to malthusian advocates was also counterproductive because it mitigated the effects of his checks on population: his preventative checks (on birth rates) and positive checks (through death rates) were the only effective means to guarantee population slowdown. Malthus did concede, however, that Ireland's demographic problems in the nineteenth century were so pressing that emigration might allow for some alleviation, a view supported by the 1835 Poor Inquiry which saw it as an auxiliary measure.⁴ The idea of overpopulation as an 'encumbrance' on society, restricting improvements in moral and social order and civilisation, was fashionable in colonial discourse. Therefore emigration might be viewed as a 'preventative' check: in Morash's terms the malthusian meta-narrative saw regulation of population through emigration as an 'agent of progress'.⁵ Followers of Malthus also believed strongly that such emigration schemes must be accompanied by subsidiary preventative measures like destruction of houses of emigrants (to prevent the 'holes being filled up') and imposition of taxes on houses or windows to discourage early marriage rates. Private property and its taxation, and reservations on the extent of state support for the poor, loomed large in Malthus's thinking, when he was prevailed upon to reluctantly support some state subsidised emigration from Ireland.⁶

In summary, therefore, there was some agreement by the 1830s that emigration was a good thing, that it should be encouraged, and that the state should consider funding it. A number of experimental migration schemes had been government-financed to Upper Canada and the Cape Province in 1815, 1817, 1819, 1821 and 1823. Comparatively small numbers were 'emigrated', generally at more cost than was anticipated. The challenge in the British Isles, especially in Ireland, was to bridge the gap between the abysmal poverty of large sections of the rural population and the costly distance and scope of colonial settlement projects: often this could be reduced to questioning whether the migration scheme was designed to solve problems of population pressure at home (to 'disencumber our crowded places' in the words of Trollope⁷) or to fill the labour needs of the colonies. State ^{scabby} parsimony and political ambivalence about the schemes seldom bridged the gap. Throughout much of the first half of the nineteenth century there was a persistent interest in Ireland in persuading the government to pay for Irish emigration by representing it as filling labour deficits in the colonies. Even by 1850, the Bath estate in Monaghan, together with neighbouring estates, was optimistically

3 In Johnston, *British emigration policy*, p. 151.

4 See Cormac O Gráda, 'Malthus and the pre-famine economy' in Antoin E. Murphy, (ed.) *Economists and the Irish economy from the eighteenth century to the present day* (Dublin, 1984), pp 87-8.

5 Christopher Morash, *Writing the Irish famine*, (Oxford, 1995), p. 20.

6 Johnston, *British emigration policy*, pp 106-7, pp 136-7.

7 Anthony Trollope, *Castle Richmond*, (London, 1994), p. 67. Trollope was talking specifically here about famine mortality.

petitioning parliament to help emigrate its paupers. The debate surfaced a number of times up to and after the famine, with persistent urgings by Irish landowners that the state get involved in assisted emigration schemes for impoverished rural dwellers, rebuffed for reasons of economic cost and doctrine by government.⁸ By the 1840s, as the economic crisis loomed in rural areas, Irish landlords were rapidly losing popular as well as political support in Britain. The new poor law and the potato calamity placed the ball firmly in the court of private property in Ireland. So it was the landed estate at the coal face of the crisis which was ultimately under pressure to face up to the escalating population problem at local level.

The estate as explanatory context

The landed estate was right at the centre of the impending crisis in mid-nineteenth century Ireland. Within its boundaries the fates of millions of people were being worked out. While parliament in Westminster and commentators up and down the country wrote about the methodologies of solving the problem, landlords, land agents and local leaders wrestled with terrible realities at local level — like the Catholic priest in 1880 whose desperate outburst reflects the persistent magnitude of the problem for the west of Ireland throughout the nineteenth century: ‘if the small tenants had the land for nothing they could not live ... I wish to God half the people of this barren territory would emigrate somewhere.’⁹

Though there was plenty of evidence of a growing rural crisis in the 1820s and 30s, when it came to addressing the problem the landed estates were gripped by inertia, especially in relation to emigration schemes, driven by the question — who should bear the cost? The comparatively sudden reality of a new poor law in Ireland in the late 1830s, which taxed property locally (by means of a rate per £ valuation) to pay for the support of the poor, focussed the minds of a great number of landowners very quickly. It was proposed that tenants of tiny farms under £4 valuation should have their rates paid by the estate proprietors. A letter from Lord Lismore in 1838 highlighted the growing fever of correspondence among the landed classes arising out of the consequences of the impending new taxation. During the month when the new legislation was passing through Westminster, he wrote to his agent that he had been ‘told by a gentleman that upon Mr Shirley’s estate in Monaghan there are over 3000 tenants who did not pay each over £5 rent ... consequently that great body under the Poor Law as it is will be entitled to relief. ... A man of business was sent from here to report upon the state of the property and he has

8 See David Fitzpatrick, ‘Emigration, 1801-70’, in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *New History of Ireland: v Ireland under the Union 1800-70*, i, (Oxford, 1989), pp 585-8.

9 Fr Patrick Greally quoted in Gerard Moran, ‘From Galway to north America’: state-aided emigration from county Galway in the 1880s’ in Gerard Moran and Raymond Gillespie (eds.) *Galway: history and society*, (Dublin, 1996), pp 488-9.

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recommended a fund to supply the means to buy out and provide for the useless tenantry. I may say more than useless'.¹⁰ The following year, the landlord in question, Evelyn John Shirley, was writing about consideration being given to 'the emigration in due time of some our numerous tenantry to our colonies and particularly South Australia'.¹¹

The growing correspondence on ways to address what had quickly come to be seen as a population problem on many estates, was characterised by a vocabulary inspired by the doctrine of Malthus and some fundamental tenets in colonial discourse. Pauper tenants were represented as 'useless', or 'surplus', 'superabundant', an 'incubus of cottier wretches', 'a swarm' on estates which were 'abounding with idleness', an 'encumbrance' inhibiting all the hallmarks of improvement and civilisation. 'Shovelling out paupers' was a normative use of this language. The progress of the Poor Law, for instance, persuaded an English land agent near Roscrea, of the advantages of emigration as a resolution of the problems of overcrowded estates: 'I have long been impressed with the idea that in such properties, emigration — conducted with great care — so as to strip off the *Rubbish* (may God forgive the word, but I speak only in the way of utter want of intelligence, industry and hopelessness of improvement) and preserve a sufficiency of stock of an improveable kind — is the plan to pursue'.¹² William Steuart Trench wrote about the 'extremely miserable supernumeries' on the estates under his care, describing the Lansdowne estate in Kerry as 'a country festering with filth and pauperism, disfigured with miserable hovels, inhabited by a miserable race' who he claimed were happy to be emigrated to America.¹³

The Poor Law rates as they eventually materialised were designed to provide minimal support for pauper populations in workhouses.¹⁴ The tax in Ireland was implemented locally and thus bore most heavily on estates with the largest pauper populations. This policy reached its ultimate expression in June 1847 with the Poor Law Amendment Act which taxed individual electoral divisions for the maintenance of their paupers and put enormous pressure on estate owners.¹⁵ Shirley complained that the 'rascally guardians' in Carrickmacross workhouse in 1850 'have chosen to make a rate of five shillings in the pound upon two of our electoral divisions',¹⁶ from which they considered many of the

10 Quoted in P. J. Duffy, 'Assisted emigration from the Shirley estate 1843-54' *Clogher Record*, xiv, (1992), p. 13

11 PRONI, D 3531/C/3/1/1-13, Shirley papers. In this case his proposal was connected with a project to send out tenants who had converted to the Church of Ireland through the efforts of the Irish Society.

12 LH, Irish Box 111: enclosed with Trench to Lady Bath, 26 Feb. 1851; quoted by kind permission of the Marquess of Bath, Longleat.

13 Quoted in G. Lyne, 'William Steuart Trench and post-famine emigration from Kenmare to America, 1850-55' in *Journal of the Kerry archaeological and historical society*, xxv (1996), pp 60, 75.

14 See Christine Kinealy, *This great calamity: the Irish famine 1845-52*, (Dublin, 1994), pp 11-26.

15 See J. S. Donnelly, 'Irish property must pay for Irish poverty': British public opinion and the great Irish famine' in Chris Morash and Richard Hayes (eds), *Fearful realities: new perspectives on the famine*, (Dublin, 1996), pp 60-76.

16 PRONI, D 3531/C/2/1, Shirley papers, E. J. Shirley to E. P. Shirley, 31 Aug. 1850.

paupers had originated. The geography of the poor law unions as they were established reflected a process of negotiation between estates interested as far as possible in having estate boundaries (especially those with large amounts of paupers) coincide with electoral division boundaries. Ultimately therefore the system put pressure on estates to bring about a reduction, a 'clearance', of paupers — in the pitiless words of the imperialist commentator Thomas Carlyle: 'to get rid of rats you must make them uncomfortable'.¹⁷ These kinds of animal analogies frequently characterised malthusian attitudes to the population problem in Victorian Ireland: 'the lands are now freed from the locusts' declared Lord Monteaigle (formerly Spring Rice) in 1848, when the tenants from the Crown estate at Ballykilcline were removed.¹⁸ Trench was reported to have denied that he ever used ejectments 'as a means of clearing the superabundant rabbits' off the Lansdowne estate.¹⁹ Fitzpatrick quotes the 1826 committee on emigration on the failed Canadian emigration of Kerry tenants — who returned as a body from Cork, 'pitching like a flock of plover, upon a bog in the same place they left'.²⁰ Such sentiments endured with many commentators through the famine and for a generation afterwards and fed into the tide of providentialist opinion which saw the depopulation of the famine crisis as being '...like the whirlwind and the tempest, it has cleansed the atmosphere, and left the air purer and more wholesome for the survivors...'.²¹

Up to the end of the European war, estate management had some margin for error, perhaps even some scope for mismanagement, in the expanding economic circumstances, and a consequence of this was excessive fragmentation of farms and multiplication of tenants in many regions. By the 1820s, however, the limits for continuing mismanagement of the social and economic affairs of estates had been reached, reflected in rising arrears and landlord debt. In the face of this reality and the looming pressure of poor rates, policies were urgently developed to correct the errors of earlier generations of estate management and one of these was assisted emigration. Emigration may be represented as a management device to reduce the pressure on the land resources, to try to instigate some element of improvement on estates and, of course, to reduce tax liability for impoverished tenants. Like many others, Lord Palmerston's agent in 1837 and Lansdowne in 1851 were proposing to introduce measures to 'thin' their estates²²: 'thinning' estates, another metaphor from the natural world, was a common reference by mid century.

17 Quoted in D. V. Glass (ed.), *Introduction to Malthus* (London, 1953), p. 16. Carlyle was also strenuously opposed to a poor law which, he claimed, only encouraged 'paupers in geometrical progression'.

18 Evidence from the *First report of the select committee of the house of lords on colonisation from Ireland* quoted in Fitzpatrick, 'Emigration 1801-70', p. 589.

19 From *Cork Examiner* 8 Aug. 1851 cited in Geraldine O'Connor, 'The Lansdowne estate, 1848-58: the Poor Law, emigration and estate management', unpublished MA thesis, UCD, 1994, p. 76.

20 Fitzpatrick, 'Emigration 1801-1870', p. 589.

21 SUL, BR 149/12/11, Palmerston papers.

22 Lyne, 'Trench and post-famine emigration', p. 102.

The numbers 'emigrated' from some of the estates were dramatic in terms of individual impacts. From the Lansdowne estate in Kerry between 1850 and 1853, c.3,360 pauper emigrants were sent out, levelling 862 houses behind them. From Shirley's estate in Monaghan throughout the 1840s, up to 2,000 were sent out in parties ranging from a couple of dozen to a couple of hundred. The Wandesforde estate in Kilkenny, sent out up to 5,800 between 1840 and 1855.²³ And the Fitzwilliam estates in Wicklow emigrated almost 6,000 between 1847 and 1856. Between 1851 and 1854 the Bath estate in Monaghan emigrated c.3,000 and the Palmerston estate in Sligo sent out 4,292 between 1847 and 1850.²⁴

These large groups of emigrants — over 2,000 were sent from the Lansdowne estate in the single year up to April 1851 — entailed extensive arrangements on the part of the estate management.

Table 1. Emigration from Bath estate 1851-2²⁵

Dates of embarkation:	Number of emigrants
23 March	139
3 April	102
10 April	185
18 April	31
24 April	53
29 April	49
16 May	42
24 May	69
10 June	62
11 August	62
27 August	50
16 October	35
TOTAL emigrants	879
Passage money	£2836
Provisions and bedding	£ 244 13s. 10d.
Clothing	£ 325 7s. 7d.
Head money	£ 302 10s. 0d.
Sundries	£ 56 17s. 7d.
TOTAL	£3765 9s. 0d.

23 Figures from O'Connor, 'The Lansdowne estate', pp 132-2; Duffy, 'Assisted emigration from the Shirley estate'; William Nolan, *Fassadinin: land, settlement and society in southeast Ireland 1600-1850*, (Dublin, 1979), p. 205.

24 Figures from Jim Rees, *Surplus people: the Fitzwilliam clearances 1847-1856* (Cork, 2000), pp 117-40; LH. Bath papers; see Fitzpatrick, 'Emigration 1801-1870', p. 615.

25 LH. Trench correspondence, Emigration account, 1 Feb. 1851-1 Mar. 1852.

The average expenditure per head for the Bath estate in 1851-2 was £4 5s. 8d. The emigrants included 177 from Carrickmacross workhouse, seven from Castleblayney workhouse, with 695 emigrated from the Bath estate who were not inmates of the workhouse.

Emigration Estates

The estates which particularly engaged with emigration schemes may be characterised by their size in acres and population, their combination of marginal land and fragmented smallholdings, and the presence of reasonably effective administrative structures. Many of the most significant emigrating estates were frequently in the ownership of non-resident British landowners.

The bulk of the assisted emigrants came from a couple of score of the largest estates in the island, with correspondingly large demographic problems. For example, Lord Lansdowne held 120,000 acres of mostly marginal land in Kerry; Fitzwilliam owned 90,000 acres in Wicklow; Wandesforde had in Kilkenny 22,000 acres; the south Monaghan estates of Shirley and Bath were 26,000 and 23,000 acres respectively. All had enormous rural populations. However, as with all assessments of estate records, their significant contribution to assisted emigration may be more a reflection of good record keeping, administration and selective survival of estate papers. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many smaller proprietors were also involved in migrating groups of tenants, like Elizabeth Smith who migrated a small number of tenants from her Baltyboys property in Wicklow.²⁶ Thus the total of assisted emigrants is probably considerably greater than the 50,000 estimated by McDonagh.²⁷

The following discussion focuses on the rationale and thinking behind assisted emigration schemes from a number of estates in Ireland in the mid-nineteenth century. On the basis of the surviving records, we can profile properties like the Shirley, Bath, Palmerston, Fitzwilliam and Lansdowne estates which engaged in substantial emigration policies. These estates were characterised by 'economic overpopulation', reflected in high rural densities and small fragmented and subdivided holdings subsisting in landscapes which were environmentally unable to support such numbers. William Steuart Trench claimed that the Bath and Shirley estates had one person on every acre; that in Ireland generally the value of many estates was 'in reverse ratio to the population'.²⁸ The Bath estate agent, who referred directly to the distress produced by 'overpopulation', demonstrated the minute parcellation of the farms of the estate in a letter to the board of guardians in 1848²⁹:

26 M. Stout, 'The geography and implications of post-famine population decline in Baltyboys, county Wicklow' in Chris Morash and Richard Hayes (eds.), *Fearful realities: new perspectives on the famine*, (Dublin, 1996), pp 15-34.

27 O. McDonagh, 'Irish emigration to the United States and British colonies during the famine' in R. Dudley Edwards and T. Desmond Williams (eds) *The great famine* (Dublin, 1956), p. 335. Tyler Anbinder, 'Lord Palmerston and the Irish famine emigration' in *Historical Journal*, xxii (2001), p. 445 estimates 6-8 per cent of total famine emigration (or c100,000) was assisted by various agencies.

28 LH, Trench correspondence, annual report to Lord Bath, 1 Mar. 1853.

29 LH, Kennedy to Lord Bath, October 1848.

Table 2. Farm size on the Bath estate 1848

Less than 2 acres	511
2-4	621
4-6	443
6-8	293
8-10	148
10-15	137

The following land agents feature proactively in the discussion of emigration from their respective estates: William Steuart Trench (successively land agent on the Shirley estate in the early 1840s, and later on the Lansdowne and Bath estates from the late 1840s until the 1860s); George Morant on the Shirley estate throughout the 1840s and 50s; Tristram Kennedy on the Bath estate in the 1840s and Joseph Kincaid on the Palmerston estate. Land agents like these occupied key roles in the nineteenth-century rural community, though roles whose political importance was diminishing from the 1850s. They acted at different times in guises of local politician, magistrate, banker, solicitor, arbitrator, family counsellor, occasionally matchmaker and welfare officer.³⁰ In Carrickmacross, Trench and his successor on the Shirley estate, George Morant, presided over weekly manor courts where every little detail on farm sales, permission to build or extend houses, rights of way, rows and disputes on wills and debts with neighbours and within families, were copiously examined (including site visits) and judgements written up at length. Professional agents like these held principles of estate management which were firmly grounded in a discourse whose ultimate objectives were the creation of ordered landscapes of moral and dutiful tenantry. And the managed emigration of elements in the population incompatible with such intentions fitted well into the discourse.

It was usually the larger residential (or occasionally residential) estates in Ireland which had the administrative machinery to tackle the logistics of emigrations in a reasonably efficient and humane manner. An estate office, such as Shirley's in Carrickmacross, with agent, clerks, bailiffs, runners/messengers and other personnel, as well as comprehensive records of the day-to-day business of the estate, was almost an essential pre-requisite. Part of an estate's administrative efficiency was a thorough knowledge of the estate and its population. This is clear in Trench's comprehensive report on Shirley's 26,000 acres in 1843. Trench was well informed on what he called the 'comings and goings' of the tenants, through a system of surveillance which was common on a great many well-managed properties — a regulationist milieu which often

³⁰ W. E. Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants in mid-Victorian Ireland*, (Oxford, 1994) has characterised many land agents as being like 'rustic statesmen'. See P. J. Duffy, 'Management problems on a large estate in mid-nineteenth century Ireland: William Steuart Trench's report on the Shirley estate in 1843' in *Clogher Record*, xvi (1997), pp 101-122.

reflected a perception of the locals as innately 'cunning and deceitful'. A similar 'watching system' prevailed on the Bath estate and the Downshire estate in Blessington, for example, as well as Lord Leitrim's estates in Donegal and Lansdowne's in Kerry. During his first year as agent on the Bath estate, Trench boasted to Lady Bath that 'a mouse can hardly move on the estate without my knowledge'. This was no idle boast as he demonstrated on many occasions — by his refusal, in one instance, to provide assistance to a tenant, Owen McKenna, in 1851 because 'when the emigration scheme was made known he sent for his family who were all well employed in Scotland to avail of the emigration bounty. This I thought it quite necessary to put a stop to...'.³¹

Like scores of other estates in Ireland, the Shirley and Bath properties were generally representative of estates with absentee or occasionally resident owners, whose main landholdings were located in rural England. About a quarter of the peers in the House of Lords, for instance, owned property in Ireland. Fitzwilliam, Palmerston and Lansdowne especially had public profiles to protect from adverse publicity in England, and their English properties were worlds apart from Farney in Monaghan or Kenmare in Kerry. Shirley's 3,000 tenant and approximately 600 cottier families in the early forties contrasted sharply with approximately 100 tenants on his 7,000-acre estate near Stratford-upon-Avon.³² There was no English equivalent to the mountainous wilderness of Lansdowne's Kenmare, characterised as being fit only for seagulls or goats in Trench's opinion.³³ For Shirley, who was a summer resident in Farney, and others like Lansdowne, Fitzwilliam and Bath who were well-informed through their agents about conditions on their Irish estates, it was inevitable that attempts would be made to reduce population pressure on their properties.

Estate management policies

Modulation in estate management was the main measure of population control and reflects the exigencies of malthusian and colonial discourses prevailing in gentry and political circles. Attempts were made to regulate marriage arrangements on many estates, for example, which as Trench saw it, represented not only future population growth, but impacted on the overall structure of farms on the estate. Elizabeth Smith's reaction in 1830 to the behaviour of her tenants was a response to common practice in many parts of Ireland: 'There was nothing struck me so remarkably when I first came here as the tenants marrying their children — setting them up in different trades etc without ever saying one word to their landlord', frequently setting them up in the house or

31 LH, Bath papers, Trench to Lady Bath, 26 Sept. 1851; though he confessed to Lord Lansdowne in 1854 that his 'watching system' was incapable of preventing 'people who herd together in the huts and cabins in the mountains' from 'secretely marrying and subdividing and increasing': O'Connor, 'The Lansdowne estate', p. 137.

32 Warwickshire County Record Office, CR 229 Box16/1, Shirley papers. The cottier list made out by Shirley for his Irish estate in 1847 is probably an understatement of the actual number — some escaped the vigilant eye of the estate office: PRONI, D 3531/M/5/1.

33 Quoted in O'Connor, 'The Lansdowne estates', p. 145.

adjoining outoffices.³⁴ E. J. Shirley believed strongly in the efficacy of a caring fatherly role in relation to his tenants and frequently lectured them in annual addresses before his return to England on subjects such as drunkenness, laziness, timely harvesting of turf, and marriage. In 1842 he posted a handbill throughout his estate which reflected his commitment to Malthus's conservative views on reproduction and living standards:

'The necessity of consideration before engaging in marriage is self-evident ... [be] aware of the duties and burdens it will bring ... remember that you injure your neighbours by throwing upon them the burthen of supporting those whom you ought yourself to support ... You are ... taking employment and food from those who already have not enough ... Keep animal impulses under the control of reason'.³⁵

Trench, the doctrinaire malthusian, depended less on encouragement and more on coercion, requiring tenants, for example, to obtain a license to marry from the estate office. His marriage regulations on both the Bath and Lansdowne estates were especially resented and lampooned locally, in *The Nation* and at least one London newspaper.³⁶ In many cases, permission to marry was made conditional by the agent on the father or brothers of the applicant giving up claims on the land, or the siblings being 'emigrated'.³⁷ In Carrickmacross he was detested for his role as 'match-maker and land-agent'.³⁸ In some cases, however, intervention by the estates in local marriage and family disagreements, often exacerbated by families and siblings living in such close quarters, was welcomed by tenants as a means of sorting out disputes. Ruth-Ann Harris suggests for example that in the increasingly competitive environment of pre-famine Ireland, with so much pressure on land resources, women frequently sought the authority of the landlord in enforcing their claims in relation to marriage, dowries, and farm inheritance.³⁹

Trench's management also embraced a range of processes which today would

34 Quoted in K. Trant, 'The landed estate system in the barony of Talbotstown Lower in the nineteenth century', unpublished MA thesis, NUI Maynooth, 1997, p. 49. See also Rees, *Surplus people*, p. 16 for references to marriage restrictions on the Fitzwilliam estate.

35 This item is quoted in W. G. Broehl, *The Molly Maguires* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), p. 45 (based on the Shirley House papers) and is missing from the Shirley papers in PRONI. Shirley's 1839 address exhorting temperance is at D 3531/C/3/1/7.

36 G. Lyne, *The Lansdowne estate in Kerry under the agency of William Steuart Trench 1849-72*, (Dublin, 2001), pp 232-42.

37 see O'Connor, 'The Lansdowne estate', p. 120. See also note 30 above.

38 ('O girls of Farney is it true/that each true-hearted wench/before she weds must get consent/ from pious Fr Trench?: O search green Erin through and through/ and tell us would you find/ match-maker and land-agent too/ in one small farm combined?', from *Dundalk Democrat*, June 1869 printed in L O Mearáin, 'Estate agents in Farney: Trench and Mitchell', *Clogher Record*, x (1981), p. 413.

39 R. A. Harris, 'Negotiating patriarchy: Irish women and the landlord' in Marilyn Cohen and Nancy J. Curtin (eds) *Reclaiming gender: transgressive identities in modern Ireland*, (New York, 2000), pp 207-26.

be called 'land reform', including the regulation of mundane matters such as farm divisions, subletting, farm sales as well as incentives to improve farm husbandry and housing. For ten years his employer Shirley had been striving for improvements on his estates — admonishing the people to desist, among other things, from 'leaving to your family in your Wills what is not yours to leave'.⁴⁰ Regulations prohibiting subdivision and subletting were repeatedly publicised by Trench on the estate in 1843: 'I will permit no man to dispose of his land to another, without leave in writing from me'.⁴¹ Throughout the famine, the estate office kept a strict record of 'permissions to sell' as tenants prepared to emigrate. From the early 1840s Trench saw assisted emigration as an alternative inducement, indeed a necessary accompaniment, of such reforms. In 1843, in his report on the estate, he proposed the establishment of a programme of emigration assistance for those tenants who were in arrears of rent and were incapable of improving their situation.⁴² Cottiers' pleas for permission to settle in the bogs met with a single response — assistance to emigrate. Subsequently, Trench had scope to embark on much more systematic and comprehensive programmes of emigration in the Lansdowne and Bath estates. As was the practice universally, a critical part of the emigration schemes was that the houses of emigrants were destroyed, tenants in some cases being expected to level or tumble their own houses to reduce costs. The conjunction of emigration and house extinction throughout the country was a fundamental pre-requisite in preventing spaces being filled up by returnees or other relatives and allowing some re-organisation on the estates. The complex nature of settlements and household arrangements on pre-famine estates, a reflection of the enormous build-up of rural populations, is a central feature in most office calculations of emigration schemes. Estates were extremely opposed to granting assistance to families, to find subsequently that part families or relatives had established themselves in barns and outbuildings.

All in all, therefore, assisted emigration might be positively interpreted as good land agency practice which became a risky public relations experiment by 1850 after the mass migrations of the famine, when as Elizabeth Smith described it in west Wicklow 'Crowds upon crowds swarm along the roads, the bye roads, following carts with their trunks and other property'⁴³ Like in many other instances, the emigrations undertaken by the Shirley and Bath estates were the subject of special attention in a series of reports from Carrickmacross by *The Nation* in late 1849: Shirley was accused of 'practising extermination' of his pauper tenants.⁴⁴

Trench's policy of emigration, according to his own ardent advocacy,⁴⁵ was to

40 Quoted in Broehl, *Molly Maguires*, p. 45

41 PRONI, D 3531/P/box 3, Shirley papers, quoted in Duffy, 'Assisted emigration from the Shirley estate', p. 14

42 See Duffy, 'Management problems on a large estate in mid-nineteenth century Ireland', pp 101-22. This scheme was modelled on one designed by Trench's cousin who was agent on the duke of Leinster's estate: Lyne, *The Lansdowne estate in Kerry*, p. 32.

43 Quoted in Stout, 'Geography and implications of post-famine population decline', p. 26.

44 *The Nation* for 1849, 15, 22, 29 Sept, 6, 10, Oct, 24 Nov, 15 Dec.

45 See W. S. Trench, *Realities of Irish life* (London, 1869). Trench was an energetic self-publicist.

embed the emigration scheme in long-term improvement of the estates. Other estates, he suggested, were content to allow voluntary emigration of individuals or indiscriminate subsidised emigration to take its course, which in the short term was certainly the cheapest option. It was also very much in keeping with prevailing laissez faire ideas on intervention in the local economy, but in the long term he claimed was counterproductive, as demonstrated on the Lucan and Wyndham estates. 'The great and marked differences between the emigration off this estate and that which is purely voluntary', Trench said sniffily from the Bath estate in 1852, 'is that in our case none but paupers are going. We have not lost one single man I should wish to keep.... Other estates where no assistance is given (and where emigration has at all set in) retain their paupers, whilst all the respectable tenants are moving off'.⁴⁶

Before the famine, the Shirley and Bath estates in south Monaghan were generally unwilling to assist cottiers (who did not have direct contracts with the landlord) to leave, both estate agents optimistically expecting the government to help: as Tristram Kennedy, the then Bath agent put it, 'the removal of the cottiers should be left entirely to the government as their settlement on his estate has been at all times contrary to the will of the proprietor'.⁴⁷ By the middle of the 1840s, however, as poor rates rose in the more economically marginal regions, all agents and landlords calculated that it cost less to send paupers or potential future paupers to the New World than to maintain them in the workhouse for a year — a calculation which is repeatedly used in estate documents and which had figured in the arguments of economists twenty years earlier. For example, Palmerston's agent Kincaid wrote in March 1847 that the estate would benefit significantly from a reduction in population: 'The cost of supporting these 150 families for the next seven months [in the workhouse] would be at least £1,500 and at the end of that time they are still upon the property as dead weights'.⁴⁸

Trench's reading of the situation when he was agent to Lord Lansdowne in 1851 was characteristically logical and malthusian: feeding the paupers would encourage them to continue 'as millstones around the neck of the estate for many years to come ... it would be cheaper to him, and better for them, to pay for their emigration at once, than to continue to support them at home'.⁴⁹ The following year he hammered home his opinion to Lord Bath: 'There can I think be no better proof of the value of the emigration of useless paupers than this. It costs less to send them to America than to feed them for a single year'.⁵⁰

46 LH, Bath papers, Trench correspondence, annual report, 1 Mar. 1852. See Lyne, *The Lansdowne estate in Kerry*, pp 45-9 where identical sentiments were communicated to Lord Lansdowne by Trench and were repeated in Trench's *Realities of Irish life* when it was published in 1869.

47 LH, Bath papers, Kennedy to Lord Bath, 20 Jan. 1847.

48 SUL, BR 146/9/3, Palmerston papers, Kincaid to Palmerston 26 Mar. 1847. See also Anbinder, 'Palmerston emigration', pp 455-6.

49 Trench, *Realities of Irish life*, p. 65.

50 LH, Bath papers, Trench to Lord Bath, annual report on estate 1853.

Emigration assistance

Emigration assistance varied from the basic passage money, to a range of other supports such as clothing, luggage, landing money, or rent arrears write-offs.⁵¹ Indeed the latter form of indirect assistance helps to understate the total impact of assisted emigration. Inevitably in what Shirley's emigration agent in Liverpool referred to as the 'heat of emigration' at the height of the famine, when the process became entangled in controversy, the extent of subsidy and assistance given was very variable. Granting assistance beyond the bare minimum of landing money (10s for Quebec for Shirley tenants) was often refused tenants who, it was assumed could sell crops, furniture and other property such as dung hills and thatch, to help with their passage. Indeed, according to the Bath agent, free passages on the Shirley estate up to early 1847 were restricted to those who held land and could thus fund their other expenses by the sale of their tenant right, a policy which he pursued on the Bath estate.⁵² When hundreds at a time were being conducted off local estates, however, there was a glut of unsaleable goods, and so a great many landed in Quebec or St John New Brunswick or New York in destitution in 1847-9. Palmerston's agent admitted that many probably had no money, being unable to sell their property.⁵³ Elizabeth Smith in Wicklow bought furniture and other property to help provide additional funds for some of the tenants she was emigrating during the famine.⁵⁴ On smaller estates, with more manageable numbers of emigrants, it may have been possible to help out in this manner, though Shirley in the 1840s and Bath in the early 1850s occasionally purchased unwanted manure heaps and thatch.

Workhouse emigrants (assisted at the expense of local taxpayers and according to a centrally regulated system) were usually fully equipped with clothes and provisions, but having nothing to sell they had no resources when they got to the other side and arrived in America or Canada in a state of utter destitution. The winters but more importantly, in Canada, the distances to travel to find work were enormous obstacles to these people. In consequence of pressure for emigration in 1850 on the Lansdowne estate, and his own anxiety to get as many as possible to the boat, Trench only provided passage tickets to keep down costs in the vain hope that tenants would provide for their journey and arrival in America. He also emigrated all the Bath estate paupers (up to 3,000) from the Carrickmacross and Castleblayney workhouses in the early 1850s. Always interested in cutting costs to the estate, he sent 900 paupers abroad in 1851 by bypassing the workhouse system: 'by placing ourselves under the supervision of the Poor Law commissioners in any way we should

51 See Rees, *Surplus people*, pp 42-6, 127 for summary of assistance on the Fitzwilliam estate; also Fitzpatrick, 'Emigration 1801-1870', pp 593-4.

52 LH, Bath papers, Kennedy to Bath correspondence, January to March 1847.

53 *Report of select committee of the house of lords on colonization from Ireland* (1847) cited in O'Connor, 'Lansdowne estates', p. 83.

54 Trant, 'Landed estate system in Talbotstown lower', pp 128-9.

have to do things much more expensively than at present'.⁵⁵ Passages to Quebec were cheaper than to the US and for much of the 1840s had less rigorous regulation of shipowners. Estates therefore encouraged tenants to take passage to Canada, though many, like agent George Morant on the Shirley estate, gave in to pressure for passage to the US, to which the majority of Irish emigrants were travelling. In a notice publicising his emigration from the Bath estate in March 1851, Trench attempted to entice most to go to Canada: persons going to New York or New Orleans were granted the free passage alone; those going to Quebec, however, were given passages plus complete outfits, 10s on landing, as well as a food allowance over the usual ship's fare.⁵⁶ The notice also proclaimed that for those going to Quebec 'it is the usual practice of the government, at their own expense, to send all emigrants to where there is most demand for their labour, or where their friends reside' (see page 104). Agents were alert to the fact that government authorities would support emigrant labour landing in Canada, so relieving the estates of the burdens or anxieties of finding employment for them. Such practices, however, often added to the unfavourable public reports of the emigrants in both Canada and Ireland. In late 1847, for instance, Palmerston agent Kincaid had requested that his emigrants be looked after by the Government Agent in Quebec, who subsequently claimed that the group arrived with a large number of old, infirm and badly clothed people.⁵⁷

The records on the Shirley, Fitzwilliam and Palmerston estates indicate an interest in emigrating whole families, with the intention of having immediate resolution of the landholding problems on the estate: having 'something to surrender', 'eliminating the surplus', consolidating farms and extinguishing houses were the priorities in emigration programmes. But as the famine crisis worsened, Shirley's agent, Morant, was opting to send out anybody who wished to go, in the hope that investment in emigration *now* was an investment in further future emigration at no cost to the estate, by establishing the conditions for subsequent chain migration to occur. For example, grants given to some individuals (especially women) in 1848 were noted as being 'experiments' to see if they would fund the later emigration of family members. Agents like Trench and Kincaid were percipient enough to be aware that women emigrants in particular were more reliable at keeping in touch with home and influencing friends and family. Elizabeth Smith was also astutely conscious of the future potential of such assistance: 'Even in a business point of view this is a £10 profitably laid out. These orphans who have much plagued us will cost us no more, and they may act as pioneers for their numerous relations'.⁵⁸ In general, however, Trench in his management of the Lansdowne and Bath emigrations was keen on maintaining control over the type of tenant who was assisted,

⁵⁵ LH, Bath papers, Trench to Lady Bath, 2 Apr. 1851.

⁵⁶ LH, Bath papers, billposter dated 22 Mar. 1851.

⁵⁷ SUL, BR146/9/13/1-4, Palmerston papers.

⁵⁸ Stout, 'Geography and implications of post-famine population decline', p. 31.

always with an eye to the repercussions on the estate's landholding future, as well as its future outmigration patterns.

The assisted emigrants

Like Palmerston and Lansdowne, the Shirley estate office was deeply involved in the nuts and bolts of the tenant emigration. The estate records show, for example, the work involved in supplying and kitting out emigrants in the 1840s, the logistics of transporting emigrants to port, successful embarkation, as well as care of the passengers in transit in Liverpool. Attention was paid to fitting clothes and footwear, assembling the emigrants in Carrickmacross in good order and transporting them safely to Dublin port or Newry.

An invoice for April 1847 illustrates the comprehensive assistance provided for some of the impoverished tenants. The eleven members of the Fox family had to be completely equipped in Liverpool for their passage to America.

Table 3. Assistance to the Fox family 1847.

'Clothes given to Pat Fox and family'

Michael Fox - 1 pair trousers

Margaret - 1 shift. 1 gown. 1 flannel petticoat. 1 apron

Betty - ditto

Mary - 1 gown. 1 slip

Pat jr - 1 shirt. 1 coat. 1 vest

Betty and Anne - 1 apron each

Bridget - 1 flannel petticoat. 1 apron

Pat sr - 1 shirt. 1 trousers. 1 coat. 1 vest

Sundries supplied:

Tinware: 2x3 gal water bottles 2/-

1 Boiler 8*d.* and coffee pot 8*d.*

4 pannicans 8*d.* 1 chamber pot 7*d.*

1 frypan 9*d.* 1 dish 8*d.* 8 plates 6*d.*

8 stone biscuit @ 3/10 <i>d.</i>	£1 10 <i>s.</i> 8 <i>d.</i>
8 stone oatmeal @ 3/4 <i>d.</i>	£1 6 <i>s.</i> 8 <i>d.</i>
2 barrels with locks and keys	3 <i>s.</i> 6 <i>d.</i>
10lb bacon and 3lb coffee	12 <i>s.</i> 6 <i>d.</i>
7lb sugar, quarter lb tea, salt	5 <i>s.</i> 0 <i>d.</i>
14lb treacle and mug, 1 bottle vinegar	5 <i>s.</i> 10 <i>d.</i>
2 small pairs shoes	7 <i>s.</i> 0 <i>d.</i>
1 small pair trousers	2 <i>s.</i> 6 <i>d.</i>
2 small frocks	3 <i>s.</i> 6 <i>d.</i>
Dinner in Dundalk	7 <i>s.</i> 8 <i>d.</i>
'Sea store'	3 <i>s.</i> 0 <i>d.</i>

The packet to Liverpool	19s. 0d.
1 nights lodging and food in Liverpool	8s. 6d.
Cash on departure	£2 0s. 0d.

Their passage to America cost £24.⁵⁹ Many emigrants did not receive this level of assistance from the estate, of course. Another tenant, Thomas Fox and his family were provided with passage and equipment to New York in 1848, with provisions given by their neighbours, and father and daughter's passage paid in America.⁶⁰

Like Scally's emigrants from Ballykilcline, and Lansdowne's poor famine emigrants from Kenmare, there was no question of letting people head off from their home estate on their own.⁶¹ Most had never been outside their parish. On the other hand, the appearance of large groups, many no doubt disconsolate at parting from home, being shepherded overseas with their roofless cabins receding in the distance, must have tugged at the heartstrings of those left behind and shaped subsequent memory of this assisted emigration. Obviously disasters like the loss of the *Carrick* in April 1847 on its passage to Canada with emigrants from the Palmerston estate, 119 of whom were drowned, as well as the rise in shipboard mortality and distress in 1847, added to the uncertainties and subsequently fuelled the construction of an exile motif around the issue of Irish migration.

Controversies surrounded the zealous approach of Trench on the Lansdowne and Bath estates, which coincided with a post-famine re-assessment of popular attitudes to these planned emigrations. The vast numbers of people leaving as voluntary individual emigrants alarmed many and even *The Times* fulminated against the subsidised emigration of 'the strength and sinew of the land' and the *New York Herald* called it an 'act of indiscriminate and wholesale expatriation'.⁶² After the famine, there was growing ambivalence in Ireland towards emigration, with the editorial policies of most newspapers being opposed to any further assisted emigration as leading to 'extermination', at the same time carrying advertisements for shipping lines to America and publishing articles of advice to would-be emigrants.

However, what was the attitude of the tenants who were given emigration assistance by estates? Trench emphasised the positive and always took care to leaven his proposal to reduce the financial drain of paupers on the estate by highlighting their prospects of betterment: the Lansdowne scheme in 1850 'would put the people themselves in a far better way of earning their bread hereafter'.⁶³ In 1851, in response to Lady Bath's concern for the 'comfort and happiness' of the people, he reported: 'You asked me some time ago to let you

59 PRONI, D3531/P/ box 1.

60 PRONI, D3531/M/6/1, 26 Oct. 1848.

61 R.J.Scally, *The end of hidden Ireland: rebellion, famine and emigration*, (Oxford, 1995); Lyne, 'Trench and post-famine emigration from Kenmare to America, 1850-55', pp 87-8.

62 Cited in O'Connor, 'Lansdowne estate', p. 73, 75. See also Lyne's account of the controversy surrounding the Lansdowne emigrants, 'Trench and post-famine emigration', pp 94-130.

63 Trench, *Realities*, p. 65.

know if the people grieved much at going. The fact is that they have seen so much misery for the last five years that their old love of home seems broken ... All these are actually gone and now upon the broad Atlantic. I trust in God and indeed I feel no doubt upon my mind but that it must be for their benefit'.⁶⁴ Trench was convinced of the popularity of the schemes on the Lansdowne estate, though in general his account is rather self-congratulatory. He reported on long queues of people panic-stricken lest there be no tickets left for them and described the paupers who left Kenmare in 1850 as being in 'uproarious spirits'.⁶⁵ Palmerston's agent was taken by surprise by the numbers applying to go in 1847 and reported his tenants in December kneeling on the road pleading to be put on the list.⁶⁶ There was a high level of popular support for assisted emigration from the Shirley estate throughout the 1840s which can be gauged from the system of petitions submitted to the estate office when the scheme was initiated by Trench in 1843.⁶⁷ Large numbers sought a variety of assistance for whole families or members of families to emigrate to America. Of course, much of this passion for emigration simply mirrored the mass scramble to America by tens of thousands of self-funded individuals at the height of the famine. Desperation to go left those who had nothing with little alternative to pleading for help from any source.

Power relations on estates did not always work one-way in encouraging tenants to leave, however. Harris suggests that many tenants who were astute observers of changing estate policies were keen to negotiate emigration assistance, and women tenants on the Shirley estate often linked marriage and emigration.⁶⁸ Many of the petitions on the Shirley estate demonstrate a keen awareness on the part of tenants of their bargaining power at a time when the estate was publicly proclaiming its anxiety to obtain peaceful possession of small holdings. For instance, the Martin brothers in 1844 had been left a half acre and a house from their mother's three acres and they considered 'the place too small to settle on and wish to give it all to the brother who has the rest. If they could get assistance to emigrate to America — their brother is unable to assist them — the petitioners have as much as would procure necessaries and clothing but no money for the voyage'. Hugh McDonald petitioned Morant in March 1845 that his departure would lead to a consolidation of holdings: 'the last day we were in here Your Honour had an objection against assisting me to America because the smoke would be on the farm. Now Thomas Fox has taken his brother's farm ... will clear up the arrear and hold the two farms and throw down Hugh McDonald's home'.⁶⁹

64 LH, Bath papers, Trench to Lady Bath, 12 Apr. 1851.

65 Trench, *Realities*, pp 66-7.

66 SUL, BR146/9/3 and 146/9/18, Palmerston papers. Thomas Darby, agent on Trench's brother's estate near Roscrea refers to the tenants going down on their knees in thanksgiving for emigration assistance in 1851: LH, Bath papers, Trench to Lady Bath, 26 Feb. 1851.

67 Duffy, 'Assisted emigration from the Shirley estate'.

68 Harris, 'Negotiating patriarchy', p. 214.

69 PRONI, D 3531/P/box 1. 28 Mar. 1844, Mar. 1845, Shirley papers.

Letters from Palmerston emigrants newly arrived in America demonstrated widespread satisfaction with their move. Admittedly these represent a selective sample assembled by the agent to counter the adverse publicity his emigration was getting at home, but they surely have a ring of truth about them. Indeed letters from America were generally from successful emigrants. From the US in October 1847: 'Have you the cow I left you and where did you get pasture for her. We are by no means sorry for leaving Ireland but would wish we had left it sooner for we are far better off than we ever were at home. Don't be troubled about us'.⁷⁰ A Shirley estate tenant in Carrickmacross workhouse wrote in 1852 to acknowledge the assisted emigration of four of his family 'to Adelaide in Australia for which act you have earned their most fervent blessing as they state its second to no other country in the world'.⁷¹

The American emigration lists in the estate offices might be characterised as being 'tenant-driven' to a general extent, with tenants being very keen to get on them, motivated by deteriorating conditions at home and repressive local estate regulations, as well as an intensification of contacts with earlier emigrants. One of Palmerston's emigrants near Toronto in 1848 was typical of the information feedback fuelling the exodus: 'I would advise ye all to come — a good man in this country will get 50/- a month and food and remember they are not fed like us at home they are fed every day like on Christmas at home and the man and master are at one table. If a man is honest he is as well thought of as if he was worth thousands'.⁷²

Another letter from Connecticut in 1848 sums up the dramatic change in community and social life for so many and the rapidly expanding emigrant networks which were being established in the space of a few years. Tenants at home, as well as estate managers, were well tuned into this development.

'...your father has a \$ a day and Dennis \$18 a month and Catherine and Ann \$6 a month each and boarding. We will be able with God's assistance to send you some money without delay ... there is more than eighty Irish of every age and sex living in this neighbourhood and all of us visit each other every Sunday regularly though there was not an Irish man or woman in this part of the state of Conn. six months ago'.⁷³

Smaller numbers of emigrants were also sent to Australia under government-sponsored assistance. Two groups were sent from the Shirley estate to South Australia in 1849, but unlike the American emigration, this was largely estate-

⁷⁰ SUL, BR 146/10/13. 17 Oct. 1847, Palmerston papers.

⁷¹ PRONI, D 3531/P/box 1, Aug. 1852, Shirley papers. For an extensive analysis of Irish emigrant responses to Australian emigration, see D. Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of consolation: personal accounts of Irish migration to Australia*. (Cork, 1994), pp 561-627.

⁷² SUL, BR 146/10/13. Palmerston papers: from Bridget Rooney, 15 Jan. 1848.

⁷³ SUL, BR 146/10/13. Palmerston papers: letter from his parents to Wm Gilmartin, 16 July 1848.

driven. Distance and limited information was a great disincentive to tenants, so that bailiffs had to be sent around the property to persuade potential candidates — young, healthy, on subdivided small holdings, in arrears of rent — to go. Peter Mc Cabe and his teenage family on 11 acres were entered on the Australian list in May 1849. In June, however, Peter indicated a stronger interest in being sent to America — having given up his farm and crop and ‘being in great destitution’. By December they were in the workhouse.⁷⁴ The ship ‘Constance’ brought one group of 94 Shirley emigrants on a controversial passage in late 1849. Initially Shirley’s office was attracted by the relatively cheap cost of sending out emigrants to Australia — £2 per head. But later on Morant the agent realised that because of the involvement of the Colonial Emigration Commissioners, the Australian emigration was a much more troublesome and expensive undertaking for estates. Inflexible regulations about supplies and outfitting put agents and their staff under a great deal of pressure, so that ultimately American emigration was the more popular and convenient option for all concerned.⁷⁵

The type of assistance provided to emigrants by estates varied, but in general anxiety about public opinion, and genuine sympathy on the part of agents, ensured that a modicum of humanitarian assistance was provided. Apart from at the height of the famine when large ‘batches’ or ‘cargoes’ of emigrants were being sent off in questionable conditions by some estates, the hundreds of assisted emigrants were embarked in a caring and humane fashion. In 1844 Elliott the passenger agent in Liverpool notified the Shirley estate office that ‘the last paid of your people got off yesterday all in excellent humour and I must say most grateful they all appeared for the trifling friendship and attention I tried to show them. They one and all desired I should write to let you know how they prayed for your success as they termed it. The ready cash they all got daily does much for them and tended to make them very cheerful’.⁷⁶

Private correspondence of Trench suggests a degree of philanthropy in his approach to the schemes. In letters addressing the concerns of Lady Bath about the emigrants’ welfare, he reported in April 1851 that ‘140 are actually on the seas and from 80-100 more to go next Thursday ... Those to whom he spoke personally stated they had not had so comfortable a night [in Dublin] these 7 years’. In March he wrote that he was ‘happy to inform your ladyship that I believe I have fully anticipated your wishes regarding the emigrants. I have offered 12s. 0d. worth of clothing to all going to Quebec and thus they will start on their voyage reasonably and comfortably provided ... A most steady

74 PRONI, D 3531/P/Box 2, June 1849, Shirley papers.

75 P. J. Duffy, ‘Embarking for the new world - a group migration to south Australia in 1849’ in J. M. Wooding and David Day (eds), *Celtic-Australian identities*, (Sydney, 2001), pp 43-56. For details on the regulations for Australian emigration see Richard Reid and K. Johnson, (eds) *The Irish Australians*, pp 27-9.

76 PRONI, D 3531/P/box 1, Shirley papers. See P. J. Duffy, ‘Emigration and the estate office in the mid-nineteenth century: a compassionate relationship?’ in E. M. Crawford (ed.) *The hungry stream: essays on emigration and famine*, (Belfast, 1997), pp 71-86.

kindhearted and faithful man, Mr Lane, is also to go with each batch of emigrants to the ship, to see that the promised allowances are fully complied with and to guide and take care of these ignorant and helpless people until they are actually on board'. In April, Townsend Trench wrote to his father that he 'would have been much pleased this morning to see the 190 emigrants start — all in *our* clothing. They really looked as if going to a wedding, so happy did they appear, so comfortable and so very well dressed'.⁷⁷

Consequences of the emigration policies

The immediate and long-term impacts of estate emigration of large numbers of tenants in mid-nineteenth century Ireland is probably well summarised by the sixth marquis of Lansdowne in 1927. Though referring specifically to the controversy generated by the Kenmare experience, it applies more generally to the social, economic and emotional impacts of the emigrations: 'there can be no question that ... the last state of affairs was better than the first for all concerned, but that there was much suffering in the process of adjustment ... cannot be denied'.⁷⁸ Emigration was about adjustment in management policies to establish solvency in estates and order in their landscapes, with improvement in the welfare of emigrant tenants a happy coincidence from the agent's point of view. Robert French of Monivea writing to his son at the height of the famine in 1847 echoed the widespread view of the landed elite: that 'a better state of things will arise from this visitation and that our lands will pass into hands better qualified to manage it, you will never have a better opportunity to get rid of some of our abundant population'.⁷⁹ This 'narrative of progress' following the 'cleansing' impact of the famine, was repeatedly invoked in literature and economic commentary in the half century after the crisis suggests Morash: 'overgrown' estates, relieved of their 'burdens', had 'room to become civilized' in Trench's view.⁸⁰

Consideration of the consequences of the assisted emigrations reflect back on the initial objectives of landed estate investment in the schemes. Trench summarised the outcomes of his policy in 1853 which echoes with other estates such as Palmerston's and Lansdowne's:

'there has been a large amount of consolidation of farms from mere pauper holdings to farms of a reasonable size, sufficient to enable a tenant to live in some decency ... on one farm now on hands ... there were lately 37 pauper tenants, the greater number of whom

⁷⁷ LH, Bath papers, Trench correspondence, March-April 1851.

⁷⁸ Quoted in Lyne, 'Trench and post-famine emigration', p. 126.

⁷⁹ Quoted in Ian P. McClelland, 'Landscape and memory: Irish cultural transmission in Victoria (Australia), c1840-1901', unpublished PhD thesis, QUB 2002, p. 165.

⁸⁰ Morash, *Writing the Irish famine*, pp 93-95, 147-51, 184. See also J. S. Donnelly, 'British public opinion and the great Irish famine' in Morash and Hayes (eds) *Fearful realities*, pp 60-75.

have paid no rent these seven years and upon another small plot of 11 acres there were recently nine families subsisting in a miserable manner ... On the whole I have re-let to solvent tenants about 1565 acres'.⁸¹

In 1850, Kincaid was reporting to Lord Palmerston on notable improvements to the estate which accompanied the emigrations of poorer tenants and the 'throwing down' of old houses, including plantations of pine tree seeds and acorns from France and England, and improved drainage schemes.⁸² Similarly in 1853 Trench highlighted the repercussions for the landscape of the Bath estate: '37,000 trees have also been planted this year on waste and unprofitable spots which will add materially to the shelter as well as beauty of these farms — and will hereafter prove of much advantage to the Estate — a large number also of mud cabins have been thrown down amounting on the whole to 231 — the inmates of which have left for America, or the manufacturing districts of the north of England'.⁸³ In general, therefore, emigration in most instances was followed by land reform: consolidation of farms, and in west of Ireland estates such as Palmerston's and Lansdowne's, the elimination of rundale, 'squaring' of fields and re-arrangement of rural housing.

What were the immediate consequences for the emigrants in the New World and where did responsibility for their welfare end? The immediate objective of estates involvement was to unburden their properties of 'surplus' population. Beyond 'landing money', estates rarely took responsibility for the welfare of the emigrants when they arrived across the Atlantic. In many ways, especially in the later 1840s, estates did not have the resources to take on such a role, although there was some appreciation of its importance to the success of the enterprise. Kennedy, Bath's agent in 1847, wrote about the need to make arrangements overseas 'either by government or otherwise ... to secure a certainty of employment for a limited period after their landing — that vast numbers would embark without hesitation' if this was available.⁸⁴

The Shirley Liverpool agent, Elliot, advised that emigrants be sent to Quebec in 1847 at 55s. per adult and half for children, '5s. for each person and half that sum for each child being paid out of their passage money at Quebec to the Government Emigration Society, by which a considerable sum is created each year to assist those in need in proceeding to their several destinations ...'.⁸⁵

Many estates tried to exploit whatever contacts or networks they had overseas which might be called on to help their erstwhile tenants. Some of Shirley's emigrants to South Australia in 1849 were sent to a cousin of Shirley. Similarly Palmerston, whose emigration scheme had experienced a run of

81 LH, Bath papers, Trench report to Lord Bath, 1853.

82 SUL, BR146/11/5, Palmerston papers.

83 LH, Bath papers, Trench annual report to Lord Bath, 1853.

84 LH, Bath papers, Kennedy to Lord Ashburton, 7 Jan. 1847.

85 PRONI, D3531/P/box 1, Shirley papers, Elliot to Smith 6 Feb. 1847.

disasters with ill-prepared emigrants in 1847, was arranging with a contact in New York in 1851 who would take 'ten or twenty able bodied labourers first and when they have got themselves housed and settled, they will send for their families...'.⁸⁶ The extent of what might be termed gentry emigration networks was important in some cases. Gentry migration overseas formed part of the pioneering edge of the British colonial project, providing labour contacts for home estates interested in avoiding negative publicity for their emigrants in the New World. The bigger estates and possibly those with English owners may have had better networks in this regard. Some had financial interests in the new world: Fitzwilliam was an investor in a railway project in New Brunswick in which he tried valiantly to provide employment for his emigrants.⁸⁷

A deeper analysis of the estates' rationale for emigration schemes — well articulated by Trench both in public and private — shows that it was ultimately in their best interests to see as far as possible to the successful settlement of their emigrants on the other side. The experience of the Palmerston estate during the famine years alarmed the agent about the inhibiting effect of negative publicity on further outmovement. Shirley's Liverpool emigrant agent reprimanded the Carrickmacross office in 1848 for sending across a 'ragged pack' of emigrants which Morant was determined would not happen again. Trench was very defensive about the controversy surrounding his Lansdowne emigrants to New York.⁸⁸ Agents like Trench, Morant and Kincaid were well aware of the importance of positive information feedback from their emigrants. In 1852 Trench highlighted these benefits to the Bath estate — he was 'happy to state that the most favourable accounts have been received of those who have emigrated. They seem to have no difficulty in obtaining employment and the remittances sent to their friends to aid them also in moving, or in paying their rent, clearly proves the beneficial change which for all parties has taken place.'⁸⁹

For this reason the estate office was anxious that the emigrants, for instance, had somebody to contact on the other side, which by the late forties given the tide of emigration, was becoming easier. Trench's notice publicising his emigration scheme in 1851 highlighted the importance of such contacts: 'Emigrants not having friends in either of these ports [New York or New Orleans] are stongly advised not to start for already overcrowded towns, but, those having friends ready to receive and help them, are recommended to join their friends'.⁹⁰ Emigration to the north-east of England in 1852, as well as being cheaper for the estate was more popular with many emigrants because a large number of their friends were already successfully established there.⁹¹ Landlord-assisted emigration was seen by its organisers as a priming device: establishing a contact community overseas was an investment in future

86 SUL, BR146/1114/3, Palmerston papers, Charles Murray to Palmerston, 10 Apr. 1851.

87 See Rees, *Surplus people*, chapter 8.

88 See Lyne, *The Lansdowne estate in Kerry*, pp 92-94.

89 LH, Bath papers, Trench, annual report, March 1852.

90 LH, Bath papers, billposter dated 22 Mar. 1851.

91 LH, Bath papers, Trench annual report 1853.

emigration as well as taking the immediate pressure off the estate to look after its landed emigrants. 'I have always looked upon the scheme of emigration as a vast seed bed which I never doubted would repay itself in cash' Trench reported to Lady Bath and in 1853 he assured Lord Lansdowne that 'large sums are.. coming over from America ... and many are going out ... on their own resource ... we are certainly receiving back good interest at least for the money expended on emigration'.⁹²

How significant were these assisted emigrants in the overall population exodus in the mid nineteenth century? Clearly they represented an important group of individuals settled in north America (or Australia) who established strong information links with home districts for at least a generation subsequently. Even in far-away Australia, nearly all the Irish arriving by the late 1850s came under the nomination or remittance system (whereby a nominee part-paid by someone in New South Wales was brought out at government expense), reflecting the depth of migration contacts.⁹³

David Fitzpatrick points out that in Ireland as a whole emigration assisted by landlords and other emigration agencies amounted to a small proportion of total emigration in the nineteenth century.⁹⁴ At the local level, however, the numbers and priming role of the assisted emigrants were very important in the overall trend of outmigration. These emigrants represented very intensive concentrations in often isolated localities where, for example, there was a natural reluctance to leave, or an inability to pay the passages. In these districts, emigration schemes which helped to smooth over some of the logistical problems of leaving home, of passage and landing and settling in, were important in establishing subsequent migration chains from these places. Indeed it must have been highly stressful for individuals going out on their own to America or Australia in the 1840s and 1850s, probably never to return. A young sixteen year old girl remembered her anxious journey alone from Derry to New York in 1882: 'The poor creatures were seasick and many of the old ones too miserable to care, and they were all moindered in their minds after the quiet peaceful lives they led, to be driven and shouted at like cattle going to the fair, and then to be penned together [in the ship] like the same cattle in the market place'.⁹⁵ Fitzpatrick talks of the joy of emigrants from Clare to Australia meeting friends and neighbours at Liverpool docks and of the significant fact of colonies of neighbours from Clare settling in the same neighbourhood in New South Wales, reflecting the impact of migration contacts on subsequent movements.⁹⁶

But the stress and difficulties of emigrating (for rural people characterised as 'ignorant and helpless' by Trench) would have been lessened significantly when 'batches' went out together in large groups, or even a couple of dozen from the same parish, who could support each other and for whom most of the unfamiliar

92 LH. Bath papers, Trench, annual report, March 1852; Lyne, 'Trench and post-famine emigration', p. 93.

93 Reid and Johnson (eds), *The Irish Australians*, p. 29; see also Fitzpatrick, 'Emigration 1801-1870', p. 603.

94 Fitzpatrick, 'Emigration 1801-1870', p. 599.

95 'I went to America' taken down by Anna Kelly, *The Bell*, 1942, p. 355.

96 Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of consolation*, pp 49-55, 68.

transport arrangements were made in advance. Rees' summary of the geography of the Fitzwilliam emigrations from 1847-56 shows the contribution they made to the overall reduction in local populations. Assisted emigrants accounted for a large proportion of the decline in population on the estate between 1841 and 1851.⁹⁷ In many cases, townlands which contributed important groups of emigrants had significant reductions in their overall population. Looking at the Shirley and Bath estates in south Monaghan, it is apparent that the assisted emigration from either estate, helped to boost the decline of the total population and separated it significantly from the population experience of adjoining areas where little or no assistance was given. The population of Shirley's estate fell by 44 per cent from 18,600 to 10,200, 1841-51; house numbers fell by 42 per cent in the same period. 15-18 per cent of this decline can be attributed to directly assisted emigration which peaked in the late 1840s. But in the following decade when assisted emigration intensified under Trench on the Bath estate, the general rate of population decline in the estate increased noticeably, and more than 25 per cent of this was accounted for by the Bath emigrants. In addition, looking at the geography of emigrants, it would appear that townlands with assisted emigrants became nodes for subsequent emigration and population decline as chains of migration were set up.

The dilemma facing estate managers in relation to their mid-nineteenth century population problems is well reflected in the correspondence of Kincaid and Trench. At a time when voluntary emigration by individuals was enormous, for estates to deliberately subsidise emigration was a high-risk strategy. Both agents felt aggrieved that their strenuous efforts to relieve their estates of the pauper burden and assist the people to a better future only resulted in popular abuse at home and in the colonies.⁹⁸ Trench was a firm believer in a strict regulatory management regime on his estates, incorporating the most up-to-date tenets of colonial improvement and opposing what he called the 'laissez aller system, [to] let everything take its course'.⁹⁹ His approach was to target the populations which were a drain on the estate and help them leave the country. Trench's *Realities*, however, was a dogmatic rendition in 1868 of an increasingly rejected malthusian discourse of estate management. The emigrants were offered Hobson's choice of assistance to emigrate, and possibly prosper overseas, or lose their farm and remain at home in penury. The loudest narrative in the discourse of emigration is certainly that of the elite — landlord and agents. Trench was a superlative advocate of the social and economic logic of 'disencumbering' the crowded estates.

However, there are alternative views to the neat and tidy representations of management, with its lists and accounts and business-like correspondence giving an impression of order and humanitarian efficiency. These subaltern voices are fragmented, often silent and invisible, but are important to recover

97 Rees, *Surplus people*, pp 138-40.

98 SUL, BR 146/9/18, Palmerston papers. See Anbinder, 'Palmerston emigration', p. 466 and Lyne, *The Lansdowne estate in Kerry*, p. 60.

99 Trench, *Realities*, p. vii.

some balance in the way the assisted emigration schemes are represented. They are occasionally heard in contemporary press reports or in letters from America or tenant petitions to the landlord, many often preserved in the records of the estates themselves. Often they are grateful acknowledgements of the benefits of the emigration schemes. Sometimes, however, there are alternative witnesses which feed into a post-famine discourse of exile, rejection and dispossession. Notable examples were provided by clergy, characterised by Trench as ‘priests and demagogues,’ who cast some doubts perhaps on the process in the increasingly politicised post-famine years. Fr Duffy of Carrickmacross objected to what he called the ‘crowbar brigade’ which was demolishing houses on the Shirley estate and to the way that agent Morant kept the ‘poor, starving, barefoot creatures ... standing on the public streets from morning until night, and from day to day, in the most inclement weather, to get a peep at your honour’.¹⁰⁰ Another clergyman cast a caustic eye on the improving outcomes of the emigration project, asserting that Trench’s ‘several large farms are so many finger-posts announcing that the ‘Destroying Angel’ passed that way’.¹⁰¹

These opposing viewpoints are epitomised in the way in which many of the recipients of emigration assistance were represented. The clergy and press increasingly in the post-famine years refer to the helpless paupers being exploited and abused by landlords, tossed about on a sea of misfortune. Trench and the landowning class, on the other hand, frequently refer to a degree of ‘native cunning’ in their behaviour which fits well into the colonial perspective of the estate gentry. One of Elizabeth Smith’s emigrants was given a £5 present before departure. She was suspicious of the tenant who she said was begging to the last and had plenty of resources, having had £40 of hay in September and 36 barrels of oats: ‘he won’t land in America with only the Colonel’s five pounds’.¹⁰² Trench and Kincaid were also convinced that many of their pauper tenants had hidden resources, with Trench suggesting that some of them who were newly clothed kept their ‘rags’ for begging in America.¹⁰³

100 LH, Bath papers, Irish box iii, cuttings from *Dundalk Democrat* (nd - 1850).

101 L. O’Mearáin, ‘Estate agents in Farney - Trench and Mitchell’ in *Clogher Record*, x (1981), p. 412.

102 Trant, ‘Landed estates system in the barony of Talbotstown lower’, p. 128.

103 Lyne, ‘Trench and post-famine emigration’ p. 70.

NOTICE

Persons who may be selected for Emigration during the month of APRIL 1851, from off the Estate of The Most Noble The

MARQUIS OF BATH.

To those persons going to NEW YORK or NEW ORLEANS, no advantage but that of a free passage will be granted.

Emigrants not having friends in either of these Ports, are strongly advised not to start for already overcrowded towns, but, those having friends ready to receive and help them, are recommended to join their friends.

To each individual going to QUEBEC, a suit of Clothes (consisting of the following articles) will be given on leaving Carrickmacross.

MAN.

Cap,
Coat and Vest,
Trowsers,
Shirt,
Neck-tie,
Pair of Brogues.

BOY UNDER 20.

Jacket and Vest,

~~Same as Man.~~

WOMAN.

Bonnet and Ribbon,
Printed Calico Dress,
Peticot,
Chemise,
Woolen Shawl,
Pair of Shoes.

GIRL UNDER 20.

Same as Woman.

In addition to the above suit a sum of 10s. 0d. for each individual old and young, will be handed on arrival at their destination.

The following addition will also be made to the usual legal ship allowance, for each adult passenger:

One Stone Meal,
One Stone Flour,
Eight lbs. Meat,
Two lbs. Butter.

Besides all these advantages to parties going to QUEBEC, it is the usual practice of the Government, at their own expense, to send all Emigrants up to where there is most demand for their labour, or where their friends reside:

(SIGNED.)

WILLIAM STEWART TRENCH.

Bath Agency Office,
Carrickmacross.
22nd March 1851.

J. REILLY, PRINTER, CARRICKMACROSS.

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