



Mr. TREVELYAN to Sir R. ROUTH.

*Treasury, February 3, 1846.*

I FEEL satisfied that you will concentrate your whole energies on the direct and practical measures for the relief of the suffering to be anticipated from the impending scarcity.

Whether we regard the possible extent of that suffering, the suddenness with which it may come upon us in various points, or the fearful consequences of its not being promptly relieved, the subject is one which calls for all our foresight and power of arrangement.

That indirect permanent advantages will accrue to Ireland from the scarcity, and the measures taken for its relief, I entertain no doubt; but if we were to pursue these incidental objects to the neglect of any of the precautions immediately required to save the people from actual starvation, our responsibility would be fearful indeed.

Besides, the greatest improvement of all which could take place in Ireland would be, to teach the people to depend upon themselves for developing the resources of their country, instead of having recourse to the assistance of the Government on every occasion. Much has been done of late years to put this important matter on its proper footing; but if a firm stand is not made against the prevailing disposition to take advantage of this crisis to break down all barriers, the true permanent interests of the country will, I am convinced, suffer in a manner which will be irreparable in our time.

Up to the present date, nothing has, so far as I am aware, been done which should prevent a perfectly sound line from being taken, and one which will bear looking back upon, after the excitement arising from present circumstances shall have passed away.

Your official letter of the 1st instant, and its enclosure, are of such a thoroughly practical character that, by taking up the several paragraphs seriatim, and commenting freely upon them, I shall be able to come to a satisfactory understanding with you on every point.

I continue to be of opinion that we ought to rely upon the organised establishments and active discipline of the constabulary and revenue forces, for the persons to be employed in responsible, though subordinate situations, such as the charge of detached depôts. The officers, and others of the police and coast guard acquitted themselves, I believe, greatly to their credit in charge of

E

the oatmeal stations on the coast of Donegal, under Sir J. Hill, in 1836; and it is reasonable to expect that persons whose prospects in life depend entirely upon their giving satisfaction in the public departments to which they belong, will exert themselves more, and be more trustworthy, than those who have been suddenly called from private life, and may therefore be tempted to make the most of the opportunity to lay up a store for future use.

I have no suggestion to make for the improvement of the plan of an establishment sketched by you for Mr. Coffin. It appears to embrace every important point.

A Commissary-General to superintend the entire western district from Kerry to Donegal, with a clerk, and two officers of the constabulary for his personal staff.

A Commissariat Officer in charge of the depôt at Limerick, with a clerk and a storekeeper.

Another officer at Athlone, with a non-commissioned officer of the constabulary and a storekeeper.

And a similar establishment at Sligo.

You may therefore consider this outline as so far settled, and remaining to be filled up at such times, and to such extent, as the progress of events may require; it being of the utmost importance that our measures should not precede the actual necessity of the case.

In order that I may complete this part of the subject, I will tell you all the persons I have in view as fit to be employed in the highest capacities under you and Mr. Coffin.

The consequences of inefficiency in this temporary service would be so frightful, that the only consideration in making appointments must be, who the person is who possesses in the highest degree the requisite qualifications for the particular duty.

---