

Letter to the City companies by Sir Thomas Philips, 29th May 1609. Reproduced in Calendar State Papers Ireland, 1608-10, p. 207.

PLANTATION of DERRY by CITY of LONDON.

Motives and reasons to induce the City of London to undertake plantation in the north of Ireland.

1. The late ruined city of Derry, situate upon the river of Lough Foyle, navigable above Derry, and another place near the Castle of Coleraine, situate upon the river Ban, navigable with small vessels only, by reason of the bar a little above Coleraine, seem to be the fittest places for the City of London to plant.
2. With small charges, these places (especially Derry) may be made impregnable.
3. His Majesty offers to grant to these two places charters of incorporation; the whole territory betwixt them, however, which is above 20 miles in length, bounded by the sea on the north, by the Ban on the west, and the river Derry of Lough Foyle on the west (out of which 3,000 acres or more may be allotted to each of the towns for their commons), to be planted with such undertakers as the City of London shall think fit, paying only for the same the easy rent of the undertakers.
4. These towns to have the benefit of all the customs on goods imported or exported, as also tonnage and poundage, and the great and small customs, for 21 years, paying yearly 6s 8d Irish as an acknowledgement.
5. The his Majesty would be pleased to the buy from the possessors the salmon fishing of the Ban and Lough Foyle, and bestow the same upon these towns.
6. Also license for free export of all goods growing on their own lands.
7. That the Admiralty jurisdiction in the coasts of Tyrconnell, now supposed to be in the Lord Deputy by the Lord High Admiral's grant, may be transferred to them for 21 years.

The Land Commodities which the north of Ireland affords.

1. The country is well watered, and supplied with fuel either of trees or turf.
2. It supplies such abundance of provisions as may not only sustain the plantation, but may furnish provisions yearly to the City of London, especially for their fleets, as beeves, pork, fish, rye, bere, peas, and beans, and in some years will help the dearth of the city and country about, and the storehouses appointed for the relief of the poor.
3. It is fit for breeding of mares and for cattle, and thence may be expected store of hides, tallow, &c.
4. The soil is suited for English sheep, and if need were, wool might be had cheaply out of the west of Scotland.
5. It is fit in many parts for madder, hops, and woad.
6. It affords fells of red deer, foxes, sheep and lambs, cony, martens, squirrels, &c.
7. It grows hemp and flax better than elsewhere, and thus might furnish materials for canvas, cables, cordage, and such like requisites for shipping. Also for thread, linen cloths, and stuffs made of linen yarn, which is finer there and more plentiful than in all the rest of the kingdom.
8. Timber, stone, lime, and slate, and building materials are to be had, and the soil is good for making bricks and tiles. The goodliest timber in the woods of Glanconkein and Kelleitragh may be had, and may compare with any in His Majesty's dominions, and may be brought to the sea by Lough Eagh and the Ban. Fir masts of all sorts may be had out of Loughnaber in Scotland (not far from the north of Ireland) more easily than from Norway.
9. All materials for building of ships (except tar) is there to be had in great plenty, and in countries adjoining.

10. There is wood for pipe staves, hogshead staves, barrel staves, hop staves, clap boards, wainscot, and dyeing ashes, glass and iron work; copper and iron ore are there found abundantly.
11. The country is fit for honey and wax.

The Sea and River Commodities.

1. The harbour of Derry is very good, and the roads at Portrush and Swilly (not far distant from Derry) tolerable.
2. The sea fishings are plentiful of all manner of fishes, especially herrings and eels. Yearly, after Michaelmas, above seven or eight score of sail of the King's subjects and strangers are there for loading, besides and infinite number for fishing and killing.
3. There are great fishings in the adjacent islands of Scotland, where many Hollanders do fish all the summer, and plentifully vent their fishes into Spain and within the Straits.
4. Much train and fish oil may be made upon the coast.
5. As the sea yieldeth fish, so the coast affords abundance of sea fowl, and the rivers great store of fresh fishes, more than any of the rivers of England.
6. There be good store of good pearls upon the coast, especially within the river of Loughfoyle.
7. These coasts are ready for traffic with England and Scotland, and lie open and convenient for Spain and the Straits, and fittest and nearest to Newfoundland.

The profits that London shall receive by this Plantation.

If multitudes of men were employed proportionally to these commodities, many thousands would be set at work, to the great service of the King, the strength of his realm, and the advancement of several trades. It might ease the city of an insupportable burthen of persons, which it might conveniently spare, all parts of the city being so surcharged that one tradesman is scarce able to live by another; and it would also be a means to free and preserve the city from infection, and consequently the whole kingdom, which of necessity must have recourse hither, and being pestered and closed up together can never otherwise or very hardly avoid infection.

These colonies may be a means to utter infinite commodities from London to furnish the whole North of Ireland and Isles of Scotland, which may be transported by means of the rivers Ban and Loughfoyle into the counties of Coleraine, Donegal, Tyrone, Armagh, and Antrim.

The city of Dublin being desolate by the slaughter of the Easterlings, who were the ancient inhabitants thereof, was given by King Henry the Second to the City of Bristol to be inhabited, which, without any charge to the King, Bristol performed, whose posterity continues there to this day.¹

This plantation, thus performed to the eternal commendation of Bristol, was not the least cause of civilising and securing that part of the country.

It were to be wished this noble precedent were followed by the City of London in these times, with so much the more alacrity as to excel Bristol in ability and means. And so much the rather, since the commodities which the City of London will reap hereby far surpass the profits which could redound to Bristol by the other.

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The 28th May 1609. Motives and reasons to induce the Citie of London to undertake plantation in the North of Ireland. Sir Arthur Chichester.

¹ In fact, the 1171-72 invasion of Henry II, which intervened in a protracted struggle between Irish clans and Norse lords, found Dublin populated; the city's mainly Norse population was simply expelled in order to make way for English settlers led by Henry's grant to the Bristolians. Many settled outside the city walls, creating the settlement of Oxmantown (East/Ostman's Town), now a neighbourhood in Dublin's Northside.