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### Report on the Holland Colony in the Grand River Eagle

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Grand River Eagle, January 7, 1848, p. 2.

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January 7, 1848

A report in the Grand River Eagle, p. 2, on the Holland Colony. The author of the report is not given. The person says: "...they ask for no private charity...They are a hardy, industrious, frugal, moral and religious people,...and like the Pilgrims of 1620, came to this country, to escape the intolerance of their own, and in quest of liberty of conscience, where no alliance exists between the church and state, and where they may be permitted to worship God in their own way."

The author claims that about 2000 people are now in the Colony.

*It must be adapted from Duffield (g.v.) - many passages are identical "though undoubtedly" the hard-to-read words are not included.*

The productions of the rich and inexhaustible mines of iron, copper, and silver, found along the shores of Lake Superior—the produce, too, of the fisheries of that lake, scarcely exceeded in extent or value by those of Newfoundland, even, and the lumber from almost boundless forests of pine and cedar, all must pass through the St. Mary's Canal when made.

Of such vast magnitude and importance is the business of the upper lake likely soon to become, and so indispensable to its prosperity and growth, is the construction of that canal, that it should be encouraged by a charter as liberal in its terms as can be granted without jeopardizing the just rights of the public.

I cannot permit the present occasion to pass without directing your attention, for a moment, towards an interesting, and, I think, valuable class of foreigners, that for the last few months, have been arriving in our state.

They are a colony of Hollanders, settled in the county of Ottawa, near Lake Michigan, remote from the inhabited parts of the country.

Their language is the low Dutch. They are ignorant of our vernacular tongue, and few persons in our state can act as interpreters of theirs.

They are located in a thickly timbered region, without roads, without mills, without mails, without magistrates or police regulations of any kind, and indeed without most of those facilities and conveniences that are deemed indispensably necessary to civilized life, even in its humblest conditions.

Still they ask no private charity, nor do they solicit appropriations from the public treasury, but they do invoke the interposition of state legislation so far as to extend to them the benefits of an organized township government, and of such opened and constructed highways as will afford them access to mills, merchants, mechanics, and post offices.

They are a hardy, industrious, frugal, moral and religious people, of what is denominated the Free Church of Holland, and like the Pilgrims of 1620, came to this country, to escape the intolerance of their own, and in quest of liberty of conscience, where no alliance exists between

of pine and other valuable timber, its education, the enterprise and intelligence of the people, the simplicity and cheapness of government, the low rate of taxes, will soon be reached—were the details of various subjects, annually promulgated in legislative form, it cannot be doubted but they would far to disabuse the public mind, and to check the accessions of population and wealth.

Besides, the annual accumulation of a mass of statistical matter, would be a benefit to the state, and to its individuals in many other respects.

A joint resolution of the last legislature, passed on the 17th March, 1847, proposed to amend the constitution as to provide for the division of the state into single districts for the representation.

This resolution is referred to the committee now convened, and if approved by them, will be submitted to the people for their approbation, in such manner and at such times as may be prescribed.

Changes of the original law, since its adoption, have been cautiously and sparingly made; no alterations of a material part, they are palpably defective.

Yet it would not be wise to elect a new system, from its practical operation found imperfect, sound policy dictates that a proper corrective should be applied.

By the twenty-first clause of the constitution, it is ordained that the legislature shall meet on the first Monday of every year.

Would not the interests of the people be promoted by so modifying that provision as to alter the sessions of the legislature to biennial?

In most new states, and in few, perhaps, in our own, a strong tendency to legislate has been manifested.

Enactments, designed to effect local objects alone, no wise conducive to the general welfare, multiplied acts of incorporation, and modifications of the general laws, have occurred during the time of our legislatures. There is

Jan. 7, 1848. 27 pze

C. Rotari, Rep. of Eagle

Grand Rapids, Mich.

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Jan. 7, 1848

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the church and the state, and where they may be  
permitted to worship God in their own way.

The Colony now numbers about two thousand  
souls, and it is believed, will be increased annual-  
ly, by many thousands of their countrymen,  
should they receive the fostering care of our gov-  
ernment, and tokens of welcome and encourag-  
ment from our people.

I recommend the organization of a township  
which shall embrace the principal purchases made  
by these colonists. They have now, no govern-  
ment among them save the restraints of religion  
and the rules of their church.

Roads for their accommodation and use, should  
be opened and wrought, so far as it can be done  
with the means properly applicable to that ob-  
ject.

Their settlement is in the midst of a wide un-  
broken wilderness, most of which, however, has  
been purchased by individuals, or selected by the  
state for the purpose of Internal Improvement.

A large amount of highway taxes is assessed  
upon these non-resident lands and brought into the  
treasury.

Would it not be just to all concerned to appro-  
priate a portion, at least, of this fund to the con-  
struction of such roads as are deemed essential to  
the growth and prosperity of this important col-  
ony?

One, perhaps, from their principal settlement  
to Grandville, in the county of Kent, another to  
the mouth of Grand River, in Ottawa county, and  
a third to some point on the Kalamazoo River, in  
the county of Allegan.

Of the 25,000 acres of Internal Improvement  
lands, appropriated at the last session of the leg-  
islature, for the construction of a canal around the  
rapids, of the Grand River, the Supervisors of  
Kent county, have selected eleven thousand seven  
hundred and ninety-eight and 27/100 acres in the  
same townships, and part of the same tract set-  
tled upon by the Holland Colony, and embracing  
nearly all the unsold lands belonging to the State,

thus been greatly protract  
public treasury made prop

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Michigan, Jan. 31, 1848