

THE STATE AND EMIGRATION

Already with the first departures of Valaisans for overseas emigration, shortly after the Valais joined the Swiss Confederation, the state was concerned about this phenomenon, for it called into question its federating and unifying ideal.

Emigration took the relay of the foreign service and appeared as the manifestation of an incompatibility between an increasing part of the population and its political institutions, casting doubt on the credibility of the latter.

ISSUES AT THE MUNICIPAL, CANTONAL AND FEDERAL LEVELS

The first public structures that were affected by emigration were the municipalities. Among federal institutions, the municipal authorities were in the best position to be aware of the precarious situations that most often motivated emigration.

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LAWS AND REGULATIONS

It was at the time of the Algerian emigration in 1851 that the cantonal authorities of the Valais undertook the first regulatory measures.

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THE REGISTER OF EMIGRANTS (DI 358)

In 1871, the decision was taken to establish a cantonal register of emigrants. Its purpose was to provide information about the persons and families who emigrated to Argentina, North America or North Africa between 1849 and 1879.

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