

them the means of fostering a rival power upon the seas, which is growing every day into more striking importance; and as illustrating the value they attach to these possessions, the French Government of to-day chiefly rely upon their Newfoundland fisheries to supply seamen for their navy, and, to this end, expend annually the enormous sum of 3,900,000 francs.

The policy pursued towards that colony up to the year 1697, was of a most extraordinary description; all settlement was forbidden under severe penalties, and it was not until the year above-mentioned that permanent possession of land was permitted, and then, and for more than a century afterwards, cultivation was not allowed farther than a few yards from the sea-shore.

In 1763, however, there was 400 sail of shipping trading between it, the mother-country, and other parts of the British dominions. In 1764 the British Parliament established the customs in that colony, the head collector being stationed at Boston; and although the inhabitants, like their fellow-subjects in Boston, at first resisted what they conceived to be an illegal imposition of taxes, levied and spent without their consent or control; yet, unlike the latter, their allegiance has to this day remained unshaken. Their sacrifices by the course they pursued in relation to the American war were great; for when that occurred, their trade with portions of the old colonies, being now part of the United States, amounted to 250,000 *l.* sterling annually, with increasing prospects; but it has never acquired its former footing since the passing of the Act of Congress of 1775, suspending commercial intercourse with the British colonies, and the final separation of the United States from the family of British colonial brotherhood.

In 1796 the probable amount of capital vested in our fisheries was one-and-a-half million pounds sterling. So long as the French could be kept out of the field of competition, our trade, fisheries, and population flourished. In 1813 for instance, just before the close of the second American war, the exports from Newfoundland amounted to 2,848,976 *l.* sterling; by the treaty of Paris, however, our rivals were reinstated on our shores to subserve the views of Imperial policy. In 1816 there were 80,000 inhabitants on the island, and 800 large vessels employed in its trade, yielding a very large revenue to the Imperial Exchequer.

Until 1832 the system of government was arbitrary and oppressive; a few capitalists or their agents did pretty nearly as they liked with the inhabitants; there was no redress for the injured to be found in the colony, and the voice of complaint lost its force before it reached the ears of the authorities on this side the Atlantic.

In 1832, by Royal Charter, a constitution was granted to Newfoundland, executive authority being vested in a Governor and Council, possessing also legislative authority, and a separate legislative branch or House of Assembly was also thereby created. Such is the present form of our constitution. The Council are irresponsible to the Crown, to the Assembly, and to the people, both for the advice they give the Governor, and for their conduct in their executive and legislative capacities. They have invariably opposed the popular branch in all important measures of reform, and general legislation has been rendered almost impossible through their obstructive conduct. A system of responsible government similar to that in successful operation in the neighbouring colonies is loudly demanded by the people, so that the government of the colony may be conducted, in the words and true spirit of Lord John Russell's declaration of British colonial rights, "according to the well understood wishes of the people, as expressed through their representatives in the House of Assembly."

This is the only mode by which the conduct of the local Executive will become amenable to public opinion, and the Government secure that confidence, insight, and power, which are necessary for the interests of all parties concerned. At present it is without any of these essential requisites; it possesses, nevertheless, the power of doing mischief, of creating discord, and bringing its own authority into contempt, as it has done by a career of misrule and repeated unconstitutional invasions of the rights of the people.

While even Prince Edward Island, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, with its population in 1851 of only 65,000, with imports of about 120,000 *l.*, exports 55,000 *l.*, and a revenue of not more than 25,000 *l.*, obtained responsible government—all that we seek for our old and loyal colony—while we are furnished with the strong and undeniable claim of equal constitutional right too long withheld, which her sons have, as scions of the old stock, with more than historical consequences which have resulted to England in the old colonies, and more recently in Canada, by withholding popular rights from the sturdy offspring of her loins, with the concessions that have been wisely made to the neighbouring colonies, in granting them a practical control in the management of their internal affairs, and with the declaration of Earl Grey in his Lordship's despatch to the Governor of Prince Edward Island, dated 27th December 1849, that "it cannot be too distinctly acknowledged, that it is neither possible nor desirable to carry on the Government of any of the British provinces in North America in opposition to the opinion of the inhabitants," may we not appeal with confidence to that spirit of justice and fair play which characterises British statesmen in these days, to redress the wrongs, and grant the reasonable request to the valuable and important dependency which we have the honour to represent. Why, we would ask, should she longer continue the victim of a local selfish clique, who flourish at her expense, who misrepresent her great resources, and sacrifice her best interests for the furtherance of their individual ends. Newfoundland has at present a population of at least 120,000 inhabitants; her imports, including those of her dependencies, are about 1,000,000 *l.* sterling, and her exports exceed that sum; her area is more extensive than that of Ireland, and she possesses more than a thousand miles of seaboard indented with noble bays and safe harbours, having abundance