

Dear Sir,

St. John's, Newfoundland, 14 December 1853.

We have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your respected favours of the 17th and 24th ultimo, with a copy of your excellent note of the 18th to the Duke of Newcastle, and his Grace's reply of the 21st ultimo.

A proclamation has been issued by our Executive, convoking the Assembly on the 31st January next. There is, therefore, a pressing necessity for an immediate decision by Her Majesty's Government upon the important questions submitted by us for their consideration, as the public are anxiously looking to the opening of the Legislature to know it, and the policy of the Assembly will be altogether influenced by the conclusion at which the British Cabinet may arrive. In fact, we anticipate that neither harmony, nor any measure of general practical utility will emanate from the different branches of the Legislature under the present constitution. Legislation will not, therefore, according to our apprehension be attempted by the Assembly, as it is worse than fruitless to expect the co-operation of the Council, except on the most humiliating terms, and at the sacrifice not only of principle, but also of the substantial interests of the country.

We have not only deemed it prudent, but our imperative duty to place these views before the Duke of Newcastle in the enclosed communication, which we have written according to your suggestion; and we shall avail of your very kind offer to place it in his possession, with such remarks as you may think proper to accompany it. We continue to entertain the most favourable opinion of his honourable intentions towards Newfoundland, but fear that the affairs of Eastern Europe may engross so much of his attention as to deprive this colony of the benefit of his immediate personal exertions in its behalf. There never was a period in its history, which demanded the aid of a wise and vigorous Government as the present, to improve the condition of the country, to promote the development of its vast dormant resources, to avert impending ruin, and secure its productive industry for its permanent improvement. The old system of trade has almost worn itself out; its redeeming qualities have disappeared and left little behind, except some of its worst effects on the operative population, who are consequently generally in a very dependent state, and many of them weekly quitting the island.

Reciprocal free trade with the United States will infuse new life, enterprise and capital into our trade and the prosecution of our fisheries; and in our opinion, go far to remedy the evils of the present system of trade.

Our Government is totally devoid of power, and is only tolerated in lieu of something better. Nothing good is expected from it, and even its former supporters admit the necessity for a change.

We should be very anxious to be particularly advised of the Duke of Newcastle's views on our affairs by the opening of the Assembly, as we should wish, if possible, to avoid, or prevent as far as may be in our power, the adoption of any course that would not meet with his and your entire approval. Any information which you shall therefore be enabled to supply in this respect, will be gratefully acknowledged.

Renewing the sincere expression of our high regard for your zeal and ability in the cause of this old and loyal colony, and soliciting the honour of your further interference for its welfare.

We remain, &c.

(signed) *Philip F. Little.*
R. J. Parsons.

P. S.—We shall forward a petition to you, if necessary, from the House of Assembly, to be presented to Parliament, or pursue any other course you may advise.

(signed) *P. F. L.*
R. J. P.

My Lord Duke,

St. John's, Newfoundland, 14 December 1853.

According to the expressed desire of your Grace, when we had the honour of seeing you in London, we refrained from importuning you for an answer to the memorial and petition of the House of Assembly of this island on the questions of responsible government, and reciprocal free trade with the United States, in the confident expectation, that, as soon after the rising of Parliament as leisure would permit, you would fully consider them, and communicate to the Governor the decision of Her Majesty's Government upon these important subjects. Having recently requested Mr. Hume to ascertain the result of your deliberation on these matters, we have learned from that respected friend of the colonies, that foreign affairs had so engrossed your attention as to prevent your coming to a definite decision upon them up to the 21st ultimo.

As a proclamation has been issued by our Governor, convening the Legislature on the 31st January next; when it will be expected by the colonists and the Assembly that your views upon these vital questions, which have agitated the public mind so intensely, shall be made known, we have deemed it our duty, in discharging the trust reposed in us by the people, through their representatives, to impose so far on your kind disposition as to make this last appeal before the opening of our Assembly to your high and honourable principles as a British statesman, to place this old and loyal colony on a footing of equality with the neighbouring