

COPIES OF EXTRACTS OF CORRESPONDENCE between the Secretary of State and the Governor of *Newfoundland*, on the recent CHANGES in the CONSTITUTION of that Colony.

— No. 1. —

(No. 49.)

COPY of a DESPATCH from the Duke of *Newcastle* to Governor *Hamilton*.

No. 1.
Duke of Newcastle
to Governor
Hamilton.
21 February 1854.

Sir,

Downing-street, 21 February 1854.

I HAVE to acknowledge your despatch No. 41, of the 28th June last, transmitting an Address from the House of Assembly, announcing the appointment by that body of three of its Members to represent to Her Majesty's Government the state of the colony of Newfoundland, and operation of its present system of government, and on the establishment of reciprocal free trade with the United States of America.

2. Both during and since the visit of the gentlemen in question to England, I have given to the first of these subjects my fullest consideration, and have not failed to give due weight to the circumstance that the same expressions of opinions and wishes have proceeded from successive bodies of representatives elected by the people, with full knowledge that this important question was at issue.

3. Her Majesty's Government have come to the conclusion that they ought not to withhold from Newfoundland those institutions, and that system of civil administration which, under the popular name of responsible government, have now been adopted in all Her Majesty's neighbouring possessions in North America.

4. They are prepared to concede the immediate application of this system, as soon as certain necessary preliminary conditions have been acceded to on the part of the Legislature.

5. The first of these is the same which has been agreed to, and put in practice when the recent change of the same description took place in Nova Scotia and in Prince Edward Island, namely, the indemnification of present holders of those offices which, by the change in question, will be rendered liable to be vacated at the will of the majority of the Legislature. The provision in question should be made either in the form of pension, or of a round sum by way of indemnity; but as to the number of officers who must be regarded as thus liable to removal, and entitled to protection, and the amount and character of the compensation so to be given, I must rely on your judgment, with the advice of your Council, and of those whom you may think fit to consult with on this occasion; and you are authorised to submit any question which cannot be thus arranged, to myself for final decision.

6. The following are the remaining conditions which I consider indispensable, and which have been suggested to me by the consideration of circumstances peculiar to Newfoundland.

7. (1.)—A considerable increase of the members of the House of Assembly. I would suggest that the increase should be from the present number to 30, and that it should be effected, not by giving additional members to existing constituencies, but by subdividing, as equally as geographical positions would admit, the districts now returning members; which appear to be, in most instances, too large for the convenient exercise of the franchise.

8. (2.)—In reference to my despatch on the financial condition of the colony, lately directed to be laid before the Assembly, it appears to me necessary that the