

— No. 28. —

(No. 134.)

COPY of a DESPATCH from Governor *Hamilton* to the Right Honourable
Sir *G. Grey*, Bart.

No. 28.
Governor *Hamilton*
to Sir *G. Grey*,
Bart.
9 December 1854.

Government House, St. John's, Newfoundland,
9 December 1854.

(Received, 9 December 1854.)

(Answered, 17 January 1855, No. 24, page 119.)

Sir,

• Page 104.

REFERRING to my despatch No. 130,* of the 29th November, relative to the Address and Resolutions of the Assembly, and to the postscript dated the 30th, in which I acquainted you that I had informed the Assembly that I would concur with them in a measure for prolonging the existence of the Revenue Act, I have the honour to enclose a copy of their reply. I feel that I have followed a safe course in simply stating the facts connected with the subject in the order of their occurrence; and that in that despatch will be found an answer to anything tangible that can be gathered from the string of resolutions passed by the Assembly.

2. My letter of Thursday, the 30th of November, which I was just able to throw into the despatch bag as it was being closed, will have informed you that I had assented to the Representation Bill, and will have announced the fact of the Assembly having, in the face of a notice of my intention to prorogue the Legislature at four o'clock p.m. on that day, adjourned at two o'clock, to the 10th January next, avowedly for the purpose of avoiding the prorogation.

3. A proceeding so unexpected and unprecedented, so disrespectful to the Crown, and so defiant of the Queen's prerogative and authority, took me so much by surprise that I was unable, before the departure of the mail on that day, to determine upon the course fit to be adopted in such emergency; but subsequent reflection satisfied me I ought not, by this conduct of the Assembly, to be deterred from the course which I had originally intended to pursue. Having, therefore, by proclamation, notified that I had, in accordance with the fact, on the 30th of November (the day of the intended prorogation) signed and assented to the Bills which had passed the other branches of the Legislature, I dissolved the present Assembly by proclamation on the 5th instant; and having, with the advice and consent of the Council, appointed the elections to be holden on the 7th and 12th May, I have directed the necessary revision of the registration of voters to be immediately undertaken, preparatory to that event.

Royal Gazette,
5 December 1854.

4. One of the objects of the Assembly in adjourning to the 10th of January was, I presume, to give Mr. Little, while preferring his charges against me and the Council, a certain *locus standi* as the representative of an existing body. My motive in dissolving the Assembly, however, was not to defeat this object, but, 1stly, to vindicate the authority of the Crown by a proper use of the function and prerogative committed to me by the Queen; and 2dly, as the preliminary measures to the introduction of responsible government had been completed by the Legislature, to prevent the postponement of the elections until next fall; a result which would probably ensue from the continuance of the present Assembly until after the 10th of January, which would, under the Duke of Newcastle's despatch, delay responsible government and continue the present unhappy state of affairs until the winter of 1855-56; would, in the meantime, prevent all useful legislation; and would probably leave the country for eight or nine months without a revenue. The Legislature will now be convened in May, in time to continue the present Revenue Act, or to adopt any modification of the revenue laws which may then be deemed expedient.

5. With respect to the official members of the Legislative Council, they, in difficult circumstances, as I have already pointed out to you in the 4th paragraph of my despatch No. 130, of 29th of November, evinced, in a high degree, temper, moderation, and the discretion of persons experienced in public business. The explanation of their proceedings is to be found in their own words in the enclosed report of the debates of the Council.

See Newfoundland
Express,
21 November 1854.