

labours, especially as the Government have taken little or no part in the preparation of general measures of legislation. Bill after Bill has passed the Assembly to duplicate the present number of its members, leaving the existing electoral districts as they were established by Sir Thomas Cochrane in 1832; the Council rejected these Bills, and another measure on this subject, of a compromise character, adopted by the Assembly last Session in a spirit of conciliation towards the Council, and sought the substitution of a close borough system, by subdividing certain districts, which would have the effect of concentrating undue influences in small localities and thus endanger the integrity of the representative principle. Hence no law has been formed on this subject by the local Legislature, and we deem it utterly hopeless to expect the present Council to agree to any just or generally acceptable measure on this head.

With reference to the second point, we would respectfully refer to the relative numbers of the different denominations of our population, and the amount of patronage they respectively hold under the Government of the colony, which may afford your Grace some clue to the motives of the few individuals connected with the local Executive, who have raised and resorted to every unfair means in exaggerating this objection. According to the Census of 1845, there were in the island,—34,291 members of the Church of England; 15,230 Dissenters, nearly all Wesleyan Methodists, making together 49,521 Protestants; and 46,995 Catholics. The members of the Church of England enjoy 18,500 *l.* sterling, yearly, out of the civil official expenditure; the Wesleyans 500 *l.*, other Protestant Dissenters, numbering 970, 2,280 *l.* and Catholics 4,593 *l.* The Executive and Legislative Council consists of six members of the Church of England, three Dissenters (none of them Wesleyans), and one Catholic. During a period of 20 years, and five general elections, the number of Protestants returned to the Assembly was 39, and 36 Catholics. In six of the nine electoral districts into which the island is divided, there are a majority of Protestant electors, both collectively and separately, as shown by the annexed abstract from the Census of 1845. Although these districts have possessed the numerical power to return members of their predominant persuasion, yet several of them, like the districts where the Catholics are in the majority, have returned persons of different creeds as their representatives. Under such a state of facts, taken from the records of the colony, we are confident that your Grace will see that this objection is only a pretext put forward, most certainly not by your Grace, but by the local clique, as an expedient to prolong their tenure of irresponsible power.

Objections similar to this were strongly urged against the concession of self-government to several of the neighbouring colonies. In many of them there were stronger sectarian differences to be encountered than ever existed in Newfoundland, and more serious consequences have resulted from them at one election, in Prince Edward Island, under the old system, than ever has or ever will likely occur in our colony, whatever may have been the misrepresentations of interested parties to the contrary.

The population of Canada affords another illustration, not only of rife sectarian differences, but also of strong antipathies arising from national distinctions of race and language. Until a proper system of government was there established, that fine country was torn with internal dissensions, and enjoyed neither peace nor prosperity. Under the reformed administration, which has for its foundation equal rights to all denominations, the organization of society has been improved, and the genuine feelings of British loyalty and freedom, which exist in all British North America, have been strengthened in Canada and all the lower provinces, in the enjoyment of self-government; the principles of which are calculated to rectify the differences to which we have adverted. Where all are equally interested in the proper and economical management of public affairs, and where there is no peculiar Church establishment to be affected by the change, or supported by the colonial Legislature, there is really no force in the objection. No undue sectarian ascendancy is sought by the reformers in Newfoundland, and it is evident that none would be tolerated or practicable; but the Government of the colony should, of course, pay a due regard to the fair claims of all denominations.

For these reasons, and those previously advanced, we trust that your Grace may be induced to see that such objections are devoid of merit; and that you will, by the exercise of your authority, cause the present Council to be dissolved, distinct Executive and Legislative Councils created, and the salutary principles of responsible rule fully enforced in the colony, that harmony may be established between the co-ordinate branches of the Legislature, and the best interests of the country thus promoted.

We have, &c.
(signed)

Philip F. Little.

Robert J. Parsons.

His Grace the Duke of Newcastle,
&c. &c. &c.