

— No. 6. —

(No. 6.)

No. 6.
Right Hon. H. Labouchere, M.P., to
Governor Douglas,
24 Mar. 1857.

COPY of DESPATCH from the Right Honourable H. Labouchere, M.P., to
Governor Douglas.

Sir,

Downing-street, 24 March 1857.

I HAVE to acknowledge your despatch, No. 2,* of the 9th January, reporting the proceedings of the House of Assembly of Vancouver's Island, from the 13th of November to the 18th of December 1856.

I have, &c.
(signed) H. Labouchere.

* Page 12.

Despatches from Governor Douglas.

— No. 7. —

(No. 12.)

No. 7.
Governor Douglas
to Right Hon. H.
Labouchere, M.P.,
22 May 1856.

EXTRACT of DESPATCH from Governor Douglas to the Right Honourable
H. Labouchere, M.P.; dated Victoria, Vancouver's Island, 22 May 1856.

(Received, 12 August 1856.)

(Answered, No. 16, 24 August 1856, page 13.)

Page 3.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 5,* of the 28 February last with its enclosures.

It is, I confess, not without a feeling of dismay that I contemplate the nature and amount of labour and responsibility which will be imposed upon me, in the process of carrying out the instructions conveyed in your despatch. Possessing a very slender knowledge of legislation, without legal advice or intelligent assistance of any kind, I approach the subject with diffidence; feeling, however, all the encouragement which the kindly-promised assistance and support of Her Majesty's Government is calculated to inspire.

Under those circumstances, I beg to assure you that every exertion on my part shall be made, to give effect to your said instructions, at as early a period as possible.

I have not had time since the arrival of your despatch, to consider the subjects treated therein as thoroughly as their importance requires; and therefore have not arrived at any definite conclusion, as to the precise plan for carrying your instructions into effect. I will, however, take the liberty of addressing you again on the subject. I observe that the terms of my Commission only empower me "to summon and call general assemblies of the inhabitants owning 20 or more acres of freehold land within the said island," apparently restricting the elective franchise to the holders of 20 acres of land and upwards, to the exclusion of holders of houses and other descriptions of town property, a class more numerous than the former. I am utterly averse to universal suffrage, or making population the basis of representation; but I think it expedient to extend the franchise to all persons holding a fixed property stake, whether houses or lands in the colony; the whole of that class having interests to serve, and a distinct motive for seeking to improve the moral and material condition of the colony.

With those remarks, I would here take the liberty of enquiring, if it is the desire of Her Majesty's Government to restrict the elective franchise to the holders of 20 acres of land or upwards, or to give the representation a more extended basis.

The mail is on the point of leaving, and I am therefore compelled to bring my remarks thus abruptly to a close.

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