

1845, the secretary was constituted the receiver of Crown rents for Crown lands. In 1847, the late Mr. Templeman, who was a colonial clerk in the secretary's office, acted as clerk to the receiver, and payments were frequently made of those rents to him, he giving receipts on behalf of the receiver, who was allowed a commission for collection of five per cent. on the amount of rents received. In the year of 1852 an account of Crown rents was furnished to the Assembly by Mr. Secretary Crowdy, in which it is stated that in the year 1847 "the sum of 286 £ 8 s. 5 d. was received, but not accounted for, by Mr. Templeman in this year." This account appears in the Appendix to the Journals of the Assembly for 1852, page 284; and the evidence of Mr. Secretary Crowdy thereon will be found in page 184. This defalcation was unknown to the Assembly until years after Mr. Templeman was dead. His estate was insolvent, and the colony has been wronged of the amount. But the real defaulter, we may fairly assume, even admitting Templeman appropriated the money to his own use, is not the dead clerk, but the paid living receiver of Crown rents, whose influence and high position have hitherto screened him from justice. He acknowledges no responsibility to the people, and therefore may treat public opinion, or his individual liability, with equal indifference.

See Governor
Hamilton, No. 85,
20 February 1854,
page 37.

For want of proper and detailed returns of the expenditure in the different public departments, the Legislature has been invariably delayed in the discharge of its business; and from this cause, and the obstructive and tardy policy of the Council, the Sessions of the Assembly have been unreasonably and unnecessarily protracted, until members from distant outports have become wearied and obliged to return to their homes before their public business had been done.

Irresponsible commissioners to superintend the erection of public buildings have been appointed by the Executive, under whom very large sums of money have been squandered in the erection of very inferior though expensive buildings. In 1851 the sum of 7,500 £ was voted by the Legislature for the erection of a penitentiary in St. John's, and the commissioners, instead of completing a suitable building for the sum, which was quite sufficient for the purpose, there being less crime committed in Newfoundland than in any other colony under the British Crown, as shown by the public records of the colony, expended about 8,700 £ in paying for the materials and erecting the basement. The Executive then applied to the Assembly for a further sum of 7,000 £ or 8,000 £ to finish the building, which was, of course, refused.

This is the system of rule pursued in your oldest transatlantic colony; the abuses to which we have referred are only mentioned as specimens to illustrate its general working. Can it be expected in all justice, that men of common sense, with a reverence for British institutions inherited from their fathers, and a knowledge of their rights, will tamely submit to the degradation of such a system? Paying all our own civil expenditure, let us have a trial of self-government, and if Newfoundland should form an exception to the other North American colonies in working out its principles, and prove itself unworthy of such a boon, disfranchise it then, and place it under the rule of some fishing admiral or naval commander, as in former days. But let it first have, what it never yet has had since Cabot first discovered it, a fair trial, and we pledge the known virtue, well-tried loyalty and intellect of its inhabitants, that they will prove themselves worthy of the concession, and capable of appreciating the blessings of self-government.

We have, &c.

(signed)

Philip F. Little,
Robert J. Parsons.

His Grace the Duke of Newcastle,
Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State
for the Colonial Department, &c. &c. &c.

(No. 2.)

My Lord Duke,

Tavistock Hotel, London, 20 July 1853.

As delegates from the House of Assembly of Newfoundland to the Imperial authorities, on the subject of its demand for a reform in its system of government, it becomes our duty to state its claim to participate in the great principles of executive responsibility, which form the fundamental basis of the British constitution, and which are therefore claimed by the people of that colony as their inalienable birthright as British subjects. Newfoundland is the oldest colony in North America, under the dominion of our Gracious Sovereign. As early as 1540 its fisheries were considered of immense importance to England. In 1618 there were 200 English ships engaged in them; and in 1626 there were 150 ships thus employed from Devonshire alone, supplying the Spanish and Italian markets with the produce of their voyages. Such was the importance attached to their possession of that valuable island, being the key to British America, standing nearest to England of all her transatlantic possessions, and commanding both the Atlantic on one side, and the Gulf of St. Lawrence on the other; that the Ministers of William 3. did not hesitate to deem the encroachments of the French on its rich and prolific waters, as one justifiable cause of the hostilities which broke out between England and that power in the early part of that monarch's reign. The inhabitants of Newfoundland have had to sustain many a severe conflict with the French for British supremacy, frequently sealing their loyalty with their blood; and the British Navy has been largely supplied with hardy and intrepid seamen nursed upon the coasts of Newfoundland. It is to be for ever regretted that an unwise policy induced the Imperial Government to cede a large portion of the best of the fishing grounds to our old enemies, and thus gave them