

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

TUESDAY, MAY 11th, 1830.

Mr. ROBINSON.

I rise, Sir, pursuant to the notice which I have given, to move for the appointment of a Select Committee, to inquire into the state of the island of Newfoundland. I should not venture at this late hour to obtrude myself on the notice of the House, or to occupy its time with detailed observations on this subject, did I not feel that it is one which well merits the most serious consideration of Parliament. I believe I am justified in saying that there is no one of our colonies, the condition of which is not better known and understood by the House, than the colony which I am now about to bring under its notice. Indeed, though the Members of this House legislate for the island of Newfoundland, they know, comparatively speaking, little or nothing about the condition of that colony. The few Acts of Parliament which are brought forward for the regulation of its affairs are generally prepared in the Colonial Office in this country, and are proposed by some individual connected with the colonial department—they are frequently introduced at a late hour of the night, and pass through their several stages without exciting any observations or discussion. Under such circumstances, I think I have a just right to claim the attention of the House on the present occasion. The people of Newfoundland complain, and I think they have a right to complain, of the line of policy which has been pursued by the Government in this country towards that colony for a long series of years. It is one of the oldest colonies in our possession, and though of that importance which should entitle it to a well-regulated and proper administration of its affairs, they have for a long period been conducted in a manner which was anything but calculated to promote the prosperity of that island.

Newfoundland had been long regarded as a mere fief