

the convenience of their families, and the purposes of the fishery. I would further remark, that such property is in a great degree valuable only so long as it be thus occupied, and that the annual rent of an ordinary house in St. John's would be almost equivalent to the full value of these freeholds, and in many instances much more. Thus it will be seen, that the rent-payers of St. John's are an equally respectable class of persons with those who term themselves freeholders in the smaller settlements; in fact, that these are the same class of persons.

A 10*l.* rent qualification at St. John's would exclude nearly all the labouring portion of the inhabitants, whilst a 5*l.* qualification would exclude but few.

2. If any rent qualification be adopted, I think 4*l.* sterling, or 5*l.* currency, would be the most satisfactory to the public; and it might be argued by those who are in favour of some such qualification, that it would in its tendency aid any other measure which might have for its object the exclusion of lodgers and paupers from the right of voting. It might also be desirable to adopt another and a distinct qualification for freehold property of the value of 5*l.* per annum in the district of St. John's, and 40*s.* per annum in the other electoral districts.

3. I do recommend an increase in the members, and also in the numbers of the electoral districts, for the reasons given in my communications to Lord John Russell, a copy of which I have the honour to send herewith.

4. I have strong doubts whether a property qualification would have the effect of securing a more respectable body of representatives. If the electors themselves be placed in a respectable and independent position, then there is but little danger to be apprehended from the choice they may make of their representatives. But if any property qualification be adopted, I think the sum of 1,000*l.* sterling, free of all incumbrances, would be the lowest amount at which it could be advantageously fixed.

No. 4.

Sir,

St. John's, 4 February 1842.

THE questions which you have proposed to me are involved in so much difficulty (particularly as respect the qualifications of voters) that I am quite at a loss how to reply to them, with satisfaction to myself and utility to the public.

Having been one of those who first advocated a local legislature for Newfoundland, and indeed one of its most strenuous advocates, I am naturally led back to consider the terms on which such a boon was sought from the Parent Government, and I find that the petitioners asked for a legislature similar in all respects to that of Nova Scotia, in 1830, which had been found by experience to have worked well, and which I presume would have been satisfactory to all parties, if similar qualifications had been fixed at the commencement of our local government; but his Majesty's Government decided on making an experiment in Newfoundland widely differing from the constitution petitioned for; and this may have thrown a difficulty in the way of now returning to the model of Nova Scotia, which at the time would have been most acceptable, and would, in my opinion, have prevented in a great measure those heart-burnings and differences which have since distracted this once peaceful community.

I enclose my answers to the questions proposed by his Excellency.

The Hon. James Crowdy, &c. &c. &c.

I am &c.
(signed) * * * *

N. B. "The qualifications for a vote or representation in Nova Scotia are either a yearly income of 40*s.* derived from real estate within the particular county or town for which the election is held, or a title in fee-simple of a dwelling-house and the ground on which it stands, or 100 acres of land, five of which must be under cultivation. It is requisite that the title be registered six months before the test of the writ, unless it be by descent or devise."—*Haliburton's History of Nova Scotia*, vol. ii., page 321.

1. A moderate rent or property qualification would, in my opinion, effect no change in the present constituency, as voters are now required to be male housekeepers, occupying a dwelling-house, as landlord or tenant, for one year, and few dwellings in Newfoundland would be valued at less than 5*l.* per year.

I think a 40*s.* freehold would be the best qualification, and the registration of the title-deeds would prevent disputes at the hustings; most persons resident in the outports possess such property; but as land in this colony generally sells for about 10 or 12 years' purchase, persons possessing but slender means might qualify themselves if they felt so inclined; voters should have some permanent holding in the colony.

Five pound to 10*l.* rent in St. John's, and 40*s.* in the country districts, would not, in my opinion, disfranchise any householder, as every tenant agrees, or would agree, for a rent to that extent.

2. Forty shilling freeholders, as in Nova Scotia; or if it be deemed requisite to extend the franchise to tenants, then 10*l.* rent in St. John's, and 5*l.* in the outports, with two years' residence in the district; this would not tend to disfranchise persons long resident, or who may be presumed to have sufficient local knowledge to form a correct judgment of the qualifications of candidates, but would merely throw out strangers and raw youngsters recently imported from England or Ireland.