

NEWFOUNDLAND.

(Confidential.)

— No. 1. —

EXTRACT of a DESPATCH from Governor Sir *John Harvey*. K. C. B., to Lord *John Russell*, dated Government House, Newfoundland, 6 October 1841.

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Extract Despatch
from Sir J. Harvey
to Lord John Rus-
sell, 6 Oct. 1841.

IN obedience to your Lordship's commands, I proceed to place before you the views and opinions which I have formed upon the actual condition of this colony, from such observations as I have been afforded the opportunities of making, and such information as I have been enabled to acquire since my arrival in the island.

1. The inhabitants of Newfoundland appear to be unfeignedly loyal and firmly attached to British connexion.

No material degree of political excitement appears at present any where to exist, but, on the contrary, an apparent approximation towards a general disposition to bury past occurrences in oblivion. The trade of the colony is flourishing; its revenues ample and increasing; the fisheries of the present year, both of seals and cod-fish, have been highly successful.

2. The apparent suspension of their representative constitution, so recently conferred upon them, upon the ground of their gross abuse of the elective franchise, has evidently created much apprehension in the public mind, and has, I am willing to believe, produced such a moral effect as would exert a salutary influence in repressing any undue violence in future elections, in the event of Her Majesty's Government deciding on authorizing me to convene another Assembly. That there are persons of both intelligence and experience in this community who may entertain doubts on this subject I think very probable; but I cannot allow myself to believe that any intelligent individual in this island would be found favourable to the extinction, or even to the suspension for any lengthened period, of those benefits which a representative constitution can alone confer upon its inhabitants, and this merely because, during the first few years of the experiment, it has not been found to work with that degree of harmony which is so desirable, but which has not always been exhibited in other colonies, after a much longer trial. To some of the causes to which these discordant proceedings may be imputed I may hereafter advert; at present I will merely observe, that all parties are, I hope and believe, convinced that moderation in their measures and proceedings will best accord with their true interests; and all, every individual of every creed, party and denomination who has approached me, and with whom I have held communication, has expressed an anxious desire that its constitution should be restored to the island, with certain modifications.

In submitting to your Lordship, therefore, a proposition that I should be authorized to convene the General Assembly of Newfoundland, I will at the same time suggest the modifications which appear to me to be desirable, if not absolutely indispensable:—

1. That the qualification of the "members" of the Assembly should be so raised as, if possible, to ensure the election of persons above the class of common labourers: the possession of an income of not less than 100*l.* per annum, or of property of any kind of the value of—say 500*l.*, might, perhaps, effect this object.

2. Such a subdivision of the electoral districts, based upon population, as materially to increase the number of members—say to nearly double the present amount.

3. The elections throughout the island to be simultaneous.

With regard to the qualification of "voters," which is at present conferred by a mere residence in the island for one year, although it certainly may be regarded