

numbering nearly 700,000 inhabitants, who elect their own Governor for his local and general knowledge and his identity with the country and its present and future welfare, only paid him about 625*l.* a year. We were satisfied to pay our public servants according to their merits and their positions, but no more. Reference was also made to a permanent Revenue Bill by him. If the representation were increased, he asked, could qualified persons be found in the outports to represent them? We replied that if the electors of the outport districts conceived that persons from their own localities would best promote their interests and represent their opinions, they could have no difficulty in finding such persons among themselves. In many of them such was the case at present, while in some instances they have chosen persons residing in the capital as their representatives.

We then referred to free trade, and showed the views of the Assembly upon that and other important questions under discussion. He said that the Government were in possession of the views of the Assembly, and that Newfoundland should necessarily be included in any arrangements which should be effected with the United States on this subject, as the resolutions of the Assembly must be regarded as reflecting the opinions of the people of the colony.

A variety of other subjects were brought under his notice, and fully discussed. In closing the interview, the delegates expressed their gratification at the opportunity thus afforded them of placing the views of the Assembly before the Government; as it had heretofore been the practice of the local authorities not only to misrepresent the people, but the Assembly, and they attempted last Session to force the Assembly into a premature exercise of its powers of resistance and the adoption of extreme measures, before they were enabled to place their opinions fairly before the home Government; but if any unforeseen circumstances should unfortunately arise hereafter to oblige the popular branch to adopt any such course as the Assembly of Jamaica had successfully adopted in vindication of their rights—a course, however, which they did not anticipate there would be any necessity to follow,—they would then rest satisfied to abide the consequences, having done all in their power to avert such a result, and that the Imperial Government would judge of their motives and their conduct from the representations of the delegates, and not through the contorted medium of any local authority inimical to colonial freedom. In plain terms, and to speak frankly, that they were pledged to impose no more taxes on the people unless they were granted the management of their own internal affairs. Reposing the fullest confidence in the present Ministry, we expressed our hope that as “all reason and experience prove that those rulers give twice who give quickly,” a speedy concession of rights too long withheld, may justify our high opinion of their intentions.

The interview then terminated by his assuring us that the Government had no interest in one system more than another—(except, remarked the delegates, in lightening the work of the Colonial Office, by throwing the duties of government, in a large degree, upon the shoulders of a responsible Council)—that the subject of self-government should have the earnest attention of the Cabinet during the recess, and thanking us for the important information we had communicated to him.

Having maturely weighed the suggestions made by the Under Secretary of State on the matters submitted for his consideration by us, we deemed them so important as to require a more formal and decided expression of our opinion than we had time or opportunity to give at the interview, and we accordingly addressed a letter to him, of which the following is a copy:

Sir,

Tavistock Hotel, London, 10 August 1853.

WE have the honour to tender our sincere thanks to you for the very satisfactory interview with which you were pleased to favour us on yesterday, relative to the affairs of Newfoundland.

With reference to the question of any alteration in the representation of that colony, we beg to repeat the deliberate opinion of the Assembly, that judging from the past, no change would be agreed to by the Council on this subject, that would be generally acceptable to the public, and consequently, that a reform in the system of government must take place before the consent of the co-ordinate branches of the Legislature can be had to a fair measure for increasing the number of representatives. The evils of which the colonists complain originate not in the Representative, but in the Executive department of the government, and the Assembly do not conceive that they would be justified in assenting to an alteration, or mutilation rather, such as the Council desire, which would not improve the latter; and having taken time to consider your novel suggestions, which was cursorily touched by you, and not maturely weighed or discussed by us at the interview, as to allowing each elector as many votes as there might be Members to be returned, with the option of giving all his votes to a single candidate, or to divide them among different ones at his pleasure; we take leave to remark, that however well such a system may be adapted, as an experiment, to the election of a Legislative Council at the Cape of Good Hope, the whole of which forms but one electoral district, we are positive it would not by any means answer or be acceptable for the election of a general assembly in any colony of British North America, subdivided into nine electoral districts as Newfoundland is, and accustomed to the old British practice of voting common to all the British American provinces. With these divisions of districts, the change suggested would virtually contract the basis of the representation, and give to the smaller number of voters, as much real power, if not more, than to the larger number, while the territorial divisions remain untouched; thus in a district of 4,050 voters, 2,500 of whom vote for six candidates, and the remaining 1,550 for three opposing candidates, the latter three would be elected by an apparent majority of 600 votes, while