

That your petitioners are entirely of opinion, that until the more populous electoral districts be subdivided, with an increase of Members, so that the representation may be fairly apportioned amongst all classes, such concession would be dangerous to the civil and religious liberties of your petitioners, and prejudicial to the best interests of the colony; inasmuch as by means of the unfair scale of representation on which Members of the Assembly are now elected, our Roman-catholic fellow subjects, although a minority of the population, return a majority of the House; and the practical operation of responsible government would be, to vest in the Roman-catholic clergy, by whose influence such majority are elected, the whole Legislative and Executive powers of the local government.

Petitioners therefore humbly pray, that until the electoral districts be subdivided, and the representation fairly apportioned amongst all classes, responsible government may not be established in this colony.

And, as in duty bound, petitioners will ever pray.

Newfoundland,

March 12, 1854.

— No. 7. —

(No. 56.)

No. 7.

Copy of a DESPATCH from the Duke of Newcastle to Governor Hamilton.

Sir,

Downing-street, 20 April 1854.

I HAVE to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch, No. 89,* of the 23d of March last, enclosing a petition to the Queen from the Protestant residents of the district of St. John, praying that until the electoral districts be subdivided, and the representation fairly apportioned among all classes, responsible government may not be established in Newfoundland.

I have to request that you will acquaint the petitioners that I have received and laid their petition before Her Majesty.

I have, &c.

(signed) Newcastle.

Duke of Newcastle
to Governor
Hamilton,
20 April 1854.
* Page 38.

— No. 8. —

(No. 90.)

No. 8.

Copy of a DESPATCH from Governor Hamilton to the Duke of Newcastle.

Government House, St. John's, Newfoundland,

23 March 1854.

My Lord Duke,

(Received, 10 April 1854.)

I HAVE the honour to enclose a copy of my message transmitting to the House of Assembly your Grace's despatch, No. 49, of the 21st ultimo, on the subject of the new system of government.

I have, &c.

(signed) Ker B. Hamilton.

Enclosure in No. 8.

THE Governor having forwarded to the Secretary of State for the Colonies the Address from your honourable House to his Grace of the 15th June last, upon the subjects of responsible government, and reciprocal free-trade with the United States of America, has, this day, received from his Grace a despatch in reply, of which the Governor herewith transmits a copy.

With reference to the proposed new form of Government for this colony, the Governor will be happy to co-operate with your honourable House in fulfilling those pre-requisites, some of which his Grace considers essential to justice, and others highly important to the satisfactory working of the new system of government. The Governor hopes that the result of the deliberations of the Legislature, with a view to the introduction of the new system, and the operation of the system itself, will conduce to the welfare of this ancient dependency of the Crown.

22 March 1854.

Encl in. No. 8.