

I had previously received your Lordship's despatch of the 28th February, 1848, in which you drew my attention to the same subject, but I delayed replying to that despatch until the introduction of representative institutions came to be considered, the two questions being intimately connected together, as the boundary-line proposed in your Lordship's despatch of 28th February, 1848, would throw into the Province of New Ulster a large number of Natives and some very troublesome Native chiefs who are at present excluded from that province.

I beg to refer your Lordship to my Despatch No. 107, of 6th December, 1848, in which, in accordance with your Lordship's suggestions, I proposed the division of New Zealand into four provinces which appear calculated to meet the requirements of the new settlements about to be formed. And I have further the honour to report that, provided the introduction of representative institutions is likely to be for some time longer delayed, I can see no objection to the adoption of the boundary-line between the Provinces of New Munster and New Ulster which is proposed in your Lordship's despatch of the 28th February, 1848.

The Right Hon. Earl Grey.

I have, &c.,

G. GREY.

No. 17.

COPY of a DESPATCH from Governor GREY to the Right Hon. Earl GREY.

(No. 23.)

MY LORD,—

Government House, Auckland, 15th March, 1849.

In my Despatch No. 106, of the 29th November last, in explaining the reasons which had induced me to recommend the adoption of the rate of franchise which I named in that despatch, I am afraid that I did not enter in sufficient detail into the state of society in these colonies; and as this is a point with which it is essential your Lordship should be well acquainted, I have thought it better to make the following additional remarks upon this subject:—

We have not in these colonies any class of society which at all corresponds with the poorer classes in England. Generally speaking every well-conducted family, however humble their circumstances may originally have been, acquire here in a few years a property of their own. I think also, as a general rule, that those persons of the humbler classes who emigrate from England may be regarded as being amongst the most enterprising and intelligent of the class to which they belong, who, feeling a capacity to raise themselves if a wider field were opened to them, determine to try their fortune in a new country, and have courage enough to carry out this idea. The acquisition of a property of their own in a new country is only accomplished by such persons after considerable exertions on their part, and by great self-denial, in a country where temptations to irregularity are so strong, and where, from their being separated from their former neighbours and their relatives, there are perhaps greater facilities for carelessness and irregularity than there would be in England.

Persons, therefore, of the humbler class who acquire property in these colonies are generally people of enterprise and intelligence, who have been in their youth made acquainted with want and privation, and who, to escape from this, have had sufficient courage to venture on an undertaking of considerable difficulty, and have then, with much toil and self-denial, succeeded in gaining a competency for themselves and their children. So soon also as they have succeeded in acquiring a landed property their minds are exercised upon an entirely new class of subjects. They have to become acquainted with the nature and form of title-deeds, to make settlements upon their wives and children, to consider the nature and effect of various laws which relate to their own interests, such as fencing Acts, impounding laws, laws relating to local assessments, &c., and they are brought into much more frequent relation with the civil Courts of the country and with the forms and manner of proceeding in these Courts than they could possibly have been in England.

From the almost total absence of an aristocracy, or of a class of old landed gentry, the small landed proprietors and artisans (who soon also become landed proprietors) are required to take upon themselves the almost entire management and control of the affairs of the church to which they may belong; and as there is no established church in these colonies, a great degree of activity and of interest in the affairs of their own church is found to exist amongst the inhabitants generally. The same circumstance secures them the advantage of very frequent intercourse with their own ministers, and has the effect of rendering them a very orderly and religious people. It should also be borne in mind that none of the small landed proprietors of the class which I am describing have any intention of quitting the country of their adoption, but, on the contrary, with a proper pride, desire to leave to their children the inheritance which they have gained for them; and they are generally desirous, by the propriety of their conduct and by the education they afford their children, to remove any disadvantages which the humbleness of their origin might produce for them. These circumstances have led me to regard individuals of the class I am alluding to as in every way well fitted to be trusted with the elective franchise; and I fear that any rate of franchise which is fixed so high as to exclude individuals of this class, and to take in principally the wealthy storekeepers in the towns, would entirely defeat the objects which would probably be in the contemplation of those who proposed such a measure. The storekeepers and merchants in the seaport towns have frequently little or no vested interest in the colony wherein they may temporarily reside; and as we have no old established mercantile houses such as exist in Europe, I think it would not be politic to deprive the *bonâ fide* country settlers of the right of franchise, and to vest too great a share of legislative power in the inhabitants of towns. The foregoing considerations are those which have chiefly led me to recommend the rate of franchise which I have named in my Despatch No. 106, of the 29th November last, and it was partly from these considerations that I was induced so strongly to press upon your Lordship the advantages that would result from a system of direct election in lieu of an indirect election by means of municipal corporations. In as far as my experience in these colonies enables me to judge, I feel confident that a rate of franchise such as I have named in my Despatch No. 106, of 29th November last, must ultimately be adopted in them, and