

AUSTRALIAN JOINT COPYING PROJECT

PATRICK MORRIS

Printed documents, 1823-38

Reel M598

**Foreign and Commonwealth Office Library
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20 Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT**

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Filmed: 1965

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Patrick Morris (c. 1789-1849) was born in Waterford, Ireland. In about 1804 he emigrated to St John's, Newfoundland, where he worked as a clerk for a Waterford merchant. By about 1810 he had become an independent merchant, trading in foodstuffs, fish, oil and timber. He gradually purchased a number of ships and became an important figure in the transatlantic trade. His ships also brought Irish migrants to Newfoundland and later to Quebec.

In the 1820s Morris became involved in the reform movement in Newfoundland that called for institutions more suitable to a permanent community rather than a transient fishing society. His pamphlet *Observations on the present state of Newfoundland* (1823), was published in London and in the following year Morris visited London and met Colonial Office officials. The reformers achieved a degree of success when the British Parliament passed the 1824 Judicature Act. In 1826 Morris moved to Waterford and he did not return permanently to St John's until 1833. In his pamphlet *Arguments to prove the policy and necessity of granting to Newfoundland a constitutional government* (1828) he argued the case for a local assembly. He referred to discussions about constitutional changes in New South Wales and the idea of a legislative council appointed or recommended by the governor. He claimed that such a body would make the people of any colony discontented. Newfoundland achieved representative government in 1832

On his return to Newfoundland, Morris was one of the leaders of the Catholic party. In 1837 he was elected to the Assembly where he chaired committees on the state of fishing, farming and the administration of justice. He reluctantly withdrew from the Assembly when he was appointed Colonial Treasurer and a member of the Council in 1840. He held this position until his death. Members of his family continued to be conspicuous in Newfoundland politics and commerce for the rest of the century.

Note: The Foreign and Commonwealth Library was dissolved in 2008 and its collections were dispersed among a number of academic institutions in London.

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1. [P. Morris] *Observations on the present state of Newfoundland in reference to the courts of justice, local government and trade: in a letter to the Right Honourable Henry Earl Bathurst, by an inhabitant of the colony.* London, A. Hancock, 1823. (76pp)
2. P. Morris. *Arguments to prove the policy and necessity of granting to Newfoundland a constitutional government, in a letter to the Right Honourable W. Huskisson.* London, Hunt and Clarke, 1828. (109pp)
3. *Report of the select committee appointed to enquire into the present state of the agriculture of the colony* (chairman: P. Morris). Parliamentary paper, c. 1838. (2pp)