

The subject of weights and measures has engaged the attention of the Council, but no definite action thereon has yet been had. Your Council would, however, urge on their successors, and on the Government, the great convenience and benefit which would result to the Trade of this Province by the adoption of the decimal system, as well in the currency as in weights and measures.

A large number of the leading Firms in this City having pointed out the necessity of some amendment in the law in reference to the more speedy collection of debts, and the prevention of fraud in mercantile transactions, measures have been taken to obtain the desired change, which the Council hope will result satisfactorily.

The geographical advantages offered by the proximity of the Labrador Coast to England, and the comparative ease with which a telegraphic wire can be extended from Quebec to Forteau Bay, in the Straits of Belle Isle, having been brought before the attention of the Council by the President of the Board, a Memorial was presented to the three branches of the Legislature, praying that assistance be given by Government to any Telegraph Company who would construct and keep in operation such a line. The Council believe that by the extension of the proposed wire to Forteau Bay, the transmission of intelligence between England and this Continent, by means of the Canadian Ocean Steamers, would be shortened about sixty hours during the period of navigation, while the extension of a wire across the Straits to St. Johns, Newfoundland, would in both summer and winter secure an uninterrupted communication. Nor do your Council see any insurmountable difficulty in connecting the line at Forteau Bay, with Greenland, Iceland, the Faroe, Shetland and Orkney Islands, by a sub-marine wire, and by this means secure the long desired electric communication between Europe and America.

Representations having been made to the Council by the Board of Brokers, relative to the system now pursued in this City in the Inspection of Flour and Meal, measures are being taken to obtain a change in the law, by which the Canadian standard of quality will be no longer regulated and governed by that of New York.

The Council having thus adverted to the principal subjects which have engaged their attention during the past year, would now bring before the notice of the Board the present unsatisfactory state of the Trade of the Lower section of the Province and particularly of this City. While the trade between the United States' Atlantic ports with the Western States and with Canada West is rapidly increasing, the trade of Quebec and Montreal with the interior is not progressing, as the following table shews:—

EXPORTS.			
	Port of Quebec.	Port of Montreal.	Total.
1845.....	£2,056,851	£720,797	£2,777,648
1850.....	1,270,373	420,736	1,673,059
1855.....	1,558,702	333,609	1,892,311
IMPORTS.			
	Port of Quebec.	Port of Montreal.	Total.
1845.....	£712,398	£2,620,252	£3,332,650
1850.....	686,441	1,793,695	2,486,137
1855.....	745,531	3,062,802	3,808,033
<i>Total Exports and Imports at the Ports of Quebec and Montreal.</i>			
	1845.....	£6,110,298	
	1850.....	4,159,196	
	1855.....	5,700,344	

These figures conclusively show the almost stationary character of the Commerce of Quebec and Montreal for the last 10 years, while the value of the Imports and Exports for the whole Province, in the 10 years ending in 1854, has increased from £4,240,117 to £15,448,658.

Your Council believe that this state of things is alarming in the extreme to the people of Lower Canada, and ought to rouse the attention of the Government of the country to its cause and remedy. Whatever may have been the cause or causes which have led to this state of things,—whether, by the sudden engraving of the system of free trade, on one previously protective in its character, it is now but of little practical use to investigate. Your Council believe that the time has passed away when the people of Western Canada can be asked to pay higher duties on goods coming from sea via the St. Lawrence, than on the same goods procured elsewhere. But they cannot help thinking that it is of the greatest importance, and ought to be a matter of the deepest interest, and calling for the earnest effort of every Canadian, whether in the eastern or western section of the Province, to secure, if possible, the Trade and Commerce of the country through its own channels, instead of through a foreign country, and by the agency of foreign merchants. That this is not the case at present will be seen by the following table:—

1854.—Exports to British West Indies.....	£2,248
Imports from “ “.....	668
Total Exports to all Foreign Countries, (except the United States,).....	46,332
Total Imports from all Foreign Countries, (except the United States,).....	338,777
Total Imports from and Exports to the British West Indies, and all Foreign Countries, (except the United States,).....	£388,025
Imports from the United States.....	£3,883,274
Exports to “ “.....	2,604,720

Imports from and Exports to United States in 1854..... £6,487,994

Of this amount £2,625,000 consisted of the domestic produce and manufactures of the United States, leaving our foreign commerce coming through that country equal to about £4,000,000, against £388,025, the amount of our direct commerce with the British West Indies and all other foreign countries. The Council view with interest the means that have been taken to bring about a Reciprocal Free Trade between this country and the British West Indies, and they would urge on their successors the necessity of keeping the subject before the notice of Government, believing, as they do, that the results would be mutually advantageous.

Although the Council of the Board of Trade have for years past pointed out the probability of the present state of the Trade of the country, no notice has yet been taken of the great measures which the Council deem essential to remedy the existing evils, and the Council regret to say that the efforts of the mercantile classes in Lower Canada, to draw trade through the St. Lawrence, have not met with that consideration from Government, nor from the people of Western Canada, which the importance of the subject demanded. The Council believe that in consequence of the enormous investments in Public Works, for which the people in both sections of the Province are heavily taxed to pay the annual interest, and which at present give no revenue, every one is interested in making these works, if possible, the channels of trade from sea to the interior. If this result can be secured, and not only an increased revenue obtained, but transport and charges on Imports and Exports to and from the interior reduced, then it is evident that the people of Western Canada, who are the most numerous, and who, no doubt, contribute a larger amount of the duties than the people of Lower Canada, are deeply interested in every work, even if such work is constructed in Lower Canada, while it has for its object the cheapening of freight and charges on transport. Every light-house in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence, every harbour of refuge for the sea vessel, has a direct tendency to lessen the cost of Insurance, and to facilitate and cheapen the cost of transport. The improvement of lake and river navigation, either by adapting the navigation to larger vessels, or by lessening the dangers, are all matters in which the people of both sections have an equal and common interest; and the Council beg to express the opinion that the political union of the eastern and