

CANADA.

Encl. in No. 4.

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TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

The Petition of the Quebec Board of Trade.

HUMBLY SHOWETH,

THAT a chain of ship canals, connecting the navigable waters of the river St. Lawrence and the great lakes of Canada, is now completed, whereby the produce of the most fertile parts of this province and of the western states of the American Union may be transported to the ocean cheaper than by any other route.

That these canals have been constructed at an immense expenditure of capital, raised under the liberal guarantee of the Imperial Government, and in connection with similar improvements in the United States, open up an uninterrupted inland navigation from Quebec to New Orleans (a distance of more than four thousand miles), with ramifications extending far into all the intervening territory.

That, in the opinion of Your Majesty's petitioners, all that is now wanting to render the St. Lawrence the outlet, and Quebec the depôt, of a large portion of the vast and varied productions of the fertile regions rendered accessible by this unequalled internal navigation, is, to throw it open, without restriction, to the ships and vessels of all nations, allowing them, during the pleasure of Your Majesty, freely to carry to the ports of this province the produce of any other country, and to take thence cargoes, as well to the United Kingdom and its possessions as to any other part of the world, which, it is greatly to be feared, nay, almost certain, that unless changes such as these be speedily made in the laws which regulate the navigation of the province within and without, the large expenditure above referred to will be nearly useless, and the people burdened with a heavy and unproductive debt to little or no purpose, with the additional mortification of seeing escape them, and diverted into other channels, those advantages and means of lasting prosperity which nature and art have combined to place fairly within their reach.

That Your Majesty's petitioners firmly believe that the merchants, shipowners, and shipbuilders of Canada have no cause to fear the competition of foreigners, on fair and equal terms, in either external or internal navigation. In the former they already successfully compete with their neighbours even in their own ports; and, in the latter, Your Majesty's petitioners feel persuaded that such competition would lead to still more favourable results, drawing forth the latent energies of these classes, and causing to be developed, and more fully applied than now, the natural resources of the country, which, in the facilities they afford for ship-building and inland navigation, are nowhere surpassed.

Wherefore Your Majesty's petitioners humbly pray that Your Majesty, taking the premises into Your Royal consideration, may be graciously pleased to recommend to Parliament to remove all restrictions that now exist to the free navigation of the river St. Lawrence, with the canals and lakes connected therewith, or which prevent the free carriage of goods by sea to and from the United Kingdom and its possessions abroad, so far as this colony is concerned, subject to such control by Your Majesty in Council as may be necessary.

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

The Quebec Board of Trade,

(Signed) By JAMES DEAN, President, duly authorised.

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No. 5.

COPY of a DESPATCH from Earl GREY to Governor-General the Right Hon. the Earl of ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

MY LORD,

Downing-street, July 7, 1848.

I HAVE to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's Despatch, No. 77, of the 13th June, transmitting a petition to the Queen from the Board of Trade at Quebec, praying Her Majesty to recommend to Parliament the removal of all restrictions to the free navigation of the River St. Lawrence, and the free carriage of goods by sea to and from the United Kingdom and its possessions abroad, so far as Canada is concerned; and I have to direct your Lordship to inform the petitioners that their petition having been duly laid before the Queen, Her Majesty was pleased to receive it very graciously.

I have, &c.,

The Earl of Elgin and Kincardine,
&c. &c. &c.

(Signed) GREY.