

To His Excellency Earl Dufferin, Governor General of the Dominion of Canada, in Council :

The Petition of the Dominion Board of Trade, humbly sheweth :—

That the tonnage owned and registered in the Dominion of Canada, in proportion to her population, exceeds that of any other country in the world :

That Canada now ranks *fourth*, if not *third*, as regards gross amount of tonnage, and that the building of vessels as well in the vicinity of our great inland waters as in Quebec and the Maritime Provinces, is one of the prominent and most profitable of the industries of this country :

That prior to the Confederation of the Provinces in 1867, our large sized vessels were, as a rule, built under contract for parties in England and elsewhere, and that when they once passed out of the builders' hands, our interest in them ceased :

That the practice of building vessels for sale has been almost wholly abandoned, and that now ship builders, being joined by Canadian capitalists, build their vessels, whether for inland, coastwise, or deep-sea voyages, and own them and reap the advantage or loss in the business, as the case may be ; our ships are now found on every sea in the commercial world—carrying valuable East India and other cargoes, delivering the same in the best of order, and in a condition as satisfactory as by first class iron freight vessels :

That the Bill introduced some time ago by Mr. Plimsoll in reference to shipping—and more recently the appointment by Her Majesty's Government of a Royal Commission to enquire and report upon the matter—has caused the marked attention of people of all maritime countries to be given to questions concerning the character, condition and loading of ships ; and the feeling in the United Kingdom is so widespread that Parliament will in all probability legislate in the matter :

That the people and Parliament of England, however desirous of doing ample justice to Her loyal subjects in the Dominion, cannot be supposed to know thoroughly how much one of the great departments of Canadian industries may be injured by attempting to legislate for us in this matter :

That the people and Parliament of Canada will join heartily with our mother country in doing all that humanity demands for the preservation of life at sea, or that a judicious precaution requires ; as instanced when at the last Session of Parliament "An Act was passed limiting deck loads to a reasonable quantity," and also another intitled "An act relating to Shipping, and for the Registration, Inspection and Classification thereof;" but they strongly object that so noble a purpose may, from want of a knowledge of the true position which our shipping now occupies, be made a plea for detrimental interference with our ships which contribute so largely to our importance and our wealth :

Your memorialists therefore humbly pray, that Your Excellency in Council may, in view of the fact that legislation will be proposed in the Parliament of Great Britain, consequent upon the report of the Royal Commission recently held in London, adopt such measures as the Government, in its wisdom, may deem necessary to prevent such legislation from prejudicially affecting the tonnage of the Dominion of Canada.

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

*The Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Governor General.*

(54.)

DOWNING STREET, April 23rd, 1874.

MY LORD,—I have the honor to transmit to you a copy of a letter from the Board of Trade, and I have to request that you will enable me to answer the enquiry which it contains.