

CANADA.

The like evil is severely felt in the import trade of the province, and is exemplified in the article of muscovado sugar, of which our supplies are now principally derived from the Spanish islands. The Navigation Laws, on which we now animadvert, prevent our importing foreign commodities in any but British ships or ships of the country where the goods are produced. Now Spain has little shipping, and none suitable for the trade with America, and there are no British vessels to be met with in the Spanish islands. The importer of a cargo of sugar to this province is thus compelled to charter a British vessel from some distant port to proceed in ballast to convey the cargo, for which he pays a freight of, say, 4s. per cwt., or fully 25 per cent. on the prime cost of the article, whilst there are fleets of American vessels on the spot, which would convey it at one half that rate. Can he, then, drawing his supplies of sugar in this circuitous and expensive method, compete in the western market with the merchant of the United States? Obviously he cannot; nor need it be matter of surprise that the trade, which under a free system would flow through the St. Lawrence, is thus diverted to other channels.

The article of sugar is a pregnant illustration of the injurious effects of the Navigation Laws on our import trade; but the remarks applicable to it apply also, to a certain extent, to every other article of foreign production. Why is there a discrimination of 25 per cent. on the sterling duty on foreign goods, between such goods when imported from the bonded warehouses in Britain and when direct from a foreign country? Is not such a discrimination in favour of the former, *pro tanto*, a bounty to New York in opposition to Quebec or Montreal? and can we be surprised that under this insane and suicidal policy, the commercial connexion of Canada West with New York is extending year by year; and with our cities is proportionably diminishing.

This Association, it will be observed, in making the present Report on the commerce of the country, has refrained from touching on any of those topics which lie immediately within the scope of the provincial authorities. These open a wide and important field of investigation, and must form the subject of a future Report. The present relating to subjects imperial in their character, and on which the action of the British Government may with propriety be sought, it is deemed advisable to lay before Her Majesty's Ministry, with the least possible delay, under the conviction that they will take such proceedings upon it as the urgent circumstances of the case render expedient.

Wherefore, your petitioners respectfully urge, that Her Majesty's Government will be pleased to take the facts contained in this their memorial into their serious consideration, and apply such remedy as to them in their wisdom may seem fit, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

On behalf of the Free Trade Association,
(Signed) JOHN YOUNG, Chairman.

Montreal, 17th July 1846.

No. 3.

(No. 101.)

COPY of a DESPATCH from Governor the Earl CATHCART, K.C.B. to
Mr. Secretary GLADSTONE.

Sir,

Government House, Montreal, 27th July 1846.

I HAVE the honour herewith to transmit a petition to Her Majesty from the Board of Trade of the town of Hamilton, praying that Canadian produce forwarded through the United States may be admitted into the ports of the United Kingdom on the same terms as if shipped from Canadian ports.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CATHCART.

No. 3.
Governor
Earl Cathcart
to
Mr. Secretary
Gladstone.
27th July 1846.

Enclosure in No. 3.

Encl. in No. 3.

TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

The Petition of the Board of Trade of the Town of Hamilton.

Humbly sheweth,

That the proposed changes in the commercial policy of Great Britain are such as to cause serious apprehensions in the minds of your petitioners, that the value of grain, one of the great staple productions of this colony, will be depreciated to such an extent as to prevent our farmers from being able to compete successfully with the corn-growing countries

(70.)

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