

LORD ELGIN AND THE FREE-TRADE ASSOCIATION.

We think it advisable to seize the present moment to lay the principles and views of the Association of which we are the humble organ before His Excellency the Governor General. In doing so we must necessarily go over ground which we have already trodden in company with our readers; but the greatness of our cause—the importance of the changes which we advocate—their essentialness to the well being of Canada,—and, last but not least, the imperative necessity for their being carried out promptly in order to be beneficial to the present generation,—all these considerations demand that we should place them briefly and clearly before the nobleman who has just assumed the arduous office of Governor of this unruly and, of late, ill governed colony. And we proceed to our task with the more pleasure and the more confidence, because, judging His Excellency by the replies he has made to the citizens of Montreal and to the Montreal Board of Trade, both of which we publish in this day's impression, we feel confident that if our humble labors are brought under his notice he will not only take the trouble to read them (which is more we believe than any of his present cabinet have done,) but he will also comprehend our views, and appreciate the endeavors which we are making to promote the interests of our country,—our efforts proceeding, we may remark, from zeal alone, and in utter contempt of any reward that can ever be offered to us, save the consciousness of deserving the gratitude of our fellow colonists from striving to urge on the progress of a great commercial reform!

What, we may ask, will Canada be in a few years without this reform—and what will she be with it? In the former case she will be a stunted province—her commerce stationary or falling off—her agriculturists dispirited and inclined to emigrate to the United States where better prices will prevail—her merchants disgusted and looking with a longing eye upon the activity and wealth of their more fortunate contemporaries settled in the Atlantic cities of the American Union, in proof of which we may mention a fact which has just come to our knowledge, that no less than four of our enterprising young merchants have this week left for New York, where they intend to pass the winter, in order to avail themselves of the active traffic now going on there in provisions and bread stuffs, with reference to the European markets. In short, to close this gloomy but not exaggerated picture, every class of people in this colony in the case supposed will be discontented and irritated with envy at their neighbors' superior prosperity and happiness.

But what will be the other side of the picture,—what shall we be if we obtain promptly the commercial reforms sought for by our Association, and which may be briefly enumerated, viz. :—

1. The abolition of the Differential Duties.
2. The adoption of a moderate uniform Revenue Tariff, admitting every species of agricultural produce—and raw materials for manufacturing industry—free of duty.
3. Such a modification of the Navigation Laws as will leave us free to employ, at our option, the cheapest vessels that can be procured whether they be British, American, French, or belonging to any other foreign power.

And lastly, the Free Navigation of the St. Lawrence, so that vessels of every flag may be invited to come and trade with us, and compete for the carrying trade of the unbounded West.

What, we ask again, will Canada be in a few years if these reforms are promptly granted? What will this capital of British North America be under such reforms, with constant access to the sea by means of the *Portland Railway* and the contemplated *Fridge* across the St. Lawrence?

Can any man hesitate about giving an answer? Can any man hesitate to say that Canada will be prosperous beyond any State in the American Union?—nay, beyond any State on the American continent?—and that this city in particular, with rapidly increasing population and trade, will be one of the most prosperous in the British dominions?

In the present article we can, of course, only point to these considerations briefly and in general terms, and must content ourselves with simply indicating to His Excellency the Governor General, the general principles of the policy advocated by our Association—the mere outline of the plan to be pursued—in the earnest hope and confidence that he will honor our journal with his attention, not as a mere newspaper (which it is not), but as a paper emanating from a body of merchants deeply interested in the trade of this Province, and animated with a zealous desire to promote that trade and develop the great resources of the Province—whether agricultural, lumbering, mining, or manufacturing—to the highest degree that human energy and judgment, aided by judicious legislation, can accomplish such high designs.

In future numbers we shall go minutely into the subjects which we have now adverted to, trusting—for we have great faith in Lord Elgin's talents and determination—that our zealous but gratuitous

endeavors will be duly noticed, and will carry the full weight which they may be found entitled to; and, to conclude for the present, in the language of His Excellency himself, we shall then be content with the only reward we look for,—“the consciousness that we have contributed to the happiness and well-being of our fellow-men!”

FREE TRADE AND THE PORTLAND RAILWAY.

Who that observes what is passing in the mercantile world at the present moment can fail to be convinced of the surpassing importance of the Portland Railway, not only to the interests of this rapidly increasing capital, but also to the prosperity of the whole Province?

Generally speaking, flour is 2s. to 3s. a barrel higher in this market than it is in New York, and wheat in proportion, but what is the state of that market in relation to this now? Flour is 35s. cash there, per barrel, and wheat 7s. to 7s. 6d. per 60 lbs., while in our market they are only worth 32s. 6d. and about 6s. 8d. respectively, payable not in cash, but by bill falling due in May next, when the articles can be shipped. By these facts, it is evident, that the Canadian agriculturist sacrifices 2s. 6d. a barrel on his flour, and 6d. to 9d. a bushel on his wheat, because he is deprived, at the present season, of access to the sea! Now, there being about 80,000 barrels of flour and 100,000 bushels of wheat in warehouse in this city at this moment, it follows, that the direct and palpable loss to the country, without taking interest and various other charges into the calculation, is at least £12,500 currency. But this amount is a trifle in comparison with the actual loss which the country suffers from want of the Portland Railway, because a much larger quantity might be got down to this market in the fall of the year, were there any object to be gained by hurrying it forward as there would be if we had access to the sea throughout the winter. We hesitate not to affirm that were that railway now in operation, the people of this Province would make a profit of fully £50,000 on wheat and flour alone by shipping them at the present moment, which they will never realize for want of that communication, because when the St. Lawrence opens there will, in all probability, be a very material reaction in the English market. And why? Because by that time the Baltic will be open where there is an immense accumulation of grain of all kinds, and all the internal channels of the United States will likewise be open, whereby grain enough will be brought to the seaboard to feed the millions of the United Kingdom as well as France, till all-bountiful Nature provides for their wants by another harvest.

O! Canadians, both of the east and west, and of every class, race and creed, were you not as blind as bats to your own interests, you would not allow that great high road to the sea, the Portland Railway, to languish as it does at the present moment, for the want of your timely support. Did you know your true interests, you would strain every nerve to hasten its completion. Instead of allowing the directors to appeal to you by every inducement they can hold out, to get you to pay your instalments with decent promptitude upon the moiety of the stock which you have, up to this time, subscribed for, you would on the contrary hurry to their bankers with your money, and move heaven and earth to get the remainder of the stock taken up.

Our soul sickens within us with disgust when we think of the apathy shown by our wealthy citizens towards this undertaking, than which we defy any individual in the Province to point out a more important for its general benefit and welfare. It is not Montreal alone whose prosperity is involved in it,—every town, city, and district in the Western section of the Province is, in our belief, equally interested. Canadians, of every origin and class, will nothing move your apathy—can you not be aroused to do a public spirited thing for the good of your country? Are you still unconvinced of the benefits this road will confer upon you? Have the thousand proofs already adduced been thrown away upon you? What then will tell upon your lethargic understandings? Will the fact already stated to you have any influence, viz. :—that flour is now worth 2s. 6d. a barrel more in New York than it is here,—notwithstanding the extra duty such flour has to pay in England,—simply because you have no access to the sea, while the Portland Railway would give you that access at all times and seasons, at small expense and in less than 20 hours time.

If such considerations as these do not arouse you to exert yourselves to get this work completed, then will you richly deserve what must inevitably befall you—the contempt of your enterprising neighbors across the line 45, and of every public spirited man in your own community!

Arouse ye, then—arouse ye—and let this essential work be hurried forward to completion, for the whole Province has a deep interest in it.