

carry on an Inland Trade with the United States, through the means of Bridges which connect the State of Maine with the Province of New Brunswick immediately above St. Stephen, and that under these circumstances, we were not prepared to recommend that the privileges of a Free Port should be conferred upon that Town, much less that it should be constituted a Free Warehousing Port, for the purposes mentioned in the Act of the 3d and 4th Wm. 4th, chap. 59.

(Signed)

C. STEWART.  
W. CURT.  
H. RICHMOND.  
R. DAWSON.

(Copy)

No. 4.

[No. 66.]

*Fredericton, N. B., 12th August, 1844.*

MY LORD,—I have the honor to enclose a Petition to the Queen from a respectable body of the inhabitants of St. Stephen, representing the decline of the Trade of that Port owing to the reduction of the Duties on American Timber in the British West Indies, and praying that a Duty of 5s. a ton may be there imposed on it.

I am not aware of the rates of Duties at present imposed in the West Indies, but it is evident that the Americans, who can export the Timber of this Province from the St. Croix without liability to the charges to which our Shipping are subject, are enabled to engross that Trade, to the great injury of the Ports of St. Stephen and St. Andrews. That the West India interests are benefited by this concession to the Americans, there can be no question, but as Her Majesty's Government reserve the exclusive privilege of imposing discriminating Duties, I submit that the inhabitants of this Province, who are not allowed to protect themselves, have a just claim to equal protection with other Colonies, and that such a Duty should be imposed upon American Timber in the West Indies, or a corresponding reduction effected in the Duties on British Timber, unless the American Government should make some equivalent concession in favor of the Trade of this Province.

The Petitioners pray also for the removal of the Imperial Duties on Foreign Flour and Salted Provisions, and also that St. Stephen may have the privilege of a Free Warehousing Port, which I have already recommended in my Despatch, No. 24, of the 22d April last.

I enclose a Return of the Shipping which have entered and cleared at the Ports of St. Andrews and St. Stephen in the last three years.

I have, &c.

(Signed)

W. M. G. COLEBROOKE.

The Right Hon. Lord Stanley.

(Copy)

No. 5.

[No. 272.]

*Downing Street, 18th November, 1844.*

SIR,—I have received your Despatch of the 12th August, No. 66, with a Petition to the Queen from the inhabitants of Saint Stephen, representing the decline of Trade at that Port, owing to the reduction of Duties on American Timber in the British West Indies, and praying that the Warehousing system might be extended to Saint Stephen. Having submitted this Petition to the Queen, I have to acquaint you that Her Majesty was pleased to receive it very graciously. I regret, however, to have to inform you, that, for the following reasons, I have been unable to advise Her Majesty to accede to the wishes of the Petitioners.

The proposals made by the Petitioners are three fold.

The first, that a Duty of 5s. per 1000 feet should be laid on Foreign Lumber imported into the West India Colonies.

The second, that the Duty chargeable in New Brunswick on Foreign Flour and Salted Provisions should be repealed.

The third, that Saint Stephen should be declared a Free and Free Warehousing Port.

Taking these different propositions in their order, I have to observe with respect to the first of them, that the Duty on Foreign Lumber introduced into the West Indies, was repealed at a time when those Colonies were suffering under peculiar depression, arising in part at least, out of the effects of Legislation, and when they had the strongest claim to every relief which Legislation was capable of affording.

The British Parliament has shewn on the part of this country, by the settlement of the Timber Duties in 1842, its willingness to continue to afford facilities and advantages even at a considerable cost to the Trade of the British North American Provinces; but under circumstances so urgent as those of the West Indies, neither the Government nor the Legislature conceived that it would be warrantable to uphold an enhanced price of a raw material so extensively required as Wood in those Colonies, by continuing to maintain a Differential Duty upon its importation.

Taking this view of the case, Her Majesty's Government feel that they could not recommend to Parliament to reimburse a Duty on Foreign Lumber introduced into the West Indies.

I must remark in passing, that the figures which are presented on the Petition do not appear to Her Majesty's Government to exhibit clearly the result of the Act passed in 1842. For with regard to Boards and Planks, although there is a small diminution in the exportations of the year 1843, as compared with 1840 and 1841, yet the increase in 1842, when the new measure was known to be impending, was very large; I do not however doubt that the first effect of the Law may have been to