

tive to the Coasting Trade, ruinous to the Proprietors of small Craft, and discouraging to the enterprize and industry of Provincial Navigators, and in the humble opinion of Your Petitioners, call for the immediate interference of Your Honorable House. That American vessels are able and do carry from their ports to the Lower Provinces, at much lower rates of freight than the vessels of this Port can, partly on account of the difference in the amount of their Custom House charges, and that thus the benevolent intention of His Majesty's Government in laying a duty on American produce for the encouragement of the Trade and Agriculture of these Provinces is materially counteracted. That the amounts of Fees exacted on some occasions, have been greater than on others, on vessels of the same class, loaded with the same description of cargoes, and in all respects under the same circumstances, by which it would appear that the exaction of Fees is arbitrary with the officers. That by the number and variety of Fees, at present demanded, officers have temptations and opportunities of imposing on individuals; and, the department not acknowledging superior authority over it in the Province, immediate means of redress are not attainable; that, therefore, the abolition of all minor Fees, and the payment of one general fee or duty to Government, according to the tonnage of vessels and distance of voyage, and the payment of Officers by Salary, as lately adopted in Great-Britain, would preclude such encroachments and be most satisfactory to the Trade. And your Petitioners take the present opportunity of representing, that, notwithstanding the liberal Fees paid by the Trade, and the splendid revenues enjoyed therefrom by the Officers, that the time given by them for attendance to the public business, viz:—From Ten until Twelve, to receive papers for the clearance of vessels, and from Ten until Two for general business, has been much too circumscribed for the convenience of the public during the busy periods of our limited season—the Spring and Fall. That your Petitioners, in the statement subjoined of Fees paid, have included the Trinity-House Dues and Fees levied by the Naval Officer, that your Honorable House may be informed of the total amount of Fees paid by the Trade in clearing vessels; that the Fee exacted by the Naval Officer is considered very high, and that your Petitioners can find no authority by which he can demand it; and your Petitioners humbly pray, that your Honorable House will take the premises into consideration, and afford such relief, as, in your wisdom, may seem fit.

Quebec, 3d February, 1824.

[Signed by 72 Merchants and Ship Owners.]