

# REPORT

OF THE

## COUNCIL OF THE BOARD OF TRADE,

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1856.

PRINTED FOR CIRCULATION AMONG MEMBERS ONE WEEK PREVIOUS TO THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BOARD, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RESOLUTION PASSED ON THE 4TH DAY OF APRIL, 1853.

THE COUNCIL, in submitting the Annual Report, would beg to enumerate as briefly as possible the various matters which have been brought under their attention since their election at the last annual meeting.

In the first place, representations having been made by the Forwarders, as to the insufficiency of water in the Lachine Canal, a Memorial was addressed to the Honorable the Chief Commissioner of Public Works, which resulted in a prompt remedy of the grievance alluded to.

Serious complaints were made as to the mode and system practised in the inspection of ashes. A full and complete investigation was made by the Council, which resulted in an expression of opinion, that amendments to the present Ashes Inspection Act are necessary, and the Council beg to refer their successors to the Resolutions and Reports made on this subject, with the view of having such amendments brought before the Legislature, at this or the next meeting of Parliament.

The Bankrupt Act proposed by the Hon. Mr. Belleau in the Legislative Council having been submitted to the Council for examination, its provisions were found unsatisfactory, and a Memorial against the Bill having been addressed to the three branches of the Legislature, it has not been proceeded with.

Mr. Bellhouse, Agent for the Ocean Steam Ships, having attributed the grounding of one of the steamers in the Lake to the want of water, the Council deemed it necessary to obtain official statements from Captain Bell, of the Harbour Commissioner's Office, and of James Holmes, Esq., Secretary of the Trinity Board, as to the depth of water in the channel of navigation, by which it was clearly shewn that the steamer was not in the channel when she ran aground, and that there was more water in the channel than the vessel was drawing at the time.

The want of a steam crane, for discharging and loading heavy freight in the harbour, was urged on the attention of the Council, and the matter was submitted to the Harbour Commissioners, who admitted the necessity of such a facility to trade, and stated that there was a temporary means provided for remedying the evil complained of.

Representations to the Council were made respecting the heavy charge for wharfage on earthenware and crockery, which were submitted to the Harbour Commissioners, who did not deem it expedient to alter the tariff at present.

Representations having been made as to rice, the produce of the United States, being admitted free of duty, while rice from the British East Indies is charged at 12½ per cent., this matter was brought under the attention of His Excellency the Governor General, by Memorial; but your Council have not yet heard that any action has been taken thereon, though it has been again brought to the notice of the Government.

Duties having been levied on packages containing goods admitted duty free, Memorials were addressed to the Honorable Inspector General, which resulted in the prompt repeal of the impost.

A correspondence took place with the Collector of Customs at this port, regarding complaints which had been made to the Council on the want of certain facilities for transacting Customs business, which were promptly remedied by the Collector. At the same time it was represented to the Collector that a practice had obtained at this port of charging for lockage, while at no other port in the Province did a similar custom prevail.—This was also promptly remedied.

A Memorial was presented to His Excellency the Governor General, on the necessity and advantage of establishing an efficient line of Ocean Steamers between Canada and Liverpool, and praying that he would be pleased to sanction a contract for such a line. The Council are gratified in being able to state that this has been done but whether vessels of sufficient power and dimensions have been contracted for, remains yet to be proved by experience.

The practice of allowing vessels to leave this port in tow of steamers without having Pilots on board, was brought under the notice of the Trinity Board.

The Board of Trade Tariff for Storage, Commissions, &c., was carefully amended, revised and published for the use of Members.

The Government of France having deputed Commander De Belvéze to visit Canada, with the view of reporting on our Trade and Commerce, the Council deemed it their duty to tender to that officer the hospitalities of the Trade of the City, and in the name of the Merchants and Board of Trade, invited him and the Officers of the frigate "Capricieuse" to a public dinner, which was accepted; and the Council have reason to believe that the visit will prove of advantage to the Trade of the Province.

The inconvenience and loss arising from the new postal arrangements of the Mother Country were brought under the notice of the Postmaster General. The matter received prompt attention, and the evil complained of has since been remedied. In connection with this subject the Council beg to express their sense of the activity, zeal, and uniform courtesy, which Mr. E. S. Freer, Post Office Inspector of Montreal, has shewn during the past season, in meeting the wants and wishes of the mercantile community in the despatch and receipt of mails.

A Petition from Dealers in Leather, praying that an Inspector of Leather might be appointed, having been laid before the Council, a copy thereof, with the recommendation of the Council, was sent to the Honorable Inspector General, by whom no action has yet been taken.

A Special General Meeting of the Board was called on the 29th September last, on the subject of the Georgian Bay Canal, and a Memorial was adopted, praying His Excellency the Governor General to cause an immediate survey to be made. The Council are happy to be able to state that the Government have promptly acceded to this request, and that a survey will be made with all possible despatch.

The necessity for cheapening the cost, and rendering more efficient the present means of towing between Quebec and Montreal, has engaged the attention of the Council, but without resulting in any definite plan or suggestion.

The appointment of some competent person, intimately acquainted with the Trade of the British North American Provinces, to reside at Washington for the purpose of representing and protecting Colonial interests under the operation of the Reciprocity Treaty, was brought under the notice of the Imperial Government, through His Excellency the Governor General, but the proposition was not favorably received.

A Memorial was addressed to His Excellency the Governor General, praying that the debt incurred, and the expenditure yet necessary, to deepen the navigable channel through Lake St. Peter to 20 feet at low water, should be assumed by the Government, and the Harbour Commissioners relieved therefrom. The Council are not yet aware what decision the Government have come to on this important subject; but as the improvement is manifestly not a local but a public work, which must cheapen transport, and thereby benefit the Province generally, the Council earnestly hope that this matter may receive due attention from Government, and that the Harbour Commissioners may be relieved from liability, and be left free to use the credit of the Trust, for improving the Harbour of Montreal, on a scale commensurate with the magnitude of the improved channel of navigation to Quebec.