

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

Notwithstanding the acrimony which has been exhibited towards the *Economist* by a portion of the public Press, we are glad to find that the views we have expressed are making way even amongst those who profess to be unfavorable to Free Trade. Grumbling, it is now admitted, will not serve us. To grumble when the crisis is arrived, is mere childishness. If we wish to preserve our commerce, we must make the most of the altered state of affairs, and put ourselves in a position to compete with New-York for the carrying trade. This view of the question is the one taken by the editor of the *Quebec Gazette*, in an article on the subject of the trade of the country. To the opinions of that writer we attach considerable importance; and we are very glad to find that he takes so rational a view of our resources, and of our ability "to stand alone."—The following is the article:—

[From the *Quebec Gazette* of 29th May]

THE TRADE OF CANADA.

An extract from the *Montreal Gazette*, containing a communication on the subject of the future course of the trade of the St. Lawrence, with some remarks of the editor, will be found in this day's *Gazette*.

This subject acquires a new interest from the late free trade measures of the British Government, and the United States bonding projects for Canada imports and exports.

Under the present system, the trade of Canada was finding its way to the United States northern sea ports. That tendency will be accelerated under the contemplated measures.

The questions in reality will be—Shall the trade of Canada employ British or American shipping? Shall it chiefly go by the St. Lawrence or the Hudson, and the just profits of mercantile agency vest in Canada or the United States?

The St. Lawrence has the advantage of greater facilities for navigation; but its outlet to the sea is more difficult and dangerous than the outlet of the Hudson from New York, which leads by a short distance to the sea, throughout the year; although the navigation of the New York canals and the Hudson is closed by ice nearly as long as the St. Lawrence.

The St. Lawrence has the advantage that shipments may be made at any port on the Great Lakes, and goods imported there, with but one transshipment, in larger vessels than by New York.

The Hudson route has the advantage of cheaper freight and insurance from New York to Europe than from the St. Lawrence.

The proposed bonding system of the United States does away with the disadvantage of New York and other United States ports from heavier duties on importation than in Canada, but the debt recently contracted in Canada, and the increasing expenses of its Government, are greatly diminishing this disadvantage of New York.

The protection given to imports from Canada in the United Kingdom has probably contributed to introduce a less intelligent, active, and cheap conducting of business than in the United States, which must operate as a disadvantage to the trade of the St. Lawrence, although it may have been agreeable and even profitable to those concerned in it.

The retaining the trade by the St. Lawrence by British ship-owners, British merchants, and persons engaged in the trade and industry of the towns along the St. Lawrence, will now depend on the intelligence, activity, and cheapness with which the produce of the several localities along the River and the Lakes can be transported to markets beyond sea, and the returns received in these different localities. All unnecessary burthens on trade ought to be diminished or removed as quickly as possible. The province is involved in debt, which will take about two hundred thousand pounds annually, chiefly out of the trade, for interest alone, which is a heavy burthen, besides its contributions to the overgrown and still increasing colonial expenditure, for which it can hardly be said an equivalent in services is rendered; all dues and charges ought to be reduced and kept at the lowest possible rate, as the only sure means of maintaining the competition with New York and the United States seaports.

With the trade goes the revenue, nearly the whole industry of the towns, and the best market for a great part of the produce of the farmer which cannot be disposed of at a great distance.

With the cessation of the export and import trade by the St. Lawrence, the producers along its banks, would have to depend on only one set of dealers and agents, who, naturally would become more exacting in their charges, notwithstanding individual competition.

It would be unwise as to fold our arms and rail "in good set terms" against British legislation. There could be no compact between the colonists and the Legislature of the Empire which has at all times expressly reserved to itself the regulation of trade. If this power has been erroneously exercised, it may be shewn, and we are bound to believe, that it will be remedied.

With proper exertions on our part, we are still better off than we would be if the inhabitants of the banks of the St. Lawrence were entirely dependent on the traders of the United States seaports, and subject to their laws and their burthens; but "true allegiance," like common honesty, never raises a question of INTEREST as an excuse for its violation.

In the *Pilot* of the 27th ult. we find a very just statement of the objects which the Free Traders of Montreal propose. We are obliged to the editor of that paper for his advocacy, and trust that he may be the means of removing some of the misrepresentations which have been circulated against our Association and its objects. What these objects are the *Pilot* thus explains—

"What then do these free traders aim at? Let the Canadian people understand—let their reviewers meet them with argument, if they are able.

"They desire that the carrying trade of the St. Lawrence should be thrown open to the world, so that by lessening the cost of freight the cities of Quebec and Montreal may be enabled to compete with New York for the trade of the West—they desire the abolition of Imperial duties under which the Canadian consumer is taxed, as we have shown elsewhere in this number, £15 on every £100 of glass that he uses and nearly three farthings on every pound of sugar that he consumes, and in like proportion on nearly all imported

articles. Such are some of the objects of the men who are reviled by the anonymous correspondent of the *Gazette* and by the *Courier*. If "the great body of the merchants" are opposed to such views, then it only proves that they are grossly ignorant of the true interests of the country, and more especially of their own. It is highly probable that many or even all the free traders may think the people of England right in demanding the repeal of the Corn Laws, but it is untrue that they have ever demanded such repeal as a measure for the advantage of Canada. On the contrary they have only come forward, when the success of the new scheme was beyond a doubt, to advocate measures calculated to save the Province from impending ruin. Such are the facts, and we defy any of the opponents of the free trade measures to combat them with argument."

Even the *Montreal Herald* is compelled to give in, and confess that something must be done in the way of Free Trade to keep up the commerce of the country. The editor of that journal says—

"We conceive there are three modes of relief within the power of the Imperial Legislature. 1st, The remission of the interest on the capital expended on our public works; 2nd, The entire repeal of the duty on our exports of grain; and 3rd, The removal of all commercial restrictions in favour of British manufactures, and some modification of the navigation laws, by which foreign shipping may be permitted to transport our produce to the home markets."

These are good signs. All that is required is that the public mind should be thoroughly aroused, and that the fallacious idea should be abandoned that protection can be kept up in Canada when it has been relinquished in the mother country. What we of the *Economist* seek to do is, to show the mercantile and agricultural communities their real position. Let them once understand that, and we have no doubt that means will be found to keep the trade from flowing into other channels.

ONE OF THE EFFECTS OF DIFFERENTIAL DUTIES.—We extract the paragraph below from an article which has appeared lately in the *Montreal Pilot*. It exhibits one of the effects of differential duties in raising the price of a necessary article of comfort. It is the same with many other articles quite as important as glass. The public, indeed, have no idea of the price they pay for "protection." They imagine the advantage to be all on their own side, forgetting that if Great Britain affords advantages to the Colonies in her market, she claims advantages in return. If both sides of the ledger could be made up, it would be found, we verily believe, that the loss the Colony sustains in the way of "differential duties" more than counterbalances the advantages she receives from protection:—

"A few days ago we were informed by one of our merchants that he had just paid £100 duty on £300 worth of foreign window glass. Of this £100, £25 was Provincial duty, and £75 Imperial. Now it must be obvious that if foreign window glass can compete with British with such a protection, the removal of the Imperial duty would enable the consumer to obtain his glass 13 per cent. cheaper. Meanwhile Canadian consumers are paying £15 to the manufacturers of British glass on every £100 used in the Province."

A CONTRAST.—Let those who think well of protection and prohibition look to Spain. In that great, but wretchedly governed, kingdom, protection and prohibition have brought into existence one hundred thousand armed smugglers, who sometimes are an overmatch for the military; the country swarms with brigands, robberies are frequent, and it appears that three hundred thousand people are depending for a living on illicit traffic. Custom-houses produce comparatively little, and the nation is bankrupt.—From this picture turn to Holland, a country freer from commercial restraint than any in Europe, except Switzerland, where they have no custom-houses at all. In Holland, persons and property are safe, land more valuable than in England—there are no poor rates, no beggars, as government employs the idle, whilst the inhabitants enjoy a high degree of comfort, civilization and wealth; and Switzerland, with obvious disadvantages of climate and position, carries on a prosperous trade, and boasts a happy, brave, contented, and independent people.

THE ARISTOCRACY AND THE CORN LAWS.

The following is an extract from the speech of Sir R. Peel, delivered in the House of Commons on Monday, the 4th of May:—

"The noble lord says that a Minister of England would do well to adopt the language of the Minister of France, if he would see the advantage of upholding a territorial aristocracy—the maintenance of a territorial aristocracy being essential to the preservation of the Conservative principle of legislation. Now I am disposed to adopt the doctrine of that French Minister—of M. Guizot. I believe it to be of the highest importance that a territorial aristocracy should be upheld—and that in no country is it of greater importance that such should be the case than in this country, peculiar for its constitution and the character of its people (cheers). I trust that in England a territorial aristocracy, invested with just powers and authority, will long be maintained. I am convinced that it is essential to the purposes of good government, and I am also convinced that a timely concession in a certain state of public opinion and of society would be the most effectual way of maintaining the legitimate authority of a territorial aristocracy (hear, hear); and if I thought that the continuance of this protection was essential to the maintenance of that territorial aristocracy, I should see in that fact a very strong reason for the preservation of protection; but I must see whether it be for the real interest of the territorial aristocracy to attempt to maintain its authority by continuing restrictions on our com-