

the railway companies to promptly re-issue the Special Import Freight Tariff of 1st June, which had been withdrawn. It was represented that the concessions therein granted had proved of great advantage to merchants, by enabling them to effect sales that would otherwise have been impracticable. The Council arranged for an interview with a committee of the signers of that petition, when it was agreed that so soon as they had prepared a clear statement of their grievances, a deputation of the Council would join the importers in representing them to the railway companies.

FREE NAVIGATION.

At the first ordinary meeting of the Council, held after its election, the reduction of the Canal Tolls was considered, and on the 24th January a petition was forwarded to the Governor-in-Council, praying that the tolls be reduced to the two cent rate conceded last year, and that such reduction be announced at the earliest possible date. It was afterwards deemed expedient that the views expressed in that petition should be more strongly urged upon the Government, and accordingly, on 8th March, a joint deputation from this Board and the Corn Exchange Association, together with delegates from St. Catharines, Hamilton, Toronto and Kingston, met the Cabinet, when the whole question of reduction of tolls, enlargement of the canals, and the assumption of the channel debt, was fully laid before the Ministers present, the Ontario delegates endorsing the claim presented by this Board, that the expenditure on the ship channel between Montreal and Quebec should be assumed as a Government work.

On 28th March an Order-in-Council was published, reducing the rate of toll on wheat, Indian corn, peas, barley and rye passing through the Welland and St. Lawrence canals, when bound for Montreal or other port east of Montreal, to two cents per ton; the concession to continue in force during the season of navigation of 1887 and no longer. The navigation interests of the country are, therefore, still weighted with canal tolls, and remain unrelieved of the burden of taxation with respect to the Lake St. Peter debt, the heavy pilotage fees, hospital dues, etc., etc., from which the water routes in competition with the St. Lawrence are free. It will be the duty of the new Council to renew the application for the present year.

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