OPINIONS OF THE HON. FRANCIS HINCKS,

ON THE

COMMERCIAL POLICY OF THE COUNTRY,

In 1846 and 1847,

WHEN EDITOR OF THE "PILOT."

From the "Pilot" of 11th April, 1846.

" We have already stated that the time has gone by for discussing the question of Free Trade—as Mr. Elder has justly observed in his truly eloquent speech, "public opinion in Canada must follow the great fact of Free Trade." The real friends of the agricultural interest must turn their attention to the best means of compensating it for the loss of those advantages which it has hitherto had. The Montreal Free Traders have taken the bull fairly by the horns. They demand the repeal of Mr. Gladstone's Act imposing differential duties in favour of British manufactures, they demand the repeal of the navigation laws, and the removal of all restrictions upon commerce. The imperial duties are stated by Mr. Glass to be £104,555.

The measure likely to be of the greatest advantage, not only to Upper Canada, but to Lower Canada, and especially to the Cities of Montreal and Quebec, is the giving the Americans the free navigation of the St. Lawrence. Were such a wise measure adopted, we can have no doubt that the duties on our agricultural produce in the United States would be abandoned, and that we would have the advantage of the great Eastern markets of this Continent in addition to those of England—there would then be an inducement to the Americans to turn their attention to the St. Lawrence as a channel of communication, whereas at present they are all interested in directing the Western produce by other routes. Let the navigation of the St. Lawrence be free and we shall have cheap freight, and upon this our farmers must now chiefly rely.

There must be an end put to differential duties of all kinds ; on teas, sugar, leather, spirits, &c., and such revenue duties imposed as the necessities of the country require. We believe that if the measures suggested were carried out, the agriculturists would benefit by them infinitely more than they can do by