

*Extract of a communication from the Montreal Committee of Trade to JAMES STUART,
ESQUIRE, dated 8th March, 1823.*

My principal object is to solicit your attention to the trade in Teas and East India goods in Upper and Lower Canada, and to the irresistible temptation which existing circumstances hold forth to the illegal introduction of those articles from the United States.

It appears from the letters of Mr. Commissioner Robinson to the Executive of Upper Canada, lately published, that the evils of the contraband trade in Teas had been represented by that gentleman to the President of the Board of trade in London, and in the course of the conversation which took place on the subject, Mr. Robinson described the hardship of the case and the little injury which would arise to the East India Company by relinquishing its monopoly as regards these Provinces.

It is notorious, that Teas and East India Goods are now supplied by contraband Trade from the United States on very low terms, and if the contemplated relaxation were obtained, and their introduction legalised subjecting them to a moderate duty, the demoralising practice of smuggling would be checked and the Provinces enabled, if required, to make ample compensation to the East India Company. Mr Robinson seems of opinion that an application on this subject, urged at such a period of the Session as would give time for explaining the circumstances of the case to the East India Company, would be liberally entertained by Government; and it is therefore hoped that you will take the first opportunity of soliciting the attention of Ministers to this important subject.

Though you may be sufficiently aware of the nature and extent of the grievance, I am directed to transmit to you the enclosed copy of a communication to the Judges by certain members of the late Grand Jury for the information of the Provincial Government, which, referring to the Geographical position, and periodical close of the Navigation of the Canadas, alleges the impossibility of preventing by coercive measures, the illegal introduction from the United States of such portable articles as Teas and silks, which are thus sold in Canada 50 per cent under the cost and charges of similar articles imported from Great Britain. It is to be apprehended that the insular situation of Great Britain, the practicability of her communications at all seasons by land and by water, and other circumstances favorable to the prevention of smuggling, may induce the ministry to think that coercive measures alone would suppress the Canadian contraband trade. It might therefore be expedient on your part to place before them the peculiarities of the position of both Provinces relatively to the United States, while urging the propriety of lessening the temptation to smuggle, by removing the unprofitable monopoly in question.

I am further directed to transmit to you herewith a schedule of the legal importation of Teas for the last nine years, showing how rapidly the importation from Great Britain diminished when the restoration of peace with the United States enabled the smugglers to resume a trade which had been in some degree suspended during the War, and to prove that the diminution has not arisen from an increase of the importation of