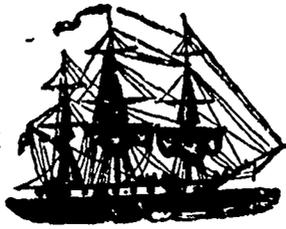


CANADIAN ECONOMIST.



FREE TRADE JOURNAL, AND WEEKLY COMMERCIAL NEWS.

Vol. I.]

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, 20TH MARCH, 1847.

[No. 47.]

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THE 'MONTREAL GAZETTE' UPON THE DIFFERENTIAL DUTIES.

We have seldom read an article in a newspaper so replete with ignorance, sophistry, and conceit, as one which appeared in the *Montreal Gazette* of Monday last; in the words of our contemporary himself, it is calculated in our estimation "to move nothing but contempt."

Of his ridiculous conceit our readers may judge for themselves by the remarks he has seen fit to apply to the Council of the Montreal Board of Trade; a body composed of gentlemen of character and ability, representing all the leading interests of the commercial body of this city, and including in their number two gentlemen who have grown grey in the Parliamentary service of their country; we allude in particular to the Hon. Geo. Moffatt, M.P.P., and the Hon. Austin Cuvillier, late Speaker of the House of Assembly. Yet of such a body, elected to their influential position by the suffrages of a numerous mercantile constituency, this journalist, who has notoriously been driven into a state of isolation on every question he has lately attempted to discuss—whose shameful tergiversation even the leading Conservative journal, the *Montreal Herald*, his political confrère, could not allow to pass without a contemptuous sneer; whose wanton conduct, in short, in reference to the Navigation Laws and the Free Navigation of the St. Lawrence must be fresh in every reader's memory,—first, having stigmatized our endeavours to procure their modification as being "absurd, preposterous, and idle," and then, the moment the Minister of the day proposed to suspend them, turning round upon himself and advocating their repeal;—of that body, we say, this editorial weathercock has had the audacity to write in the following terms: "That the Montreal Board of Trade (as at present constituted), and its disciples, are blind leaders of the blind, wretchedly ignorant both of the position and true policy of the colony." Such is the language of this stranger, whose residence in the colony is, comparatively speaking, but of yesterday, towards men, most of whom have past the best part, if not the whole, of their lives in it, and whose knowledge "of the position and true policy of the colony" must in a general sense be immeasurably superior to that of the Editor of the *Gazette*.

We are sensible that that Board needs no defence from us, and that we are scarcely called upon to notice the attacks of such a contemptible paper as the *Gazette* has become; but the article adverted to wears somewhat of a demi-official stamp—appears, in fact, to be thrown out by command of the Cabinet of the day, as a feeler to ascertain how far the public are inclined to tolerate a continuance of the noxious differential duties. On no other supposition than that of the application of the task-master's lash to the back of the hireling, can we look for the sudden and unlooked for attack upon a document which was placed before the public some eight or nine months ago. Perhaps the Government have read the Hon. Mr. Moore's letter, and being probably undecided as to the course they should themselves pursue in relation to these duties, have instructed their organ to throw out certain views upon the subject. Indeed there is a striking similarity between the views expressed (?) by the Hon. Legislative-Councillor alluded to and those apparently entertained by the *Montreal Gazette*.

On these grounds, therefore, and particularly from the mysterious connection between the *Gazette* and the local Ministry of the day, we deem it to be our duty to review the article, in order to obviate the effects which its plausible sophistry and false allegations may have produced upon the minds of the unwary.

The Differential Duties are the subject of the article we have reference to, and the Report of the Montreal Board of Trade, published in August last, is the text on which the *Gazette* professes to have founded his strictures.

The doctrines of the Board of Trade, as enunciated in their Report, we hold to be sound, and founded in truth and fact; and as our journal was established to defend and promulgate such doctrines, we deem it to be peculiarly our duty on the present occasion to step forth and, for the purpose of defence, assume the doctrines of the Board of Trade to be those of our own journal, and to hold ourselves accordingly responsible in argument for their support. The Board of Trade cannot of course enter into a controversy with the press, least of all with so unprincipled a journal as the *Montreal Gazette*; but the cause of Free Trade, in whatever manner and by whomsoever it may be attacked, shall never want a champion while our journal has "a local habitation and a name."

To enable our readers to understand the points at issue, we are under the necessity of copying largely from the article in the *Gazette*; but we trust that they will not consider us tedious in doing so, as the points involved in the extract are among the most important that can be examined in relation to the question of Free Trade.

The Board of Trade state their case against the Differential Duties in the following terms:—

Turning their attention then to the laws by which the external commerce of the Colony is regulated, they find a system of differential duties in existence which they conceive to be at variance, under present circumstances, not only with sound commercial principles, but also with justice and abstract right. These differential laws were imposed upon our commerce with the view of giving the manufacturers of the Mother Country and the planters of the West India Islands a monopoly, as far as laws could effect that object, of our markets for the consumption of the articles respectively produced by them—an arrangement which could not reasonably be objected to under the *balanced system* which had heretofore prevailed between the Mother Country and this Colony; the adjustment being such as to be regarded by both parties as a fair equivalent for the benefits conceded.

Your Committee, however, beg to submit that the case is now most materially altered, the slight differential duty to be maintained for the next three years on our produce imported into her markets for consumption, with the exception of Timber and a few other unimportant articles, being no adequate equivalent, they humbly conceive, for the injury done to our commerce and industry by the differential duties on foreign articles imported into this Colony for consumption, the oppressiveness of which may be estimated by the following table, showing at one view the amount of extra duty which they impose upon articles of foreign production imported into Canada:—

ARTICLES.	FOREIGN.	BRITISH.	DISCRIMIN.
Beef, Salted or Cured,	5s. per cwt.	2s. per cwt.	3s. per cwt.
Butter,	10s. per cwt.	2s. per cwt.	8s. per cwt.
Cheese,	5s. per cwt.	2s. 6d. per cwt.	2s. 6d. per cwt.
Candles, Sperm,	15 per cent. and 2d. per lb.	2d. per lb.	15 per cent.
" Wax,	7 per cent. and 2d. per lb.	1d. per lb.	7 per cent.
" other kinds,	5s. per cwt. and 1d. per lb.	1d. per lb.	5s. per cwt.
Coffee,	5s. per cwt. and 2d. per lb.	2d. per lb.	5s. per cwt.
" Roasted,	5s. per cwt. and 1 per cent.	1 per cent.	5s. per cwt.
Fish, Dried and Salted,	1s. per cwt. and 1 per cent.	1 per cent.	1s. per cwt.
" Pickled,	1s. per cwt. and 1 per cent.	1 per cent.	1s. per cwt.
Glass, Glassware, & Silks,	10 per cent.	5 per cent.	15 per cent.
Hardware,	12 per cent.	5 per cent.	7 per cent.
Leather Manufacturers,	12 per cent.	5 per cent.	7 per cent.
Molasses,	1s. per cwt.	1s. per cwt.	3s. per cwt.
Manufactures—Cotton			
" Linen and Woollen,	12 per cent.	5 per cent.	7 per cent.
" Oakum,	7 per cent.	Free.	7 per cent.
" Oil, Fish,	16 per cent.	1 per cent.	15 per cent.
" Pork, Salted or Cured,	5s. per cwt.	2s. per cwt.	3s. per cwt.
" Paper Manufacturers,	12 per cent.	5 per cent.	7 per cent.
" Spirits, Rum,	1s. per gallon.	6d. per gallon.	6d. per gal.
" Brandy & other Spirits,	2s. 3d. per gallon.	1s. 3d. per gallon.	1s. per gal.
" Sugar, Refined,	20 per cent. and 2d. per lb.	10 per cent. & 2d. per lb.	10 per cent.
" " Muscov. & Bastard,	12s. 6d. per cwt.	7s. 6d. per cwt.	5s. per cwt.
" Sugar Candy,	20 per cent. and 2d. per lb.	2d. per lb.	20 per cent.
" Wine,	17 per cent. and 8d. per gal.	10 per cent. & 8d. per gal.	7 per cent.
" Wheat Flour,	2s. 6d. per 100 lbs.	6d. per 100 lbs.	2s. p. 100 lbs.

On most articles of import not included in the above Table, there is a protection in favor of British Goods, varying from 4 per centum upwards.