

sugar, and coffee—which at present do not come into competition with the same description of goods of British origin.

Your petitioners observed, with much gratification, that your Majesty's late Secretary for the Colonies, in a despatch, No. 32, dated Downing Street, 3d March, 1846, in referring to the then proposed measures of government, for the removal of commercial restrictions, expressed his desire "that the efforts of the British legislature in this respect may be seconded, their range extended, and the example rendered yet more impressive, not only by the acquiescence, but by the approval and active co-operation of the legislatures and the inhabitants of the colonies." And your petitioners would cheerfully have sustained the Provincial Legislature in that co-operation, in preference to the course adopted by it, of remonstrating against the passage of a measure which circumstances had rendered no longer resistable.

Your petitioners therefore believe, that in submitting to your Majesty their convictions of the expediency of repealing the present customs laws, authorizing the imposition of protective or differential duties within this Province, they are not preferring to your Majesty a complaint the redress of which will not be in accordance with your Majesty's wishes and intentions.

Your petitioners, therefore, in view of the premises herein set forth, most humbly pray that your Majesty will be pleased to recommend to Parliament an immediate repeal of the navigation laws of the United Kingdom, so far as the same relate to the River St. Lawrence, and also such alterations in the present imperial Colonial customs as may render the trade of this Province with the Mother tariff Country one of fair reciprocity.

Toronto, 15th August, 1846.

HOW TO MEET FREE TRADE.

We give below the copy of a letter which John Tucker Williams, Esq., M.P.P., has addressed to his constituents. It shews the progress which Free-Trade opinions are making in this colony even amongst those whose political feelings incline them most strongly in the opposite direction. Mr. Williams is a Protectionist of the old school, and evidently regards Free Trade with no friendly eye. He speaks of it as something yielded to "external pressure," meaning evidently that it is not supported by the reflective wisdom of the country, which he seems to think looks to the sliding-scale alone as the only sound principle to ensure to the producer a fair remunerative price for the outlay, skill, and labour, he has expended in his business. With these opinions of Mr. Williams it is not our business to quarrel. It is enough for us that the hon. gentleman is content to receive Free Trade with all its evils, as he believes them to be, and that, far from yielding to what he considers the gloomy prospect before us, he sees in it only an argument for fresh energy and fresh exertion. This is just the spirit we wish to see awakened in the country; for we feel satisfied that it will help us over infinitely greater difficulties than ever Free Trade is likely to throw in our way. It encourages us to hope, too, that the view taken by Mr. Williams will be entertained generally by his political friends, and that we shall find all classes of politicians in the country intent on pursuing the course it has been our business to endeavour to incite them to.

In respect to the practical measures recommended by Mr. Williams, we need scarcely say that they are generally those which have been advocated by the *Economist*. We must except, however, the remarks which appear under the head "thirdly," respecting the loan to Great Britain. We cannot agree with Mr. Williams that we are "morally and equitably exonerated from the responsibility of this engagement," and deny, as we have before denied, that the improvements of our internal communications were undertaken solely on the strength of our protected trade with the mother country. With this exception, we agree with the views expressed by Mr. Williams, and trust that his example will be followed by gentlemen like himself possessing influence in the country:—

TO THE AGRICULTURISTS OF THE COUNTY OF DURHAM.

GENTLEMEN,—The numerous private communications addressed to me, (subsequent to the close of the last session of Parliament.) from various sections of your extended constituency, on the all-engrossing subject of the recent abrogation, and ultimate abolition, of the British Corn-Laws, and the influence anticipated therefrom in the price of Canadian wheat, render it a work of no inconsiderable labour to give each individual so addressing me a separate and distinct reply; I therefore avail myself of the more convenient medium of the public press to answer them collectively.

The adoption of the sliding-scale of duties on the import of wheat into Britain, in proportion to its prices in that market, appeared to me to be based on a sound principle, namely, to ensure to the producer a fair remunerative price only, for the outlay, skill, and labour in his avocation. That principle of legislation, if rightly applied to every other branch of national industry, would in my opinion have been productive of national prosperity. The Imperial Parliament, however, yielding to external pressure, have abrogated the principle, and adopted a system of ultimate free trade in this essential article of our commerce, the consequences of which are so severely felt with us, by the serious diminution of its value of 2s. 6d. per bushel within the short period of six months; and this depression in price, be it remembered, has taken place at a time when it was universally conceded that a scanty crop pervaded Europe. What the reduction in the price of the article may be when Europe is blessed with a bountiful harvest, it may be difficult to determine, but calculations thereon may be conjectured from what is stated on the authority of the most reputable journals that have widely disseminated the information, without creating from any quarter, an attempt at refutation, namely, that a prime article may now be obtained in the ports of Wallachia, at the low price of 1s. 3d. per bushel; the prospect before you, therefore, does not appear the most encouraging.

Are we then to imagine that our efforts are powerless to diminish the impending gloom, and are we to remain supine and inactive under the pressure, conceiving the infliction remediless? or, rather, are we not stimulated to renewed exertion and incited to fresh activity by the obstacle that presents itself for the active energies of our nature to surmount? Rely on it, much may be accomplished by active exertion rightly applied; and I, therefore, proceed to recommend to your notice the following practical measures of relief:—

First, We are to adopt every modern improvement in the science of agriculture, by which we may realise the greatest return at the least cost.

Secondly, We are to countenance and support the formation and establishment of Joint Stock Companies, having for their object the facilitating our intercourse with the interior, and diminishing the price of transit; and encourage all Associations and individual Establishments for manufacturing articles essential to our wants, and particularly the brighter fabrics of cotton and woollens, for by so doing you will create a domestic consumption for your productions, and render yourselves independent of purchasing similar articles of import.

Thirdly, We may justly claim exemption from the re-payment of the loan guaranteed by Great Britain, because it was expressly stipulated by the Parent State that the entire sum should be expended in improving our internal communications; to drive through the channels of the St. Lawrence the traffic of the western territories; and, when near its final completion, in obedience to such stipulation, an Act of the Imperial Parliament (arising out of a great domestic State exigency, and adverse to Colonial interests) virtually diverts that traffic into a more direct, more expeditious, and less expensive route. We are, therefore, morally and equitably exonerated from the responsibility of this engagement.

Fourthly, We may rightfully demand an immediate repeal of all all differential duties on imports into the Province, on the principle that if Canadian wheat have not a preference over the foreign article in the British market, neither may British manufactures have a preference in the Canadian market.

Fifthly, We may in justice claim an important modification from the oppressive operation of the monopoly of the existing Navigation Laws, by which monopoly the freight-charge on Canadian products (by being restricted to the employment of British shipping only) are maintained at the cost of 100 per cent, over and above the remunerating rate.

And, *Lastly*, We claim the right of perfect reciprocity of principle in our commercial intercourse with the neighbouring Republic. If the agricultural productions of that country may be imported into this Province free, or at a mere nominal duty, similar productions from this country ought to be permitted to be introduced into the United States on the like terms.

By individually and collectively striving to attain these desirable results Canada will yet prosper.

I have the honor to be, Gentlemen,
Your devoted Representative,
JOHN TUCKER WILLIAMS.

THE 'TORONTO COLONIST' ON FREE TRADE.

In another part of to-day's *Economist* we give the report of the Toronto Board of Trade, and in connection with that report we now copy the remarks of the *Toronto Colonist*, which has until lately distinguished itself by a stubborn opposition to Free-Trade doctrines. The final passing of Sir Robt. Peel's measure has, however, as it might naturally be expected to do, effected a change in these opinions, and rendered the *Colonist* as zealous in its demands for the abolition of all restrictions as the most enthusiastic amongst the Free-Traders.