

THE PROVINCIAL TARIFF.

In our last article on this subject, which appeared in the last number but one of our journal, we compared the importations under *ad valorem* duties from 1839 to 1845 inclusive, and we showed that while the duty was 2½ per cent *ad valorem* the average imports per year amounted to £1,869,388 stg., and that since the duty has been 5 per cent *ad valorem* the average has been £2,048,483 stg., showing an increase of £179,095 per annum, or not far from 10 per cent, upon the importations of the first period; a fact from which we draw the conclusion that 5 per cent is not too high for a revenue duty.

We also reviewed the question, whether *ad valorem* are to be preferred to specific duties; and we concluded by stating our views with respect to *Canal Tolls*. Respecting the latter, we need not now repeat the arguments we then advanced; but we may recal public attention to the course we recommended for adoption. It was this: that so soon as our canals are perfected, so that propellers and other craft capable of carrying three or four thousand barrels each, may be employed in the trade of the St. Lawrence with the Upper Lakes, then to reduce our tolls to a mere nominal rate, with the view of rendering the St. Lawrence the cheapest route to and from the sea, by which means we should render it impossible for any other existing channel to compete with us for the trade of the prolific West.

We deem it advisable to keep this view before the public, that it may be duly examined, as we feel convinced, from certain signs that are beginning to manifest themselves, that an immediate attempt will be made to maintain a high scale of canal tolls, for the purpose of at once deriving a large portion of our revenue from that source; a policy, than which, we avow, we can conceive nothing more suicidal to the best interests of the province.

The next point we advance respecting the Tariff, is, that duty should be levied by the *hundred pounds*, and not by the *hundredweight*. The advantage to be gained by this is *simplicity*. The calculations in fractional parts of a hundredweight, that is 112 lbs., are exceedingly troublesome and inconvenient, and we conceive that such would be obviated by making the integer 100, instead of 112 pounds. Of course, simplicity and convenience are the only advantages we expect to derive from the adoption of this suggestion. It has no other merit; and we presume it will be allowed that the old weight of 112 lbs. has nothing to recommend it but its antiquity, from which perhaps a prejudice may still linger in its favour in the minds of those who reverence more than we do "the wisdom and customs of our ancestors."

For the same reason—that is, for the sake of simplicity and convenience—we would also recommend that the duties should be levied in *currency*. Any one practically acquainted with the *complex* nature of a Custom-house entry under the present system of things, will cordially, and without qualification or reserve, admit that what we now suggest is very much to be desired.

Have our readers any idea of what a Custom-house entry is at the present day? Perhaps some of them have not. For the benefit of all, then, we will furnish an example,—the entry of an importation of spirits:

First, the Imperial duty:

1000 Gallons Cognac Brandy, at 1s. per gallon.....£	
Less one-fourth, being imported from the United Kingdom,.....	
	£ Sg.

Converted into Currency at the rate of 4s. 4d. per Dollar, £ Cy.

Next, the Provincial duty:

1000 Gallons Cognac Brandy, at 1s. 3d. per gallon,.....£	Stg.
Converted into Currency at the rate of 24s. 4d. per £ Stg. £	Cy.

Total Currency,.....£

Now, in lieu of this very complex affair (which we are sure the subtle genius, the editor of the *Gazette* could never fathom, although he has more than once pretended to a deep knowledge of figures), we would propose to substitute the following simple form:

1000 Gallons Cognac Brandy, (Value £———)	
at [suppose] 2s. per gallon,.....£	Cy.

We presume that a bare inspection of the two examples will satisfy our readers of the advantage of adopting what we recommend, viz. that the duties be levied in Currency, instead of Sterling. After all, what is gained in any way by levying the duties in Sterling? Is it supposed that the country will be imposed upon by doing so?—that by such means people will be so hoodwinked as to believe that they are paying only a penny a pound duty on their sugar, while in reality they are paying a penny and twenty-one hundredths of a penny, or, briefly, about a penny-farthing a

pound, and so on throughout the whole Tariff? Surely the Legislature will not reckon on such ignorance; and if not, what good reason is it possible to advance in favour of the inconvenient system which now prevails?

We trust our Boards of Trade throughout the province will take this matter up, and second the efforts we are making with the public, and purpose to make with the Legislature, for a thorough reform of our Provincial Tariff!

THE FREE NAVIGATION OF THE ST. LAWRENCE.

In our last number we reviewed the merits of this question, more especially with reference to the reasons given in Lord Stanley's despatch to the Board of Trade for refusing, though repeatedly prayed for by that Board, to abandon the restrictions maintained upon the St. Lawrence. Our limits, however, did not allow us to do full justice to the subject, and we therefore return to it, for the purpose of more fully elucidating certain points which we then only referred to.

The points discussed in our last were those which Lord Stanley raised as the grounds on which Her Majesty's Government defended their refusal to accede to the prayer of the Montreal Board of Trade; and we may as well repeat,—for they cannot be too often placed before the country,—that they were, first, "*Policy*," and, secondly, "*the maintaining of a principle which has been constantly acted upon for the benefit of the British shipowner*:"—which principle, being interpreted, means, as we have shown by various irrefragable proofs, compelling us to pay a British shipowner 2s. to 3s. a barrel more for carrying our flour to England than a foreign vessel would do it for, and 7s. to 10s. a load more for carrying our timber to England than a foreign ship would do it for;—means, as affirmed by the people of Trinidad, (to which we alluded particularly in our last number,) paying 35s. a ton to British ships for carrying their products and supplies, while the people of Martinique get the same service performed by French ships for 20s. per ton;—means, in short, laying every class in the British Colonies, but more especially in this Colony, under heavy contribution for the benefit of a small section of the British community, because a prejudice still exists in England, among the aristocratic and non-commercial classes in favor of the British Navigation Laws!

The Colonists, however, are the sufferers; and if their voice is heard or heeded in the British House of Commons, these laws must speedily be reconsidered, and their restrictions waived or modified—or it requires no prophet to foretell that indignation and disgust will settle in the colonial mind, from a conviction that our general welfare is disregarded by the mother country, except where it clearly and conclusively coincides with that of her own favored classes. We trust, however, that these consequences will not ensue;—we trust that our Legislature will early take up the question, and by temperate reasoning and remonstrance, produce such a conviction in the British Parliament as will lead to a speedy concession of our demands. But if this is not done, we deem it our duty to declare that we fear the consequences will be fatal to the best interests of this Colony and to the general prosperity of the British Empire. Three of the most important Colonies—Canada, Jamaica, and Trinidad—have already spoken out against these noxious laws; and we have no doubt all the others will follow as soon as they have fitting opportunity.

But let us turn again to Lord Stanley's despatch, for there is in it another point which requires to be examined, and which we only glanced at in our last number. It is this: that by rendering Montreal a free port,—in other words, allowing foreign vessels to reach it from the sea, for the purpose of trading,—"*it would be practically giving to foreign nations the free navigation of the St. Lawrence for 150 miles through the interior of the Province*." Well, certainly, so it would; and what mighty harm would there be in that? Foreign, that is American, vessels have now the right of navigating through the very heart of the Province for a much greater distance than 150 miles; and does any harm result from it? None, that we have ever heard of, or we dare say, Lord Stanley either. Well then, if nothing is to be dreaded from allowing foreign vessels to come through the heart of Canada down to Montreal, what possible harm can there be in allowing foreign vessels to come through the St. Lawrence up to Montreal? Nay, further, what possible harm would there be in allowing such vessels to pass by Montreal, both upwards and downwards, if they saw fit to extend their trips either way. We confess we can see none. But, to start with, *all we ask for is, that Montreal should be the point of junction*,—in other words, that as foreign vessels are now allowed to come downwards to Montreal, they should also be allowed to come upwards to Montreal, from the sea. Surely the plea of danger to the State cannot be advanced against this demand, for we do not ask the right in favor of foreign vessels of war, but simply in favor of trading vessels, from which, of course, no evil or danger could be appre-