

CANADA.

ence of cost in the voyage; the expense of inland navigation would be cheapened, and the citizens of the United States would be induced to make the St. Lawrence the outlet for their produce, thereby conferring on Canada the benefit of a transit trade of great and growing importance.

That in the present position of affairs in this colony, the repeal of the Navigation Laws, so far as they affect Canada, could scarcely prove injurious to the British shipowner; for if the result of these laws be to concentrate the imports and exports of Canada in New York (and that this will be the result your memorialists do not entertain the slightest doubt), it is obvious the question simply amounts to this,—Will the British shipowner allow the foreigner to compete with him in the St. Lawrence, or will he compel himself to compete with the foreigner in the ports of the United States.

That in the opinion of your memorialists, the objection which has been urged against the repeal of the laws in question on political grounds, is not entitled to greater weight. Nothing will so soon predispose the people of Canada to sympathise with their American neighbours as that identity of interests which the present intimate trading relations springing up betwixt the two countries are so fitting to promote; and nothing on the contrary will contribute to maintain the loyalty and attachment of the people to the Parent State, as the preservation of their old channels of commerce, and direct intercourse with her markets by the waters of the St. Lawrence.

That the grounds, therefore, on which your memorialists more particularly rest the prayer of their memorial are as follow:—

1stly. That as Canada now enjoys but a remnant of protection in England, she should be released from any restrictions for the benefit of the British shipowner.

2ndly. That without the free navigation of the St. Lawrence, and a repeal of the British Navigation Laws so far as the British Colonies are concerned, there is reason to apprehend that New York will become the great emporium of the trade of Canada, and that thus a unity of interests, commercial and political, will be created with the United States.

3rdly. That in such an event, the repeal of those laws cannot materially injure the British shipowner, the question simply being, whether competition for the trade shall take place in the harbours of the United States or in the River St. Lawrence.

Lastly. That the repeal of these laws will have the tendency to perpetuate, and not to destroy, the relations that exist betwixt Canada and the mother country.

Wherefore your memorialists humbly pray that your Honourable House will be pleased to take the subject into your serious consideration, and to grant such relief in the premises as in your wisdom may seem meet.

And your memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

PETER MCGILL,

President of the Montreal Board of Trade.

Frederick A. Willson, Secretary, Montreal,
26th May, 1848.

SIR,

Secretary's Office, Montreal, 29th May, 1848.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this day, enclosing memorials from the Board of Trade of Montreal, addressed to Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, and the two Houses of the Imperial Parliament respectively, on the subject of the Navigation Laws and of the free navigation of the River St. Lawrence, which, on the part of the Board of Trade, you request may be transmitted to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, to be laid before Her Majesty and Lords and Commons of the United Kingdom.

Immediately on the receipt of your communication, I had the honour to lay the same, with its enclosures, before the Governor-General, and I am commanded to inform you, that the memorials of the Board shall be forthwith forwarded to her Majesty's Colonial Secretary.

I am further commanded to state, for the information of the Board of Trade, that the subject of these memorials has for some time engaged the attention of his Excellency, and that his Excellency has communicated the views of this Government to Her Majesty's Colonial Secretary. The opinions expressed in these communications, as to the expediency of relieving this country from any restrictions imposed upon its commerce, are strengthened by the representations of the Board of Trade; and his Excellency entertains strong hopes that the liberal and generous policy of the Imperial Government towards this colony will be further exemplified in the measures which his Excellency believes are under consideration in England.

His Excellency commands me to say, that feeling very strongly that he has not used mere words of form or compliment, in attributing liberality and generosity to the policy of the empire towards this province, he observes with regret an expression in the memorials which the Board of Trade has requested him to forward, to the effect, that should the River St. Lawrence not continue to be the great highway for the commerce of Canada, a commercial union of the most intimate character will be produced between the United States of America and this colony, the inevitable result of which would be to dissolve the ties which connect the latter with the mother country.

That this expression should be used at a time when the only remaining protection existing in England is afforded to Canadian trade, and after so many demonstrations of the disinterested desire, on the part of the Imperial Government, to make the connexion of Canada with the empire beneficial to the colony, is a ground of surprise and disappointment to his Excellency. If the observations of the Board were correct, there could have been no necessity for making it