

CANADA.

Enclosure in No. 14.

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To his Excellency James Earl of Elgin & Kincardine, Governor-general of British North America, &c. &c. &c.

May it please your Excellency,

The Board of Trade of Hamilton, Canada West, bearing in mind the memorable expression of your lamented relative, the late Earl of Durham, that it was the desire of our Gracious Sovereign, that the inhabitants of Canada should have no reason to envy the people of the United States of America, have petitioned Her most Gracious Majesty the Queen to be pleased to alter the Navigation Laws, so that the produce of Canada might be placed on the same favourable footing as to facility of transport as that of the United States, and that the merchants of Western Canada might have the same facilities afforded them of importing by way of Quebec, as they now have by way of New York.

The Board of Trade enclose this petition to your Excellency, praying that you will have the goodness to cause it to be laid at the foot of the Throne; and should, as the Board humbly trust is the case, your Excellency entertain similar views to those expressed therein, the Board beg of your Excellency to recommend their prayer to Her Majesty's most gracious consideration.

The Board of Trade representing the commercial interests of this city are actuated by the sole motive of drawing the ties between this colony and the parent state still tighter, by encouraging the route of the St. Lawrence, instead of transporting goods or produce through the United States; humbly conceiving that measure only to be accomplished by relaxing the Navigation Law, so as to place the ports of Quebec and Montreal on a par with New York. This accomplished, the Board of Trade would indeed feel that they had nothing to envy in any country in the world.

Hamilton, Canada West,
Saturday, 12th June 1847.

J. T. BRONDGUST,
President of the Hamilton Board of Trade.

To the Queen's most Excellent Majesty in Council.

The PETITION of the HAMILTON BOARD OF TRADE,

Humbly sheweth,

That your petitioners, who yield to none in devotion to Your Majesty's Person and Government, reside at a city situated at the head of Lake Ontario, a place of much importance in supplying the western parts of Canada with goods of various kinds, and being at the head of the navigation of the aforesaid lake, a place whence a large portion of the produce of the West has to be shipped.

That your petitioners, owing to the protection upon grain imported into Britain from Canada, formerly enjoyed certain privileges now much reduced.

That your petitioners are permitted to import goods, the produce of any country whatever, by inland transport, however originally imported into such country; but are not permitted to import goods by sea, excepting in a British or colonial vessel, or in a vessel belonging to the country that produced the article imported; thus giving a foreign port a privilege beyond a colonial port, and giving to American canals the dues, and to American forwarders the profits, that might otherwise be paid in tolls on Canadian canals, and for the benefit of Canadian forwarders.

That since the protection in their produce has been removed, your petitioners cannot afford to employ any but the comparatively cheap coasting shipping belonging to the United States of America, for the purpose of importing West India produce, such shipping being found in most West India ports, waiting for freights, having landed their cargoes of provisions from the United States of America, and which vessels carry cheaply in consequence of their cargoes being return cargoes; whereas British and colonial vessels have to be chartered out and home, and as such cheap American vessels are not permitted to go to Quebec or Montreal, their cargoes have to be landed at New York, and thence brought into Canada by inland navigation, through American canals, to the injury of colonial ports, canals, merchants, and forwarders, without the slightest possible advantages to British shipping.

That in the absence of any protection of consequence on Canadian produce, it is of the highest importance to obtain freights at the lowest rates; that although British ships sail as cheaply as any, still, owing to various causes, such as their being required for the East India, Australia, or China trade, or from a scarcity in Great Britain and Ireland, a very abundant harvest in Canada, or a sudden increase in the demand for shipping, freights often rise to very high rates, and even then, perhaps, as happened in the autumn of 1846, not half the produce could be shipped at all, and, owing to the distance from Britain, vessels thence could not be sent out to arrive prior to the winter setting in, whilst at the same time

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