

As a proof that these discriminating duties impose heavy burdens on this colony in their operation, it may be added that the amount of duty collected under them last year was no less than 104,555*l.* or about one-fourth of the whole net revenue of the province derived through the Custom-house, a fact from which your memorialists draw the conclusion that the articles required for consumption are, in many instances, cheaper in Foreign than in British markets, and that, therefore, Canadian interests are seriously compromised by their operation in preventing a free resort to the cheapest markets for the supplying of the wants of the colony. But the amount of duty thus levied affords a very inadequate criterion, taken alone, of the extent to which Canadian interests are affected by the laws in question.

Your memorialists are of opinion that it is reasonable to assume that the amount lost by the colony by the operation of these differential duties in enhancing the cost price of imported goods, is fully equivalent to the amount levied under them; viz. 104,555*l.* a sum utterly wasted, as far as this colony is concerned, by the people of Canada being debarred from going to the cheapest market to supply their wants. Your memorialists would explain that this arises from its being cheaper in many instances to buy goods in England at a considerable increase over the price of similar articles in foreign markets, provided that such increased price fall short, in any degree, of the amount of discriminating duty levied on such foreign articles.

Your memorialists desire, however, carefully to guard against a misconstruction of their motives in making these observations. They are far from intending to cast blame upon the conduct of the mother country towards this colony. On the contrary, they acknowledge, with pride and gratification, that they have a due sense of her love of justice conveyed through the dispatch of your Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, of the 3d of March last, in the offer to release us from the effects of the laws in question, so soon as the colony should make an application to that effect, in a way which the Imperial Legislature could recognize as the well understood wishes of the people; and, therefore, your memorialists respectfully approach Your Majesty, to state the views which they entertain as representing the mercantile interests of this city.

In the opinion of your memorialists, a more formidable restriction, however, than the differential duties alluded to, and one which entails incalculably greater injury on the trade of this colony, it is now their duty to bring respectfully under the notice of Your most Gracious Majesty. It is a question they approach with some hesitation, knowing the high national interests which it is held to involve, but the vital interests of this colony require that it should be brought fully under Your Majesty's notice; and your memorialists rely with full confidence on its being carefully and dispassionately reviewed. They refer to the question of the Navigation Laws. These laws are so framed as virtually to give an absolute monopoly of the carrying trade of Canada, both internal and external, to the British shipowner, as the following extracts will show.

- 1st. Goods, the produce of Asia, Africa or America, shall not be imported into the United Kingdom, to be used therein, in foreign ships, unless they be ships belonging to the country of which the goods are the produce, and from which they are imported :
- 2d. No goods shall be exported from the United Kingdom to any British possession in America, except in British ships.
- 3d. No goods shall be carried from any British possession, to any other British possession, nor from one part of any such possession, to any other part of the same, except in British ships.
- 4th. No goods shall be imported into any British possession in foreign ships, unless such belong to the country of which the goods are the produce, and from which they are imported.

Why should Canada be thus limited to the use of British vessels? What equivalent in trade does England now afford to compensate her for such injurious restrictions? None, absolutely none.

But your memorialists, averse to employing unsupported assertions, or creating odium against these laws by mere general objections, will select a few instances to prove the fact which they assert, that they are highly injurious to the commerce and welfare of this colony. First, as regards external commerce: on instituting a comparison between the average rates of freight current between New York and Liverpool, where British and American ships meet in open competition, and Montreal and the latter port, in which case British vessels alone are permitted to engage in the carrying trade, the difference operating against Canadian interests is of sufficient magnitude to excite well founded alarm for the permanence of our prosperity, if those oppressive laws are persevered in. The following Tables show the current and average rates of freight at New York and Montreal respectively for the past three years, showing an average excess of charge against Canada of 3*s.* 3*d.* currency per brl. of flour, and 7*d.* currency per bushel of wheat.

For Mr. Secretary  
Gladstone's  
Despatch, 3 March  
1846, *vide* Papers  
ordered by the  
House of Com-  
mons to be printed,  
18 May 1846,  
No. 321, page 5.