

## CANADA.

It would be superfluous for your petitioners to point out the injurious effects which could not but result from such a diversion of trade; suffice it to say, it would create and cement ties of beneficial interest between Canada and the United States, and proportionally weaken the attachment which this colony entertains for the mother country.

Your petitioners are indeed aware that it has been asserted by a class of political economists, that the colonies are a source of pecuniary loss to England, and that she might profitably abandon them altogether; but your petitioners have too much confidence in the wisdom of Your Majesty's Government to suppose that such sentiments are shared in by them, or that even were the proposition to be true, they would draw the same precipitate conclusion from it.

In nations there are interests infinitely transcending those of a mere pecuniary nature; and your petitioners would regard the integrity of the British dominions, the preservation of Britain's political power and influence, as cheaply purchased by any pecuniary loss the colonies might occasion her.

It is with this belief, and with the desire to avert the dismemberment of the empire, so far at least as Canada is concerned, that your petitioners at this time approach Your Majesty. They do not seek the restoration of the old system of protection; on the contrary, they have no objection to the utmost freedom of trade, compatible with the safety of the ties subsisting between this colony and the mother country; but having respectfully shown how that connexion must be endangered when the measures of Sir Robert Peel take full effect, they will briefly point out those remedial measures which, in their opinion, would avert the evil, and continue to attach this province to England by the chains of interest, as well as of affection and duty. These measures, so far as imperial legislation is concerned, are,—

Firstly. The repeal of the Navigation Laws as they relate to Canada, and the throwing open the navigation of the St. Lawrence; and,

Secondly. The enactment of a moderate fixed duty, say not less than 5s. per quarter on foreign wheat, colonial to be admitted free. In the event of this suggestion being approved of by Your Majesty's Government, your petitioners would strongly urge that, if not inconsistent with existing treaties, the exemption from duty of Canadian produce should be extended to all bread stuffs shipped from a Canadian port, whether of Canadian or foreign origin; the effect of which would be to pour the whole trade of Upper Canada, and a vast proportion of that of the Western States, through the River St. Lawrence, adding immensely to the revenue arising from the public works of the province, and giving a powerful impetus to the prosperity of British North America. Indeed it is the opinion of your petitioners that the increase of revenue arising from the canals under the system proposed, would be such as would admit of our Legislature materially reducing, if not entirely repealing, the import duties on British manufactures imported into the provinces. Your petitioners having already presented an humble petition to Your Majesty in the month of May last, for the repeal of the Navigation Laws as they regard Canada, and having in that petition sufficiently explained their reasons for urging their repeal, they will only at present refer to the second measure suggested, namely, the enactment of a moderate fixed duty on foreign wheat.

Your petitioners would most earnestly urge this on the attention of Your Majesty's Government for the following reasons:—

Firstly. It would be no violation of the new fiscal principles of the English Government, inasmuch as such a duty as that prayed for would simply be a tax for revenue, and your petitioners see no reason why grain should not be moderately taxed as well as any other commodity.

Secondly. Your petitioners are of opinion, from practical observation, that such a duty would not come out of the pocket of the consumer, but out of that of the producer, that it would not in the general course of things add to the price of bread stuffs in England, but reduce the price of bread stuffs in the markets of foreign countries.

Thirdly. Such a moderate fixed duty on foreign grain would increase the revenue of the country, on the average, by about a million sterling; which, as it would not come out of the pocket of the consumer, would be a great national gain, combining a most seasonable relief to the country in its present financial position, with other advantages of perhaps even paramount consideration.

Fourthly. A duty of this kind in favour of Canada would preserve the trade of the St. Lawrence, add to the revenue derivable from the provincial canals, diffuse universal satisfaction throughout the colony, and what, in the opinion of your petitioners, is all important, would continue to attach Canada to the mother country, thus perpetuating the present connexion, and preserving inviolate the British dominions.

May it therefore please Your Most Gracious Majesty to take the prayer of this petition into your serious consideration, and grant such relief in the premises as in your wisdom may seem meet.

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

(Signed)

PETER M'GILL,

President of the Montreal Board of Trade.

FREDERICK A. WILLSON, Secretary.

Montreal, December 14, 1848.