

TRICKS OF NEWSPAPER WRITERS—GROSS MISREPRESENTATION!

We have on several occasions had to complain of the unscrupulous conduct of the Government organ in its statements respecting the *Economist*, but could not have believed it possible that the editor of that paper would have had the hardihood to attempt the deception which appears in his last number. On referring to that paper, the reader will find an editorial account of the debates which took place in the two Houses of Parliament on the Address in answer to the Queen's Speech, from which the following is an extract:—

"With respect to the Corn Duties,—Mr. Labouchere, who may be understood to speak the sentiments of the Government, said that he would not oppose the repeal of the 4s. duty on foreign corn, though he did not believe it would be any relief to the consumer, but only a loss of revenue, and an addition to the profits of the holders. We may expect, therefore, to see the trade in corn shortly entirely free, probably for ever.

"With respect to the Navigation Laws, the same gentleman said, that he would not refuse a temporary relaxation, but he would oppose all permanent abrogation. If shipping were wanted in the American ports, the employment of eight ships of the line, alone, would supply transit for 80,000 quarters of corn by one voyage each."

The public will, of course, judge from this, that the Government, whose sentiments, as the *Gazette* says, Mr. Labouchere may be understood to speak, are not of opinion that any good is to accrue from a free trade in corn, and that they are totally opposed to a permanent abrogation of the Navigation Laws, from which the country in general expects so much. Strange opinions these, indeed, to come from a Whig Ministry, and little consistent with the declaration which the eminent leader of that party has made on more occasions than one. So we thought when we read the *Gazette*, and so doubtless have thought many others, to whom that article has been shown. But what will those parties think, when we tell them, as we now do, that MR. LABOUCHERE NEVER UTTERED A WORD OF THE KIND! Such, we assert, is actually the case. We defy the editor of the *Gazette* to produce the copy of a London paper in which any such language is put into the hon. gentleman's mouth;—there is no such report to be found—no such sentiments were ever uttered by Mr. Labouchere, or any other members of the Cabinet!

How then did the editor of the *Gazette* get his report? Did he fabricate it? Did he, for his own particular purposes, invent it? Did he dream it? Did he and does he believe it?

It is for the editor of the *Gazette* to explain his own conduct; but we will state one fact, which will not, we fear, improve the matter. Although Mr. Labouchere never uttered, and could not have uttered, such a declaration against Free Trade, Lord Geo. Bentinck, the leader of the Protectionist party in the House of Commons, did, and the editor of the *Gazette* has absolutely taken the speech of this nobleman and published it as that of a member of the Cabinet!!!

Now did the editor of the *Gazette* do this willfully, or through ignorance? We leave him, as we said before, to explain; but in either case, it is bad enough. If it was by design, he has been guilty of a gross act of dishonesty; if by ignorance, he has shown himself to be a very incompetent editor of a newspaper. To mistake the sentiments of the Protectionist leader for those of a Liberal Minister, is such a blunder as would go far to destroy the character of a public man in most communities, and must have its effect in this. It exhibits an ignorance of the opinions of English statesmen, such as is totally inexcusable in a newspaper writer.

What renders the conduct of the editor of the *Gazette* still more suspicious is, that he must have known that the organ of the Ministry—the *Morning Chronicle*—(rather a different kind of organ to the Montreal one) had, just previous to the meeting of Parliament, and in anticipation of that event, came out strongly on the subject of Free Trade, and thereby prepared the public mind for the measures which it is now known the Government are actually about to recommend.

On the whole, we repeat, the conduct of the *Gazette* in this affair is most suspicious, and places the editor on the horns of a dilemma, from which we now invite him to escape, by explaining to his duped readers whether he really meant to cheat them, or does not know better than to take the opinions of Mr. Labouchere, the Whig Free-Trade leader, for those of Lord George Bentinck, the great hero of Protection!

TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'ECONOMIST.'

{ TOWNSHIP OF MILTON, COUNTY OF SHEFFORD, C.E.,
6th February, 1846.

SIR,—The most superficial observer of the signs of the times cannot fail to perceive the rapid progress which the principles of Free Trade are making towards adoption by the civilized world. They are certainly the most natural, liberal, and enlightened principles upon which nations can conduct their intercourse. In the promotion and practical application of these principles, as well as in every thing else which has for its object the benefit of the world and the amelioration of the condition of mankind, Great Britain has taken the lead; and as her example in commercial affairs is generally followed by the rest of the world, we may expect soon to see the principles not only adopted by the Colonies (by virtue of the power lately granted them), but by all commercial nations of any importance. The natural effect of the universal adoption of Free-Trade principles would be, to make the prosperity and advancement of each nation or country entirely dependent upon its own natural and internal resources, and the industry, enterprise, and enlightenment of its own people; rather than upon the unnatural and artificial system of monopolies, high protections, and prohibitory duties,—a system which is utterly incompatible with sound legislation and the genius of this enlightened age. The greatest impediment to the successful and beneficial operation of the Free-Trade system in Lower Canada, is the existence of the Feudal Tenure, as by its most barbarous and oppressive enactments, the very natural resources upon which we shall be entirely dependent when the protection which we have hitherto enjoyed in the British markets is withdrawn, are under the control of, and are completely monopolized by, the Seigniors or Feudal Lords; and as long as these resources are suffered to remain in the hands of a few individuals, who will not or do not develop them, and the advantages to be derived from them remain inaccessible to the body of the people and public enterprise, our past history furnishes sufficient proof that they never will be a source of wealth or benefit to the colony, and that Lower Canada never will make any progress as a manufacturing or an agricultural country. Lower Canada possesses the greatest natural facilities for manufacturing—an abundance of cheap labour, and an infinite number of the finest and most powerful water privileges in the world, and yet on account of the existence of the abominable Feudal Tenure, which places them all in the hands of the Seignior, they are of no advantage whatever to the country. The people are allowed to occupy the seigniorial lands only upon conditions which are the most detestable and degrading to British freemen. They must acknowledge the Seignior to be the "lord and proprietor" of the soil, must pay an annual rent, and upon the sale of any of their lands, the purchaser must pay a sum equal to one twelfth of the purchase money into the hands of the Seignior, who, in the deeds he gives, always reserves to himself all the water privileges, and other great and important advantages, to the great detriment of the unfortunate tenants. The Seignior, on his part, allows the people the enviable privilege of acknowledging themselves to be his "vassals and tenants," and of doing him "fealty and homage," for the lands and tenements he allows them to occupy! Under these circumstances, and labouring under the great disadvantages of this baneful and pernicious system, the country cannot make any advancement in manufactures or agriculture,—those two great branches of industry, and the foundation of all prosperity. It is thus that we are prevented from turning our own great industrial resources to profitable account, and thousands of our poor are deprived of the means of obtaining the necessities and comforts of life. If, under these disadvantages, Free Trade subjects us to the competition of foreign countries in the British markets, then the withdrawal of our protection by Great Britain, and the establishment of Free Trade, will, most assuredly, be followed by consequences the most disastrous to the welfare and prosperity of this province. However, I think that by the abolition of the Feudal Tenure on an equitable basis, with a due regard to the existing rights of all parties interested, which would give us the free use of our own resources, most, if not all, of the disastrous consequences which, under an opposite state of things, we may anticipate as the result of Free Trade to this province, may be completely averted. I would respectfully call the attention of Free-Traders to this question and urge upon them the imperative necessity of immediately endeavouring by all constitutional means to rid the country of the barbarous Feudal Tenure. From the very nature of their principles, which are opposed to monopolies in every shape, they are the party best calculated to effect this desirable object.—I hope to see the leading gentlemen of that party lose no time in setting on foot a well-organized agitation on the subject. It is emphatically a cause of the people: and their cordial support and sympathy might therefore with the more confidence be depended upon. That portion of the press, too, which advocates "free trade and no monopoly," should not remain inactive, but enter the field and win a share of that honour which a grateful people will always bestow upon their benefactors.

Hoping that the above hint may not be without effect,

I remain, Sir, yours truly,

A FRIEND OF CANADA.