

RIVALRY OF CITIES.—QUEBEC AND MONTREAL.

One of the greatest drawbacks to the prosperity of this colony is to be found in the want of cordiality, and of that spirit of co-operation amongst the inhabitants of different sections, which are essential in every rising community. And yet we know of no country where there is less rivalry of interest. In most countries of any considerable extent, there are numerous sea ports, each of which naturally seeks to engross to itself as much as possible the export and import trade, and views with jealousy and alarm every species of competition. In England this has notoriously been the case; and this monopolizing spirit and feeling has been encouraged by the privileges which have at various times been accorded to certain cities, either through money or court influence. Here we are altogether differently situated. Possessing but one channel of communication with the ocean, the main question obviously is, how is that channel to be made most productive to the whole country? The question, which city is best adapted to become the main depot for the discharge of produce, whether in its way from or to the ocean, is altogether secondary in importance, and although the decision may be modified to a certain degree by the spirit of enterprise of the respective inhabitants, it will finally be based mainly on the natural or artificial advantages which the favored city may afford. On such a subject there ought to be no more hostility between the cities, than between two merchants following the same trade. Each seeks to attract customers to his own warehouse, and each in so doing is legitimately and honorably pursuing the course of his profession.

But there is a rivalry honorable also, but still determined, which ought to be aroused, and that is with the foreigner.—Here is scope for competition, on the result of which—more than perhaps on any other event—depends the future greatness of this country. The prize to be contended for is nothing less than the conveyance through our waters, of the produce of the whole western country: if secured, it opens to us an almost boundless accession of wealth—not only in the toils which may be exacted from foreigners for the use of our internal communications, and which looking at the sum now raised on the Erie Canal amounting to £600,000 per annum, we may fairly calculate would soon amount to a sum sufficient to pay a large proportion of the national expenditure,—but by the vast addition to our commerce, which it must create. The means of success, we believe, are in our own hands; and that our neighbors are of the same opinion, every document emanating from the Government of the State of New York abundantly proves: all speak of the enlargement of the Erie Canal as the only means by which they can possibly compete with us. As success would be of such immense advantage, failure would lead to equally calamitous consequences. The canals, constructed at so enormous an expense to the country, would be idle; not yielding sufficient to defray the interest of the money expended on them. There is no medium: either we must advance or retrograde.

Such being the case, if ever there was an epoch in the history of this country which called for unity of action, it is the present; and yet we regret to say there is not the slightest appearance of that co-operative spirit to which we alluded in the commencement of this article. Why is there this apparent apathy, or what is worse, this discord and distrust, between those whose interests are identical?

In all the principal cities of Canada there are Boards of Trade chosen by the commercial class, from their own body, to watch over their interests. These Boards of Trade—we feel a pleasure in stating it—have for a series of years rendered essential service to their constituents; and the reports which have emanated from them at various times have generally been highly creditable productions, and in many instances have evinced a very high order of talent, and a thorough acquaintance with the science of political economy.

That a good understanding should at all times subsist between these various public bodies is manifestly desirable for the welfare, not of the mercantile community alone, but of every other class—since the interests of all are inseparably connected, in a country situated as this. Differences of opinion must arise wherever there is free discussion, but sound policy would dictate that those differences should be stated and argued in a friendly spirit: and when those differences exist on minor points alone, they should be waived by one or the other in order that those points on which there may be a coincidence of opinion may be energetically and efficiently urged. When also subject matters of great importance are brought before the several boards—subjects in the results of which all are deeply interested, but on the means of arriving at those results there may be wide difference,—it would be highly advantageous that deputations from the several associations or boards should occasionally meet each other, fully discuss the points of difference, and see if some middle course could not be struck out, which would meet the views of all, and which all would agree to support. Such occasional meetings would tend much to promote unity of action amongst the mercantile body, and to give weight and efficiency to their

representations to the government. It may be remembered that we, last summer on several occasions, urged this description of meetings to consider the subjects of the Navigation Laws, Free Navigation of the St. Lawrence, and such other topics, growing out of our changed commercial relations with Britain, as would probably be brought before our Provincial Parliament at its next sittings: and it has been, we have no hesitation in saying, a great loss to the country that our suggestions have not been acted upon. Had there been such a convention, we have no doubt there would have been combined action from all classes: as it is, there will, we fear, be as many plans for the legislature as there are cities. It is now too late to remedy completely, the effects of this inaction, but much may yet be done by the respective Boards of Trade, and Agricultural Associations, in promoting a mutual good understanding amongst each other, so that when parliament assembles, we may not present the spectacle of, "a house divided against itself."

We have been led into these remarks by a perusal of the proceedings at a public meeting held at Quebec, on the 7th inst., for the purpose of establishing a telegraphic communication between that city and Halifax, and of certain articles which have appeared in the *Quebec Mercury*, commenting generally on the conduct of the people of Montreal, and particularly on that of our Board of Trade towards the sister city. In our last number we took occasion to express our satisfaction at the spirit and enterprize of the good citizens of Quebec, and our cordial hope that they might be crowned with the most complete success; and we are satisfied that we but expressed the wish of the people of Montreal, who are far indeed from viewing with jealousy the public spirit of their neighbours. When such we know is the feeling of our city towards Quebec, we regret that it should have been apparently so little understood; on the contrary, if we may judge by a portion of their press, that it should have gone abroad in Quebec that there was a desire on the part of the people here to pluck a single leaf from the wreath to which they are entitled for their public spirit, or take a single dollar from the rich harvest which their commercial enterprize fairly entitles them to.

But it seems, according to the *Quebec Mercury*, great umbrage has been given by the Montrealers, because Mr. Alderman Lunn, in the Montreal City Council, without any allusion to the people of Quebec, gave notice of a motion to address "the Governor General, praying him to recommend to the Governors of the Lower Provinces the establishment of telegraphic communication between Halifax and Montreal," and because the *St. John's N.B. Courier* asserts that the Montreal Board of Trade had made a similar application to the Governor General.

As to Mr. Alderman Lunn, we must leave him to defend himself, and which we presume he will do when he brings forward his promised motion. We need merely mention that we believe it is not the practice in the Corporation to make any comments on merely giving notice of a motion to be hereafter made. The conduct of our Board of Trade may be explained to the satisfaction, we believe, of every unprejudiced person. We have no personal interest in the matter in controversy; nor do we pretend to know anything of the circumstances which operated on the minds of the Council of the Montreal Board of Trade,—with whom we have held no intercourse—all our information is gathered from the records of the proceedings at the meetings of the Council, which are open to every member of the Board of Trade. From these records we have gathered the following facts, which speak for themselves.

On 8th October last—a time when it will be fresh in the recollection of our readers, great interest existed here on the subject of telegraphic communications—the Montreal Board of Trade addressed a letter to the Quebec Board of Trade, stating, in substance, that their attention had recently been given to the subject of constructing a line of Magnetic Telegraphs from Quebec to Toronto, presently; with the view of connecting it, at Montreal, with the lines now existing or in progress from Boston and New York to Springfield, Massachusetts, and ultimately of extending it to Halifax, Nova Scotia. The capital required would be £22,000: and then object in the foregoing communication was to ascertain whether the mercantile class of Quebec would feel disposed to promote the undertaking, and if so, what proportion of the capital would be taken by them. So far it would appear the Montreal Board of Trade were desirous of acting in conjunction with the Quebec mercantile community, and that they were fully alive to the importance of Halifax as the point from which intelligence should radiate.

Now let us see how the Quebec Board of Trade met those advances from our city. The letter—which evidently required immediate action, and for want of which the scheme fell to the ground for the time—remained unanswered until the 3rd November, when the Quebec Board of Trade appear to have been roused to a state of sufficient energy to reply to it. They then—too late for any practical purpose—inform the Montreal Council of Trade that they (the Quebec Council) have no doubt that the undertaking would be looked upon with favour by the commercial and other inhabitants of the city, but until some scheme should have been proposed for their consideration, it would be impossible to say to what extent stock would be taken in their city. They further express their desire to cooperate with the Montreal Board of Trade.