

LORD ELGIN

himself that there was a great deal in the economic conditions of the provinces which demanded an immediate remedy before all reason for discontent could disappear. He did not fail to point out to Lord Grey that it was necessary to remove the causes of the public irritation and uneasiness by the adoption of measures calculated to give a stimulus to Canadian industry and commerce. "Let me then assure your Lordship," he wrote in November 1849, "and I speak advisedly in offering this assurance, that the dissatisfaction now existing in Canada, whatever may be the forms with which it may clothe itself, is due mainly to commercial causes. I do not say that there is no discontent on political grounds. Powerful individuals and even classes of men are, I am well aware, dissatisfied with the conduct of affairs. But I make bold to affirm that so general is the belief that, under the present circumstances of our commercial condition, the colonists pay a heavy pecuniary fine for their fidelity to Great Britain, that nothing but the existence of an unwonted degree of political contentment among the masses has prevented the cry for annexation from spreading like wildfire through the province." He then proceeded again to press upon the consideration of the government the necessity of following the removal of the imperial restrictions upon navigation and shipping in the colony, by the establishment of a reciprocity of trade between the United States and the British North American