

dearness of this route is an established fact; and they likewise feel, that if they did subscribe to that opinion, although it might corroborate the propriety of the course they have pursued in suggesting to Parliament the interposition of an interval before entire freedom shall be given to the corn trade, it could do no more; it could not induce them to ask, nor Parliament to grant, nor, they are certain, could it induce the people of Canada to desire, that the market of their farm produce should be maintained by means of a perpetual tax upon the people of England. In referring to the unchecked competition which, so far as British law is concerned, will be established between colonial and foreign corn by the repeal of the Corn Law, it perhaps may not have occurred to the Assembly, that British law alone cannot suffice to establish this competition. The price which the colonial and foreign exporters of corn respectively will obtain for their grain in Great Britain, must always be materially affected by the comparative degrees of facility which may be afforded in the country of the one and of the other for the introduction of those British goods by which payment for the corn must substantially be made. British goods are admitted into Canada at very low, into the American Union at very high, import duties. The effect of this is not merely to give to the British exporter a better position in the Canadian market than in that of the United States, but to enable him to give a better price for the commodity he purchases in return, and therefore to give to the corn trade of Canada a corresponding advantage, so long as the present tariffs continue, over that of the United States.

With respect to that portion of the address which prays Her Majesty to invite the Government of the United States to establish an equality of trade between the dominions of the Republic and the British North American colonies, I am commanded to instruct your Lordship to assure the Assembly that Her Majesty will readily cause directions to be given to Her Minister at Washington to avail himself of the earliest suitable opportunity to press this important subject on the notice of that Government, and that it will afford Her Majesty the most sincere satisfaction if any communication which may hereafter be held for this purpose shall have the effect which is desired by Her faithful Commons of Canada.

Her Majesty's Government have, as may be known to the Assembly, on several occasions endeavoured to make arrangements with foreign powers for the mutual relaxation of tariffs; and similar attempts have taken place among foreign powers, one with the other, but almost uniformly with ill success. Whatever arguments may be used to show the great increase of benefit that would accrue on both sides if states could have been induced to act simultaneously for this purpose, experience has sufficiently shown the difficulty of effecting these combined operations upon matters which are properly of domestic concern, and has suggested the wisdom of securing the incomplete advantage which depends upon our own free agency alone, rather than of foregoing it in the vain endeavour to realize benefits larger indeed, but not within our reach. Should the Government of the United States continue to maintain the scale of import duties now in force upon its frontier, Her Majesty's Government will view with regret a policy injurious to Canada; but they will reflect with satisfaction on the prevalence of laws more favourable to commerce on the Canadian side, and will anticipate from those laws both a direct benefit to the people and trade of the Province, and the further advantage which a consistent example given by this country and by its colonies will, as they believe, not fail to realize in disposing foreign states towards the removal of restrictions on trade.

With respect to that part of the address which relates to the duty of 1 s. per quarter, which it is proposed to charge on all wheat imported into England after the repeal of the Corn Law, I am to refer your Lordship to my despatch, No. 56, of the 18th April, on the same subject. From the purport of that despatch it would of course be even more difficult to recede at a period when the Bill introduced into the House of Commons by the advisers of the Crown has passed through all its stages in that House, and has been affirmed, as to its principle, on the second reading, by the House of Lords.

It is necessary for me here to offer an explanation with regard to an expression of mine, which appears to have given rise to misapprehension. I have stated to your Lordship, in a previous despatch, that Her Majesty's Government desire that the trade of Canada should in all respects approach as near to perfect freedom as the dispositions of its inhabitants and the exigencies of the public revenue there may permit; and from this it is inferred that the amount of 1 s. per quarter,

For Mr. Secretary
Gladstone's Despatch,
No. 56, of the 18th
of April, vide Papers
ordered by the House of
Commons to be printed.
18 May 1846, No. 321,
page 10.