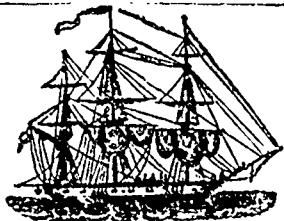


CANADIAN ECONOMIST.



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MONTREAL, SATURDAY, 10TH OCTOBER, 1816.

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THE NAVIGATION LAWS.

We think it incumbent on us to dwell on the effects of these laws upon Canadian industry and commerce, in order that the country may be fully prepared to reason with the Imperial authorities should they see fit to deny us what we are so clearly entitled to as an act of simple justice, viz., such a modification of these laws as will allow us to employ American or any other foreign vessels at our option in our intercourse with the world, and particularly with Great Britain herself.

In our present number we shall appeal to the good sense of our fellow-columnists in favour of our views, by submitting statistical facts to them that will prove how seriously our best interests are compromised by the operation of the laws in question.

In passing, however, we must have a parting word with our contemporary of the *Gazette*. That wonderful luminary seems by his late articles against our journal, and the Association of which it is the organ, to have parted with both his honesty and his common sense—witness the article in his paper of the 3d instant, in which he misrepresents the doctrines and opinions advocated by the writers in this journal so foully that reply would be worse than useless. He has evidently no scruples of conscience left to contend with. To such of our readers as see the *Gazette* no explanation of what we allude to can be necessary; but for the benefit of those who do not read that journal,—which has latterly, by the way, shown all the characteristics of a trucking time-serving print, instead of that sturdy independence which in the earlier stages of its existence it got credit for,—we may mention that it attacks us for inserting a "Dialogue" that appeared in our number of the 26th ultimo, "on Free Trade between two Farmers of the Eastern Townships,"—accusing us of affirming and maintaining the very fallacy in that Dialogue, which we took pains in our introductory remarks to expose and refute! There is but one term which can be applied to a public journalist capable of attempting to damage an opponent by resorting to such disreputable means as that of misrepresenting him in order to gain a momentary triumph with those who may not see both sides of the question by reading both papers. In our former numbers, however, we have so effectually exposed his previous misrepresentations, and refuted his contemptible sophistry, that for the present we do not feel called upon to notice his recent delinquencies more at large. We revert therefore to our subject, viz., the costliness to Canada of the British Navigation Laws.

Having occasion to refer lately to the Report of the Montreal Board of Trade, a document drawn up with great care and ability, and invaluable as a perfect exposition of our commercial relations with Great Britain, as well as foreign powers, we were particularly struck with the statistics which it embodies—establishing by authentic data the fact that during the years 1814-15 and 46 this colony sacrificed to the British ship-owner an average excess of 3s. 3d. currency per barrel of flour and 7d. currency per bushel of wheat over the rates which were current during the same period from the port of New York to the port of Liverpool, in Great Britain. It also furnishes the quantity of produce exported by the St. Lawrence during the same period, as follows:—

	1814 R. Barrels.	WHEAT. Bushels.
1814	415,477	282,183
1815	432,218	396,252
1816	311,665	306,939
Total	1,168,360	985,374

We must add, however, by way of explanation, that the quantity given for 1816 embraces the export up to the end of July only; to complete the year therefore we may add, according to present appearances, an estimate of at least 200,000 barrels of flour and 150,000 bushels of wheat, which will make the total export for the three years in question—

1,368,360 Barrels Flour,
1,135,374 Bushels Wheat.

We have also before us an authentic document, showing the quantity of timber exported from Quebec in the years 1841 and 1845—timber, deals, staves, lathwood, &c. being reduced to loads, as follows:—

1841	519,650 loads.
1845	663,951 "

1,183,601

To which we will add an estimate for 1816 of.....600,000

Making together for 1,783,600 loads exported during the three years in question. To these exports should be added about 60,000 barrels of ashes and a large quantity of provisions, barley, peas, &c.; but as time will not at present allow us to introduce them in this calculation, we limit ourselves to wheat, flour, and timber,—relying on the result as quite sufficient to satisfy the community that the Navigation Laws entail a degree of loss on this colony which entitles it to the best consideration of the mother country, claiming a modification of these laws as an act of mere justice—throwing liberality entirely out of the question.

Multiplying the quantity of flour and wheat exported, by the excess of 3s. 3d. currency per barrel, and 7d. currency per bushel, and the quantity of timber by an estimated excess of 7s. 6d. per load (which every practical merchant we conceive will allow is a moderate estimate, when tested by the average excess of flour and wheat), and the result shews that this colony has lost, during the period in question, no less than £921,098 11s. 6d. currency, or £308,032 17s. 2d. per annum! Let the agriculturist and the hardy care-worn lumberer ponder well on these facts, let them consider that within the last three years they have sacrificed to the British ship-owner—not to the British Government, be it remarked—but to their fellow-subject, the British ship-owner, the enormous sum of nearly a million of money! Well might the British Ship-owners' Society exult over Lord John Russell's recent declaration in Parliament, that he did not intend to introduce any measure for the relaxation of the Navigation Laws; but has the Canadian colonist any reason to be satisfied?—the Canadian colonist who is thus required to sacrifice to the British ship-owner nearly as much annually as he is required to contribute to his Government, to meet the expenditure of the colony!

The people of this colony must be changed, indeed, if they submit to this intolerable injustice without remonstrating with the Imperial authorities, and claiming the relief they are so manifestly entitled to.

But the party who argue against these laws being modified to suit our present circumstances, tell us that this is the price we pay for British protection, and that we must submit to it, or be cast off by the Mother Country. In the first place, we state, in reply, that no British statesman or British minister has yet used such a line of argument, and, until they do so, it is not worth our while to grapple with it; but when they do employ such argument, it will be easy to show that the price is too extravagant to be long quietly paid.

What nation is Canada likely to come in collision with to require such costly protection? None on the face of the earth, except the United States, and the worst that could happen then would be to become an independent member of the Union. But let us not be misconstrued; let it not be supposed that we desire such a change; far from it. Our love of country is, perhaps, the strongest feeling of our nature; but the cause we have at heart, viz., the commercial freedom of our adopted country, must be argued out to its fullest consequences, embracing all contingencies; and hence, by way of warning to the headstrong opponents of improvement, we glance at this as a probable result, should the Mother Country be so blind to her own interests as to persevere in maintaining her costly and harassing restrictions, when the public voice has been declared in decided and unmistakable tones against them.