

decay, and be utterly useless; that not only the productions of the United States bordering on the Upper Lakes, but those on the Canadian side will be directed from the channel of the St. Lawrence, and pass through a foreign country.

Can the editor of the *Quebec Gazette* deny these to be facts, and can he shut his eyes to their consequences? The trade of the country annihilated; our cities sinking into mere villages; those busy streets, now swarming with an active population, overrun with grass, silent and deserted; those splendid edifices erected with so much labour and expense, untenanted and sinking into decay; those wharves at which navies now ride in safety, discharging and receiving their cargoes, useless and dilapidated; our merchants bankrupts, our revenues destroyed, and the public creditors unpaid!

This may be considered and probably is an over-wrought picture, but it is difficult to say how disastrous may be the consequences, if we do not properly avail ourselves of the short period intervening before the small modicum of protection now afforded in Britain be withdrawn. It is as impossible as useless to disguise the fact, that there are great difficulties in the way, but they may we hope and believe be overcome by the united exertions of the whole community. The Report of the Montreal Board of Trade has specified certain reforms which we, in common with its framers, believe to be essential to our future existence as a commercial country; they have placed their opinions before the public and abide the decision of the tribunal to which they have appealed. Let those who believe their statement of the dangers and the remedies to be true, support their views,—let those who differ from them state the ground of their objections, and the remedies which they in like manner would prescribe.

### COLONIAL MISGOVERNMENT.

#### THE BOARD OF WORKS AND THE CROWN-LANDS DEPARTMENT.

On the 14th instant a notice was issued from the Crown-Lands Department from which we make the following extract:

"N.B.—In consequence of the present depressed state of the Timber Trade, the quantity of Timber to be cut per square mile has been reduced for this season from 1000 to 500 feet."

When our eye fell upon the above quotation, our first impression was that of doubt—doubt that such a notice was put forth in a British colony, under the authority of a Minister of the Crown! There it was, however, and its authenticity was unquestionable.

In the mother country, we see the leading statesmen of the day, and the highest Ministers of State, *vieng* with each other in the noble task of rendering industry and commerce free from limit or restrictions, and proclaiming to the world with boldness and sincerity their confidence in the soundness of the maxim that "every man is the best judge of his own interests," and that it is unwise in Governments to fetter or limit the discretion of the productive classes. But in Canada the maxim is reversed. Mr. Papineau, a Minister of the Crown, thinks he knows best what amount of timber should be prepared annually for the Quebec market, and because it has this year suffered a temporary depression, he *wills* that for the ensuing season 500 feet only shall be cut where formerly it was allowed to fell 1000! Will the British nation believe it? What will they think of a Colonial Minister who interferes with trade to render an important commodity dear, while they are doing everything on their side to render it cheap? Let it be proclaimed in time throughout the Baltic that a Canadian Minister has determined to limit the quantity of timber that shall be prepared here for the market for next season, in order that full advantage may be taken of his extraordinary wisdom!

Let Peel and Russell, whom the world at present looks up to and confides in as guides on all questions of national policy, and particularly as regards the development of industry and commerce. Peel and Russell who, proclaim the doctrine that industry can regulate itself without the interference of Government, and that supply and demand will always, in the long run, find their natural level;—let these statesmen, we say, henceforth hide their diminished heads, for, behold, a greater than they has appeared in this hemisphere, the luminary at the head of the Crown-Lands Department of this Colony! who, without reference to causes, without enquiry of any kind whatever, without consulting those who have contracts to fulfil, or those who contemplate making contracts for the future, without taking the trouble possibly to think of the effects of his absurd and injurious meddling, takes upon himself to cure a temporary depression in the Timber market by limiting the means of production! Let the public look to it in time. Who knows but some meddling spirit of the Ministry may next attempt to cure the depression in the Flour market by limiting by some unheard-of means the operations of millers, forwarders, farmers, and every one else concerned in the business? We repeat, that such absurd meddling as Mr. Papineau's should be looked to in time, to prevent such encroachments on the rights of industry being carried farther, through the ignorance of men holding high political appointments, and whose only punishment unfortunately is an indignant dismissal from office after the injury has been done.

In the foregoing lines we have condemned the conduct of a meddling spirit in the Ministry. We must now take up a very different subject—a drowsy one.

There is a Department in existence known as the Board of Works, and at its head is a person called the "Chief Commissioner." What this gentleman has been about this summer it is impossible for those not acquainted with the secrets of his office to discover. He was heard of some time since as being among his constituents, canvassing for his reelection. That, however, was got through satisfactorily, and we have since been expecting a sign from the Board of Works of an active, intelligent man being at its head. But we have been disappointed: no sign has yet been given. The new Commissioner is, we fear, what we have long suspected, incompetent in every respect—except public integrity, in which he is stainless—for the arduous duties of the office he has undertaken.

Would a competent, energetic public officer have allowed the best part of this summer to pass away *without determining what was to be done for the deepening of Lake St. Peter?* The commercial fate of this important city hangs in a great measure on the early, we might almost say the immediate, completion of a channel of at least 16 feet water through Lake St. Peter, and the Legislature in its late session did its duty in appropriating the necessary funds for that purpose, throwing the responsibility on the Government of *deciding* whether the old natural channel should be deepened, or whether the *dredging* of an entirely new channel should be prosecuted. This journal has repeatedly expressed the opinion that the old channel is that which should be made perfect, founding its opinion upon the following grounds:

1st. The work can be done in much less time.

2nd. It can be done at much less expense.

3rd. When completed there it will be a channel 1500 feet wide, instead of one only 150 feet wide; the only difference in the other respects between the two being that the new channel would be straight, while the old one is slightly curved, and about a mile and a half longer,—differences to which we believe practical men attach little or no weight, or respecting which differences authorities are so equally divided as to render it difficult to decide between them.

Thus all the Government has to do is simply to *decide* which of these two channels shall be rendered available for the commerce of this city; yet half the summer has elapsed and *no decision has been come to!* Nay, no steps even have been taken to obtain correct information upon the subject.

We call upon our fellow-citizens, therefore, to arouse themselves, and take their affairs into their own hands. Let them call upon the incompetent, the apparently idle men at the head of the responsible departments of the Government to do their duty, and to do us justice. Are the best interests of this city to be jeopardized, because an indolent, timid man at the head of the Board of Works has not head enough to adopt the proper means of obtaining sufficient information to enable the Government to decide which channel shall be prosecuted to completion? We trust that our fellow-citizens will speak out on this subject, and that the drowsy gentleman at the head of the Board of Works will be shamed into doing his duty, if he be insensible, as he appears to be, to higher and worthier motives.

### FREE TRADE IN CANADA WEST.

We have this week received the result of the labours of our Agent in Canada West, and have reason, on the whole, to be gratified with the support extended to the *Economist* in that division of the province. Nearly two hundred new subscribers have been added to our list, and there is now scarcely a town or village from Cornwall to London to which several copies of the *Economist* do not find their way.

Nor is this all. Gratifying as the success of the *Economist* is to us personally, we regard as of infinitely more importance the strength which our cause must receive from the active co-operation of the different mercantile bodies to be found in the Upper Province. We have frequently said, and now repeat, that it is only by union and decision on the part of all classes that speedy attention will be paid to our claims which the state of our trade imperatively requires, and that we shall receive from the Imperial Government a full concession of our Free-Trade demands. In this, as in all other matters, every thing depends on unanimity, and on the zeal and discretion with which our cause is conducted. If there should be division between us, arising from geographical position, or what may be supposed to be rival interests, the reforms we ask for may be postponed long after the time they could be of any use to us, and the commerce of the country pass wholly out of our hands. If, on the other hand, every section of the province is found equally intent on these reforms, it is no less certain that they will be conceded, and that, with their concession, the evils we now see threatening us will be averted.

And here we would beg to refer to a suspicion which seems to exist in certain quarters, that the question of Free Trade, as far as