

CANADA.

Laws as they regard Canada); and as the restrictions imposed upon them by these laws, and the partial closing of the St. Lawrence against foreign vessels, prove in their effects most detrimental to the commerce and to the essential interests of the province; it is, therefore, the opinion of your petitioners that the people of this colony have a just claim upon the mother country to be relieved from those onerous restrictions.

That your petitioners, from further experience, acquired in the season just closed, see the most powerful reasons to reiterate, what was urged by their fellow citizens at the public meetings already referred to, that there is the strongest ground for apprehension, should the British Navigation Laws (as far as they affect this province) continue in force after the protection to Canadian grain and flour in Great Britain is withdrawn, that the bulk of the produce, both of the Western States and of Canada West, will be sent to ports of the United States for shipment, notwithstanding the superior advantages in economy of transport which the internal communications of Canada possess, but which are fully counterbalanced by the greater cheapness of ocean freight in the United States, and that the Navigation Laws will thus be rendered inoperative as regards their main object, that of protection to British shipping, whilst they will exercise a most baneful influence alike over the portion of our revenue derived from public works, and over the interests of every individual connected with the trade and commerce of the country.

That your petitioners have duly considered the Bill "to amend the Laws in force for the encouragement of British Shipping and Navigation," prepared and brought into the House of Commons by Mr. Bernal, Mr. Labouchere, and Lord John Russell, and ordered to be printed on the 16th August last; and, although they desire to refrain from expressing any opinion upon the merits of the Bill, so far as they affect the general interests of the empire, yet conceiving that it fully meets the wants and just claims of this province, inasmuch as it proposes to leave them free to employ foreign or British vessels at their option in their commerce with the United Kingdom and other nations, and to concede to the Provincial Legislature the power to regulate the coasting trade and inland navigation, as it may deem most for the general good, hail the measure with the liveliest satisfaction, and declare their earnest hope that nothing will occur to prevent its being enacted, and becoming operative at the earliest possible day after the next meeting of the Imperial Parliament, and trust that the urgency of their case will be duly appreciated by Your Majesty's Government; your petitioners being convinced that the provisions of the Bill, so far as they relate to Canada, are indispensable for the restoration of prosperity to this colony.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that Your Most Gracious Majesty will be pleased to take the foregoing into Your Majesty's earnest consideration, in order that the concession claimed, which your petitioners anxiously look for, and consider themselves justly entitled to, may be granted and made available to them on the opening of the navigation of the St. Lawrence in the spring of the ensuing year.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

(Signed)

A. N. MORIN,

Speaker, Legislative Assembly;

(Signed) Jos. BRUDSET, Mayor.

PETER M'GILL,

President, Montreal Board of Trade;
and 2447 other signatures.

Montreal, December 18, 1848.

Similar petitions addressed to the two Houses of the Imperial Parliament.

(No. 8.)

No. 4.

COPY of a DESPATCH from Governor-General the Earl of ELGIN AND KINCARDINE to Earl GREY.

Government House, Montreal,
January 14, 1849.

(Received February 5, 1849.)

MY LORD,

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a petition to Her Majesty the Queen, from the Hamilton Board of Trade for the repeal or modification of the Navigation Laws, as far as they relate to Canada; and I have to request that your Lordship will be pleased to lay it at the foot of the Throne.

I enclose likewise similar petitions for presentation to the two Houses of the Imperial Parliament.

I have, &c.,

(Signed)

ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

The Right Hon. Earl Grey,

&c. &c. &c.

Enclosure in No. 4.

TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY IN COUNCIL.

The Petition of the Board of Trade of Hamilton, Canada West,

HUMBLY SHOWETH,

THAT your petitioners submit, with the most profound respect, that inasmuch as the Imperial Authorities have deemed it advisable to abandon their protective policy, and have, in