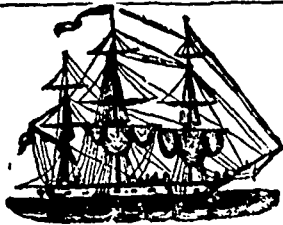


# CANADIAN ECONOMIST.



## FREE TRADE JOURNAL, AND WEEKLY COMMERCIAL NEWS.

Vol. I.]

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, 22ND AUGUST, 1846.

[No. 17.

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## THE CANADIAN ECONOMIST.

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### MONTREAL BOARD OF TRADE AND 'QUEBEC GAZETTE.'

In our last number we inserted a Report of the Montreal Board of Trade on the state of Canada, particularly as affected by the new commercial policy of Great Britain.

That document, from its intrinsic merit, as well as from the importance of the topics treated on, has doubtless engaged the serious attention of our readers, and we trust that it will be widely diffused not only in this Province but in the Mother Country. The public owe a debt of gratitude to the Montreal Board of Trade, for so promptly acting on the suggestion which we ventured to throw out, and for giving the weight of their character and influence to the principles which the Free Trade Association set forth in their Report on the same subject, dated 17th July last. We trust that the course pursued by the Montreal Board of Trade will be followed by all the other Boards of Trade in the Province; since it is to the combination of these public Boards, comprising as they do within their circle a large portion of the wealth and intelligence of the country, that we mainly look for a reformation of the abuses of our commercial system.

We think that the Montreal Board of Trade has done wisely in making a separate Report on those subjects which lie immediately within the sphere of action of the Imperial Government. To have intermingled questions which are within the province of our local Executive, would have embarrassed the discussion; and from the wide difference of opinion which prevails on such topics would perhaps have tended to prevent the attainment of the objects enumerated in the Report.

Let us not however be misunderstood. Concurrent with our claim on the British Government for the removal of all restrictions imposed by Imperial Acts on our commerce, must be our demands on the Provincial Government for a radical fiscal reform. The one is equally essential to our welfare with the other, and until both objects are gained we cannot look for commercial prosperity.

But, whilst we would by no means compromise or shrink from the expression of these opinions, we hold it prudent policy to avail ourselves of the assistance of those who are willing to further some, although they are opposed to other, of our aims. In this spirit we are quite willing to receive as coadjutor the worthy member for Durham, JOHN TREKERN WILLIAMS, Esq., who has recently enlightened his constituents on the subject of Free Trade; nothing doubting, that by the time we have succeeded with his assistance, in removing the impediments to our foreign trade imposed under the plea of protection to British shipping or manufactures, we shall also experience his valuable aid in the removal of those shackles imposed with a view to the protection of Canadian agriculture: or should we be disappointed in this expectation, at all events whilst thus unitedly fighting against protection we can mutually exclaim:

"Turn thou the mouth of thy artillery  
As we will ours, against these saucy walls:  
And when that we have dash'd them to the ground,  
Why, then defy each other."

For the furtherance of the objects specified in the Report of the Montreal Board of Trade, we look with confidence as we have already stated to the other Boards of Trade in Canada. We rejoice to learn that in Canada West all these associated bodies are on the alert, and numerous representations, similar in their character to those which have gone forth from this city, will be transmitted to the Imperial Government.

Amidst the general movement, we ask: Will Quebec alone remain passive? Will her Board of Trade sit with folded arms, waiting to see what lucky circumstance in the chapter of accidents may occur to ward off the impending danger to her and our commerce? Is she not deeply interested in the question, whether the stream of commerce is to flow down the St. Lawrence, or be directed to the Hudson? Is she so confident of the continued monopoly of the Timber Trade—so free from all apprehensions of competition with the Baltic—as to make in her eyes every other branch of commerce insignificant and of no estimation? These are questions which it behoves her to ponder well, if she intends to maintain her present eminence, and still more if she determines fully to avail herself of her natural advantages in the commercial struggle with our enterprising neighbours in which we are about to embark.

It has been to us a subject of regret, since we entered on our career as public journalists, that we have experienced little sympathy or support in our objects from the inhabitants of Quebec. We have been, and are, loth to believe that any feeling of jealousy at the increase of the trade of Montreal, can have led to this estrangement. Sure we are at least, that, since our establishment we have never uttered one word that implied a preference of the interests of Montreal over those of Quebec, or indeed over those of any other city of Canada. All the measures we have advocated have been general in their character, and, to the best of our judgment, advantageous to the whole country. We have ever repudiated national or local preferences.

Again we ask, therefore, why is it that Quebec has stood aloof from us? If she differ from us, why has she not convinced us by argument of the erroneousness of our principles? If she agree with us, why does she not strengthen us with her assistance and support? In either case, we respectfully invite her to record her opinion. Surely the occasion is of sufficient importance to justify the invitation.

Since writing the foregoing observations, the *Quebec Gazette* of the 19th inst. has reached us, from which we gather that the Report of our Board of Trade has at least attracted the attention of the press of the sister city. We are glad to see this symptom of vitality in one of the members, and hope it may prove the precursor of renewed life and vigour through the whole body politic.

We infer from the article in the *Gazette* that the editor is an advocate for the continuance of the British Navigation Laws; but from the peculiar style in which he treats the subject, it is difficult to ascertain what are his actual opinions. We think most of our readers will admit that a *prima facie* case has been made out against the continuance of the operation of those laws in this colony, and that strong grounds have been assigned for our application for their repeal. It now behoves those who advocate their continuance to bring forward their case, and we venture to promise that when they do so we shall be prepared to rebut it.

The editor of the *Quebec Gazette* takes exception to the Report of the Montreal Board of Trade because they do not "trace out the probable causes of the comparative cheapness of the United States over Canadian vessels." We do not conceive it to have been any part of their duty to do so, the *onus probandi* clearly lies with the party claiming protection to demonstrate the grounds of their demand, and of this so acute a logician as the editor of the *Quebec Gazette* must be well aware.

The Board of Trade have done their duty—they have detailed facts which irrefragably prove that in various branches of our commerce we are heavily taxed in order to protect the British ship-owner, and they have shewn that the grounds on which alone such a monopoly could be defended, namely, an equivalent protection to our products in the British markets, no longer exists. They have demonstrated that without the burthen imposed on us by the British Navigation Laws is removed, this the great natural outlet for the products of the teeming West, and as such the natural source of our wealth will be of no avail; that our public work will sink into