

subject." The answer inclosed, after acknowledging receipt of the letter of inquiry, says :—

"I am to state in reply that all documents deposited in London Custom House before the year 1814 were destroyed by a fire which occurred in 1815, and that the earliest documents referring to the Canadian Trade and Customs, now deposited in the Custom House are those for the year 1828."

The returns for 1791, sent by Mr. Dunscomb, show very strikingly the enormous increase in the size of the ships since that date. I have made an abstract of the tonnage of the ships given in the returns, which shows that there were:

Tons		Ships.
Under	50	2
From 51	to 75	7
" 76	" 100	3
" 101	" 150	22
" 151	" 200	23
" 201	" 250	15
" 251	" 300	7
	309	1
	339	1
	384	1
	411	1
	508	1
		84

The returns not being of great length they are given in full in a note which will be found at the end of this Report. (See Note B).

In the *Haldimand collection* there is a volume containing the statistics of the Trade of Quebec, from 1768 to 1783, and these also are printed. I have slightly changed the form of the accounts for the purpose of saving room, but with this exception the tables are an exact transcript of those in the original. (See Note C).

There are some discrepancies between the totals and the items, but these I have not rectified, as the errors may be in the details rather than in the addition.

A list of the appointments to the Customs at Quebec and Montreal from the Cession of Canada is also given. (See Note D).

I have thought it desirable to have these returns printed as, in the first place, they are of great interest to the commercial community, and in the second, because their publication may lead to an investigation by some of the old firms into documents that may be in their possession with regard to the trade of the various ports. Documents relating for instance, to the early trade of Montreal, Halifax, N. S.; St. John, N. B.; Charlottetown, P. E. I.; St. Johns, Newfoundland; those connected with the lake trade, and others of a similar nature, would not only be of interest but of great value. If gentlemen who are or who have been connected with the trade and commerce of the country would forward documents of the nature I have indicated, a collection might be formed that would be of inestimable value as the foundation for a thoroughly good history of the commercial progress of the British North American Provinces and the Dominion. Such information, even if it yet exists, is so scattered and practically inaccessible, as to be of comparatively little value. The various Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade, Harbour Commissioners and similar bodies, might render great assistance in promoting this object.

There is another cause of loss of papers to which I beg leave to refer, namely, the frequent destruction of printed records of parliamentary and departmental proceedings; reports of committees and other documents. These, which at present are of comparatively little value, become in the course of time of great service to those dealing with public events. Unfortunately, from a desire to obviate a temporary