

2 MEMORIAL *from* THE MONTREAL BOARD OF TRADE *for*

COPY of a DESPATCH from the Governor-General of *British North America* to Earl *Grey*, enclosing a MEMORIAL from the MONTREAL BOARD OF TRADE for a Modification of the NAVIGATION LAWS, and for the removal of the Restriction at present applicable to the Navigation of the *St. Lawrence* by Foreign Vessels.

(No 16.)

COPY of a DESPATCH from Governor General the Right Honourable the Earl of *Elgin* to Earl *Grey*.

My Lord,

Government House, Montreal,
24 March 1847.

I HAVE the honour to transmit for your Lordship's consideration the copy of a Memorial presented to me by the Montreal Board of Trade, which treats of measures of great importance as bearing on the interests of this Province.

15 March.

I have, &c.

(signed) *Elgin & Kincardine*.

Enclosure.

To His Excellency the Right Honourable the Earl of *Elgin and Kincardine*, Governor-general of British North America, &c. &c. &c.

The MEMORIAL of the MONTREAL BOARD OF TRADE,

Humbly sheweth,

THAT in the opinion of your Memorialists the recently adopted commercial policy of the mother country, imperatively demands the immediate attention of the Provincial Legislature, with the view of effecting corresponding modifications in the fiscal and commercial regulations of this province.

That the laws which press most injuriously upon the energies of the inhabitants of this province, restricting the freedom of their commerce, discouraging that spirit of industry and enterprize which ought to be fostered and promoted, and, in short, depressing the general welfare by retarding the development of the varied resources of the province, are, First, The British Navigation Laws; Secondly, The Imperial Differential Duties; Thirdly, The Duties levied on Agricultural Produce; and Lastly, The Restrictions maintained against Foreign Vessels navigating the *St. Lawrence*.

The first and last mentioned of the above restrictions, your Memorialists are aware, are not under the control of the Provincial Legislature; but they nevertheless think it necessary to draw your Excellency's attention to their injurious effects upon our commerce and general welfare, in the hope that your Excellency will take such steps as may be necessary to bring them under the notice of the Imperial authorities, as well as to urge the paramount necessity which exists of their being promptly modified to such an extent, as will leave the people free to employ the cheapest vessels they can procure, whether they be British or foreign, and the inhabitants of Montreal in particular, the power to avail themselves of the advantages to be derived from an unfettered intercourse with foreign nations; without which concessions, your Memorialists despair of being able to maintain a successful competition with their neighbours of the United States, for the extensive and growing trade of the Western regions of America.

Next in the order of importance is the question of the Differential Duties. These your Memorialists conceive to have been virtually placed within the control of the Provincial Legislature by the "British Possessions Act" passed in the last session of the Imperial Parliament, and they would therefore respectfully but earnestly crave, that your Excellency will take such steps as your Excellency may deem advisable, to procure their unqualified repeal.

With respect to the duties on Agricultural Produce, your Memorialists would respectfully urge, that they consider such duties highly objectionable in principle, because they deem it unjust, as well as unwise, to tax the first necessities of life; and injurious, because they tend to limit the export trade of the province.

Your Memorialists would, in the next place, with the view of promoting and encouraging industry, recommend, that all raw materials required for manufacturing purposes should be admitted free of duty. In this respect, your Memorialists would follow in the footsteps of the mother country, which has recognized the principle so fully, that they believe scarcely a duty remains in her tariff upon such materials.

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