

NATIONAL HOTEL,

Washington, January 6th, 1851.

To the Hon. R. M. McLANE,

*Chairman Com. of Commerce, House Reps.*

SIR: I avail myself of your kind permission to state the grounds on which the passage of the bill which has been repeatedly brought under the consideration of Congress for establishing reciprocal free trade in certain articles, the natural products of the United States and Canada, is urged by the latter. To bring the subject fairly under consideration, I must advert to the changes which have taken place within the last few years in the colonial policy of Great Britain. The old policy of the mother country was to compel the colonies by means of heavy differential duties, to purchase their supplies exclusively from her. The trade was carried on in British bottoms, and the products of the colonies were admitted into the markets of the mother country on more advantageous terms than those of foreign nations. While such was the commercial policy of Great Britain, the political affairs of the colonies were materially influenced by the Imperial Government, the local Parliament having no practical control over the administration of affairs. About the same period, when, owing to the change in the commercial policy of Great Britain, it became necessary to remove all restrictions on the colonial trade, a most important concession was made to the North American Provinces by the introduction of a system of government under which the local Parliaments obtained an effective control over their Governments. The consequence of the withdrawal of the protection formerly enjoyed by the colonies has been, that they have been left to buy and sell in the markets of the world, just as the United States, or any other foreign nation. Under the colonial system, the differential duties