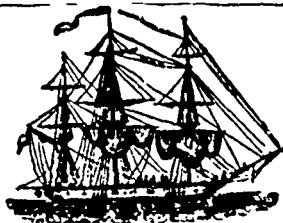


CANADIAN ECONOMIST.



FREE TRADE JOURNAL, AND WEEKLY COMMERCIAL NEWS.

Vol. I.]

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, 31st OCTOBER, 1846.

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THE CANADIAN ECONOMIST.

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THE NAVIGATION LAWS.

Our contemporaries of the *Gazette* and *Herald* affording us cause to dwell upon the effects of these laws, we do so the more willingly as it is all-important to the country that their influence and bearings should be fully understood.

The *Gazette* has become furious, because in exposing his misrepresentations we have turned the poisoned sting of his malevolence against himself. Vanquished in argument, and foiled in his personal attacks, he has betaken himself to swaggering, the last resort of weak-minded men. We quote the following paragraph as a specimen of the style for which his press has become notorious:—

"Though Master Jocko may wink his eyes, fold his tail between his legs, and look as demure as possible, he can scarcely escape recognition, and will probably receive, after all, what is proverbially called 'monkey's pay'—'more kicks,' as the sailors say, 'than halfpence.'"

Thus, to all appearance, he fancies himself a perfect Achilles, and "fierce as a forest boar" throws down the gauntlet to a whole "confederacy," daring one or all to step forth and pick it up. No doubt he fancies himself a hero, but the public calmly viewing without partaking of his passion, are involuntarily reminded by his antics, of the fabled animal of old, which mistook its character for a moment from finding itself enveloped in a lion's skin—objects both and equally of pity or derision.

The *Herald*, the antipodes of the *Gazette*, is manly and straightforward, and it gives us pleasure to pursue our difficult inquiry in a friendly way with him. In his number of the 28th, he thinks he has discovered another flaw in our calculation respecting the enormous loss entailed upon the productive classes of this Colony by the operation of the Navigation Laws, which we have shown to be about £300,000 a-year. Let us add, that we now name this sum advisedly and after mature deliberation, being fully satisfied that even as regards timber we can convince the public that our calculation will bear the test of the severest scrutiny.

But before going into this part of our subject, let us ask the *Herald*, why, being an advocate for a modification of the laws in question, he limits himself to pouncing upon what he considers to be a flaw in our indictment of these laws, passing altogether over other facts which cannot be disputed, and which ought to be laid perseveringly and in every shape before the public,—facts which must sooner or later convince every reasonable man, every dispassionate inquirer, that what we affirm respecting these laws is founded in truth and incontrovertible.

Let, for instance, particulars like the following be ever kept before the public by such journals as sincerely desire to bring about a modification in the Navigation Laws so far as this Colony is concerned, viz.: that comparing rates of freight current at New York with those prevailing at the same dates here, the following facts are shown: 1. That while the rate was 2s. on the 13th July last at New York for Flour per brl., it was 6s. per brl. here; 2. That at another date, while it was 2s. 3d. per brl. at New York, it was 6s. per brl. here; 3d. That on August 14th, while it was 2s. 3d. there, it was

5s. 9d. here; and 4. That at the present moment, while it has reached the extravagant rate of 3s. there, it is 5s. 6d. to 6s. here, with an obvious upward tendency. Such facts, we humbly think, our contemporary of the *Herald* ought to have laid before his readers, as well as what he has supposed to be a defect in our difficult and heretofore unattempted calculation. We believe in the sincerity of our contemporary's convictions, and knowing the widely extended influence of his journal, will not attempt to undervalue the service he might do the cause by giving publicity to our labours.

Again, with reference to the question of importing sugars from the Spanish and other foreign islands. It is notorious that the bulk of our supplies are imported direct from the Spanish islands, where English vessels are scarcely ever to be found for charter, while American vessels, on the other hand, are always procurable on the spot—thus inflicting additional sacrifices upon us. What says the Report of the Montreal Board of Trade, a report emanating from the highest mercantile source, recognised by law, and enjoying the confidence of their constituents, the mercantile body at large? It says that importers of sugars are compelled to pay British vessels 3s. per cwt. for carrying their sugar, while American vessels could be had in abundance to do the work at 2s.! What, then, is the sacrifice thus entailed upon us, and that too in addition to the £300,000 a-year already accounted for? By authentic data, the quantity of sugar imported by sea into this Colony runs from 5,000,000 lbs. to upwards of 9,000,000 lbs. per annum, and 1s. per cwt. extra freight sacrificed to the British shipowner upon that quantity of sugar, that is on the mean quantity of 7,000,000 lbs. per an., amounts to £3,125; and yet we are told by such prejudiced papers as the *Gazette* that the Navigation Laws have no "appreciable influence" on the rates of freight which the monopolist British shipowner compels us to submit to! We could go on exposing hardships in every direction, imposed upon us by the harrassing operations of these blighting laws, but our article having already run to a greater length than we intended, we must limit ourselves for the present to showing that in our original estimate for the sacrifice on timber, we made, not only a fair, but a far more liberal allowance than was strictly required of us.

We cannot quote the Montreal Board of Trade as our authority for the average rate of timber freights from Quebec to Liverpool for the last three years, but by other sources to which we have access we have established it at 36s. 6d. stg. per load, which is the equivalent of the average rate of flour from Montreal for the same time, which the Board of Trade establishes at 4s. 9d. stg. Now this average rate for flour established an average loss to Canada of 3s. 3d. cy. per brl. less the necessary allowance of about 9d. per brl. for the difference of expense of navigation, leaving a clear sacrifice of 2s. 6d. per brl., or 44 per cent on the full average rate.

Thus, it is obvious, by parity of reasoning, that we are entitled to assume that 44 per cent. of the freight paid upon timber is actually sacrificed by this Colony, instead of our very moderate estimate of only 17 per cent. In other words, we are entitled to estimate the loss at 19s. 4d. currency, per load, instead of the moderate rate we assumed of 7s. 6d. per load; in which case, the figures would have stood thus, upon timber alone:—

1,783,000 loads, at 19s. 4d. currency, £1,723,566 13 4
Instead of—Same quantity, at 7s. 6d. " £668,625 0 0

showing a difference under-estimated by us, from a desire to keep within the most moderate bounds, of upwards of a million of money in three years.

Canadians, think of this. Look into the figures and satisfy yourselves that we are not placing a fable but an actual and frightful picture before you. Examine it, ye lumbermen on the Ottawa, whom the *Gazette* invoked, a few days since, to struggle to maintain these harassing and commerce-crippling laws; examine it, we say—take not our word for it, but examine it, and satisfy yourselves that these laws cost you ten times as much, in extra freight, as any benefit you receive from the differential duties maintained by England in favor of your timber.

Our backsliding "confederate," the *ci-devant* member of the Free Trade Association, who presides over the destinies of the *Gazette*, has again honored us with a two-column notice. It is a pity this Don Quixotte of the press does not time his lucubrations better: he is generally (with one memorable exception,) too early or too