

CANADA.

New York, for shipment to Great Britain; and while our canals are at present paying but little more than the expense of attending them, we believe that under wise and liberal laws, they would be made the source of great revenue, even beyond the expectations of the most sanguine.

We do not wish, unnecessarily, to obtrude our complaints on the attention of Your Majesty, but being, mostly, agriculturists, we deeply feel the evils under which we labour, in consequence of these laws, and humbly pray that Your Majesty will be graciously pleased to take the subject into Your Majesty's serious consideration, and to grant such relief in the premises as to Your wisdom may seem meet, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Farmersville, November 29, 1848.

[1451 signatures.]

No. 2.

(No. 24.)

No. 2.

COPY of a DESPATCH from Governor-General the Earl of ELGIN AND KINCARDINE to Earl GREY.

Government House, Montreal,

February 11, 1849,

(Received March 7, 1849.)

MY LORD,

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith, a petition to Her Majesty the Queen, signed by 53 members of the Quebec Board of Trade, stating that the petition from that body for the repeal of the Navigation Laws, which was enclosed in my Despatch, No. 77,* of the 13th June last, does not represent the sentiments of the majority of the present members.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

The Right Hon. Earl Grey,
&c. &c. &c.

Encl. in No. 2.

Enclosure in No. 2.

TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

The Petition of the undersigned Members of the Board of Trade of Quebec.

HUMBLY SHOWETH,

THAT the corporation consists of 89 members, of whom 17 are absent from the province.

That this petition is signed by 53 members thereof, being a large majority of that body.

That the petition to Your Majesty from their Council bearing date the 13th of June last, praying for an alteration in the Navigation Laws, does not represent the sentiments of your present petitioners, because they deem it incompatible for colonists seeking protection to ask for the abrogation of a law, which may severely injure the shipping interests of the mother country and the colonists, and endanger the withdrawal of the protection they now enjoy on their timber, without which they cannot successfully compete with foreigners.

That immense sums of money have been expended in improving the navigation of the St. Lawrence, so that vessels carrying 5000 barrels can now bring their cargoes to Quebec from the extremity of the Western Lakes without breaking bulk. That this enormous outlay, and the advantages resulting from it, will become of no avail if resort is not again had to protection, as from the intricate navigation of the river below Quebec, its distance from other markets, and the long period during which it is closed in winter, render it impossible either for Quebec or Montreal to compete with the Atlantic ports; and your petitioners conceive they cannot adduce a better proof of this than by contrasting the present market rate for superfine flour in New York with that in Montreal. In the former it is worth 5.75 dollars, equal (at the true par of exchange, viz., within a fraction of 2 per cent. premium), to 29s. 3d. currency per barrel, whilst at the latter it only commands 24s. A part of this difference no doubt must be ascribed to the port of Montreal being now closed, but a still greater proportion to the fact, that after the 1st of February next, all grain and flour, whether from a colonial or foreign port, will be admitted into the United Kingdom on the same terms. And your petitioners feel confident, that so long as this continues, flour will always command in New York at least 2s. 6d. per barrel more than in Montreal, whereas a permanent duty of 8s. per quarter on wheat, and 5s. per barrel on flour, would ensure the carrying trade of the whole of the produce from the Western country in British bottoms, and at the same time tend immensely to increase the consumption of British manufactures throughout the province.

Your petitioners hail with grateful feelings the liberal overtures made to the Legislature for the construction of a railroad from hence to Halifax, a measure they conceive deeply calculated to maintain the connexion with the mother country, and fraught with the greatest advantages to the inhabitants of these provinces.

* In series presented July 1848, page 13.