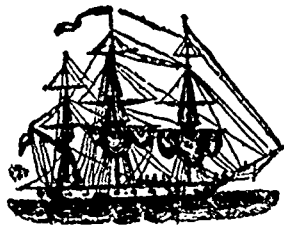


# CANADIAN ECONOMIST.



## FREE TRADE JOURNAL, AND WEEKLY COMMERCIAL NEWS.

Vol. I.]

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, 3rd APRIL, 1847.

[No. 49.

### CONTENTS.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1.—Montreal Board of Trade and the Press. | 7.—Duties.—Nova Scotia.                      |
| 2.—The Usury Laws.                        | 8.—The Navigation Laws and British Opinions. |
| 3.—Attorney General and Board of Trade.   | 8.—Miscellaneous Articles.                   |
| 4.—Freights on the St. Lawrence.          | 9.—Intelligence.—General and Local.          |
| 5.—British Shipowners' Circular.          | 10.—The Markets.                             |
| 6.—Trade of Canada.                       | 11.—Advertisements.                          |
| 7.—Shipping Trade.—Description of Seamen. |  |

## THE CANADIAN ECONOMIST.

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, 3rd APRIL, 1847.

### MONTREAL BOARD OF TRADE AND THE PRESS.

We had occasion in our last to pay a deserved tribute to our Board of Trade for the zeal and ability with which they have laboured in behalf of the mercantile community, and for the manliness with which they have stood forth to denounce the apathetic indifference with which the commercial interests of the country appeared to be viewed in high places. If any incentive—besides that of the approbation of their fellow-citizens—were needed to urge the Montreal Board of Trade—and those other public bodies who with them are struggling to emancipate the commerce of the country—to persist in their career, it is to be found in the covert opposition which they encounter from that portion of the press which is commonly supposed to be in the confidence, and under the influence, of the Administration. That opposition, it is true, is sufficiently contemptible in itself; being generally expressed in sneers and abuse—weapons easily wielded and ever at the command of those who are incapable of grappling with arguments;—but as probably directed by authority, it is entitled to graver consideration. We may be in error in our supposition—we shall rejoice to find that we are so—but the peculiar manner in which the attack in the *Montreal Gazette* on our Board of Trade has been conducted, certainly conveys to our mind the apprehension, that it is the dictation of persons behind the scenes; and who so likely as the party of whom he professes to be *par excellence* the organ? How otherwise are we to account for his continued silence for months after the appearance of those articles, which he now attacks with such virulence, but on the hypothesis that he is acting under orders? The occasion too is happily chosen: there is sufficient time before the meeting of Parliament to feel the pulse of the people, and to ascertain whether they will be satisfied to let things remain as they are. The instruments are also equally well adapted for the work. First, steps on the scene the Hon. Mr. Moore: he may be regarded as the pilot balloon, sent off to see which way the wind blows; but he is deficient in ballast, and the bubble soon bursts. Then is launched forth the *Montreal Gazette*, and although being light and puffed up with wind, like his *avant courier*, he is well adapted to soar into the clouds, he is ill qualified to abide the “pelting of the pitiless storm”; and consequently founders about tempest-tossed, until he also explodes, and falls to the ground; “used up,” as our friend of the *Pilot* observes.

The results of these experiments—by whomsoever they may have been authorized—on the public mind, are certainly not very encouraging to the Protectionists; but they are, it seems, not easily daunted. Driven from the commercial metropolis of Canada—shamefully routed here—they have taken refuge in the *ultima Thule* of Canada West, and are again prepared to do battle. The cry of protection to the British shipowner, and to the British manufacturers, being in a manner abandoned, is to be replaced by the cry of Protection to the Canadian Agriculturist. Every exertion is to be used to persuade the people of this country that the notion of commerce, manufactures, and agriculture, being linked together in

interest, is a gross delusion. No longer are we to indulge the pleasing dream, that by the combined action of every class of the community, its general welfare is most effectually promoted: the maxim that union is strength is to be reversed, and the strength of our body politic is to be based on the disunion of its members. The champion of discord, the *British Colonist*, is to prove in his “next issue,” “that there can be no identity between the interests of agriculture and commerce under an irreciprocal free trade system.” “The fact,” says he, “that the farmers and merchants in England regard each others’ interests as hostile since the prospective repeal of the Corn Laws, is itself an argument that no such identity now exists. In Canada the same feeling exists generally, and this being generally known in Montreal accounts for the over-anxiety of the Board of Trade to press on His Excellency, prematurely and at a season entirely out of place, its free trade nostrums.”

We have not room in our present number to comment on this and the other absurdities in the article in the *British Colonist* from which the above is an extract. We shall probably have occasion to meet him hereafter, as he is about to take the field. We merely quote the passage, as evidence of the *animus* of the Protectionists. Of course, censure from such writers being the highest praise, our Board of Trade must feel highly gratified by his vituperatory notice. Not satisfied, however, with attacking our Board of Trade, he falls foul of the whole Press of this city, and makes the notable discovery, that our newspapers are, “with scarcely an exception, the obedient tools of that new despotism,” the commercial interest! We rejoice, however, to find there is “no doubt that, when the sentiments of His Excellency and the Council and the Legislature shall be fairly before the public, a little more independence on the part of the Press will become manifest.”—A fine compliment this to his own party, at the expense of his brethren of the Press! Independence, *Astræa*-like, has fled from the corruption of Montreal, to take up her abode in her favored seat Toronto, and in the bosom of her chosen champion, the *British Colonist*!

Seriously, we should have thought the editor of the *British Colonist* had had sufficient employment afforded him by his contemporary the *Examiner*, who has rather awkwardly called on him to explain the trifling inconsistency of the *British Colonist*, in August last “demanding, as a consequence of the new imperial policy, the free navigation of the St. Lawrence to the whole world, the removal of all differential duties,” &c. &c., and the same *British Colonist*, in March, 1847, striving to the best of his very humble abilities to maintain intact restrictions on the navigation of the St. Lawrence, and the Differential Duties. The awkward figure he cuts in his vain attempts to reconcile these palpable contradictions, and to justify his *turning his back on himself*,—to use the metaphor of a statesman after his own heart, the late LORD CASTLEREAGH,—we should have thought would have taught him at least sufficient caution to beware how he attacked the whole press of Montreal. But perhaps he considered it a good ruse to escape the fury of the main attack, by creating a division in a distant quarter. We assure him, however, that it shall not succeed; and that whensoever he broaches those pernicious doctrines which he promises to promulgate they shall be fairly encountered.

One word before we have done with the editor of the *British Colonist*; he says that our press will change its tone and opinions “when the sentiments of His Excellency and the Council and the Legislature shall be fairly before the public”; the inference being plain, that the predicted change of opinion is to be operated through the influence of those bodies: are we to understand that he draws his conclusions from mere conjecture, or from personal experience? Perhaps the best method by which he can reconcile his own inconsistency is by candidly admitting that it has been effected by some extraneous influence—by the “pressure from without,” to which we alluded in the early part of this article.

Another champion of the Navigation Laws and the Differential Duties—of course also a direct opponent of the Montreal, and a covert opponent of the Toronto, Board of Trade—has appeared in the person of the *Toronto Patriot*.

For the present, we shall merely request him to show in what manner the Differential Duties are productive of revenue: in our ignorance, we have hitherto considered them as directly the reverse,—as a tax laid on the mass of the people for the purpose of encouraging some particular branch of commerce. This may, or