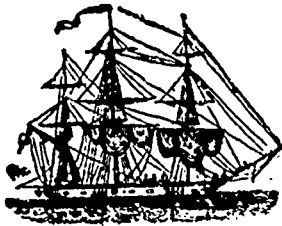


# CANADIAN ECONOMIST.



## FREE TRADE JOURNAL, AND WEEKLY COMMERCIAL NEWS.

Vol. II.]

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, 8TH MAY, 1847.

[No. 2.]

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## THE CANADIAN ECONOMIST.

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, 8TH MAY, 1847.

### TO THE PUBLIC.

We are induced with this number to bring the *Economist* newspaper to a close. The original design did not contemplate more than a year's trial; and although at one time it was considered that that period might be extended, other considerations have since intervened, and induced the Committee to adhere to their first resolution. To have continued the paper, would have required a greater pecuniary outlay than the Committee consider themselves bound to make,—a greater sacrifice of time than could fairly be expected a the hands of gentlemen working without reward, and solely for the public good. The time, it is true, these gentlemen have given cheerfully, and would have continued to give, for a cause in which their feelings are so deeply interested. Beyond this it would be scarcely fair to expect them to go.

The principles for the advocacy of which the *Economist* was started, have now full hold of the public mind; the great questions which we first put forward, and for which we have constantly struggled, are those which now press themselves most forcibly on the attention of our statesmen; and if the Legislature only does its duty at the approaching session of Parliament, we may fairly expect to find the liberal policy of the mother country successfully imitated by the colony. This is a great change from the state of things which prevailed twelve months ago, when the *Economist* came into existence. Then all was despondency and gloom. The economical questions of the day, instead of meeting with intelligent enquiry, were shunned as omens of approaching colonial ruin. To repeal the differential duties, to banish the Navigation Laws, and throw open the St. Lawrence—these were questions that no one liked to approach, and that were sure to bring a suspicion on those who had the boldness to grapple with them. Nor were the local interests of the colony better attended to. It may truly be said that of all the subjects which engage the attention of the public press in this colony, commerce has the least share. Respecting the most trivial political event of the day, there are a hundred opinions to be gained; but of those more important interests connected with the commercial welfare of the country, how seldom is an intelligent opinion to be learned. It is found easier to cavil about petty appointments, than to enunciate sound principles of commerce; and the nomination of a political partizan to some second-rate office, is a more fruitful subject of newspaper comment, than if the best interests of the country were sacrificed to the bigoted notions of an incompetent Minister.

Against this state of public feeling, the *Economist* has fought hard, and not without success. Commercial questions are no longer passed over in silence, or met by a slovenly notice from the press, but are treated in a spirit of serious enquiry, and elevated to the importance they deserve. At the same time, the alarm that at first filled the public mind has, with a better understanding of the principles of political economy, passed away.

Let it not be supposed, however, that we assume all the credit of this newly-awakened interest. By no means. All that we claim is to have been the first to bring these subjects fairly before the public eye,—to have insisted upon them, if not with talent, at least with earnestness,—and to have left nothing undone that we considered necessary to give effect and weight to our opinions.

That the course we have pursued should have pleased all was not to be expected. There will be some, no doubt, prepared to question our pretensions, and to cast doubts on the integrity of our purpose. We cannot help that. Not to have excited some jealousy—to have called forth some ill-feeling—would have been to be more than human. That, moreover, is not the question. We do not claim to be immaculate—we do not ask to be acquitted of all faults. The amount of our pretensions is this, and that granted, we are satisfied—that we have succeeded in disseminating sounder views respecting our commercial relations and interests, and that we leave the cause of Free Trade better understood and in better favor than it was when we started our journal.

As a newspaper, the *Economist* has received very strong support, and we should be wanting in courtesy not to acknowledge it. The circulation has gone on increasing from the first, and there are few villages throughout the Province of Canada into which numbers of the Free-Trade Journal do not find their way. This would seem at first to be inconsistent with the announcement of a pecuniary loss, but the apparent anomaly is easily explained. The price for which the *Economist* is issued is not sufficient to cover the expenses of printing. This it was known must be the case when it was started. If the journal was to be placed within the reach of all classes, it was necessary that the subscription should be trifling, and that the difference should be paid by those who had taken up the cause, and who felt interested in the commercial welfare of the country. This has been done to a considerable amount, and it has been done cheerfully.

But it was not alone as the organ of the Free-Trade Association that the *Economist* enjoyed favor. We think we may also claim something for its character as a practical commercial journal, and particularly for the large amount of statistical information which found its way into its columns. This is a feature in which the ordinary newspapers have hitherto been lamentably deficient. We have endeavoured to correct the defect, and to throw additional light on the available resources of the country.

Nor is it without considerable regret that the Editors of the *Economist* now relinquish their task. They feel that the cause is still far from secure, and that there yet remains much to be done. There are still errors to be destroyed and prejudices to be removed, statesmen to be watched, and parliament-men kept to their duty. Even now the commercial existence of the Colony hangs in the scale, and the slightest weight may turn the balance against us. The object for which the *Economist* was started still requires earnest advocates, and the Free-Trade Association has need of all the energies of its members. In the hands of that Association the most important interests are placed, and it will be their aim for the future, as it has been in the past, to press their views on the legislature and the country. Although the *Economist* ceases, that Association will still be active.

To those newspapers which have supported the *Economist* our best thanks are tendered; and, in the same spirit, we would desire to part in peace with those from whom we may have differed. If hard words have now and then passed between us, let something be set down to the earnestness with which we have regarded our cause, and something to the provocation which we have at times received.

To the public at large, who have watched our progress, and who have sympathised with our success, it is not so easy to express our thanks. We do not, however, part with them here. We have still a long road to go together, and many a battle to fight, before the cause is won. Though we lay down our editorial pens, it is only to turn our energies in another direction. Under the auspices of the Free-Trade Association, we shall continue to work in their cause,—to keep a watchful eye on public men,—and only consider our trust quite discharged, when nothing remains to be done. For the present only, we say Farewell!