

and navigation, and acknowledged in your Lordship's despatch (No. 31), of the 17th September, in which it is remarked that the reasons so ably urged in favour of it, "a change in the Navigation Laws," will not fail to receive the deliberate consideration of Her Majesty's Government, I have to call your Lordship's attention to the construction to be placed upon the recent imperial enactment, "to allow, until the 1st day of September 1847, the importation of corn from any country in foreign ships," which, while it indicates the intention of the imperial legislature to permit the introduction of grain into England in the most unrestricted manner from any quarter of the globe, in vessels of any nation, does not appear to relieve Montreal from any of the disabilities under which the city labours, not being a free port, and consequently not to be reached by foreign vessels from the sea-board to carry away her grain.

2. The Montreal Board of Trade are now pressing for the consideration of this point on my government, representing in a very forcible light their peculiar position with reference to the Act in question, which appears to place them in a less favourable situation as regards the mother country than any foreign state.

3. One illustration will be sufficient to show the working of the existing disability. Flour and grain are brought down to Montreal in small craft, canal-barges or propellers; the merchants represent that they hold and are daily buying large quantities of grain at Cleveland, Chicago, and other ports of Western America, to be forwarded to Montreal, if enabled when reaching this city to tranship into sea-going vessels at reasonable freights, *i. e.* to take advantage of competition between Canadian and foreign vessels, or securing freightage from other quarters; on the other hand, to be forwarded through the United States to the sea-board, if it is found that foreign vessels are still disqualified from ascending to Montreal.

4. The fact that Quebec is a free port is not sufficient to retain the carrying trade down the St. Lawrence route; as American propellers, the vessels which would naturally be employed from Cleveland and Chicago, are precluded from descending below Montreal, thus rendering two transshipments necessary; and canal-barges having already received their cargoes from lake craft, thus incurring one transshipment higher up the river, do not find sufficient encouragement to descend below the first port.

5. The erection of Montreal into a free port would entirely remove the present difficulty, and to a very great extent achieve what has been so earnestly prayed for in several memorials presented by the city of Montreal, and fully entered into in the despatch already quoted (No. 117).

I have, &c.

(Signed) ELGIN & KINCARDINE.

No. 10.

(No. 16.)

Copy of a DESPATCH from Governor-general the Right honourable the Earl of ELGIN to Earl GREY.

My Lord,

Government House, Montreal, 24th March 1847.

I HAVE the honour to transmit for your Lordship's consideration the copy of a memorial presented to me by the Montreal Board of Trade, which treats of measures of great importance as bearing on the interests of this province.

I have, &c.

(Signed) ELGIN & KINCARDINE.

No. 10.
Earl of Elgin
to
Earl Grey,
24th March 1847.

15th March.