

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN THE

GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF CANADA AND THE SECRETARY OF
STATE FOR THE COLONIAL DEPARTMENT.

UPON

THE OPERATION OF THE NAVIGATION LAWS.

(No. 22.)

No. 1.

CANADA.

No. 1.

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

Government House, Montreal,
February 9, 1849.

(Received March 7, 1849.)

MY LORD,

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a petition to Her Majesty the
Queen, praying for the repeal of the Navigation Laws, from the inhabitants of
the county of Leeds, district of Johnstown, Canada West.

I have, &c.

(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

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

Enclosure in No. 1.

Encl. in No. 1.

TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN,

WE, your Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, inhabitants of the county of Leeds, in the
district of Johnstown, and province of Canada, beg most respectfully to approach your Majesty
from this distant portion of Your Majesty's empire, and humbly to present the grievance
of which your petitioners complain, and which is as follows.

That we deeply feel that the British Navigation Laws, and the laws affecting the navigation
of the St. Lawrence, are peculiarly burthensome and detrimental to the agricultural and com-
mercial interests of the province.

That so long as the products of Canada were largely protected in the markets of Great Britain
the privileges conceded by the Navigation Laws to the shipping interests were not made a subject
of complaint by us; but now that the Imperial Government has reduced the protection to a
mere fragment, which in a few months will be wholly withdrawn, we humbly conceive that
justice would seem to demand that the restrictions imposed by these laws should at once be
removed.

We can assure Your Majesty that the evils resulting from these laws are severely felt
by us during the present autumn: that while produce is ranging at high and remunerative
rates in the British markets, the prices paid for the same in Montreal are so extremely low as
not to afford us the expense of producing.

This state of depression is owing, in a great measure, to the exorbitant freights charged by
the vessels which convey our produce to Britain; and we feel assured it will continue as long as
there is no greater competition allowed in our carrying trade.

It appears evident to your petitioners that the St. Lawrence was designed by nature as the
great highway for the surplus produce of Your Majesty's Canadian possessions, as well as that
of a large portion of the American States bordering on the Great Lakes.

The colonial Government taking this view has already expended large sums in the con-
struction of canals along the line of the St. Lawrence, and have completed an uninterrupted
chain of communication from the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Western Lakes.

But, notwithstanding the great natural advantages which this channel offers over all others,
for the carrying trade of the Great West, the restrictions imposed by these laws has turned the
greater portion of the trade through other artificial channels, by way of Oswego and Buffalo, to