

persens anticipato; and we think much the same of the Navigation Laws."

This may serve as a sufficient vindication of our Board of Trade in asking for such a boon.

2nd. He admits (see *Gazette* of 10th instant) "that, as respects neutral ports, particularly those of the Spanish West Indies, with which we ought to have a considerable direct trade, and possibly the Brazils and Spanish Main—the sugar-growing, and flour, fish, and pork consuming countries generally—there are circumstances which might enable us to ask for some special relief, and if we asked for it *like men of sense and discrimination, we would probably get it*, for Britain has ever been most indulgent to her colonies, and to this one in particular. *We should establish a fair case if we could show that the restrictions imposed are a burden on us, quite incommensurate with any benefit created in the employment of British shipping, and that, like many other restrictions, the law is, in this, actually defrating itself, by driving the whole trade into the hands of the foreigner.*"

Now this is precisely the case put by the Montreal Board of Trade in relation to our commerce with Cuba. We extract the following passage from the Report:

"Our supplies of Muscovada Sugar are now chiefly derived from the Spanish Islands, but by the Navigation Laws on which we are annuadverting, foreign commodities can only be imported in British ships of the country where the goods are produced. Spain has but little shipping and none suitable for our trade, while on the other hand there are frequently no British vessels for charter to be found in those islands, although United States vessels may be had in abundance to convey Sugar to Canada at about 2s. per cwt. What, then, is the necessary consequence? The British merchant is compelled to proceed to a distant port to look for a British vessel. Having found one, he engages her to proceed *in ballast* to a Spanish Island to take in his cargo of Sugar for Canada, for which he has to pay her 3s. per cwt., or 20 per cent on the prime cost,—a great advance on what the American vessel *on the spot* would have willingly accepted for the same service."

How does the Editor of the *Montreal Gazette* answer this? He says:

"As we said before, if we can establish a direct trade with Cuba, which we cannot do unless we can send a freight there, we think that is a case in which we may have some show of justice for asking for a relaxation of the Navigation Laws. But if it is more profitable to us to use Liverpool, London, or New York, an an *entrepot*, or intermediate warehousing station, and we are allowed to go freely to the latter, surely it is no special grievance to us to say, "We do not want you to throw your trade into the hands of the merchants and shipowners of New York. We want you to keep it to yourselves, and employ your own ships and sailors, as we do."

This surely is anything rather than an answer to the question. The Board of Trade complain that the maritime cities of Canada are placed by the British Navigation Laws in a relatively worse position than the towns in the interior, inasmuch as the former are impelled, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, to obtain their supplies through British, while the latter can draw theirs through Foreign, vessels; and the instance cited, demonstrates such to be the fact.

So far as regards the British Navigation Laws, the fundamental difference of opinion between the Board of Trade and the Editor of the *Gazette* appears to be in the demand made by the former to be allowed to send our own produce to Britain in foreign bottoms. His answer is, we admit, plausible, namely, that "Great Britain does not indulge herself with such a privilege. She will not take a cargo of produce from any foreign power, or in one of her own."

No one can doubt that such a deviation from the principle of those Navigation Laws which have existed for ages, is one not likely to be conceded without full consideration, nor without ample and sufficient reasons. But that the peculiar circumstances of our position justify such a claim on our part, notwithstanding the assertion of its "absurdity" by the Editor of the *Montreal Gazette*, we are fully prepared to prove. That claim rests on the peculiarity of our position, and is justified by precisely the same arguments which we used with relation to the import trade in the article of Sugar, namely, the injustice of our cities being subject to disabilities, from which those cities in the interior are exempt.

Since the Editor of the *Montreal Gazette* has admitted (see *Gazette* of 11th instant) that it may and will probably occur ere long that American produce from the interior will be imported into Quebec or Montreal in American bottoms, thence to be transhipped also in American bottoms to Britain, and since colonial produce can at the expiration of four years be transported through the American canals to a shipping port in the United States, and thence shipped in American bottoms to Britain, we think he must in candour admit that it is anything rather than an absurdity to ask that colonial produce may also enjoy similar advantages, and be shipped in American bottoms to Britain from Montreal or Quebec.

We did intend to enter in this number on the subject of the FREE NAVIGATION OF THE ST. LAWRENCE, but our remarks have been extended to so great a length, that we must defer doing so until another opportunity arises.

THE 'COBOURG STAR' ON FREE TRADE.

It is with much regret that we find the article given below in the columns of the *Cobourg Star*. It is just another proof of the extremes to which party zeal will frequently lead men. We cannot, however, form so poor an opinion of the writer as to suppose that he really believes what he has put down on paper. However opposed he may be to Free Trade, we feel quite satisfied that neither he, nor any other man having the least respect for his character, would venture to make such assertions out of a newspaper, and that they should have been made in a newspaper, is to be regretted. For instance, would the editor of the *Cobourg Star* like to have his credit as a writer rest on the assertion, that the Montrealers "victimised the farmers of Upper Canada by procuring the construction of the St. Lawrence Canal," or is he content that his claims to guide the public mind should be tested by his sweeping denunciations of almost the entire mercantile community? We are satisfied that he would not like to be so judged, nor should we wish that he should be. Yet, he has not hesitated to assert of Free Traders that they are "incapable of possessing humane and generous sentiments," and that "all their views are exclusive and selfish!" He talks of their "wishing to impose coercive regulations on others calculated for their own benefit," and accuses them of "plunging into the wildest speculations in order to amass a criminal fortune!" Finally, he cautions the farmers against them, as he would against pick-pockets and robbers! When it is considered who are the men of whom these things are alleged, the foolishness of the attack appears more glaring. Never did any one, during the Free Trade discussion at home, venture to state of the British merchants who supported that measure what this Canadian editor does. Free Trade, it must be recollected, is now the avowed commercial policy of England. The men who passed that measure and adopted that policy are men of whom Great Britain may well be proud—her greatest, noblest, best. Who ever supposed the Peels, and Russells, and Morpeths, and Broughams, and Greys to be guided by sordid motives? Who ever accused them of ignorance or recklessness? And in Canada, where Free Trade has become a necessity because England has so willed it, what interest have those who ask for changes in our system that are not shared by others? Has the farmer no interest in the reduction of freight by the St. Lawrence, or in the abolition of discriminating duties, by which the price of articles of use and consumption is increased? Has he not as much interest in these questions as the Free Traders? But, then, the Montreal Board of Trade has asked for a repeal of the 3s. duty, and this is to ruin the agriculturist. Supposing, for the sake of argument, the farmer did get less for his wheat in consequence of the doing away with this duty, would this warrant such sweeping charges as are brought against the merchant? Has not the latter, in a question dependent on the decision of the Provincial Legislature, as fair a right to the assertion of his opinion as the farmer, and is he to be accused of every vice under the sun because he does assert that opinion? The editor of the *Cobourg Star* wishes to give the farmers alone the credit of being patriotic, but will he tell us whether this patriotism will prevent their sending their produce by the way of New York, if they can do so cheaper than by the St. Lawrence? We are very much afraid it will not, and therefore what we, in common with other Free Traders desire, is to prevent the necessity of putting their patriotism to the test, by making it their interest as well as their wish to avail themselves of the St. Lawrence. The editor of the *Cobourg Star* may call this selfishness if he please, but we are very much mistaken if it do not prove more consistent with loyalty, patriotism, and the welfare of the country, than the policy he would adopt. In the meantime, whilst the experiment is making, we trust he will put some restraint on his temper, and endeavor to believe that it is quite possible for men to differ in opinion with him without being either rogues in practice, or reckless demagogues in thought.

The following is the article to which these remarks are directed:—

"This is emphatically the age of change; old things are passing away, all things are becoming new; and, amid the general confusion consequent upon such a state of things, no country seems more hopelessly involved than Great Britain. Flung to the winds the wisdom of experience, she madly takes the lead in the race of headlong speculation, and scoffs at all counsel that teaches respect for the past. She would no longer, forsooth, subject those upon the earth to the opinions of those that are beneath it! How the statesmen of former generations would stare at the experiment of bringing Russian and Polish serf labour in competition, through the corn market, with free labour at home and in the colonies! But how much more would a Wilberforce be astonished to behold England—England, that abolished slavery!—England, that paid twenty