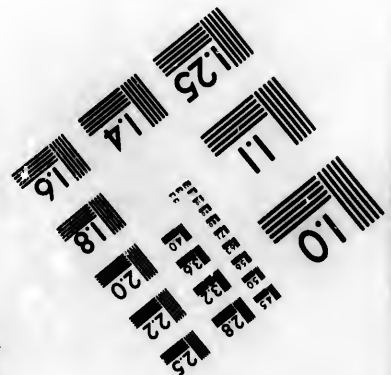
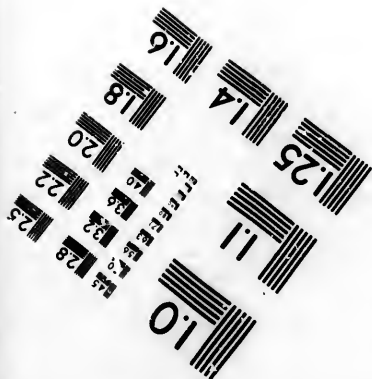
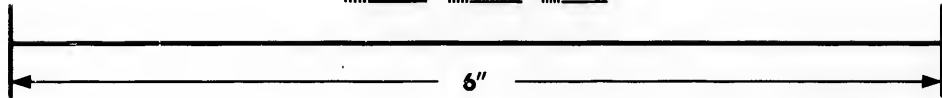
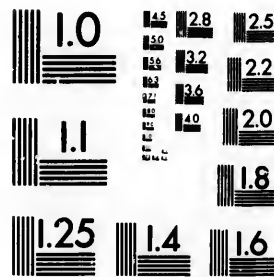


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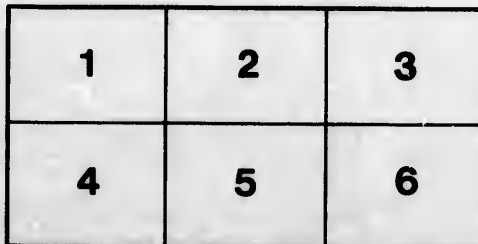
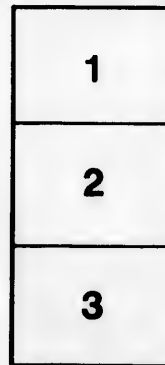
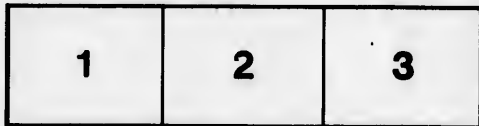
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# ADDRESS

OF THE

## FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION,

TO THE

### INHABITANTS OF CANADA.

FELLOW COUNTRYMEN,

A crisis has arrived in the commercial affairs of this Colony which demands the best energies, the devoted attention of all concerned in the welfare of its various rising interests.

That crisis has arisen from the new Commercial Policy of the Mother Country—a Policy which strikes at the root of protection in every shape, exposing at once this Colony and the Mother Country to the severest effects of unrestricted competition. To raise objections to this Policy would not only be idle, but inconsistent with the objects of this Association.

Believing, as we do, that the principle of Free Trade, applied generally to the commerce of a country, is sound, and the wisest, under all circumstances, for a nation to adopt in order to secure the prosperity of all classes; believing also, (since the Mother Country is depriving us of the favor we have hitherto enjoyed in her markets,) that the prosperity of Canada can only be maintained by its trade being rendered *free*, allowing Industry and Capital to seek out their natural distribution and employment; but apprehensive at the same time that our Legislature is not yet prepared to give effect by law to these liberal views, we have deemed it prudent and expedient to form ourselves into an Association for the purpose of collecting in one body all who agree in opinion with us. By this means we shall extend our influence, consolidate our views and interests, attain unity of purpose and action, and thereby place ourselves in a position to secure the ascendancy of our principles in the Commercial Laws of the Province.

United on the basis of Free Trade, we shall respectfully but firmly demand, in the first place, the removal of all Imperial Acts imposing discriminating or regulating duties; in the second place, the repeal of all duties, Imperial and Local, levied on American Wheat, Provisions, or Corn of any kind whatsoever; and lastly, we pledge ourselves to resist by every lawful means, the future enactment of any Protective, Prohibitive, or merely Regulating Duties whatever—believing such to be detrimental to the general interests of society, and at variance with sound policy.

We further avow that we entertain the opinion that Duties should be levied solely for the purpose of creating Revenue to provide for the necessities of Government, and the extension of internal improvements; and that, for these objects, such articles only should be selected for Duty as will afford it without restricting or fettering the general Commerce—the Carrying Trade—or the Agricultural Industry of the country.

Declaring these to be our guiding principles and opinions, we now earnestly invite men of all classes throughout the Province, to combine and co-operate with us to give them practical effect, by carrying them through the Legislature. We call upon our fellow-citizens to enrol their names upon our books, and our fellow-subjects at a distance to form Branches, in connection with this Central Association.

The Commerce and Industry of this Colony, as yet in their infancy, and hitherto nourished under an unsound system of Protective Stimulants, will soon be left to seek out their natural channels; and fortunate will it be for our common welfare, if, by our united efforts, we now succeed in planting the principle of Free Trade in our Commercial system. Then,—but not till then,—may we hope to make the Saint Lawrence the highway for the rich products of the teeming West—to develop the vast resources of this rising Colony—and to secure for her people the highest possible share of prosperity and happiness.

We shall now address a few words to the Canadian Agriculturist, to satisfy him that he has nothing to fear from Free Trade; but that, on the contrary, he will derive advantage from it in common with every other member of the community. We are aware the opinion prevails that Protective Duties enhance prices, and we shall consequently take some pains to remove this fallacy.

All writers of eminence on the subject of Political Economy ; all close and earnest observers of the course of Trade, agree in opinion that where a country is in the habit of exporting any surplus Produce, the price in the market she mainly depends on, as her customer, regulates the value of the whole to the Producer. Canada is in that position. She has for many years past been an Exporter of Agricultural Produce, partly her own growth, and partly *naturalized* American ; and the course of prices has ever been regulated by the value in the markets to which such surplus was sent. To prove this to the satisfaction of all reasonable men, it will only be necessary, we think, to review prices here for the last six years. We adopt this term as most likely to carry conviction to the minds of Agriculturists, because it enables us to compare prices during two periods of directly opposite character. During the first period American Wheat was admitted duty free ; during the latter it was subject to a duty of 3s. sterling per quarter. Let us now compare the average price of Flour in the said years in the Montreal Market ; taking Flour as our criterion, not as being better adapted to our purpose, but because the Market prices are better fixed and more readily got at. We shall place these prices in parallel columns, that the principle we are contending for may be obvious at a glance, viz ; that, to the Canadian Agriculturist prices are not enhanced, by Protective Duties, but depend on the Market to which his produce is sent.

Thus, when American Wheat was admitted into Canada *free*, prices were as follows, *i. e.* the average of the year :—

1840,.....	26s. 10d.
1841,.....	28s. 5d.
1842,.....	30s. 0d.
Average of three years, 28s. 5d.	

American Wheat subject to a duty of 3s. sterling per quarter :

Average prices of the year :—

1843,.....	25s. 7d.
1844,.....	25s. 3d.
1845,.....	27s. 2d.
Average of three years, 26s.	

Who now will contend with these facts before him that prices are enhanced by Protective Duties, or that such duties favour in the slightest degree the prosperity of the Canadian farmer ? We call upon him, therefore, to unite with us to rid the country of such fettering duties, which plainly have no effect but that of crippling its Industry, and restricting its Commerce. Let him also bear in mind, that our plan, if fully carried out, will cheapen every commodity which he requires for his daily use ; for, by removing all Discriminating and Regulating Duties, we shall enable him and every other consumer, to obtain his Sugar and his Tea, his wearing apparel and his luxuries, wherever he can procure them cheapest.

We now proceed, in the development of our plan, to show the incalculable advantages that will result to Canadian Commerce and the Carrying Trade, by removing all duties and restrictions from American Produce.

First, we shall show the amount of produce collected annually on the shores of our great inland waters and brought to this city for distribution to the various markets of consumption ; next, the vast quantity that passes through the Erie Canal, seeking a market at New York, and other American ports ; and lastly we shall show that it is in the power of Canada to divert a large share of this latter trade through her own waters, if her people and Legislature will promptly give effect to the liberal and enlarged policy which it is the object of this Association to advocate and urge.

No. 1.—Table shewing the quantity of Produce brought by the St. Lawrence to the City of Montreal in the year 1845.

PORK. Brls.	BEEF. Brls.	LARD. Kegs.	FLOUR. Brls.	WHEAT. Bush.	Other Grain. Bush.	ASHES. Brls.	BUTTER. Kegs.
6109	723	461	590,305	450,209	40781	33,000	8112

No. 2.—Table shewing the quantity of Produce carried through the Erie Canal in the year 1845.

PORK. Brls.	BEEF. Brls.	LARD. Lbs.	FLOUR. Brls.	WHEAT. Bush.	CORN. Bush.	FLAXSEED. Lbs.	ASHES. Brls.
63646	7 699	3064800	2517250	1620033	35803	8303960	80646

From the foregoing Tables, it will be seen that the quantity carried through the latter channel is enormous as compared with the former. It becomes then a question of vital importance, whether a portion of this trade can be attracted through the St. Lawrence. We believe that it can, because the cheapest conveyance to the sea-board and to the manufacturing districts of New England must win the prize ; and who will deny that the securing of this prize is not worth our best and united exertions ?

The cheapening of the means of transit is the great object to be attained ; and our best practical authorities are firmly of opinion that, the Saint Lawrence will be made the cheapest route as soon as our chain of inland improvements is rendered complete. They affirm that the cost of transporting a barrel of Flour, from Detroit to Montreal, will not exceed 1s. 6d. to 1s. 9d. The difficulty will then be to secure a Port of constant access to the sea ; and that difficulty will be overcome by the early completion of the projected Portland Rail-way ; a road

that will place us within a day's journey of that city, the harbour of which may be made the safest and cheapest on the Continent of America. By that route, we shall avoid the occasional dangers and inconveniences of the St. Lawrence from Montreal outwards, practically secure a longer season for Trade in the fall of the year—and safely reckon on freights to Liverpool as low as those from New York. But what is equally important to the Transit Trade to England, is this: that by rendering our charges cheaper than those through the Erie Canal to Boston, we shall secure the Transit Trade to that great City, and all other Eastern Markets, as well as the supplying of our sister Colonies, commonly known as the Lower Ports. This picture may appear too flattering to those who have not investigated the subject; but to such we say, examination will convince them that, with the Saint Lawrence as a highway, and Portland as an outlet to the Sea, we shall be enabled successfully to struggle for the mighty Trade of the West, and bid defiance to competition on the more artificial route of the Erie Canal. But there is no time for slumbering; inactivity at this crisis would be fatal to our hopes; even the very produce of Western Canada may be carried, in spite of us, through AMERICAN CHANNELS, unless we immediately carry out the completion of our own.

We may also here remind the Canadian farmer, at whatever place he may be situated, that every saving effected in the means of bringing his produce to market, adds in the same degree to the value of his Wheat and every other marketable product of the soil he cultivates. And here it may not be out of place to add that, repudiating all sectional feelings, we seek no advantage for classes, no peculiar advantage for Montreal over other parts of the Province; we advocate, on the contrary, the general interests of Producers and Consumers—the general welfare of the community.

In connection with the foregoing we shall now briefly advert to the Regulation Acts imposed by the Mother Country, for the purpose of securing harmony in the working of her Commercial Policy. These Acts were carried when England's Policy was protective, and we had no right or interest to complain of them. Now her policy is founded on the opposite principle, that of Free-Trade, and it becomes the duty of this Colony to object to their continuance, as incompatible with the welfare and development of her resources and interests. We allude now to the Imperial duties on American Produce and Provisions generally. England can have no interest now in maintaining these fetters on our Trade, and will doubtless remove them as soon as their objectionable effects are fairly and legitimately brought under her notice.

The Imperial duties upon Foreign Manufactures are also objectionable, as being at variance with the Imperial maxim of legislation:—"That it is true policy to buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest Market." They are also at variance with the doctrine laid down by Mr. Goulbourn the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the late debates in the House of Commons, "that Canada has no right to complain as long as she is placed on the same footing as the inhabitants of the Mother Country."

Accepting this doctrine as sound, this Association shall deem it its duty to demand the removal of all Imperial Acts levying Discriminating Duties on articles of foreign manufacture; thus leaving us free to obtain our supplies wherever they can be procured cheapest.

We conclude by again appealing to the Canadian Public to combine with us to give effect to the principles of Free Trade in our Commercial policy—the only policy which can secure prosperity and rapid development to our great resources and the rising interests of all classes of society.

In the name of the  
Free Trade Association,

JOHN YOUNG,  
Chairman.

OFFICE OF THE FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION,  
Montreal, March, 1846.



