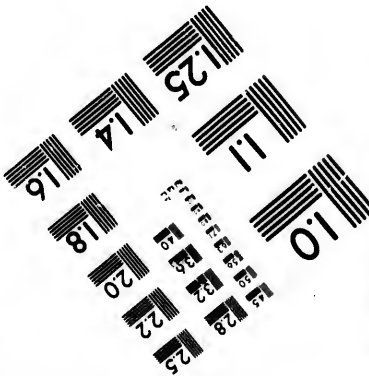
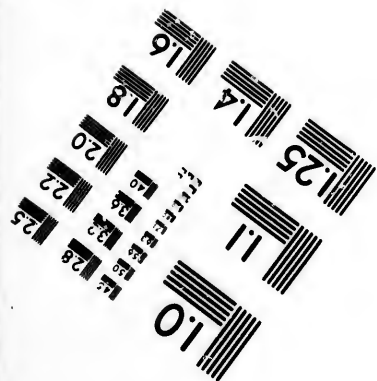
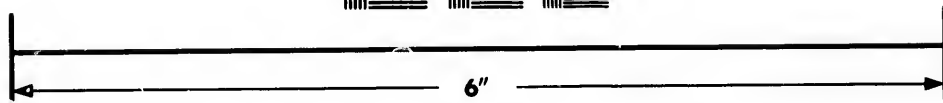
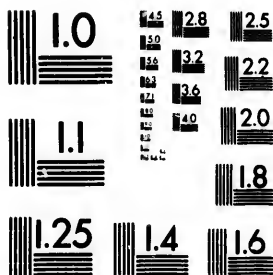


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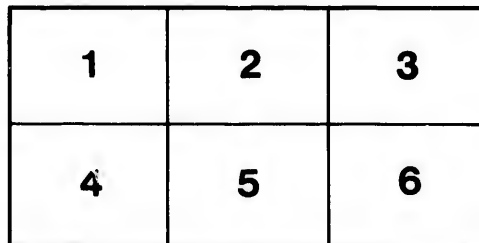
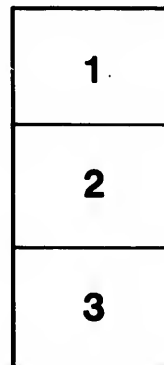
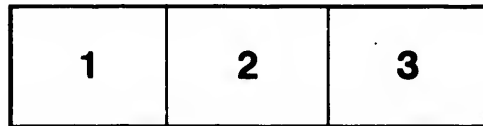
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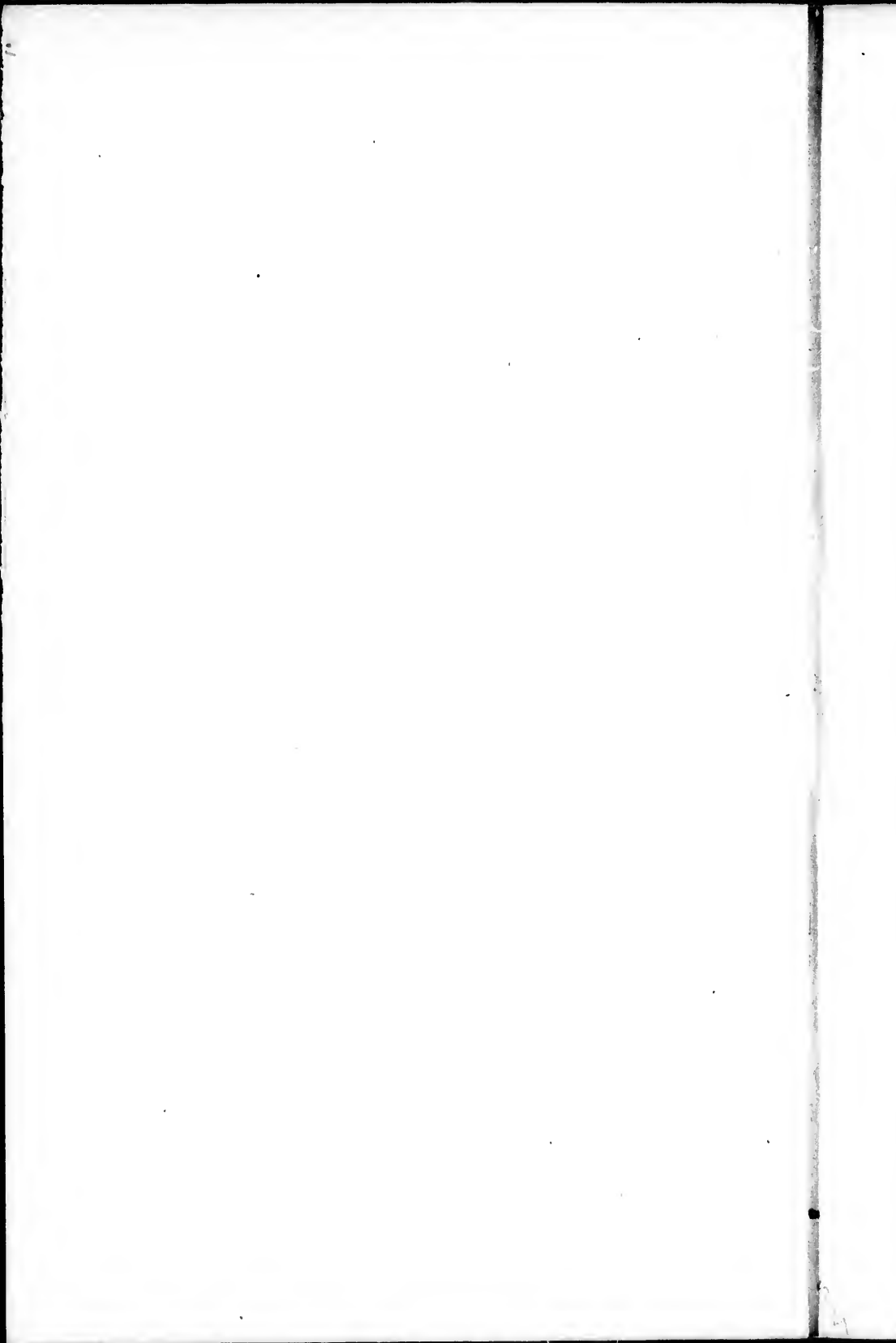
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MEMOIR

UPON

THE RESOLUTIONS

PROPOSED BY MR. GLADSTONE

FOR THE

FUTURE REGULATION OF THE TRADE

OF

The British Possessions

IN

AMERICA.

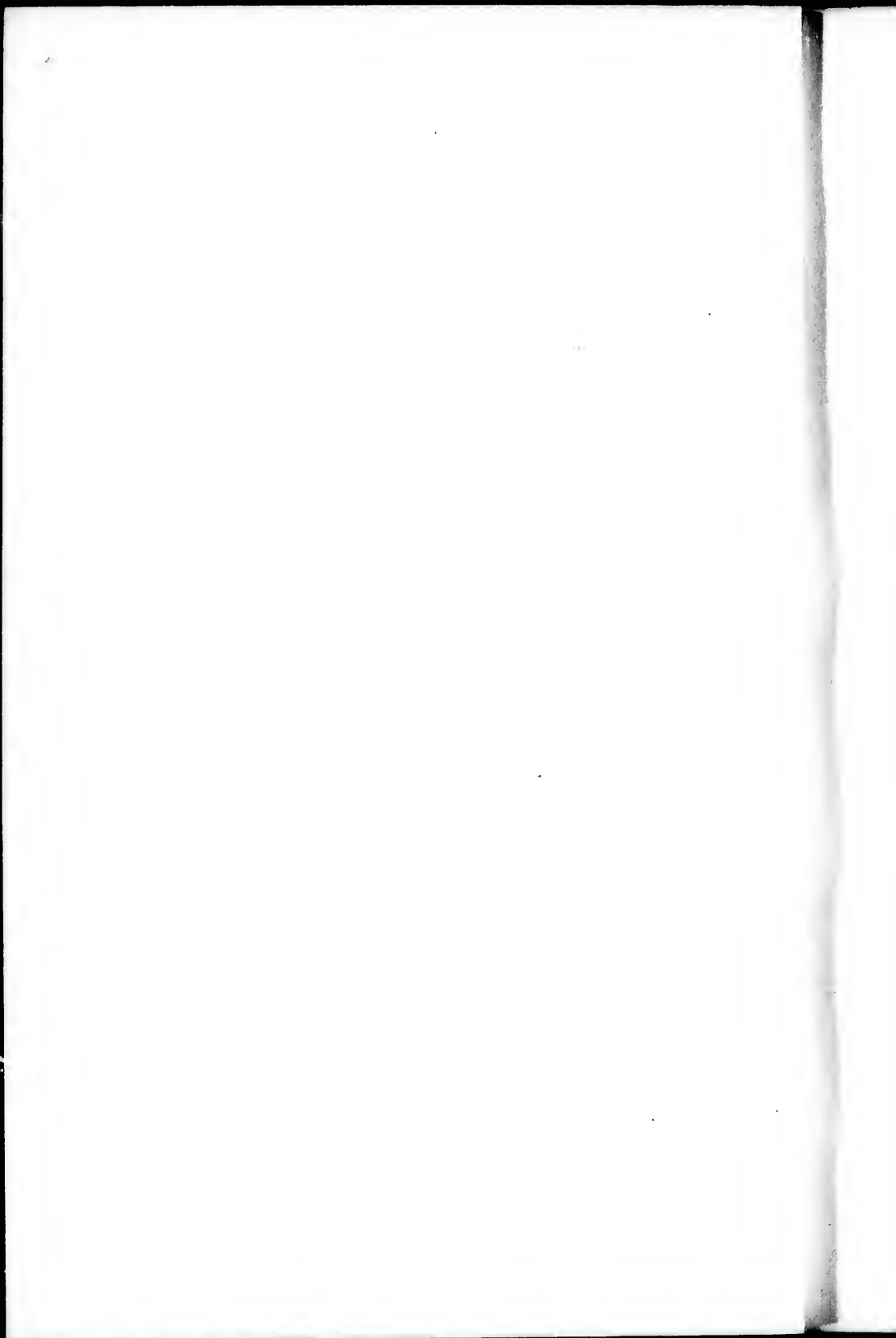
BY

THE AGENT FOR NEW BRUNSWICK.

LONDON :

PRINTED BY C. ROWORTH AND SONS,
BELL YARD, FLEET STREET.

1842.



MEMOIR, &c.

—◆—

THE Duties at present existing for the regulation of Colonial Trade, the changes proposed by the late Administration, and those now moved by the new Ministry, as far as the effect is discussed in the following pages, are exhibited in the table below.

DUTIES upon Articles, not the Produce or Manufacture of the United Kingdom or its Dependencies in America, imported into the British North American and West Indian Colonies, by Sea :—

	<i>Present Duty.</i>	<i>Proposed by the late Administration.</i>	<i>Now proposed.</i>
WOOD, viz.—			
DEALS and BOARDS, per M. feet, 1 inch thick	£ s. d. 1 1 0	s. d. 10 6	s. d. Free.
STAVES, per M.			
White Oak	0 12 6	} 7 0	Free.
Red ditto	0 15 0	}	
HOOPS, per M.	0 5 3	} 2 6	Free.
SHINGLES, per M.			
Not over 12 inches..	0 7 0	} 3 6	Free.
Over 12 inches	0 14 0	}	
PROVISIONS.			
WHEAT FLOUR, Per barrel	0 5 0	2 0	2 0
BEEF and PORK, Salted, Per cwt.	0 12 0	4 0	3 0
BUTTER.	} 15 per cent. } <i>ad valorem.</i>	15 per cent } <i>ad valorem</i> }	8 0 per cwt.
FISH, Dried, Per cwt	} prohibited. }	2 6	2 0
Per barrel	}	5 0	4 0
MANUFACTURES	Duties <i>ad va-</i> <i>lorem</i> of 7½, 15, 20, and 30 per cent.	An uniform charge of 10 per cent.	Do. 7 per cent.

Thus it appears that a new principle is announced in our Laws of Trade—the entire abolition of protection; and the subject selected is one of the staple productions of the Northern Colonies in their intercourse with the Southern. A sudden and extreme reduction is also proposed in the protection upon all other the staples of the Northern Colonies. At the same time, the best market which the world affords for British manufactures, that of the British possessions in America, seems about to be surrendered to foreign competitors, under duties of from fifty to seventy-five per cent. less than the present amount of protection. The effect, it is humbly conceived, will immediately inflict a very serious injury upon the British Northern Provinces, and will probably prove in the result but the prelude to the entire ruin of their trade and prosperity, as dependencies of the British Empire.

The first and immediate operation of these Resolutions will be the sudden and unexpected suppression of a large portion of the trade from the North American Colonies to the British West Indies, in Wood, Fish, Corn, and salted Provisions: indeed, in the two last articles, the trade will probably entirely cease. And in the next and still more disastrous operation of these Resolutions, in the transference to foreign countries of that market which the Northern Colonies now afford to British manufactures, the inevitable, if not intended, consequence may most clearly be foreseen, of the loss to those Colonies of their best and almost only remaining market, that of the United Kingdom.

As far as regards the intercolonial trade between the Northern and the Southern Colonies, the new principle of abolishing all protection whatever, seems in this, its first instance, to be neither compatible with the countries to which it applies, nor even consistent with the other resolutions and provisions by which it is accompanied. Contrary

to all former example, and to the whole system of our commercial legislation, Wood, the staple commodity of the Northern Colonies, the commodity which in conveyance gives most employment to navigation, is entirely stripped of all protection in the ports of the Southern: and while the Northern are thus left to be supplanted by the rivalry of foreign states, which lie far nearer to the Southern Colonies, these latter still retain their former protection in the Northern Colonies upon Sugar, Coffee, and other produce, of which the foreign producers lie certainly at an equal if not greater distance than the Southern Colonies.

Respecting the alteration proposed in the article of Fish, the substitution of a protective duty instead of entire prohibition, is indeed intelligible, and, if efficient, would be unobjectionable: but it is insisted that the protection now proposed of 2s. per cwt. and 4s. a barrel is too low to have any effectual operation. And why, when an article of food is subject to a duty, such an article as Wood should be exempt, is a cause of no little perplexity; nor is the difficulty cleared up by reference to either the respective importance of those articles, or to the interests of navigation. For the value of Wood imported into the Southern Colonies is greater than that of Fish, and the carriage of Wood must employ quite as much tonnage as both the carriage and taking of Fish. The real ground of the distinction must perhaps be sought in that unfortunate prejudice which now prevails against protective duties upon Timber, a prejudice which certain writers are incessantly propagating, for no reason apparently but that the effect of those duties affords a practical illustration of the fallacy of preferring Foreign to Home and Colonial Trade. No desire can, of course, be here felt to depreciate the importance of the British and Colonial Fisheries: on the contrary, the necessity of a more adequate protection upon their produc-

tions is most earnestly pressed : but, at the same time, the continuance of the present protection upon Wood is no less to be urged as a matter of, at least, equal importance to British and Colonial Trade and Navigation. It is of these two articles that the freights from the Northern to the Southern Colonies are principally composed, and the whole freights in that trade can be nothing less than of one hundred and thirty thousand tons a year. This, therefore, is the amount of British Colonial Navigation to be put in jeopardy by this measure. The value of those freights may be fairly taken at £200,000. The value of the commodities conveyed can not now be less than £700,000. To this aggregate of nearly a million, however, must be added part of the value of the ships, which are mostly built peculiarly for that trade, and are less fit for any other, even supposing any other could be found ; and further, there must be added whatever capital, certainly considerable, has been invested in the Northern Provinces for mills and other establishments to prepare deals, staves, and other such articles for the Southern Colonies. Any estimate of such losses must of course be vague, and may be under as well as over the real amount : but there can be no doubt that the result of the present measure will be a large sacrifice of the intercolonial trade, and that the sacrifice will be a most severe injury to the Northern Provinces.

The whole value of the importations into the Southern Colonies of those articles, Wood, Fish, Corn, and Salted Provisions, in which the present Resolutions affect the Northern Colonies, was, in the year 1837, £1,322,920 ; of which £962,786 was of British Production, or imported from British Possessions, and £360,134 was of foreign importation. Of Corn and Provisions, the value of all imports into the Southern Colonies was £742,214, of which

£419,118 was from British Possessions. Of Fish, the value of all such imports was £346,232, of which £345,887 was British. And of Wood, the value was £428,694, of which £233,393 was British. The British and Colonial Trade, therefore, in Fish and Wood together, amounted to above half a million; and in Corn and Salted Provisions, to above £400,000. These are large sums. Nor is there anything in the proportion of British to Foreign Trade in Wood, to show that this competition is not very fairly sustained. No doubt the whole of these imports might be supplied from either of those sources. The United States exported to all countries, in 1840, to the value of 710,164 dollars, in dried and pickled Fish, and of 2,101,021 dollars in Wood.

If, however, a compromise be necessary, and some sacrifice of the present Protective Duties must take place, there is no doubt that the Corn and Provision Trade is most likely to go to the Americans, and is at present not only of lesser value to British and Colonial Commerce, but a considerable portion of that trade is undoubtedly in articles of foreign origin, and may therefore be thought not so legitimately entitled to protection. (Yet the Beef and Pork sent to the other Colonies from Canada last year exceeded 36,000 barrels, and the whole imported into the West Indies, in 1837, was but 45,639 barrels, of the value of £156,709.) But the trade in Fish and Wood is all of British and Colonial produce, and according to every principle of the protective system can not, as long at least as that system is retained, be fairly placed beyond that pale of the British Empire. These truly are interests of great amount. Yet they appear even small, in comparison with others affected by the proposed Resolutions.

But, as far as the proposal operates to reduce the duties now levied in the Colonies for the protection of British Manufactures, those Provinces could of course have neither

the disposition nor the right to offer any complaint, were it not too evident that this is but the introduction of a principle, the fulfilment of which must immediately react to their own entire ruin, as soon as the inevitable consequence shall have been felt in a corresponding diminution of the protection which these Provinces now enjoy in the United Kingdom. In this view, therefore, which alone displays the real character of the measure, nothing could have been devised more fatal to the trade and prosperity of the Northern Colonies, than this alteration, which, under an appearance of liberality altogether delusive, proposes as a boon, what they must soon find to be their greatest misfortune, and proclaims as a concession, what is pregnant with the severest of all inflictions. There seems, therefore, no impropriety in setting forth on the part of the Colonies, not only the miserable consequences which this measure, in its reaction, will entail upon the Northern Provinces, but also the immediate losses which the manufacturing, commercial, and shipping interests of the United Kingdom will sustain, by foregoing their present protection in the Colonial Trade.

First, then, it is asserted as a fact, to which too much credit and importance cannot be attributed, that under the trifling protection of seven per cent. now proposed, British manufacturers can no longer sustain their place in the Colonies against foreign competition, in many and most valuable commodities. In all articles of Leather, Glass, Paper, Silk, and Tallow, in Cordage, and in the coarser fabrics of Cotton, Linen and Woollen, and in Slops, it will be impossible for the British merchant to compete with the Americans and other foreign producers in supplying either the Northern or Southern Colonies. Such is the opinion of those most interested in the trade, and best acquainted with all its rivalries and relations. And such an opinion

may be verified by every argument drawn from either the situation of those Colonies, the annals of their trade, or its statistical returns. For both the Southern and Northern Provinces lie at the very doors of the American States, which already, in proportion to their population, import from us little of such articles, and export yearly more and more :— and some small quantity of such commodities has for some time found its way into our Colonies, even under the present duties, and such importations are increasing. The whole value of our exports of manufactures, in Cotton, Glass, Leather, Slops, Paints, Silk, Tallow, Paper, and miscellaneous articles, in 1839, to the Northern and Southern Colonies, was £4,215,843; while the value of the same articles exported to the United States that year was but £2,449,781; although the population of the latter was seventeen millions, and of the former perhaps barely over two millions and a half, of persons. Of the same articles, the United States, as well as several other countries, have for some years exported something to those Colonies; and as far back as in the year 1837 such exports thither, with the addition of those in Linen, Woollen, and Upholstery, amounted to £137,040. That amount would undoubtedly be found to be much greater at the present moment. In the year 1841, the value of all exports from the United States to the British Possessions in America was 8,362,754 dollars. In the year preceding, the value of American manufactures exported to all countries was 12,108,555 dollars, of which 3,549,507 were of fabrics in Cotton.

In the face of these facts, to reduce the present protecting duties from a varied scale of fifteen, twenty, and thirty per cent. to an uniform charge of only seven, seems a very precipitate and extreme measure, altogether at variance with the differences which exist in our means of producing different manufactures, and utterly inefficient as a protec-

tion in those of the most consequence. The reduction also is greatest, as well upon those articles in which our manufactures are most pressed by their foreign competitors, as upon those articles on which the protecting duties are highest in the United Kingdom. But the strangest anomaly, and which indeed seems to be quite a curiosity in our laws of trade, is this, the duties thus reduced in the Colonies will amount only to between a third and a fourth of the duties still continued in the United Kingdom for protection on the same manufactures.

But, it has been asserted, that this measure has been some time before the public, as proposed by the late Administration, and no complaint has been made, but on the contrary, an universal approval has been given. In the first place, the measure of the late Administration, as far as regards the inter-colonial trade, was by no means the same. It even placed a higher protection by one-fourth upon Fish and salted Meats; and, what is of most importance, instead of abolishing protection upon Wood, one half of the present duties was in every case retained. Next, as that measure was not only abandoned by that Administration, but that Administration itself was dismissed upon an appeal to the country, on a question which was thought one of a series of changes involving the whole Protective and Colonial System, no expectation was entertained that the succeeding Ministers would themselves bring forward a proposal of the same extreme character. Besides the measure is now presented under different circumstances. At that moment the manufacturing interests were intent upon the system of Free Trade, and could scarcely ask for that protection to themselves which they denied to others. Nor could they, while supporting a policy which, whatever its other merits, had at least that of consistency, foresee that only so much of it as abolished their protection in the

Colonies would be adopted, and that which removed their supposed burthens in Corn be refused. In the Colonies the real character of the measure was not immediately understood: it came before them in an aspect of concession very different from what they afterwards found its consequences would prove. And if previously any expressions of satisfaction were heard, they are only imputable to that delusion which the proposal was too well adapted to create, that the Colonies were to preserve the most important benefits, and be relieved from the burthens, of the protective system: a delusion that has since entirely disappeared. Under such circumstances no just surprise could be felt, nor conclusion drawn, from the absence of complaints. It is, however, a great mistake to suppose that there were none. The British North American Merchants of London petitioned the House of Commons against the measure, and urged at considerable length their reasons, which, if unregarded, have also been unanswered, and seem unanswerable, in proving it, as they asserted, "most inconsiderate, unnecessary, and extreme, and pregnant with the most fatal results to the United Kingdom and its Dependencies."

The Agent of the province of New Brunswick, who also acts in a similar capacity for the Committee of Trade at Quebec, made his humble remonstrance against the principle and consequences of the measure, in a Memoir which was transmitted both to the Colonial Department and to the Office of Trade; repudiating the idea that any benefit could be derived to the Colonies from a measure which seemed to menace the whole system of protection upon which their whole prosperity depended; and protesting that, "although the Northern Colonies had certainly very many and great reasons of gratitude to the Mother Country for commercial as well as other advantages, which it was hoped recent events had shown not to have been in-

“ sensibly received or unworthily bestowed, yet such a
“ measure as then proposed was by no means to be classed
“ in that category ;” and expressing the greatest apprehensions lest “ the reducing of those duties, of which the
“ Northern Colonies never complained, never asked for the
“ reduction, nor expected nor desired it should be made,
“ would serve no other purpose than as a reason for depriving them of that preference in this country without
“ which their trade and industry could scarcely exist.”

A Petition against the measure was addressed and sent home to the Colonial Department from the commercial body of St. Andrews in New Brunswick, a port deeply interested in the West India Trade, particularly in wood; deploring the alteration proposed, and stating the calamitous results it would bring upon Colonial industry, commerce, and navigation, and urging that supplies in the West Indies were never so cheap and abundant as under the existing duties, which compelled both the British and foreign competitor to sell at the barest possible profit.

A Petition against the measure was also addressed and sent to the Colonial Department from the Chamber of Commerce in Halifax, Nova Scotia, the port of all others in British North America most extensively engaged in intercourse with the Southern Provinces; expressing deep concern at a measure which was about to effect an entire change in the inter-colonial trade, destroy the protective system of the Empire, transfer the carrying trade from the Colonies to the United States, and produce so little and so doubtful a benefit to the West Indies, that even their wish for it was questionable.

Other Petitions from the Northern Provinces would most undoubtedly have come home against the measure of the late Administration but for the circumstances, already mentioned, of the abandonment of that measure, and the

dismissal of that Administration. In the succeeding Parliament, at its late Session, no intimation was ever given by the present Ministry of their intention to renew the measure of their predecessors, nor was any expectation of the kind entertained by the Northern Colonial interests either on this side or on that of the Atlantic. And if, after a fair consideration of these reasons, any doubt be still felt as to either the injury that will result to those Provinces from the measure now proposed, or the opinion they must form of its character, it is earnestly to be hoped that her Majesty's Government may be induced to suspend the progress of the Bill through Parliament until time shall have been given, and no great space will be required, for the intelligence to be communicated thither, and petitions thence to be received here. By this course, would not only the prayers and complaints of those Provinces be made known, which of itself would be some consolation, but from the facts and reasons that would be presented a degree of information might be acquired, which would render the decision of Government more deliberate and satisfactory.

But then it may be asserted, that at least the Southern Colonies do approve of the measure, and that it will be a great relief to them, and will cheapen their productions and exports to this country. Even if all this were so, it would still be a question, whether this benefit would exceed the injury which both the trade and navigation of the Northern Colonies are sure to sustain; and if that comparison were doubtful, the further injury with which the manufactures of the United Kingdom are threatened would remain to be compensated. But are either of these assertions, that the Southern Colonies desire this measure, and that they will find it a great relief, quite so certain as supposed? That the West Indian interests in this country have always made the present system a subject of com-

plaint, is admitted ; but then that has been partly for the purpose of maintaining their own case for high protection in the United Kingdom, and partly from that inconsistency, which is incidental to every particular interest, but which it is the business of Government to correct, to desire the utmost benefit, without sharing mutually the burthens, of the social and commercial system. But the local feeling of the Southern Colonists themselves is believed to be somewhat different. They have witnessed on the spot the operation of this system, and do not, it is believed, desire, as certainly they could not obtain, any thing better than the present protecting duties ; by which so equal a competition is kept up between the Northern Colonies and the United States for supplying the Southern Colonies, that, taking the year 1837, the latest of which accounts are published, as a criterion, the importation from the former is £623,123, and from the latter, £517,699 ; and the amount levied upon the latter, by the duties necessary to support this competition, is (or was some years ago, and no later accounts are at hand) but about £57,000 ; the whole of which is paid into the Provincial Treasuries of the West Indian Colonies. Yet, even if this belief, as to the local feeling of those dependencies upon this subject, were erroneous, and if there existed, as it is believed is not the case, petitions against the present system from either their legislatures or commercial bodies, there is one fact which is incontestible, and which, if it do not negative the approval of the present measure by the Southern Colonies, altogether destroys the reason of their approval—The measure can give them no relief of any importance whatever to lessen the cost of their production. Because the Southern Colonies must continue to raise the same revenues to support their civil government ; those revenues can only be levied by duties on imports ; those imports can be only of

the same articles as at present: whatever duties, therefore, are removed by the Imperial Parliament, must and will be re-enacted by the local legislatures, with this difference only, that, while the present charge falls upon foreign production, and brings a British competitor to the market, the new duties may be charged equally upon both, and then, though, in as far as they are less in amount, they will enable the foreigner to sell somewhat cheaper, yet, in as far as they will drive competition from the market, they will enable him also to sell somewhat dearer. And neither these results nor the facts on which they depend are suppositions only, but already in partial existence. The present protective duties do not raise in the Southern Colonies a revenue sufficient for their wants. And how is the deficiency supplied? By further and higher duties on the same articles. So far are the Southern Colonies from any sincere expectation of cheapening their productions by a reduction of duties on their necessary supplies, that their principal, if not their entire, revenues are derived from no other source; to which also they voluntarily resort already, and by which only the whole reduction now to be made in their revenues can be restored. This demonstrates what also by the best sources of information is known to be the case, that it is not the cost of those supplies that enhances there the cost of production, but that their price and abundance is now such as even invites taxation. If, therefore, the West Indian Colonies have ever on that pretence complained of such duties, of some of which they had the remission in their own power, and refrained from using it, the grievance evidently has been only one of those, the continuance of which is turned to more advantage than can be derived from the removal. No less evident is it, that if the complaint were sincere, relief to any important degree is not to be attained by the present

measure, nor is in the nature of things attainable; for the cost of all productions must depend upon the price of labour, and unless the supply of that bear a more equal proportion to the demand, than can now be brought about in the Southern Provinces, the price is not regulated by the cost of such necessaries as here in question.

The only correct view, however, for either the West Indian, or any other interest, to take of the existing duties or their proposed repeal, is to view them in connexion with our general system of commercial policy, and by the merits of the whole judge the merits of each part. At present our laws of trade form a Colonial and Protective System at least consistent with itself. The proposed enactment not only involves, but expressly introduces, a new principle—the repeal of all protection whatever upon one of the staples of colonial production, in a market that demands scarcely less than the value of half a million yearly of that commodity; while but inefficient, or even nugatory duties are left for the protection as well of other colonial productions sold yearly in that market to the amount of £800,000, as upon the principal manufactures of the United Kingdom now sold in these Colonies to the vast extent of £7,000,000 a year. The change cannot rest here. Hitherto, it is an inconsistency and absurdity. The counterpart or complement must necessarily soon take effect in depriving those Colonies of their preference and protection in the markets of the United Kingdom. No one should commend the first step and beginning, unless he is prepared to approve the progress and end. Certainly the responsibility of this change is not to be envied, if it bears any proportion to the magnitude of interests involved. Never was there a more fortunate and successful system than the present. Never such a trade as that of the British Possessions in America has become. The world exhibits nothing like it.

Nothing so prosperous is to be found in the annals of all nations. These Colonies have a population of but 2,600,000 persons, and their imports are now of £10,500,000; of which above £8,000,000 are from British possessions, and £7,000,000 from the United Kingdom. The whole navigation employed by their exports exceeds 2,000,000 tons; of which almost the whole is purely British; and which, besides all the wealth of their freights, maintain an immense body of the best and hardiest seamen. To institute any comparison of this vast amount of commerce and navigation with that of the Eastern Colonies would be futile. With reference to any foreign country, the superiority in trade of the Western Colonies is so great, that, even compared with the United States, the prosperity of whose commerce and its extent with this country is so much and justly vaunted, if only respect be had to the greater population of the Americans, not only do they proportionately import far less of our manufactures and productions, but their trade with all the world bears no proportionate comparison with the whole trade of the British possessions in America. For though more than six times greater in population, those States import far less than three times as much in value from all countries; and the tonnage employed by their exports is even less than a fifth more in amount than that so employed by these Colonies. Seventeen millions of Americans import from all countries to the value of about 130,000,000 dollars a year, and the whole tonnage employed by their exports is, or was in 1840, the year of its greatest amount, 2,353,595 tons, of which tonnage 1,647,009 was American; while two millions and six hundred thousand Colonists import to the value of £10,500,000, and the tonnage employed by their exports exceeds 2,000,000 of tons, and these are almost entirely British. These are great interests to tamper with. It would probably be no easy task, by any change

of system, to make the industry of these or any other equal number of persons more useful to our wealth and power; and certainly it is not by transferring both to foreign nations, as the present measure will be nugatory unless it does, that such a task is most likely to be accomplished.

The measure now proposed will be nugatory unless it transfer British and Colonial Trade to Foreign. The preference at present given to the former is such, that of £1,300,000, the value of the supplies of Fish, Corn, Provisions and Wood, annually imported into the Southern Colonies, £900,000 are of British and Colonial production; of £10,500,000, the value of the whole imports into the Northern and Southern Colonies, about £8,000,000 are of British and Colonial production. Here then is a market of so much annually to be transferred to foreign competitors. Another aspect is thus presented of the proposed measure, deserving the greatest attention. These foreign competitors press us hard in all markets equally open to both, and exclude us from their own markets by high duties as well upon British as Colonial produce. On the one side we have the Prussian League, on the other the American Tariff, and on both the most ambitious and enterprising rivalry. Great Britain and her Northern and Southern Colonies lie, in a triangular position, between; each member desiring the productions and supplying the wants of the other two, and the wealth and power of each being the common wealth and power of the whole. Now at a moment when there happens, as too often recurs, a great falling off in our foreign trade, for which the only consolation to be found is that recently announced by the Premier, of a considerable increase of our trade with the Colonies, it may be wise, and is certainly liberal, to select this, the most important, constant and increasing branch of Colonial trade,

and transfer it to the foreigner; but would there be any harm in at least asking him for an equivalent, for something of reciprocity? It is a matter of about £8,000,000 a year we have on hand: a bagatelle! we are weary of it: it enriches us against all rules: it but serves to discredit science with the simple and practical: let us get rid of the business by all means: perish our Colonies, save our principles!—still why should we not sell it? Can we get nothing for it? May it not be exchanged at least for a reciprocity treaty? What has more excited the envy and cupidity of the foreigner than our Colonial commerce? Will none of them consent to make some reduction in their charges upon British productions, in return for so liberal an abolition and reduction of our charges upon imports into the Colonies? Or if the manufactures of the United Kingdom are quite above the need of any such stipulation, is that the case with the Colonies, or at least with the Northern? Are not their fisheries depressed by both duties and adverse bounties, too great to be contended with, both in Europe and America? Has not France, beside her heavy duties, bounties also, which, unless lately reduced, amount to nearly 10s. per cwt. on dried Fish in the West Indies? Has not Spain discriminating duties of 5s. 1d. per cwt. in favour of Fish imported in her own vessels? Have not the Americans, beside bounties of four dollars a ton on their vessels engaged in the fisheries, and of a quarter of a dollar per barrel on pickled fish, have they not duties of one dollar a cwt. on foreign dried Fish, and of from one to two dollars a barrel on pickled? Have they not also duties of five-and-twenty per cent. ad valorem upon the Wood of other countries? And thus, though they exported to the British possessions in 1840 to the value of 8,368,754 dollars, did not the Americans import thence in the same year to the value of 3,225,258 dollars

only? Our Colonies, therefore, being by such means shut out from the markets of those countries, might we not, before opening our markets to them, ask them to do the same for us or for our Colonies?

The Northern Colonies have little to sell but Wood, Fish, Corn, and Salted Provisions. The Americans refuse to let them bring Wood to the United States under a less duty than twenty-five per cent. of the value: why not at least say to the Americans, Then you must pay twenty-five per cent. to bring your Wood into our Southern Colonies? The Americans refuse to buy our Colonial Fish under a less charge than 4*s.* 1*d.* a cwt., and from 4*s.* 1*d.* to 8*s.* 2*d.* a barrel: why not tell them by our law that they must pay the same to sell in our Colonies. The same reasoning applies, though perhaps less strongly, to provisions and corn. And if the Southern Provinces must now despair of ever finding a market for their Sugar in the United States, nothing but the high duties of that country upon spirits prevents a considerable exportation thither from our West Indian Colonies; who therefore would probably be glad to see that barrier removed, and to be thus enabled to pay for their supplies, under the new measure, by something else than specie. Certainly no condition can be more distressing than that of the Northern Colonies will be, if, by the abandonment of the protective system of this country, they are to lose all British markets, and, by the continuance of the protective system in other countries, are to be admitted to the market of no foreign nation. The Americans, perhaps from political motives, adhere rigidly to their high duties on Colonial productions: the policy which, notwithstanding, would throw open to that country the markets of the Colonies, will excite only the mockery and derision of so clever a people. But what must be the feeling of the Northern Colonies under this, seeing the slight protection

hitherto remaining in their intercourse with the Southern removed, and even the preference shown in favour of the Mother Country, throughout all her possessions in America, reduced to inefficiency, for the sole advantage of that nation ever rival in commerce, and too often hostile in power ?

There is a difference, in one respect, much to be lamented, between the judicial and legislative administrations of Government, so far at least as the introduction of laws is virtually attributed to the executive department: by no determination of any tribunal can a man's property or industry be affected before he has had notice and opportunity given him to defend his interest even of the smallest amount: but in legislation upon questions of trade, involving the vested wealth and labour of whole classes, to an immense extent, throughout a vast and various empire, the most sudden, extreme, and critical changes may be resolved upon by the executive, and *no rule to show cause* against them be first given to those concerned—no opportunity to state their case—no warning—no time to make their defence or prepare for the event, until the minds of those upon whom the decision depends have been made up, it may be, upon defective or erroneous information. Not till after Parliament has possession of the subject, and Ministers are already committed to certain views and opinions, and it has become late either to collect reasons, or obtain a hearing, have those whose property and industry are at stake an intimation of their danger. This evil may be unavoidable, or in some measure counterbalanced in other questions, on which the representatives of those concerned have a voice and vote in the Parliamentary discussion; but in the regulations of Colonial Trade, the interests of which are too remote to be warmly espoused, or even thoroughly understood in either House,

the British Possessions abroad will look in vain for many zealous and competent advocates, unless among the Ministers of the Crown. The Board of Trade and Plantations was, perhaps, instituted for that very reason among others; and certainly it is only in that and the other executive departments of the Imperial Government, that on this occasion, as on most others, the Northern Colonies can expect a full investigation of their case, and a favourable and parental decision.

From the foregoing facts and reasons, the following conclusions seem to arise.

That the Duties now existing for the regulation of Colonial Trade are so moderate, as to have neither restricted the industry, nor excited the complaints of the Colonies; and so efficient, as to have increased the commerce and employed the navigation of both Great Britain and her dependencies, far beyond all example of any system, in any country, at any age.

That the Measure now proposed, as far as it affects the trade between the Northern and Southern Colonies, is most injurious to the former, as it will deprive them of either all, or all adequate, protection in a commerce, which is worth £1,300,000 a year, and employs yearly about 240,000 tons of shipping: the measure is inconsistent in itself, as it deprives of all protection in the Southern Colonies the chief staple of the Northern, their Wood; an article of which the present importation in the West Indian Provinces amounts to nearly £500,000 a year; while upon other articles of far less importance to either commerce or navigation (upon Butter, for example, in which no diminution of duty is made) the principle of protection is still, though more or less inadequately, sustained; the measure is unequal between the Northern and Southern Colonies, as, while the protection of the former is thus diminished in the

ports of the latter, the protection of the latter in the ports of the former is kept up to its present amount; the measure is not required by the Southern Colonies, as they in fact voluntarily impose further duties upon the same articles; it can not benefit the Southern Colonies to any material extent, as the whole amount of duties to be reduced is probably much under £50,000, and the deficiency caused by such a reduction must be supplied to the provincial revenues by new duties upon the same articles; and though such duties, being charged upon all importations, may be less in amount, and thereby enable the foreigner to sell cheaper, yet they will assist him to drive colonial competitors out of the market, and thereby enable him to sell dearer. And thus the measure will only serve to transfer to the United States a trade that is now nearly equally divided between them and the Northern Colonies by the most enterprising and frugal competition.

That, as far as the measure affects the trade between the United Kingdom and both the Northern and Southern Colonies, the most extensive, certain, and increasing market for British manufactures will be suddenly deprived of that protection, without which foreign productions, already beginning to be imported, will undoubtedly be there substituted to a great extent in future; and the introduction of such a principle, in an intercourse so immense, on a scale so extreme and so contrary to the policy of our whole laws of trade hitherto, can only be regarded, as the consequences must soon prove it, the beginning of the End of the whole Colonial System of Great Britain.

That, as far as the measure affects foreign countries, it is a pure gratuity to them of a market of £10,500,000, of which £8,000,000 now belong to British productions, and £7,000,000 of the eight to the productions of the United Kingdom.

And finally, that though the Northern Colonial interests, both here and abroad, received with the greatest apprehensions and earnest remonstrances the measure proposed last year by the late Administration, that measure was so much more moderate, considerate, and equitable, than the present, as far as regards the trade of Northern Colonies to the Southern, that what was then regarded as a loss and an injury, would be now looked upon as a boon and an advantage. And it is most earnestly to be hoped, that if her Majesty's Government can not be induced to preserve the duties now existing in the Colonies, at least no greater reduction may be made than was proposed by the late Administration.

HENRY BLISS.

11, KING'S BENCH WALK, TEMPLE.

15th February, 1842.

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