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NAVIGATION LAWS.

(CANADA.)

COPY of a Despatch from the Governor-general of *British North America* to *Earl Grey*, enclosing a Memorial from the MONTREAL BOARD OF TRADE for a Modification of the NAVIGATION LAWS, and for the Removal of the Restrictions at present applicable to the Navigation of the *St. Lawrence* by Foreign Vessels.

Mr. Hawes.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
14 May 1847.

NAVIGATION LAWS.
(CANADA.)

RETURN to an Address of the Honourable The House of Commons,
dated 10 May 1847;—for,

“COPY of a DESPATCH from the Governor-General of *British North America*, enclosing a MEMORIAL from the MONTREAL BOARD OF TRADE for a Modification of the NAVIGATION LAWS, and for the Removal of the Restrictions at present applicable to the Navigation of the *St. Lawrence* by Foreign Vessels.”

Colonial Office, Downing-street, }
11 May 1847.

B. HAWES.

(*Mr. Hawes.*)

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
14 May 1847.

COPY of a DESPATCH from the Governor-General of *British North America* to Earl Grey, enclosing a MEMORIAL from the MONTREAL BOARD OF TRADE for a Modification of the NAVIGATION LAWS, and for the removal of the Restriction at present applicable to the Navigation of the *St. Lawrence* by Foreign Vessels.

(No 10.)

COPY of a DESPATCH from Governor General the Right Honourable the Earl of *Elgin* to Earl Grey.

Government House, Montreal,
24 March 1847.

My Lord,

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.*

15 March.

Enclosure.

To His Excellency the Right Honourable the Earl of *Elgin and Kincardine*, Governor-general of British North America, &c. &c. &c.

The MEMORIAL of the MONTREAL BOARD OF TRADE,

Humbly sheweth,

THAT in the opinion of your Memorialists the recently adopted commercial policy of the mother country, imperatively demands the immediate attention of the Provincial Legislature, with the view of effecting corresponding modifications in the fiscal and commercial regulations of this province.

That the laws which press most injuriously upon the energies of the inhabitants of this province, restricting the freedom of their commerce, discouraging that spirit of industry and enterprise which ought to be fostered and promoted, and, in short, depressing the general welfare by retarding the development of the varied resources of the province, are, First, The British Navigation Laws; Secondly, The Imperial Differential Duties; Thirdly, The Duties levied on Agricultural Produce; and Lastly, The Restrictions maintained against Foreign Vessels navigating the *St. Lawrence*.

The first and last mentioned of the above restrictions, your Memorialists are aware, are not under the control of the Provincial Legislature; but they nevertheless think it necessary to draw your Excellency's attention to their injurious effects upon our commerce and general welfare, in the hope that your Excellency will take such steps as may be necessary to bring them under the notice of the Imperial authorities, as well as to urge the paramount necessity which exists of their being promptly modified to such an extent, as will leave the people free to employ the cheapest vessels they can procure, whether they be British or foreign, and the inhabitants of Montreal in particular, the power to avail themselves of the advantages to be derived from an unfettered intercourse with foreign nations; without which concessions, your Memorialists despair of being able to maintain a successful competition with their neighbours of the United States, for the extensive and growing trade of the Western regions of America.

Next in the order of importance is the question of the Differential Duties. These your Memorialists conceive to have been virtually placed within the control of the Provincial Legislature by the "British Possessions Act" passed in the last session of the Imperial Parliament, and they would therefore respectfully but earnestly crave, that your Excellency will take such steps as your Excellency may deem advisable, to procure their unqualified repeal.

With respect to the duties on Agricultural Produce, your Memorialists would respectfully urge, that they consider such duties highly objectionable in principle, because they deem it unjust, as well as unwise, to tax the first necessities of life; and injurious, because they tend to limit the export trade of the province.

Your Memorialists would, in the next place, with the view of promoting and encouraging industry, recommend, that all raw materials required for manufacturing purposes should be admitted free of duty. In this respect, your Memorialists would follow in the footsteps of the mother country, which has recognized the principle so fully, that they believe scarcely a duty remains in her tariff upon such materials.

Among

REMOVAL of RESTRICTIONS ON COMMERCE with CANADA. 3

Among the minor suggestions which your Memorialists would venture to make respecting the provincial tariff, are the two following:—

First, That the duties should be levied in the legal currency of the province; from which your Memorialists would expect to derive much advantage in increased simplicity and convenience; as, wherever specific duties are levied, a troublesome conversion of sterling into currency would be avoided, and time, which is of the utmost importance in the active season, would thereby be much economized.

The next suggestion which your Memorialists would make is, that the practice of exacting bonds from importers on placing goods under the Queen's lock, as security for the payment of the duties upon them, should be entirely abolished. Your Memorialists regard this practice as extremely inconvenient, and troublesome to importers generally, while, on the other hand, they consider it to be quite uncalled for as a means of securing the revenue against loss, inasmuch as the Crown in no instance parts with its lien upon the articles in bond until the duties levied upon them have been paid, or "otherwise secured according to law." Under these circumstances, your Memorialists humbly trust that the vexatious practice in question will be speedily annulled.

Finally, your Memorialists would recommend, that along with the reforms already suggested, the scale of Tolls now levied upon the Provincial Canals should undergo a thorough revision, with a view to the substitution of such rates as will be calculated to attract the trade of the West to the channel of the St. Lawrence.

To this recommendation your Memorialists attach much weight, and trust it will have due influence with your Excellency's government in framing the fiscal measures which the present crisis imperatively calls for; and your Memorialists would respectfully add, that all the advantages which they expect to flow from the adoption of the foregoing suggestions, may be seriously endangered by ill-timed apathy or unwise legislation.

And your Memorialists will ever pray.

(signed) G. Moffat,
(Seal.)

President of the Montreal Board of Trade.

Montreal, 15 March 1847.

(signed) F. A. Willson,
Secretary.

