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CANADA.

COPIES of any DESPATCHES from the Governor-General of *Canada* to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies in regard to the Commercial Changes now under the consideration of the Imperial Legislature.—(In continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 321, of the present Session.)

(*Lord George Bentinck.*)

*Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
10 June 1846.*

FURTHER RETURN to an Address of the Honourable The House of Commons,
dated 14 May 1846.

COPIES of any DESPATCHES from the Governor-General of *Canada* to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, in regard to the Commercial Changes now under the consideration of the Imperial Legislature.—(In continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 321, of the present Session.)

Colonial Office, Downing-street,
8 June 1846.

LYTTELTON.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed, 10 June 1846.

— No. 1. —

(No. 54.)

COPY of a DESPATCH from Governor the Earl *Cathcart*, K.C.B., to the Right Honourable *W. E. Gladstone*.

No. 1.
Governor Earl
Cathcart to
Mr. Secretary
Gladstone,
13 May 1846.

Sir,

Government House, Montreal, 13 May 1846.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith, in order that it may be laid at the foot of the Throne, an Address to Her Majesty from the Legislative Assembly of this Province, praying that, in the event of a change being made in the law regulating the admission of Foreign Corn into the British markets, due regard may be had to the interests of Canada.

I have, &c.

(signed) *Cathcart*.

TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

Most Gracious Sovereign,

WE, your Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of Canada in Parliament assembled, respectfully beg leave to address your Majesty on a subject of the highest importance to the inhabitants of this Province.

We assure your Majesty, that while we have seen with unmingled satisfaction the happiness and prosperity of the people of this colony advancing in steady and successful progression under that moderate system of protection of her staple productions, grain and lumber, which your Majesty and your Imperial Parliament have hitherto graciously secured to them, we feel that we should be wanting in our duty, as well to your Majesty as to our constituents, did we fail earnestly to represent to your Majesty that we view with serious apprehension and alarm, as detrimental to the best interests of this colony, the adoption of the proposed principle of commercial intercourse now under the consideration of the Imperial Parliament.

We cannot but fear that the abandonment of this protective principle, the very basis of the colonial commercial system, is not only calculated materially to retard the agricultural improvement of the country, and check its hitherto rising prosperity, but seriously to impair our ability to purchase the manufactured goods of Great Britain; a result alike prejudicial to this colony and the Parent State.

We feel truly grateful to your Majesty for enabling us, by guaranteeing the payment of 1,500,000*l.*, to undertake many valuable public improvements, which are now approaching to completion, and which under the existing laws would ultimately prove productive. But should the duties on foreign and colonial produce entering the United Kingdom be assimilated, as at present proposed by your Majesty's Imperial Government, it is much to be apprehended that the agriculturists of this Province will be deprived of a fair and remunerative price for their surplus produce; and that, consequently, the increase of our staple products, which was reasonably anticipated, will be checked to such an extent as materially to lessen the prospect of our canals and other public works proving as productive as we had reason to expect.

We respectfully represent to your Majesty, that, situated as Canada is, and with a climate so severe as to leave barely one-half the year open for intercourse by the St. Lawrence with the mother country, the cost of transporting her products to market

is much greater than is paid by the inhabitants of the United States; and that without a measure of protection, or some equivalent advantage, we cannot successfully compete with that country.

It therefore becomes our duty, as faithful subjects of your Majesty, to point out what we sincerely believe must be the result of measures which have for their object the repeal of the laws affording protection to the Canadian export trade. First, it will discourage those at present engaged in agricultural pursuits from extending their operations; secondly, it will prevent the influx of respectable emigrants from the mother country, who have for many years past settled in large numbers on the waste lands of the Province, and who by their industry and capital have materially contributed to that rapid advancement of the country which we have before noticed; and, lastly, it is much to be feared that, should the inhabitants of Canada, from the withdrawal of all protection to their staple products, find that they cannot successfully compete with their neighbours of the United States in the only market open to them, they will naturally and of necessity begin to doubt whether remaining a portion of the British Empire will be of that paramount advantage which they have hitherto found it to be. These, we humbly submit, are considerations of grave importance both to your Majesty and the people of this Province; and we trust we need not assure your Majesty that any change which would tend in the remotest degree to weaken the ties that have for so many years, and under trying circumstances, bound the people of Canada to that land which they are proud to call their mother country, would be viewed as the greatest misfortune which could befall them.

We would further remind your Majesty that while, in compliance with the recommendation of the Imperial Government, we have passed a law repealing all duty on American produce coming through our country for exportation, no similar advantage is accorded by the American Government to the people of this Province; but that duties, amounting in most cases to prohibition, are rigorously maintained by that Government on every article of ours entering into their ports. The disadvantage we must labour under in this respect is so apparent that we respectfully request your Majesty will be pleased to cause the necessary steps to be taken for opening a negotiation with the Government of the United States for the admission of our products into their ports on the same terms that theirs are admitted into those of Great Britain and this colony.

We also humbly request that your Majesty will favourably consider the justice of admitting the products of this Province generally into the Imperial ports free of duty, as the expense of transportation is in itself all the protection which our fellow-subjects in the United Kingdom can reasonably expect as respects the imports from a colony situated at such a distance from the mother country, and with ports closed to commerce for so large a portion of the year. And we the more confidently appeal to your Majesty's justice upon this point as the relief that we seek in this particular is in strict accordance with the very principles upon which the changes that we deprecate are based, as well as to the assurance received through your Majesty's Secretary of State, that it is the desire of your Majesty's Government that the trade of Canada should in all respects approach as nearly to perfect freedom as the wishes of its inhabitants and the exigencies of the public revenue may permit.

While the subject that we have thus brought under the notice of your Majesty embraces other points requiring the gravest deliberation, and calling for the most favourable consideration on the part of the Imperial authorities, your Majesty's faithful Commons have felt it to be their duty to your Majesty, to the Imperial Parliament and the mother country, and to their own constituents, to lose no time in at once approaching your Majesty with the declaration of their views upon that part of it embraced in their present address, and to which, renewing their assurance of devoted attachment to your Majesty's person and Government, they earnestly entreat your Majesty's most gracious and favourable consideration.

Legislative Assembly,
Tuesday, 12th May 1846.

(signed) A. N. Morin,
Speaker.

— No. 2. —

(No. 83.)

COPY of a DESPATCH from the Right Honourable W. E. Gladstone, to
Governor the Earl Cathcart, K. C. B.

No. 2.

Mr. Secretary
Gladstone to
Governor Earl
Cathcart,
3 June 1846.

My Lord,

Downing-street, 3 June 1846.

I HAVE to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's despatch, No. 54, of the 13th of May, transmitting to me, for presentation to Her Majesty, an address which has been voted by Her Majesty's loyal subjects the Commons of Canada. In this address it is set forth, that the Assembly of Canada regard the adoption of the principle of commercial intercourse now under the consideration of the Imperial Parliament with serious apprehension and alarm, and various grounds are stated for entertaining such impressions. Her Majesty has been pleased to receive this address with the fullest confidence in the loyalty and intelligence of Her faithful Commons of Canada; but it is with sincere concern that

that Her Majesty has learned the existence, in such a quarter, of anticipations of such a character.

I have it in command from Her Majesty to address to your Lordship the following observations in regard to the matter of the address, which have been submitted by Her Majesty's advisers for Her gracious approval, and to which She has been pleased to give Her sanction.

Her Majesty's Government conceive that the protective principle cannot with justice be described as the universal basis, either of the general connexion between the United Kingdom and its colonies, or even of their commercial connexion. There is a large and important group of the colonies of this county, having a very extended commerce, and one of a peculiarly British character, in relation to which the protective system has at no time exercised a powerful influence, and in relation to which at present it has little more than a nominal existence. I speak of the Australian colonies: and it cannot fail to be remarked, that while these are the most distant, and therefore, according to the suppositions of many, the most in need of commercial preference, they have also made the most rapid progress, and have thus most effectually belied that necessity. It is true, indeed, that a part of their material prosperity may be ascribable to the supply of penal labour; but this is far from affording an explanation of the case, since perhaps the most remarkable instances of vigorous and rapid growth among the Australian possessions of Her Majesty have been instances in which penal labour has been altogether unknown. The energy of the colonists has, without doubt, under Divine Providence, been the main cause of their singular advancement; stimulated, but not overborne by distance, and aided, not repressed, by the enjoyment of commercial freedom. The same energies, with less disadvantage of distance to contend against, will, it may be confidently predicted, have a similar effect in developing the resources of British North America, and not with less, but rather with the more signal success, when capital, industry and skill shall be left to take their own spontaneous direction, and to turn to account, as individual prudence shall suggest, the abundant materials and instruments of wealth which the bounty of Heaven has bestowed.

Her Majesty's Government have been glad to find that the Assembly has viewed with an unmingled satisfaction the prosperity of Canada under the moderate system of protection which has hitherto prevailed; but the Assembly cannot fail to recollect, that all the progressive relaxations of that system, which for a series of years past have been introduced into the law, have been met and resisted by predictions of the ruin that it was honestly but erroneously conceived would follow them, and that those predictions have, with a remarkable uniformity, been disappointed. Experience cannot but suggest that a similar insecurity attaches to the renewal of the same expectations founded on the same arguments.

It is not for the sake of controversial or purely argumentative advantage that Her Majesty's Government refer to former apprehensions, and to the manner in which they have been dissipated by the event. A retrospect of this kind is calculated to throw clear and abundant light upon the real merits of the question. The fears which are now entertained have reference to the circumstance that it is proposed to remove all differential duty between Canadian and foreign corn. Is it then to be shown that the Canadian corn trade has prospered heretofore in proportion to the amount of such differential duty? Far otherwise. The law of 1828 diminished the difference in favour of Canada; the law of 1842 further and greatly diminished the difference in favour of Canada; the Law of 1843, which reduced the duty on Canadian wheat to one shilling per quarter, still left a much smaller difference in its favour, as against foreign wheat, than existed under either of the former Corn Laws. And yet the corn trade of Canada has grown and prospered; and its extension has, doubtless, contributed in no small degree to the happiness and prosperity of the people of the colony, which the Assembly, sharing in the unmingled satisfaction of Her Majesty and the British Parliament, has seen advancing in steady and successful progression. But this extension has taken place, not under protection secured from change, nor under protection fortified by successive increments, but contemporaneously with a series of changes involving its great diminution.

It appears to be the impression of the Assembly that some great revolution of prices is likely to occur, as the consequence of the pending changes in the law, which will deprive the Canadian farmer of all hope of remuneration

for his surplus produce. But the Canadian farmer is advancing from year to year in capital and in science; and, to say nothing of the great advantages he cannot fail to derive from improved communications, it would surely be rash to assert, nor probably do the Assembly in their address intend to imply, that his industry must be paralysed unless he shall continue to receive the precise amount of average payment for his grain that he has hitherto received for it. Doubtless the alarm which has been excited has reference to the idea of some sudden, great and permanent reduction of price, to follow the repeal of the British Corn Law. Without pretending to estimate too nicely the momentary or the occasional effects of that measure, Her Majesty's Government cannot but admit that they could better appreciate at least certain presumptive, though far from demonstrative, grounds for the alarm of the Canadian agriculturist in regard to the future fortunes of the colony if they shared in such an anticipation. To some reduction of average and usual price, from the removal of artificial restraints, they are disposed to look forward; but when they consider the steady and rapid growth of population in the corn-producing countries of the globe, they cannot but be persuaded that it would be unwise, whether in the friends or the opponents of commercial relaxation, to recommend or dissuade it on the ground of any great revolution in permanent prices to be operated by it; and their expectations of advantage, sanguine as these anticipations are, have reference in a greater degree to the increased steadiness of the market, and to the vigour which general trade will derive from the removal of restraints upon the exchange of commodities, and agriculture, from the cessation of all artificial influence disturbing the balance of its several pursuits, and from the wholesome stimulus that competition, which in farming pursuits can scarcely become overwrought, rarely fails to impart to industry.

I am unwilling to repeat at length the arguments which I have addressed to your Lordship in my despatch, No. 66, of the 18th May, with respect to the other great subject of the alarm of the Assembly, namely, the trade in lumber. When, however, we revert to the year 1842, it cannot but be acknowledged that this was the case of a trade peculiarly artificial as it stood under the former law. The reduction, though graduated, was decisive; perhaps in no case has it been more so; and certainly in no case have more uniform, confident or sincere prophecies of ruin been hazarded by the opponents of the change. The result is, that the export of timber from British North America to this country attained, during the last year, to a height which it had never reached under the more protective law. I do not mean that the withdrawal of protection was either the exclusive or even the principal direct cause of this prosperity; although there cannot be a doubt that many trades have to refer their vigour to the fact that the absence of artificial support has in their case given free operation to the stimulus necessary for the development of natural and permanent resources. Increased demand in the United Kingdom has, without doubt, been the main and the immediate cause of the increased export of wood from British North America; but it is the conviction of Her Majesty's Government that such increased demand was itself referable in no small degree to the relaxations of our commercial law; and therefore, in its due proportion, the growth of the timber trade is truly and justly, even if circuitously, to be ascribed to that very diminution of protection from which its ruin had been anticipated. We are now to look forward with hope to a further increase of the consuming power of this country; a further encouragement to the use of timber as compared with competing articles capable of being applied to the same purposes; a further encouragement to the use of Canadian timber, in combination with the wood of the Baltic, for those objects in regard to which the consumption of the one directly stimulates the consumption of the other. Is it too much to hope that causes so similar may produce like effects; and that the caution with which Parliament has proceeded in the gradual reduction of the timber duties to a moderate standard may be again rewarded by the satisfaction with which it will witness a further growth in the wood trade of Canada?

Her Majesty's Government, therefore, cannot, on the part of the Imperial Exchequer, share in the fear that increased freedom of trade will have the effect of crippling the revenues of those important public works which are designed to facilitate the transit of the produce of Canada by the St. Lawrence to the sea. They can by no means subscribe to the opinion that the comparative

dearness

For Mr. Secretary
Gladstone's Despatch,
18 May, No. 66,
vide Papers, ordered by
the House of Commons
to be printed, 18 May
1846, No. 321, p. 17.

dearness of this route is an established fact; and they likewise feel, that if they did subscribe to that opinion, although it might corroborate the propriety of the course they have pursued in suggesting to Parliament the interposition of an interval before entire freedom shall be given to the corn trade, it could do no more; it could not induce them to ask, nor Parliament to grant, nor, they are certain, could it induce the people of Canada to desire, that the market of their farm produce should be maintained by means of a perpetual tax upon the people of England. In referring to the unchecked competition which, so far as British law is concerned, will be established between colonial and foreign corn by the repeal of the Corn Law, it perhaps may not have occurred to the Assembly, that British law alone cannot suffice to establish this competition. The price which the colonial and foreign exporters of corn respectively will obtain for their grain in Great Britain, must always be materially affected by the comparative degrees of facility which may be afforded in the country of the one and of the other for the introduction of those British goods by which payment for the corn must substantially be made. British goods are admitted into Canada at very low, into the American Union at very high, import duties. The effect of this is not merely to give to the British exporter a better position in the Canadian market than in that of the United States, but to enable him to give a better price for the commodity he purchases in return, and therefore to give to the corn trade of Canada a corresponding advantage, so long as the present tariffs continue, over that of the United States.

With respect to that portion of the address which prays Her Majesty to invite the Government of the United States to establish an equality of trade between the dominions of the Republic and the British North American colonies, I am commanded to instruct your Lordship to assure the Assembly that Her Majesty will readily cause directions to be given to Her Minister at Washington to avail himself of the earliest suitable opportunity to press this important subject on the notice of that Government, and that it will afford Her Majesty the most sincere satisfaction if any communication which may hereafter be held for this purpose shall have the effect which is desired by Her faithful Commons of Canada.

Her Majesty's Government have, as may be known to the Assembly, on several occasions endeavoured to make arrangements with foreign powers for the mutual relaxation of tariffs; and similar attempts have taken place among foreign powers, one with the other, but almost uniformly with ill success. Whatever arguments may be used to show the great increase of benefit that would accrue on both sides if states could have been induced to act simultaneously for this purpose, experience has sufficiently shown the difficulty of effecting these combined operations upon matters which are properly of domestic concern, and has suggested the wisdom of securing the incomplete advantage which depends upon our own free agency alone, rather than of foregoing it in the vain endeavour to realize benefits larger indeed, but not within our reach. Should the Government of the United States continue to maintain the scale of import duties now in force upon its frontier, Her Majesty's Government will view with regret a policy injurious to Canada; but they will reflect with satisfaction on the prevalence of laws more favourable to commerce on the Canadian side, and will anticipate from those laws both a direct benefit to the people and trade of the Province, and the further advantage which a consistent example given by this country and by its colonies will, as they believe, not fail to realize in disposing foreign states towards the removal of restrictions on trade.

With respect to that part of the address which relates to the duty of 1 s. per quarter, which it is proposed to charge on all wheat imported into England after the repeal of the Corn Law, I am to refer your Lordship to my despatch, No. 56, of the 18th April, on the same subject. From the purport of that despatch it would of course be even more difficult to recede at a period when the Bill introduced into the House of Commons by the advisers of the Crown has passed through all its stages in that House, and has been affirmed, as to its principle, on the second reading, by the House of Lords.

It is necessary for me here to offer an explanation with regard to an expression of mine, which appears to have given rise to misapprehension. I have stated to your Lordship, in a previous despatch, that Her Majesty's Government desire that the trade of Canada should in all respects approach as near to perfect freedom as the dispositions of its inhabitants and the exigencies of the public revenue there may permit; and from this it is inferred that the amount of 1 s. per quarter,

For Mr. Secretary Gladstone's Despatch, No. 56, of the 18th of April, vide Papers ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 18 May 1846, No. 321, page 10.

which

which has been adopted for a long period in this country as the standard of a nominal duty upon corn, ought to be removed. But the language which I employed had reference to the trade of Canada as affected by laws applicable in her own markets and on her own waters. Indeed, if the allusion had been to a rigid and perfect equality of trade in the ports and markets of this country, its first and most important bearing would, I apprehend, have been, not upon the nominal duty of 1*s.*, which it is proposed to retain upon colonial in common with foreign corn, but rather upon the very considerable duties of 15*s.* and 18*s.* respectively, which, as against nominal duties of 1*s.* and 2*s.* on Canadian timber and deals, it is proposed to continue to charge on the corresponding foreign articles.

Her Majesty's Government, in the discharge of their duty to the Crown and to the people of this country, and likewise to the empire at large, have not felt themselves to be at liberty to advise Her Majesty to pass by the address of Her Canadian Assembly with a brief or merely formal answer, although the advanced stage at which the deliberations of Parliament have now arrived might have afforded at least a technical justification for such a course. They have thought a more frank and full exposition of their views of this great question in its bearings upon Canada was due to the important body from which the address proceeds, and from which they are well assured may be anticipated the most candid consideration even of arguments opposed to their own. It is due especially on account of the importance of that body and of the province of Canada; but, even in the case of the smallest portion of Her subjects, I have it in command to say that it would equally have been the desire of Her Majesty that such a frank exposition of the policy of Her Government should be made. Her Majesty does not recognize the distinction between Her nearer and Her more remote subjects with reference to a matter so nearly touching Her relation towards them, and the duties and the sentiments of consideration and affection which it involves. Nor can she recognize in this view any distinction between the more and the less powerful, particularly at a time when Her Parliament is engaged in the discussion of measures which are recommended to its notice especially upon the ground that they tend to improve the condition of the most numerous and the least opulent classes of Her people.

It would indeed be a source of the greatest pain to Her Majesty's Government if they could share in the impression that the connexion between this country and Canada derived its vitality from no other source than from the exchange of commercial preferences. If it were so, it might appear to be a relation consisting in the exchange not of benefits but of burdens; if it were so, it would suggest the idea that the connexion itself had reached or was about to reach the legitimate term of its existence. But Her Majesty's Government still augur for it a longer duration, founded upon a larger and firmer basis,—upon protection rendered from the one side, and allegiance freely and loyally returned from the other,—upon common traditions of the past, and hopes of the future,—upon resemblances in origin, in laws, and in manners,—in what inwardly binds men and communities of men together, as well as in the close association of those material interests which, as Her Majesty's Government are convinced, are destined not to recede but to advance, not to be severed, but to be more closely and healthfully combined under the quickening influences of increased commercial freedom.

I have, &c.

(signed) *W. E. Gladstone.*

— No. 3. —

(No. 53.)

COPY of a DESPATCH from Governor the Earl *Cathcart*, K. C. B. to the Right Honourable *W. E. Gladstone.*

No. 3.
Governor Earl
Cathcart to
Mr. Secretary
Gladstone,
13 May 1846.

Sir,

Government House, Montreal, 13 May 1846.

AT the request of the Board of Trade of the town of Hamilton in Upper Canada, I have the honour to transmit herewith, for the purpose of being laid at the foot of the Throne, a Petition to Her Majesty from that body, praying that the measures now before the Imperial Parliament relating to corn and timber may not become law.

I have, &c.

(signed) *Cathcart.*

LETTER

LETTER from *J. Young*, Esq. to the Hon. *Dominick Daly*, Civil Secretary, Montreal.

Sir,

Hamilton, 7 May 1846.

I HAVE the honour to transmit through you to his Excellency the Governor-general, the enclosed Petition to Her most gracious Majesty, from the Board of Trade of this town, against the measures now before the British Parliament relative to corn and timber, and to request that his Excellency would be pleased to forward the same at the earliest possible period, to be laid at the foot of the Throne.

I have, &c.

(signed) *John Young*,
President Hamilton Board of Trade.

TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

The Petition of the Board of Trade of the Town of Hamilton.

Most humbly sheweth,

THAT great alarm has been occasioned in your Majesty's province of Canada, as well as in your Majesty's other possessions in North America, by the measures recently brought before the British Parliament by your Majesty's Government, proposing the reduction and abandonment within a short period of the protection now afforded us on our staple articles of export.

That these provinces are the nearest colonies that can supply the mother country with corn and timber, and in return take British manufactured goods to an extent greater, according to our population, than any other colony, and four times greater than any foreign country.

That, should free trade in corn supersede the protection now afforded to this great staple of our export, we shall be no longer in a situation to continue as importers of British manufactured goods to an extent worthy of consideration, and the attention of the colonists must unavoidably be directed to the encouragement and extension of domestic manufactures.

That, encouraged by the protection afforded us in the British market, and the benevolent intentions of Your Majesty towards the colony, as expressed in the determination to regard Canada as an integral portion of the empire, and in her intercourse with the mother country to place her in the position of an English county, we have been induced to borrow on the credit of Great Britain a loan of one million and a half sterling to improve and complete our internal communications, which, should this protection be withdrawn, will be comparatively valueless, the means by which we hoped to liquidate the principal and interest being diverted into other channels.

That, in addition to the above, your petitioners would beg to present to your Majesty's notice the following facts.

That the trade to these colonies employs a most numerous and important portion of the British mercantile marine.

That British shipping is subject to additional expense by Imperial Acts in its intercourse with these colonies.

That we suffer considerable natural disadvantages, owing to our distance from the mother country, and to our ports being from their northerly situation closed to an export and import trade for nearly six months of the year.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray your Majesty to continue to this colony the protection now afforded, or at least such a modification thereof as may still enable us to compete with European growers of corn in the British markets and thereby enable us to import and consume British manufactured goods.

Or that, should the measures lately introduced by your Majesty's ministers become law, your Majesty will be graciously pleased to extend to this colony such relief as may enable us to sustain the disastrous consequences which we apprehend will follow the adoption of the policy now advocated by your Majesty's Government.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

(signed) *John Young*, President.
William Atkinson, Secretary.

— No. 4. —

(No. 74.)

COPY of a DESPATCH from the Right Honourable *W. E. Gladstone* to Governor the Earl *Cathcart*, K. C. B.

My Lord,

Downing street, 1 June 1846.

I HAVE laid before the Queen the Petition to Her Majesty from the Board of Trade of the town of Hamilton in Western Canada, which accompanies your Lordship's despatch of the 13th May (No. 58). Her Majesty was pleased to receive it very graciously; but, much as I regret my inability to advise the Queen

No. 4.
Mr. Secretary
Gladstone to
Governor Earl
Cathcart,
1 June 1846.
to

to assent to a request preferred by a body of Her Majesty's subjects possessing such and so many claims on the favourable regards of their Sovereign, I have been precluded from advising Her Majesty to assent to the prayer of this petition, that the measures now before the Imperial Parliament, relating to corn and timber, may not become law. To assent to it would be (as the petitioners will not fail to perceive) not merely to retract the recommendations addressed by Her Majesty to Parliament at the commencement of the present Session, but would be to contravene all the votes hitherto passed in pursuance of that recommendation by both Houses of Parliament.

I have &c.

(signed) *W. E. Gladstone.*
