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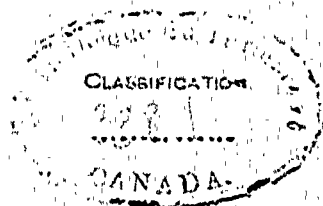
TIMBER DUTIES.

COPY of a MEMORIAL to the BOARD of TRADE
by the Merchants of *Quebec*, respecting the
TIMBER DUTIES.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
14 March 1831.

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TIMBER DUTIES.



COPY of a MEMORIAL to the BOARD OF TRADE by
the MERCHANTS of *Quebec*, respecting the TIMBER
TRADE.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed, 14 March 1831.

THE MEMORIAL of the undersigned Proprietors of Lumber Establishments
and Saw Mills, in the Neighbourhood of *Quebec*.

Humbly Showeth,

THAT your Memorialists have heard with the greatest anxiety and consternation
that it has been proposed in the Imperial Parliament to make an Alteration in
the Duties on Timber and Deals, prejudicial to the North American Colonies :

That your Memorialists, and a vast number of the inhabitants of the Canadas,
have made large outlays of capital in saw-mills, and the various establishments
indispensably requisite for carrying on the Trade, on the faith of existing laws :

That the winter-establishments for preparing the new supplies of Lumber for
shipment next season have now been established throughout the country for more
than three months, and stocked at a heavy expense :

That many of your Memorialists provided in the autumn at *Quebec* large
stocks of Lumber for the loading of their early spring ships, an essential and usual
precaution to ensure the accomplishment of two voyages during the season :

That these undertakings have been entered into unsuspecting of any change,
and that the capital so invested amounts at the present moment to at least
£1,250,000 :

That any immediate alteration in the Duties unfavourable to the North American
Trade would render these investments a total sacrifice :

That such loss of capital, and sudden withdrawal of employment from so many
persons, would be a dreadful visitation to this young Colony, and spread over-
whelming ruin and misery far and wide throughout the country :

That the Trade having risen up under the protective system adopted in the
first instance by the British Government from motives of policy, for the purpose of
opening channels for the supply of Timber independent of foreign countries, ought
not, your Memorialists respectfully represent, in justice to be abandoned without
ample notice, that those who have been encouraged thereby to embark their
capital in the trade may have time to withdraw a portion of it; such, your
Memorialists believe, has always been the just system of His Majesty's paternal
government, as in the cases of the bounty to the Linen Trade and on Barilla: any
other system would be but calling forth the energies of His Majesty's subjects to
involve them in ruin :

That a continuation of the present protection to the trade would be requisite
for a term of at least five years, to withdraw a portion of the capital embarked in
it, and three years to realize the stocks of Lumber on hand, and now preparing :

MEMORIAL OF MERCHANTS OF QUEBEC

To the Right Honourable LORD AUCKLAND, President, and the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Privy Council for Trade and Plantations ;

The MEMORIAL of the COMMITTEE of TRADE of *Quebec*, representing the Merchants thereof,

Humbly Showeth,

That your Memorialists have learned with the greatest alarm, that it has been proposed in the Imperial Parliament to take into consideration during the present session, the existing scale of duties on Lumber, with a view to an alteration prejudicial to the North American Trade :

That the duties as they stand at present afford but a bare protection to the trade, and that any such change must put an end to it :

That the Lumber-trade is the most valuable and extensive trade enjoyed by the North American Colonies, and that the loss of it will be attended with the most disastrous consequences to the inhabitants generally, and bring upon many utter ruin :

That capital to a very considerable amount has been invested in the trade, both by merchants in *Quebec*, and by inhabitants throughout every part of the country, to form the establishments indispensably requisite for carrying it on. In *Quebec* for the security of the Lumber, and of the ships while loading in the strong tideway of the river St. Lawrence, and throughout the country in erecting saw mills, forming log-ponds, and in building craft for the transport of deals ; most of which works are of great cost, many forming the only hope and dependence of their proprietors, and all useless for other purposes :

That the Lumber-trade is of the utmost consequence to the poorer inhabitants of the country, furnishing to a very large number their only means of support during the severity of our long winter, particularly after seasons of bad crops, (which in the lower province is of frequent occurrence,) and to the young men, and the new settlers, the most ready way of enabling them to establish themselves on lands :

That emigration from the mother country to the Canadas has been increasing annually :

That in the year 1829 it amounted to	- -	15,945 persons,
And in the year 1830	- - - -	28,100.

And that should the present state of extreme distress of the labouring classes of Great Britain and Ireland unhappily continue, emigration must go on increasing to a very considerable extent, offering as it does the most immediate and effectual means of relief :

That on this score the Lumber-trade is all important to the mother country, to the emigrants, and to the provinces, as affording prompt means of employment on their arrival to the poor emigrants for their immediate support, and enabling those who are frugal and industrious, in a short time to establish themselves on lands :

It is important to the inhabitants of the provinces, as relieving them from the severe pressure of a constant flow of needy strangers by the work so afforded them. And most important and consolatory to His Majesty's Government in their paternal care, and to the gentlemen of Great Britain and Ireland, in sending forth their poor countrymen to find an asylum in the Canadas, that such ready means exist of obtaining employment for them, and that it is in their power to maintain this desirable state of things. Every part of the country, but most especially, the new settlements in the neighbourhood of *Quebec*, and the River *Ottawa*, afford abundant proofs of the benefits which have been derived from the Lumber-trade.

That thus it is the means of retaining as settlers in the Canadas a vast body of emigrants, who would otherwise be driven for immediate occupation to the United States :

That moreover the extensive amount of tonnage employed in the Trade affords the means of cheap transport to emigrants, nor have they far to travel from
the

the homes they leave to find a conveyance, as vessels are constantly departing during the summer season for North America from almost every port in the United Kingdom:

And these your Memorialists call to the attention of your Lordships as most material considerations; it being evident, that without such means the expense of immigration would be beyond the reach of thousands who now immigrate here:

That the amount of the Importations into Lower Canada by sea during the season of 1829 was £. 1,275,000 sterling; that the returns of 1830 are not yet made up, but that the amount is considerably larger, almost entirely from the United Kingdom and its dependencies, and in British shipping. The amount of foreign tonnage being only 430 tons out of 225,513 tons entered:

That the Canadas being thus consumers of British manufactures, and British West India produce to so large an amount, merit the consideration of His Majesty's Government in the protection of the produce they have to offer in return, more especially as the trade is carried on by British native subjects, British capital, and in British ships:

That there were cleared out from the ports of Lower Canada for all places beyond the limits of the Province in British shipping,

In the year 1829—240,880 tons, navigated by 10,742 men.

In the year 1830—225,083 - - - - - 10,030 —

and that a still larger number of British ships are employed in the Timber-trade from the other ports of North America:

That your Lordships having perfect knowledge of the value and importance to the mother country of a trade which employs so large an amount of British shipping, and forms so extensive and excellent a nursery for British seamen, as well as affording an opening and employment for so large a number of the members of our family (in these distressful times more than ever requisite), your Memorialists need make no comment on the subject. It would however be grievous to your Memorialists to reflect that as these advantages will be sacrificed with the destruction of the North American Timber Trade, so will be increased the employment of foreign shipping, the nurseries of foreign seamen, and the employment and prosperity of foreign subjects:

That by the return of Imports into the United Kingdom it appears that foreigners under the present scale of duties enjoy a very considerable share of the Lumber-trade with Great Britain; that in this regard the competition of Colonial Timber operates most serviceably in keeping down the price of foreign Timber, for it cannot be supposed that the Baltic proprietors and merchants will neglect to take advantage of the additional demand which will be made in their markets for 600,000 tons of Timber, the necessary consequence of any change of duties in their favour. Inasmuch as the British North American Timber will be thrown out of the market altogether, and thus British interests further sacrificed to enrich foreigners:

That the scale of duties adopted in the session of 1821 was determined on after a very long and laborious inquiry of a Committee of the House of Commons, and after weighing maturely the conflicting interests of the various parties who appeared before them; and it was considered a very nice and delicate adjustment, enabling competitors from all quarters to meet on equal terms in the British markets:

That under this impression, and on the faith of the permanency of this scale of duties, many of your Memorialists, and of the inhabitants of these provinces, made their outlay for carrying on the Lumber-trade, which will become a total loss to them on any further change in favour of the Baltic trade:

That it having been said by opponents to the trade that it has a demoralizing effect in the population engaged in it, and tends to divert their attention from the cultivation of lands:

Your Memorialists beg leave to state, though owing to peculiar circumstances it formerly was attended by such effects, that it is now no longer the case; on the contrary most conducive to forwarding the settlement of lands:

It had naturally the effect complained of when, during the late war, the United Kingdom, cut off from her usual sources for the supply of Timber (then most wanted) the trade newly introduced into the North American Colonies became suddenly forced to a considerable extent, on a limited agricultural population, high prices, and high wages, with dissipation in their train, could not but be the natural consequences. But the trade having now been long established in the country, and the labouring part of the population surprisingly increased by immigration, prices and wages are moderate, and emigrants and young men find the Lumber-establishments the means of enabling them, by saving their wages for two or three years, to establish themselves on lands, which otherwise it would be out of their power to accomplish :

Your Memorialists can state this as a fact, coming within their own knowledge ; and that in establishments where upwards of 200 labourers are employed there is the most perfect sobriety, and no opportunity of obtaining ardent spirits to excess ; nor are they used but when given out by the foreman in moderation, after exposure to hardships :

That your Memorialists have heard with concern that an unfounded prejudice has gone abroad respecting the quality of the Fir Timber imported from British North America :

On this subject they feel themselves entitled to state with confidence, as respects Fir Timber, that the Red Pine is equal in quality to any brought from the North of Europe, either for ship-building or domestic purposes. That the Yellow Pine Timber affords masts for the Royal Navy, not obtainable elsewhere, and when sawn into deals, an article unequalled by any other for the interior or joiners work of houses ; and that the white spruce-deals, afforded at a low rate, are quite equal to any, and superior to some from the Baltic, and can only be said to yield in quality to those from Christiana in Norway :

Your Memorialists therefore most humbly pray that your Lordships taking the premises into your favourable consideration may be pleased to recommend to the Imperial Parliament to maintain the present scale of duties on Timber and deals, as established in the session of 1821, relying on the permanency of which, your Memorialists, and many thousands of His Majesty's faithful subjects, have embarked their capital and labour, and in which any alteration prejudicial to them will involve them and their families in utter ruin :

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

(signed) *Jeremiah Leaycraft*, Chairman.

H. Le Mesurier.

G. Pemberton and Others.

Quebec, 28th January 1831.
