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# FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN THE

GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF CANADA AND THE SECRETARY  
OF STATE FOR THE COLONIAL DEPARTMENT,

## UPON THE OPERATION OF THE NAVIGATION LAWS.

*In continuation of the Papers presented to both Houses of Parliament  
by Command, July 1848, and February and 2nd March 1849.*

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Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty,

9TH MARCH 1849.

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LONDON:

PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET,  
FOR HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.

1849.

## SCHEDULE.

### DESPATCHES FROM THE RIGHT HONORABLE THE EARL OF ELGIN, GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF CANADA.

No. in Series.	Date.	No. of Despatch.	SUBJECT.	Page
1	1849. 9 Feb.	22	With Petition to Her Majesty, praying for the Repeal of the Navigation Laws, from the Inhabitants of the County of Leeds, Canada West . . . . .	3
2	11 Feb.	24	Petition to Her Majesty from 53 Members of Quebec Board of Trade, dissenting from the Petition for the Repeal of the Navigation Laws, inclosed in Lord Elgin's Despatch, No. 77, of the 13th July last . . . . .	4
3	12 Feb.	25	With Copies of Address to Her Majesty, and Resolutions adopted by Inhabitants at a Public Meeting at Hamilton, on the subject of Trade and Navigation . . . . .	5

## FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN THE

GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF CANADA AND THE SECRETARY OF  
STATE FOR THE COLONIAL DEPARTMENT.

UPON

THE OPERATION OF THE NAVIGATION LAWS.

(No. 22.)

No. 1.

CANADA.

No. 1.

COPY of a DESPATCH from Governor-General the Earl of ELGIN AND  
KINCARDINE to Earl GREY.

Government House, Montreal,  
February 9, 1849.

(Received March 7, 1849.)

MY LORD,

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a petition to Her Majesty the  
Queen, praying for the repeal of the Navigation Laws, from the inhabitants of  
the county of Leeds, district of Johnstown, Canada West.

I have, &c.

(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

The Right Hon. Earl Grey,  
&c. &c. &c.

Enclosure in No. 1.

Encl. in No. 1.

TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN,

WE, your Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, inhabitants of the county of Leeds, in the  
district of Johnstown, and province of Canada, beg most respectfully to approach your Majesty  
from this distant portion of Your Majesty's empire, and humbly to present the grievance  
of which your petitioners complain, and which is as follows.

That we deeply feel that the British Navigation Laws, and the laws affecting the navigation  
of the St. Lawrence, are peculiarly burthensome and detrimental to the agricultural and com-  
mercial interests of the province.

That so long as the products of Canada were largely protected in the markets of Great Britain  
the privileges conceded by the Navigation Laws to the shipping interests were not made a subject  
of complaint by us; but now that the Imperial Government has reduced the protection to a  
mere fragment, which in a few months will be wholly withdrawn, we humbly conceive that  
justice would seem to demand that the restrictions imposed by these laws should at once be  
removed.

We can assure Your Majesty that the evils resulting from these laws are severely felt  
by us during the present autumn: that while produce is ranging at high and remunerative  
rates in the British markets, the prices paid for the same in Montreal are so extremely low as  
not to afford us the expense of producing.

This state of depression is owing, in a great measure, to the exorbitant freights charged by  
the vessels which convey our produce to Britain; and we feel assured it will continue as long as  
there is no greater competition allowed in our carrying trade.

It appears evident to your petitioners that the St. Lawrence was designed by nature as the  
great highway for the surplus produce of Your Majesty's Canadian possessions, as well as that  
of a large portion of the American States bordering on the Great Lakes.

The colonial Government taking this view has already expended large sums in the con-  
struction of canals along the line of the St. Lawrence, and have completed an uninterrupted  
chain of communication from the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Western Lakes.

But, notwithstanding the great natural advantages which this channel offers over all others,  
for the carrying trade of the Great West, the restrictions imposed by these laws has turned the  
greater portion of the trade through other artificial channels, by way of Oswego and Buffalo, to

CANADA.

New York, for shipment to Great Britain; and while our canals are at present paying but little more than the expense of attending them, we believe that under wise and liberal laws, they would be made the source of great revenue, even beyond the expectations of the most sanguine.

We do not wish, unnecessarily, to obtrude our complaints on the attention of Your Majesty, but being, mostly, agriculturists, we deeply feel the evils under which we labour, in consequence of these laws, and humbly pray that Your Majesty will be graciously pleased to take the subject into Your Majesty's serious consideration, and to grant such relief in the premises as to Your wisdom may seem meet, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Farmersville, November 29, 1848.

[1451 signatures.]

No. 2.

(No. 24.)

No. 2.

COPY of a DESPATCH from Governor-General the Earl of ELGIN AND KINCARDINE to Earl GREY.

Government House, Montreal,

February 11, 1849,

(Received March 7, 1849.)

MY LORD,

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith, a petition to Her Majesty the Queen, signed by 53 members of the Quebec Board of Trade, stating that the petition from that body for the repeal of the Navigation Laws, which was enclosed in my Despatch, No. 77,\* of the 13th June last, does not represent the sentiments of the majority of the present members.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

The Right Hon. Earl Grey,  
&c. &c. &c.

Encl. in No. 2.

Enclosure in No. 2.

TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

The Petition of the undersigned Members of the Board of Trade of Quebec.

HUMBLY SHOWETH,

THAT the corporation consists of 89 members, of whom 17 are absent from the province.

That this petition is signed by 53 members thereof, being a large majority of that body.

That the petition to Your Majesty from their Council bearing date the 13th of June last, praying for an alteration in the Navigation Laws, does not represent the sentiments of your present petitioners, because they deem it incompatible for colonists seeking protection to ask for the abrogation of a law, which may severely injure the shipping interests of the mother country and the colonists, and endanger the withdrawal of the protection they now enjoy on their timber, without which they cannot successfully compete with foreigners.

That immense sums of money have been expended in improving the navigation of the St. Lawrence, so that vessels carrying 5000 barrels can now bring their cargoes to Quebec from the extremity of the Western Lakes without breaking bulk. That this enormous outlay, and the advantages resulting from it, will become of no avail if resort is not again had to protection, as from the intricate navigation of the river below Quebec, its distance from other markets, and the long period during which it is closed in winter, render it impossible either for Quebec or Montreal to compete with the Atlantic ports; and your petitioners conceive they cannot adduce a better proof of this than by contrasting the present market rate for superfine flour in New York with that in Montreal. In the former it is worth 5.75 dollars, equal (at the true par of exchange, viz., within a fraction of 2 per cent. premium), to 29s. 3d. currency per barrel, whilst at the latter it only commands 24s. A part of this difference no doubt must be ascribed to the port of Montreal being now closed, but a still greater proportion to the fact, that after the 1st of February next, all grain and flour, whether from a colonial or foreign port, will be admitted into the United Kingdom on the same terms. And your petitioners feel confident, that so long as this continues, flour will always command in New York at least 2s. 6d. per barrel more than in Montreal, whereas a permanent duty of 8s. per quarter on wheat, and 5s. per barrel on flour, would ensure the carrying trade of the whole of the produce from the Western country in British bottoms, and at the same time tend immensely to increase the consumption of British manufactures throughout the province.

Your petitioners hail with grateful feelings the liberal overtures made to the Legislature for the construction of a railroad from hence to Halifax, a measure they conceive deeply calculated to maintain the connexion with the mother country, and fraught with the greatest advantages to the inhabitants of these provinces.

\* In series presented July 1848, page 13.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that Your Majesty will be pleased to take the premises into your favourable consideration, and recommend to Parliament such measures in relation thereto as in your wisdom may seem meet.

CANADA.

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

(Signed) H. LE MESURIER, Vice-President,  
and by 52 other Members.

Quebec, January 27, 1849.

(No. 25.)

No. 3.

No. 3.

COPY of a DESPATCH from Governor-General the Earl of ELGIN AND  
KINCARDINE to Earl GREY.

Government-House, Montreal,  
February 12, 1849.

(Received March 7, 1849.

MY LORD,

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship, for the purpose of being laid at the foot of the throne, an Address to Her Majesty the Queen, and copies of resolutions adopted at a public meeting of the inhabitants of Hamilton, on the subject of Trade and Navigation of this province.

I have, &amp;c.

(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

The Right Hon. Earl Grey,  
&c. &c.

Enclosure 1 in No. 3.

Encl. 1 in No. 3.

TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN,

WE, Your Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the inhabitants of the city of Hamilton, in the province of Canada, in public meeting assembled, most humbly beg leave to approach Your Majesty with renewed expressions of our devoted attachment to Your Majesty's Person and Government.

We most humbly beg leave to represent to Your Majesty, that, as it appears it is the intention of Your Majesty's Government to introduce an important alteration in the commercial policy of the empire by the abrogation of the Navigation Laws which at present exist, and also that the inhabitants of Your Majesty's province of Canada are desirous that such a change should take place, in so far as the navigation of the lakes and rivers of this province are concerned.

We most humbly beg leave to assure Your Majesty, that the inhabitants of this city do not participate in these sentiments, and that, after full and careful deliberation, they have decided on approaching Your Majesty with an expression of their confidence in the wisdom of Your Majesty's Government to deal with this important question as may be for the interests and benefit of the empire at large.

We would, however, most humbly represent to Your Majesty, that the adoption of a commercial system of free trade with foreign countries will operate onerously upon Your Majesty's loyal inhabitants of this province, by removing from them that protection for their staple products which they have heretofore enjoyed in the home markets, and cause them to contend with a foreign nation whose proximity to the ocean, and the stringent enactments of their own Government enable them to compete advantageously with Your Majesty's transatlantic subjects in the markets of the empire.

We would most humbly beg leave to inform Your Majesty, that the protest made in Your Majesty's House of Lords on the third reading of the Bill to repeal the Corn Laws, meets our full concurrence inasmuch as it sets forth the disadvantages under which Your Majesty's Canadian subjects must labour, and the difficulties they will experience in keeping faith with their creditors, for the construction of vast public works, which will be rendered partially useless by the withdrawal of that protection with which our agricultural products have heretofore been favoured in the British markets.

We beg further most humbly to assure Your Majesty of a hearty welcome to our industrious fellow subjects who may arrive in this important colony from the parent state, and that the encouragement of a healthy system of emigration, and the means of affording immediate employment to emigrants on their arrival amongst us, would prove materially beneficial to Your Majesty's loyal subjects in this colony and at home, by opening a boundless extent of fertile territory to the immigrant, and enable the colonists to construct such works as would develop the resources of the province, and ensure happy homes and contentment to thousands of Your Majesty's subjects who are at present unable to procure employment or the means of subsistence in the mother country.

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We would further most humbly solicit Your Majesty to take into Your Majesty's gracious consideration the difficulties under which Your Majesty's Canadian subjects labour through the withdrawal of the protection which the staple productions of the colony have hitherto enjoyed over foreign grain in the home markets; which difficulties have materially retarded the advancement of this portion of Your Majesty's empire, operated detrimentally upon the vast public works which have been constructed through the paternal care and assistance of Your Majesty's Government, and to a great extent diverted the trade of the colony through the neighbouring Republic, thereby decreasing the revenue of the province, and affording advantages to foreigners in which Your Majesty's subjects cannot participate.

We would most humbly represent to Your Majesty that such a policy is calculated to operate injuriously on the manufacturer and artisan of the empire, as well as on all classes of the colonial community. We therefore humbly pray that Your Majesty will be graciously pleased to extend to colonial produce such protection as may seem to Your Majesty just and proper, and to adopt, if not inconsistent with Your royal pleasure, such a commercial policy as will promote the general interests throughout Your Majesty's extended dominions, and prevent foreigners from enjoying a trade which, in our humble opinion, should be confined to and participated in by those who have the happiness of living under the parental sway of Your Majesty.

All which Your Majesty's faithful subjects, the inhabitants of the city of Hamilton, pray Your Majesty graciously to receive.

(Signed)

GEO. S. TIFFANY, Chairman.

Dated at the City of Hamilton, Canada West,  
this 22d day of January, 1849.

Encl. 2 in No. 3.

Enclosure 2 in No. 3.

At an adjourned meeting held in the City of Hamilton, on the 8th day of January, 1849, to take into consideration the subject of the Navigation Laws,

His Worship the MAYOR in the Chair,  
M. W. BROWNE, Esq., Secretary,

The following Resolutions were adopted:—

1. Moved by Sir Allan Macnab, and seconded by Michael Aikman—

That this meeting is of opinion that, inasmuch as the mother Country has seen fit to abandon her protective policy, and has in consequence deprived this colony of many advantages formerly enjoyed in the markets of the United Kingdom, advantages, the loss of which we deeply deplore, and which we consider cannot be fully compensated, even by a change in the Navigation Laws, as they regard Canada; that, therefore, it is the opinion of this meeting, that an humble Address be transmitted to Her Majesty, praying that she will take into Her earnest consideration the propriety of abandoning this ruinous free-trade policy, and of adopting a system of mutual reciprocity and protection between the Colonies and the Parent State, which will prevent foreigners from competing with British subjects in their own waters, to the serious injury of Colonial shipping, and without any counterbalancing advantage to any class of our own community.

2. Moved by Jasper T. Gilkison, seconded by Colonel Servos—

That, in the opinion of this meeting, the abandonment of the Navigation Laws, so far as Canada is concerned, would prove most disastrous to its prosperity, by compelling its enterprising inhabitants to compete with foreigners, whose resources, experience, proximity to our ports, and the restrictive policy of their own Government, give them an immense superiority over us, enabling them, whilst they exclude our shipping from the navigation of their waters, to possess themselves of our carrying trade, and take the proceeds out of the country, to which it will never return; that such a policy would prove destructive to Canadian and British shipowners, depriving them of legitimate return for their capital, and eventually adding that capital to the wealth of a rival nation.

3. Moved by Mr. L. Distin, seconded by John Fisher—

That, inasmuch as labour is the true wealth of a country, and the sole producer of capital, any measure which is calculated to transfer that capital from a country, detracts from its wealth, and confers it upon strangers. By this means foreign labour will raise the produce out of foreign soils to supply the British markets; foreign labour will build the ships to transport that produce to market, and foreign labour will throw into Canada every article of consumption or of trade, which we either raise or manufacture, to the injury of our agricultural population, and the total annihilation of our manufacturing and shipping interests.

4. Moved by John O. Hutt, seconded by Peter Gage—

That this meeting fully and cordially concurs in the protest made in the House of Lords on the third reading of the Bill for the repeal of the Corn Laws, which was as follows:—“Because the removal of differential duties in favour of Canadian corn is at variance with the legislative encouragement held out to that colony by Parliament, on the faith of which the colonists have laid out large sums on the improvement of their internal navigation; and because the removal of protection will divert the traffic of the interior from the St. Lawrence and the British ports.

of Montreal and Quebec to the foreign port of New York, thus throwing out of employment a large amount of British shipping, severing the commercial interests of Canada from those of the Parent Country, and connecting those interests most intimately with the United States of America.

CANADA.  
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5. Moved by R. Inson, seconded by W. A. Harvey—

That, in the opinion of this meeting, a respectful but firm representation should be made to the Home Government of the injuries we have already suffered from the partial repeal of the Corn Laws, and praying, that instead of making further concessions for the benefit of foreigners, such a policy should be adopted as would draw still closer the connexion between this colony and the Parent State, and tend to the prosperity and advancement of both.

6. Moved by W. Atkinson, seconded by Jas. Reid—

That, in the opinion of this meeting, the adoption of such a policy as is contemplated in the preceding resolution, the encouragement of emigration, and the means of affording employment on public works to labourers on their arrival in the province, would open up an immense extent of fruitful country, ensure happy homes and a comfortable subsistence to the starving thousands of our father-land, enable our agriculturists to dispose of their produce in the best market, create an extensive demand for British manufactures, and thus prove mutually beneficial to the empire and the colony.

7. Moved by Colin D. Reid, seconded by A. Logie—

That a humble address to Her Majesty, based upon the foregoing resolutions be prepared, and that Messrs. J. T. Gilkison, and R. R. Smiley be a committee to frame the same; that it be signed by the Chairman in behalf of this meeting; and that the same, together with a copy of the resolutions, be taken charge of by the member for this city, to be presented by him to his Excellency the Governor-General, with a request that his Excellency will be pleased to transmit the same to Her Majesty.

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