

# The Gleaner

AND

## NORTHUMBERLAND SCHEDIASMA.

VOLUME II.]

"Nec aranearum sane texus ideo melior, quia ex se fila gignunt nec noster vilior qui ex alienis libamus ut apes."

No. 23.]

MIRAMICHI, TUESDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 15, 1831.

### THE GLEANER.

#### AMERICA.

From the Quebec Mercury

##### A FEW REASONS AGAINST ANY CHANGE IN THE SYSTEM OF OUR COLONIAL LUMBER TRADE.

Any attempt to alter the policy which Great Britain has so wisely adopted towards her North American Colonies, is an attack upon their very vitals. I cannot see the propriety of a system, tho' adorned with the title of "bona fide free trade," which would shut up a mother country from favouring an infant colony, in the only way in which it can be brought forward, and made most rapidly of value and importance—that would force her to withdraw the fostering hand which has raised it to its present prosperous height, and oblige her to remove those props by which the colony is supported. The Imperial Parliament should have weighed (as I have no doubt it did) the cost and the consequences, before it gave a preference to Timber from Canada, which has led so many to embark in the trade, and also to the formation of saw mill establishments in various parts of both provinces, which in extent and perfection are equal, if not superior to any in Europe. Government must have foreseen that if the preference was once given and acted upon, it could never be withdrawn with any degree of safety to the colony.

This is not a mere question between two commercial bodies, whose interest may be balanced by the weight of their respective political friends. It is a struggle for the well being—I may say, for the existence of a country containing nearly one million of inhabitants, and in whose prosperity Great Britain is intimately concerned. It has been stated that the measures which have been followed, were inconsistent with the principles of a free system, "and went to force a trade at a great public loss, in a colony which had no natural advantages for sustaining it." A round and confident assertion sometimes checks or prevents investigation. I cannot conceive what other advantages are necessary for the trade, than abundance of stock, and the greatest facility of conveyance to the market. It may be very easily shown that the stock of pine timber in Canada, is, in all probability, inexhaustible, and it surely requires no proof to establish that she excels every other country in the convenience of internal water communication. The numerous lakes and navigable rivers, with which she is intersected in every direction, are skirted chiefly with the very article in question.

The inferior quality of the timber from this country has been much insisted on—but I have not been so long in the world without feeling in my own experience, and observing in others, the mighty power of prejudice, and I should doubt much the opinion of even a carpenter, of the quality of Canada timber, who had been in the habit of working only on that from the Baltic in the early, or for the greatest part of his life. My line of business gave me an intimate knowledge of every species of timber from the northern countries of Europe. Since I came to this country I have had very sufficient opportunity of examining the timber produced in it, and I have no hesitation in believing that when prejudice wears away, it will stand as high in public opinion as that from the Baltic. All other productions of Canada are equal to those of the same climate in Europe, and why should timber be the only exception? The white or yellow pine, which is spread very generally over the Upper parts of Canada, is far superior to anything of the kind that can be found in the Baltic, both as to size and quality, and can be shipt at the low price of 3d. to 4d. per foot. From the great length of time in which the business has been carried on in the Baltic, the workmen seem to have acquired more expertness.

Mr. Warburton in the House of Commons on the 12th November:

and the timber is better dressed—it is also more carefully assorted into different qualities than in Canada, a cargo, therefore, of first quality, or what is called crown red pine from Riga or Memel may appear more in form than a cargo from Quebec. This, however, is no proof that the general growth is better.

But the formidable objection to the colonial timber is the heavy loss supposed to be sustained by the preference given to it in the sale of duties, and it seems so difficult to get quit of the idea that Great Britain has made a "sacrifice" by thus encouraging the trade, that I must admit it for a moment for the sake of argument. If she has then given up a certain amount in pounds, shillings and pence, it is for advantages, both to herself and to the colonies, which cannot be so easily calculated. She has, in so doing, rendered herself independent of other powers for a supply of timber, and by taking from the Colonies in a liberal manner, their first available articles, she increases their means, and in thus helping their prosperity, lays the foundation of an extensive market for her own manufactures. Our lumber trade employs a great quantity of shipping, which not only enlarges the nursery for seamen, but affords great facility to emigrants, thirty thousand of whom have this season found easy access to this country by means of the vessels which have crossed the Atlantic for timber. Thus it may be said, a bridge has been constructed at the easiest possible expense from that part of the empire which is over crowded, to another in which there is still sufficient room. These are a few of the beneficial consequences, which have arisen from the "sacrifice" which our mother country has made. But she has really made it? Is there in fact a public annual loss of one million and a half? or were she to give up all the advantages I have attempted to enumerate, and instead of the present apparent "sacrifice," make in reality, an oblation of the colonies themselves, would the consumers of timber in England be supplied one farthing cheaper?

The merchants in the Baltic, it may be presumed, understand as well as others the effect of increased demand for their articles, and it may be also supposed, are as much inclined to take advantage of it. I leave it, therefore, with our free trade economists to calculate the result of an additional demand in the Baltic market for one million of tons of timber. Before the colonial timber got so freely into the English market, Memel timber could not be shipt under one shilling per foot, and it cannot be improbable, that the prices will soon be again at or above that rate, if the competition from this country be done away. The prices in Quebec last season were not on an average above 7d. per foot for red pine, and 3d. for white or yellow pine. The prices were no doubt rather lower than usual, owing to the large quantity brought to the market, but the improvements going on, and in contemplation to reduce the expense of the conveyance of the timber down the rivers, will soon, if the trade be continued, enable the lumberers to sell at these prices with sufficient profit. It is needless to enter more particularly into the subject, nor does it require any calculation to show that the additional expense, on the freight from Canada, of about 6d. per foot, may very soon be balanced by a rise of the price in the Baltic ports. The same loss, as it is called, or expenditure, would, therefore not only be still on the business, but it would get into a most unfavorable channel for the interests of Great Britain. Instead of being given as freight to our own shipping, as it now is, it would go into the pockets of the merchants in the Baltic. So that the saving held out to the consumers in England, by going again for their supplies to the Baltic, is altogether fallacious.

Thus would Great Britain shut herself out from her own colonies, place herself again at the mercy of the Baltic traders, and add still more to the riches and strength of the northern powers, without any compensation whatever for the ruin of this important part of her own dominions!

I believe there are some well wishers to Canada who do not strenuously oppose the present attempt from an idea that the lumber trade is not favorable to what they think her best interests. They view it as a hindrance to agriculture. But they do not consider that in adding to the means of employment, it increases the demand for produce, and it provides, what is of great consequence in this climate, winter work for a numerous and hardy class of our population.

The timber is giving way in many districts to cultivation, and where it is spread too extensively to be exhausted, as is the case on the Ottawa, it is evidently encouraging it.—The farmer and the lumberer are ranging more distinctly into different classes, and there are already a number of farms far beyond the surveyed and regularly settled part of the country, which are cultivated for the purpose of raising provisions for the people employed in the woods on the timber. When the townships are extended in that quarter and the obstacles in the Ottawa removed, there is no doubt but that the land on the upper part of the river, will, on account of its vicinity to the lumbering operations, be chosen for settlement in preference to other situations.

I shall here give an extract from my son's report of the journey he undertook in the autumn of 1829, to ascertain the practicability of the water communication from the Ottawa to Lake Huron, which report was laid before Government, and is also inserted in the 2d vol. of the transactions of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, under the title of Topographical notices of that part of the country.

He corroborates what I have said of the influence of the lumber trade in promoting cultivation, and states the inexhaustible extent of the Pine forests.

"It is now only four years since the procuring of lumber from Crown lands along the Ottawa has been rendered a legal occupation. This branch of the timber trade has increased rapidly, and now forms a principal support of the Canada shipping. The stock of red pine in the Upper Ottawa countries is probably inexhaustible: it begins to be common growth about the head of the Chats Lake, and the region favorable to its production, by all accounts, extends some hundred miles northward. The fine river which traverses this region, with its numerous tributaries, promises to afford the means of obtaining the pine for market from an almost indefinite extent of country, and in which we may expect the growth of the timber to be more than sufficient to keep pace with the annual cutting.

"In all likelihood, a great proportion of these northern pine lands will be found unfit for settlement; but, considering the great support and encouragement which the timber trade of the Ottawa must afford, both to the agricultural and mercantile interests of the Colony, the existence of this accessible red pine region is, unquestionably, a most favorable feature in the country; more so perhaps than if its place were occupied with the most fertile hard wood lands.

"The passage of the timber down the various rapids and falls does not form the chief obstacle in prosecuting this business. In such a flow of water as the Ottawa, there is also to be found some method of passing it, either in cribs or single pieces, without much damage or extraordinary delay. The grand obstacle consists in the difficulty and expense of providing provisions, grain, &c. necessary for the winter's operations, at a distance beyond the settlements, and with the interrupted channel of the Ottawa alone as a means of conveyance. The survey and settlement of what eligible lands may be found along the river, is one evident means of assisting the trade in this important particular. Indeed, the usual value of every specie,