



ROYAL GAZETTE.

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The following extract from a Despatch from the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for the Colonies to His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, is published for general information.

Downing Street, 17th May, 1842.

SIR,—Her Majesty's Government having had under their consideration the representations on the subject of the projected alteration of the Import Duties, both in the United Kingdom and in the Colonies, from the Legislature of New Brunswick, as well as from various Bodies interested in the Trade of the Province, which accompanied your Despatches of the numbers and dates noted in the margin, I now proceed to explain to you, for the information of the parties interested, the conclusion to which Her Majesty's Ministers have come in reference to those representations.

Her Majesty's Government cannot but regret the unfavourable apprehensions which are entertained by the Petitioners as to the probable effect of these measures, and in which, to some extent, you appear to participate; but they trust that a closer examination of the changes which are proposed will lead to a more favorable estimate of their probable results; and although I do not feel called upon on the part of the Government to enter into a detailed and argumentative exposition of the subject, I am, nevertheless, induced to hope that the general observations which I propose to make, may be found useful in removing erroneous impressions and allaying exaggerated fears.

The contemplated changes in the Imperial and Colonial Tariffs appear to effect New Brunswick in three, and only three important particulars, viz: The trade in Wood with the West Indies; the trade in Fish with the West Indies; and the trade in Wood with the United Kingdom.

With respect to the trade in Wood with the West Indies, I admit, that probably some falling off may take place in the export of Shingles, Staves and Headings to the West Indies, but these appear to form a very inconsiderable portion of the New Brunswick Wood trade, as appears from the following Table.

Value of exports of Wood goods from New Brunswick in the years	1837,	1836,	1835.
Shingles and Staves,	£22,279,	£21,195,	£20,336.
Total exports of Wood goods,	454,391,	454,236,	478,453.

The remainder of the Wood exports from New Brunswick as derived from information, which I have no reason to doubt, is not likely to be affected by the competition of the United States who are themselves obliged to resort to New Brunswick and Canada for this commodity, and who, from the gradual diminution of their own Timber, will become more and more dependant upon the British North American Provinces for their supplies.

With respect to the trade in Fish with the West Indies, although Her Majesty's Government have, with a view to satisfy the just claims of the West Indian population, recommended the substitution of a duty upon Fish, in lieu of the present prohibition, yet in fixing that rate of duty, regard has been had to the protection and encouragement of the British North American Fisheries, as well on account of their importance as a nursery for seamen, as also because of the monopoly hitherto enjoyed by British North American Colonists, an abrupt transition from which, into an unprotected competition, might lead to much individual loss and inconvenience.

In estimating however the comparative facilities of the United States and New Brunswick for carrying on Fisheries, I do not perceive any thing either in reference to the proximity of the Fishing Ground, the cost of building or fitting out Ships, the ordinary rate of Wages, or the aptitude of the people for this species of employment, which would lead to the supposition that the United States have any superior advantages over New Brunswick, or that the proposed protection of 15 per cent. is not amply sufficient, or that there are any other circumstances which would call for a larger increase of protection to the British North American Fishermen than is accorded to the other branches of the industry of these Colonies.

I am aware that in the United States and France, high duties are imposed upon the produce of the Fisheries of this Country, and that the system of Bounties is still kept up with a view to the support of their own Fisheries.

Her Majesty's Government however conceive that those high duties must be deemed to be an admission on the part of the Countries imposing them, that they are themselves apprehensive of the competition of the British Fishermen in their own markets, as it has been stated by parties who have urged upon the Government the adoption of a higher rate of protection to the British Fisheries that such apprehensions are actually entertained. If there be any ground for such apprehensions there can be little cause for the Petitioners to fear lest Foreign Fish should, to any serious extent, compete with British Fish in the West India Markets, protected, as it will be, by the proposed Duty, and notwithstanding the privilege in the nature of a bounty or protection proposed to be continued to the British Fisheries of importing, duty free, the principal articles required for their employment.

With respect to the wood trade with the United Kingdom, I perceive that whilst the Petitioners have dwelt upon those portions of the proposed changes which they conceive to be unfavorable to the Colony, namely, the diminution of the difference between the Duties imposed upon Baltic and British North American Timber, they have omitted to notice the reduction (amounting very nearly to abolition) of the Duty upon Colonial Timber, which will necessarily give increased facilities to the importation of this article into this Country, and, by admitting of a reduction of price in respect of the reduced Duty, will tend to increase the consumption, and thus cause a reaction upon the price favorable to the Importer, and keep up or increase the employment for the Shipping engaged in this branch of Commerce.

The advantage of this will be more especially felt in that class of Wood which is more peculiarly the produce of British North America, the Yellow Deal, and which, in fact, meets with no very effective competition from the Baltic Timber, in consequence of being applied to different purposes for which the Yellow Pine of New Brunswick is preferred, both from its superior fitness, and its lower price to the consumer.

Her Majesty's Government consider also that the addition of 2s. per 50 cubic feet on Foreign Deals to the duty of 30s. as at first proposed, and the five per cent. additional duty to which Timber will be liable, and which, although inappreciable upon the Colonial duty, amounts to 1s. 6d. per cubic foot upon Foreign Timber, should not be lost sight of, in the endeavour to form a just estimate of the Tariff proposed to Parliament.

If the Petitioners give due weight to these considerations, Her Majesty's Government trusts that they will eventually be of opinion, that whilst the alterations in the Timber duties will be found of very great advantage to the consumer in this Country, the Timber trade of New Brunswick will, so far from declining, be placed in a