

TO THE ELECTORS OF THE COUNTY OF LINCOLN.

St. Catharines, December 20, 1847.

GENTLEMEN :

Having been informed that a rumor is in circulation, in many parts of the country, that, (being an advocate of free trade,) I am in favor of admitting American produce into Canada, free of duty, **WITHOUT PROCURING AN EQUIVALENT**, by obtaining access to their markets, for the Canadian farmer, on the same terms—I beg explicitly to declare, that such reports are wholly untrue. The policy advocated and carried into effect, by Sir Robert Peel, in England, is **RUIN** to Canada. A remedy is indispensable—and I have no doubt you will take the same view of the subject, when it is more fully explained.

You are aware that Canada is almost wholly an Agricultural country, and that its wealth depends on the value of the products of the soil. To increase the price of those products, has been my constant aim, since I first entered into public life.

First—by opening our communications to the ocean—the benefits of which will, during the ensuing season, be realized by the grower, in lessening the cost of transportation.

Second—by obtaining the removal of duties, in the markets of Great Britain. When this effort was first commenced, in 1833, every barrel of flour was charged 3s. sterling, duty. After persevering from year to year, until 1843, this object was effected. **THEN** the products of Canada received a real protection in the mother country over other nations : **THEN** grain was, at times, higher in Canada than the neighboring States : **THEN** we reaped the full benefit of the boon we had been so long seeking ; but it was of short duration.

In 1845, the Government of Great Britain repealed this law ; changed their commercial and colonial policy, and admitted the produce of all nations, free from duty, without providing for the admission, on the same terms, of Canadian products, into the markets of the United States. This omission or neglect of the British Government has placed the farmer residing in Canada, in a much worse position than the farmer residing in the United States ; inasmuch as, under the operation of this act, and the existing Tariff in the United States, under no circumstances or changes in the markets of Europe or America, **can** the price of wheat be higher in Canada than in the United States : whereas, at times, it may be lower.

Up to this period, (1845,) I steadily advocated the policy of removing all duties, and establishing **FREE TRADE** between the mother country and this colony, and collecting a revenue from duties on American products ; as my public letter of 15th May, 1845, clearly proves.

Since then, I have advocated a very different policy ; and every farmer in Canada should clearly understand the necessity of this change, under the operation of the present act. **BEFORE THIS**, we could send flour to England on payment of a nominal duty, while the Americans paid from 5s. to 12s. sterling, per barrel. This protection on Canadian flour, in the markets of Britain, was the cause of its being higher in Canada, **AT TIMES**, than in the U. States. **NOW** and **HEREAFTER**, American flour and grain will

be admitted into the markets of Britain without duty. Whereas, Canadian wheat is subject to 20 per cent. when consumed in the United States ; consequently, when the markets are better in America than in Europe, prices must be lower in Canada, by the amount of that duty—as you have all seen and felt since August last. Since then, wheat has averaged, at Buffalo, from \$1 to \$14—at St. Catharines, 6s. to 7s. York. We must not deceive ourselves on this subject. The U. States lie between us and the Atlantic ; therefore, our geographical position shuts us out from any other market than Britain and the United States.

And be it observed, that we are closed in, a great part of the season, by ice—the effect of which, on our markets, is this. Some 50 to 60,000 barrels of flour are sent down to Montreal in the fall—there it must remain until spring, where it cannot now be sold for over \$4½ per barrel. Whereas, ten times that quantity, in the New-York market, will command, during the same period, from \$5½ to \$6, cash.—These facts are undeniable proof, that higher prices must always be paid, on the American side, for the New-York market, than on the Canada side, for the Montreal market, **IN THE FALL**.

Again—During the winter, this stock in New-York may be sent to supply any demand in foreign markets—while that in Montreal must remain on hand until late in the spring. This creates an extra demand for home consumption, in the former ; which cannot be the case at the latter place : consequently, prices in the spring will also be lower here than there. It is only during the summer season that we can expect an equalization of prices on the boundaries of the two countries, under existing laws.

These are the reasons why I advocate **RECIPROCAL** duties, and why I feel assured that our products **MUST** be admitted into the markets of the United States **WITHOUT DUTY**. When that object is attained, (and if your confidence is continued, I feel no doubt on the subject,) the farmer in Canada will be able to command, at all times, as high prices as his neighbor on the opposite side of the boundary, and under no circumstances will he ever be subject to lower rates.

If it be said that the miller, merchant, and mechanic may be benefitted, but not the farmer—the reply is unanswerable. If the farmer receives 20 per cent. more for the grain he grows, his land is of 20 per cent. more value—the miller gains in the value of his toll—the shipper by freight—the merchant by increased sales—and the mechanic and the laborer by higher wages. The interests of all are identified, in the increased wealth and prosperity of the country. If the first is depreciated in value, all are equally affected.

Believe me, a more important subject has not been brought before you ; and it is so clear and self-evident, that I cannot conceive a single farmer will entertain a doubt as to the benefit he will derive, by the admission of his produce into the markets of the United States, on terms of **RECIPROCITY**—and on no other was it ever advocated by

Your obed't serv't,

WM. HAMILTON MERRITT.

Lebanon 13th Jan'y 1848.

My Dear Sir

I heartily congratulate you on the results of the
elections generally. not on your own return of which I never entertained
a doubt - or on obtaining a Majority, but I did not believe it
would be so great. - I have no doubt Mr Farland will
be returned, in short the present Ministry are really so unpop-
ular in this District that they were on no occasion defended -
there seemed an unanimity of feeling respecting them, and why
because they had never brought forward a single Measure or
done any good for the Country in any way whatever -

The Election here, was considered doubtful
from my having advocated Free Trade, it is the first ⁱⁿ Constitu-
ency. when the Subject has been openly avowed and
discussed - and I feel quite encouraged at the result
not so much from being returned, as from the rapid
increase of enlightened views among our farming
population -

I have sent you this letter 20th Dec
with my remembrances on being returned - which read
as it gives my views on ~~the~~ what I believe the
natural operation of the Trade will be - and
may remove apprehensions entertained by some
that it will injure or rather decrease the Trade
with Montreal - and consequently lessen the income
on our Canals - which is wholly erroneous I should be so
understood.

Truly Yours

W Hamilton Prentiss

Hon. Robert Baldwin

45 x

W H Hewitt
13/20 Jan 1828

1. Longitudinal
2. The Chunks
3. The Hooks 1/2

The District

W H Hewitt

W H Hewitt

1828 Jan 1828

He is in London



W H Hewitt