

ATLANTIC STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY.

RETURN to an Order of the Honourable The House of Commons,
dated 20 February 1861 ;—*for*,

COPY “ of a MEMORIAL to the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty’s Treasury from Merchants, Bankers, Traders, and others interested in the Trade with *Canada*, praying that the CONTRACT between HER MAJESTY’S GOVERNMENT and the ATLANTIC STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY may be declared at an end.”

TO THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS OF HER MAJESTY’S TREASURY.

THE MEMORIAL of the undersigned Merchants, Bankers and others interested in the Trade between the United Kingdom and the Province of *Canada*,

Sheweth,

THAT the circumstances under which the “ Cunard ” Contract was renewed prospectively in May 1858 for a further period of five years from 1st January 1862, and the “ Galway ” Contract was subsequently entered into in February 1859, notwithstanding great dissatisfaction on the subject in *Canada*, and in neglect of an assurance previously given in the one case, that the province should have the opportunity of being heard, in the other that all parties desirous of competing for the service should have full means of doing so, are circumstances so well known, that it is sufficient only to refer to them. The statement of the whole of the facts is given in the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons of 1860, on Packet Contracts, and other official public documents therein quoted.

The influence of these proceedings of the legislature and public of *Canada*, is shown more particularly in Parliamentary Papers 112, Session 2 of 1859, and 120 of 1860. The course taken by the Imperial Government was gravely impugned as at variance with the distinct assurances previously given, and as fostering by Imperial aid a foreign competition detrimental in the highest degree to the commercial interests of the province. The result was that the Canadian legislature found itself compelled, by motives of self preservation, to vote from the revenues of the province an annual grant of 45,000 *l.* sterling, extended subsequently to 84,000 *l.* sterling, towards the cost of the maintaining an independent steam packet postal service between Quebec and Portland and the mother country, in the hope of thus averting in some degree the loss of the passenger and through traffic between Europe and the Western States of the American Union, and of diminishing the pressure of a heavy burden of charges and postage on Canadian traffic and correspondence, consequent on their attraction, through Imperial subsidies, to the ports of Boston and New York. To use the words of the Report of the Select Committee, “ In the meanwhile this country and her colony present the spectacle of competition against each other, by maintaining rival subsidized lines at a greater mutual cost to the respective Governments, that of *Canada* having recently increased her subsidy to the Montreal Company to about 84,000 *l.* sterling.”

The services of the Cunard Line have been performed with wonted speed and regularity ; and those of the Montreal Line also much to the advantage and satisfaction of the public. In neither case have the interests of the sister kingdom been neglected, as testified by the punctual receipt and dispatch of the Irish mails through the respective ports of Cork and Londonderry.

2 MEMORIAL:—ATLANTIC STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY.

In the case of the Galway contract, however, the circumstances are altogether different. The service, unsatisfactory when performed, has broken down, no departure having taken place under the contract since the month of October last.

The undersigned, representing Canadian interests in this country, feel themselves justified, under these circumstances, in respectfully calling upon Her Majesty's Government to exercise the powers vested in them by the express terms of the Galway contract, as follows: "In case of any breach of this contract on the part of the said Company, their officers, agents, or servants, in any respect, and whether there be or be not any penalty or sum of money made payable by the said Company for any such breach, it shall be lawful for the said Commissioners for executing the said office of Lord High Admiral (if they think fit, and notwithstanding there may or may not have been any former breach of this contract), by writing under the hand of one of their secretaries for the time being, to determine this contract without any previous notice to the said Company or their agents, and to declare that contract at an end."

And your memorialists further pray that Her Majesty's Government will consent to transfer to the Montreal Line of Steamers the whole, or such portion as they may think fit, of the subsidy hitherto allowed to the Galway Line, thereby rendering in some degree justice to the Canadian people, and the large interests in this country concerned in the prosperity of the province, by relieving Canada of a portion at least of the heavy annual subsidy to the Montreal Line of steamers, now borne by the Colonial Exchequer, a subsidy forced upon the Government and people of Canada by a course of policy, against which they have for several years past energetically protested as unfairly fostering the rival ports of the United States; and a policy, moreover, which has been condemned after solemn inquiry by a verdict of a Select Committee of the House of Commons.

(Signed by)

Baring Marshall, } Provincial Agents of Canada.
Glyn, Mills & Co. }

Chalmers, Guthrie & Co.

John Chapman & Co.

And by twenty-seven other signatures.

ATLANTIC STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY.

COPY of a MEMORIAL to the Lords Commissioners of
Her Majesty's Treasury from Merchants, Bankers,
Traders and others interested in the Trade with
Canada, praying that the CONTRACT between HER
MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT and the ATLANTIC STEAM
NAVIGATION COMPANY may be declared at an end.

(*Mr. Dunlop.*)

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
26 February 1861.
