

P E T I T I O N .

To the Honorable the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada, in Parliament assembled.

The Petition of the Board of Trade of the City of Toronto,

HUMBLY SHEWETH,—

That an Association of Traders under the title of the Hon. Hudson's Bay Company, during a long period of time, have claimed and exercised a sovereignty in the soil, together with the right of exclusive trade over a large portion of the Province of Canada, and that the exercise of such claim is subversive of all those rights of privileges which were guaranteed to the inhabitants of Canada, by Royal Proclamation immediately after the conquest of the country, and subsequently secured to them by those Acts of the British Parliament that gave to Canada a Constitutional Government.

Your Petitioners further shew that up to the year 1763, when by the treaty of Fontainbleau, Canada was ceded to the British Crown, the whole region of country extending westward to the Pacific Ocean, and northward to the shore of the Hudson's Bay, had continued in the undisputed possession of the Crown of France for a period of two centuries, and was known as "La Nouvelle France" of Canada

That during the half century succeeding the treaty above alluded to, an extensive trade and traffic was continued to be carried on throughout the country described, by commercial companies and traders who had established themselves there under authority of the Crown of France, and that trade was likewise at the same period carried on by other traders of British origin who had adventured into that country and formed establishments there consequent upon its cession to the British Crown; that such trade and traffic was carried on freely and independent of any restrictions upon commercial freedom, either as originally created by the Crown of France or promulgated by that of Great Britain.

That in 1783, nearly all the aforesaid traders and companies united and formed an association under the name of the "Northwest Company of Montreal," which said Company made many important discoveries and extended their establishments throughout the interior of North America, and to within the Arctic Circle, and to the Pacific Ocean.

That in the year 1821, the said "Northwest Company" united with the so called "Hudson's Bay Company,"—a company to all intents and purposes foreign to the interests of Canada, and owing no responsibility to it.

That under the name of the "Hudson's Bay Company" they advance claims and assume rights in virtue of an old charter of Charles II., granted in 1669,—this bearing a date nearly one hundred years before that this country had ceased to be an appendage to the Crown of France and pertained to that of Great Britain.

That under such pretended authority, said "Hudson's Bay Company" assume a power to grant away and sell the lands of the Crown, acquired by conquest and ceded to it by the treaty of 1763.

That said Company have also assumed to enact tariffs, collect customs dues, and levy taxes against British subjects, and have enforced unjust and arbitrary laws in defiance of every principle of right and justice.

Your Petitioners now especially pray the attention of Your Honorable House to that region of country designated as the Chartered Territory over which the said Company exercises a sovereignty in the soil, as well as a monopoly in the trade, and which said Company claims as a right that ensures to them in perpetuity in contra distinction to that portion of country over which they merely claim an exclusive right of trade but for a limited period only.

Whilst Your Petitioners believe that this latter claim is founded upon a legal right, they humbly submit that a renewal of such license of exclusive trade is injurious to the interests of the country so monopolizing, and in contravention of the rights of the inhabitants of Canada.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray that Your Honorable House will take into consideration the subject of how far the assumption of power on the part of the "Hudson's Bay Company" interfere with Canadian rights.

And also the necessity of more particularly declaring the boundary of Canada on the westward and on the northward, and of extending throughout the protecting arm of Canadian laws, and the benefits of Canadian Institutions.

And Your Petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

CHAS. ROBERTSON,
Secretary.

THOS. CLARKSON,
President.

Toronto. 2nd April, 1857.

3rd Session, 5th Parliament, 20 Victoria, 1857.

PETITION

Of the Toronto Board of Trade, praying that
the license of exclusive trade may not be
renewed to the Hudson's Bay Company
&c.

(*Mr. Gamble.*)

ORDERED, by THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, to
be Printed, April 24th, 1857.

PRINTED, 5th May, 1857.

TORONTO:
PRINTED BY JOHN LOVELL, YONGE STREET.



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