

cause to disappear, by according to our vessels the same treatment which their own vessels enjoy in the ports of the American Union. Already negotiations with this object in view are in progress at Washington, and there is every reason to hope that they will terminate successfully.

Such, Sire, is the object of the project of decree which your Majesty is solicited to sanction by your signature. It is in conformity with the liberal character of the law concerning the Mercantile Marine, the object of which is to attract into our ports the greatest possible amount of business. It is evident that merchandise goes by preference to those places where it has the least charges to bear, and the suppression of tonnage dues in the ports of the Empire is a powerful means of attraction. If this truth needed any demonstration, I should ask your Majesty to permit me to cite the example of Marseilles. In that great port tonnage dues were suppressed after the re-establishment of general peace by an Ordinance of the 17th of September, 1817, and this equality of conditions between French and foreign vessels has caused no injury to the French marine, whose relative part in the maritime business of Marseilles has always been increasing.

This instance affords for the future of our commercial navy a point of comparison, and an example which should give security to all.

I am, &c.,

Armand Béhic.

DECREE.

Art. 1. The tonnage dues established in the nature of compensation duties by virtue of treaties and conventions, concluded by France with Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Portugal, Prussia, Sweden, and Norway, the Hanse Towns of Bremen, Hamburg, and Lubeck, are and remain suppressed.

Art. 2. French and English vessels coming from a port of Great Britain, or of her possessions in Europe, into any of the ports of the French Empire, shall be freed from the tonnage duty established by virtue of the provisions of the first Article of the Treaty of January 26, 1826. The same freedom shall accrue to all flags which are assimilated by conventional Acts to the French flag, and which, as such, coming from British ports into France, would have to pay the above-mentioned tonnage duty.

Art. 3. Until it shall please the Government of the United States of America to abolish, as it has done for its own vessels, the duty of 94 cents per ton levied upon French ships arriving in the ports of the American Union, vessels of the United States arriving in a port of the French Empire shall remain subject to the duty of 5f. per ton, conformably to the provisions of the 5th Article of the Convention of Commerce and Navigation of June 24, 1822.

Art. 4. The present decree shall receive its execution in all the ports of the Empire and of Algeria, from the 1st of January, 1867.

Art. 5. Our Ministers of agriculture, commerce, and public works, and of finance, are charged, each as far as they are concerned, with the execution of the present decree.

Done at the Palace of the Tuileries, the 27th December, 1866.

NAPOLÉON.

The following is a translation of the Law of the 19th May, 1866, with its accompanying Decree, referred to in M. Béhic's report to the Emperor of the 27th December, 1866:—

LAW.

ARTICLE 1. All objects, raw or manufactured, including steam machinery and parts of machines entering into the construction, the rigging, the equipment, and the maintenance of sailing or steam vessels destined for commerce, in wood or iron, shall be admitted duty free, subject to the condition of proving, within the space of one year, that the said objects have been applied to the use specified above.

Imperial decrees will determine the proofs and conditions under which this immunity will be enjoyed.

Every infraction of the provisions of these decrees will necessitate the payment of the duties which are or shall be levied upon the articles enumerated above; and in addition, will be punished with a fine equal to three times the amount of the same duties.

ART. 2. The bounty accorded by Articles 1 and 2 of the Law of the 6th May, 1841, to steam machinery of French manufacture, intended to be placed on board national vessels destined for a maritime international navigation, is, and remains suppressed.

Nevertheless, the said bounty will continue to be allowed on apparatus which shall be duly proved to have been in course of construction previously to the promulgation of the present law.

ART. 3. Six months after the promulgation of the present law, sailing or steam vessels, rigged and equipped, shall be admitted to registration, upon payment of a duty of two francs per ton measurement.

The same duty shall be applicable to hulls of wood or iron.

ART. 4. The tonnage dues established upon foreign vessels entering ports of the Empire shall be suppressed from the 1st of January, 1867.

The tonnage dues actually collected, as well upon French as upon foreign vessels, and applied, as guarantee to the payment of loans contracted for improvements in French ports, are maintained.

A tonnage duty, not exceeding 2 frs. 50 c. per ton (*décime* included), and applying equally to French and foreign vessels, may be established with the view of meeting expenses of a similar nature, by Imperial decrees in the form of regulations for public administration.

ART. 5. Three years after the promulgation of the present law, the surcharges on the Flag at present applicable to merchandise imported from the country of production, in other than French vessels, shall be suppressed.

ART. 6. In cases where the French flag, in a foreign country, shall be directly or indirectly subjected, to the profit of the Government, of cities or corporations, to duties or other charges for navigation, importation, or exportation of merchandise, from which the vessels of the said country are exempt, such duties, or surcharges as may be held necessary to compensate for the disadvantage to which the French flag is subjected, may be established by Imperial Decree on vessels of the said country, which enter ports of the Empire or of French colonies or possessions.

ART. 7. The preceding provisions are applicable to the colonies of Guadeloupe, Martinique, and Réunion.