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LONDON, May 14, 1784.

At a Meeting of the West-India
Planters and Merchants,

Resolved, That the following *Considerations on
the Present State of the Intercourse between
his Majesty's SUGAR COLONIES and the
Dominions of the UNITED STATES of
AMERICA*, be printed, and sent, in the
name of this Meeting, to every Member
of both Houses of Parliament, and to
the Principal Trading Towns in Great
Britain and Ireland.

JAMES ALLEN, Sec.

A

CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

Present State of the Intercourse between his Majesty's SUGAR COLONIES and the Dominions of the UNITED STATES of AMERICA.

A Third Edition of a Pamphlet, intitled, "Observations on the Commerce of the American States, by John Lord Sheffield," having been lately introduced to the Public, with large additions, and an assurance, "That the Facts were not lightly taken up, but minutely and carefully enquired into, and strictly examined;" the West India Planters and Merchants think it incumbent on them no longer to hazard the public judgment being misled on points so essential to the general welfare, by his

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Lordship's uncontradicted authority. Their wish was, to have contradicted, in *the whole* of his Lordship's own words, so much of his assertions as relate to themselves and the British Sugar Colonies, with the matters of fact; but they find such a perpetual repetition of the same assertions in various forms, and the whole mass of assertions, opinions, and extraneous matter so complicated and confused, that they could not effect that purpose, without inserting herein the greatest part of the three pamphlets: they will therefore endeavour fairly, and as nearly as possible in his own words, to state the substance, and lay the question, respecting the Intercourse between the Sugar Colonies and the United States of America, before the Public, upon the true grounds on which its issue depends; leaving the investigation of the rest of his Lordship's doctrines to whom it may concern.

It may be proper to premise, that the first edition of the pamphlet in question was published in Spring 1783, immediately after the joint-administration of Lord North and Mr. Fox was formed, and in opposition to a Bill which the then late Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Pitt, had left depending in Parliament, for a temporary regulation of the Trade and Intercourse between the Dominions of Great Britain and those of the United States. It was by that Bill proposed to be enacted, amongst other things,

things, that American ships might carry their own produce to our Islands, Colonies, or Plantations in America, and take back the produce thereof in return. The Bill was rejected in Parliament, and in lieu of it, an Act was passed, empowering the Crown for a limited time, which has been by two subsequent acts prolonged, and will expire the 20th June 1784, to regulate the said trade and intercourse by proclamation. Accordingly, proclamations have been from time to time issued, which substantially carry into execution most of the other objects of Mr. Pitt's Bill, but confine the intercourse between the Sugar Colonies and the American States to British-built ships, whilst they leave the trade between Great Britain and America free to the ships of America. It is chiefly in support of this restriction upon the Sugar Colonies, that Lord Sheffield's labours have been employed, and to prove the truth of an assertion which pervades the whole work, *That the West Indies may be sufficiently supplied with the Articles of North American produce from Canada, Nova Scotia, and the Island of St. John.*

To this end, his Lordship asserts as follows:

The coast round St. John's abounds with fish. The soil of the island is excellent, and capable of great improvement. No country in the world affords better pasture for cattle, and provisions of all kinds

kinds may be raised in great abundance. [Edition 2d, page 42.]

Pease, which may be made a substitute for rice or Indian corn, are cheaper in Canada than in any part of the American States, where they are only raised in the province of New-York and the Jerseys: though perhaps there may not be a sufficient quantity raised in Canada at present to supply any great demand, there may soon. [Edition 1st, page 44.]

Before the war, the wheat from Canada began to be preferred at Barcelona. It keeps better in a hot climate, being usually sent in grain, and yields from sixty to sixty-five pounds per bushel; yet the flour of it, not being very white, sells proportionably cheaper. Being in grain, the Spanish purchaser had the advantage of manufacturing it; and there being a demand in Canada for a low-priced, but strong red wine of Spain, for which there was none in the American States, the Canadian merchants had great advantages, and they may be still increased*. There was no winter-wheat in Canada previous to 1763. In 1774, vast quantities of both that and summer-wheat were exported, not less than five hundred thousand bushels, with which above one hundred ves-

* They could not lawfully import wine into Canada from Spain.

sels

sels were loaded for Europe, besides what was sent in flour and biscuit to the West-Indies and fisheries; and one hundred thousand bushels were left in hand for want of ships to export them. In five or six years, three or four hundred sail might be employed from Canada in different branches. Our West-India islands will then be under no necessity of drawing supplies from the American States; and the importation of their wheat and flour should be prohibited. The merchants of Philadelphia, the capital of the corn country, sent ships to Quebec to load with wheat from thence to Europe. Canada can supply the Newfoundland fisheries with flour and bread. [Edition 2d, page 45.]

Forty thousand quarters of Canada wheat used to be imported to Philadelphia and New-York annually before the revolt. [Edition 3d, page 65.]

No wheat is sent from America to the West-Indies, except a very small quantity for poultry, or such uses. In the year 1769, one hundred and sixty bushels of wheat were exported from North America to the West-Indies; but twelve thousand seven hundred and thirty tons of flour and bread were exported from thence in the year 1770, into our islands. As wheat has been for several years past, and previous to the war, cheaper in Canada than in the American States, and as the New-York and Philadelphia mills were ten years ago supplied

supplied with forty thousand quarters from Canada, there can be no doubt that these articles will come cheaper from that province, when a sufficient number of corn-mills are erected, than from the American States. Canada will then be able to send her flour immediately to the place of consumption, without passing through the medium of New-York and Philadelphia, leaving a great profit at those places. [Edition 3d, page 118.]

There is only one capital mill in Canada. [Edition 2d, page 84.]

Canada will soon amply supply the principal articles wanted in the islands, except Indian corn and rice; and if there should be a difficulty in getting these articles, the cheapness of wheat in Canada will soon afford a good substitute for them. [Edition 2d, page 89.]

Nova Scotia, or St. John's Island, cannot, for some time, spare much grain, as they are new settlements. They plant summer-wheat, as in Canada; but from the shortness of the summer, and because the planters are not in good order sufficient to take all advantages of the season, and are not acquainted as yet with all the adequate methods that may be known in a more advanced state of settlement, the summer-wheat is apt to blast; the settlers therefore act injudiciously in giving themselves up so much to the culture of wheat. These countries,

countries grow fine barley, good rye*, and tolerable oats; and as these grains are not subject to the accidents peculiar to new-settled northern countries, they should therefore principally cultivate them and pease, at least for the present. Lower Canada grows summer-wheat. Higher Canada, which is the great granary, grows both summer and winter wheat. [Edition 3d, page 120.]

Nova Scotia may raise oxen sufficient for the islands, having fine pasture. [Edition 2d, page 76.]

Horses for the saddle came from New England on the best terms, and may be supplied through Nova Scotia and Canada †. Horses for draught, and for the sugar-works, are essentially necessary in the Windward Islands, and can be had from Canada on better terms than from any other country ‡: they are small, but very strong and hardy. [Edition 2d, page 70.]

It is said, however, that horses from the Southern Colonies, being used to a warm climate, are preferred. [Edition 3d, page 118.]

* Neither of which are consumed in the West-Indies.
† So that those Colonies may be allowed a direct intercourse with the United States, though the Sugar Colonies must not.
‡ Witness the number supplied by Canada, when the trade to all America was free.

*A considerable quantity of candles and soap used to go from England to America. Our islands were never well supplied with soap from England; they got a considerable quantity from the Dutch. There is a drawback on exportation, of 1d. per lb. on candles, and 1½d. per lb. on soap. If the trade with the West-Indies should be laid open, Britain and Ireland may lose the soap and candle trade.** [Edition 3d, page 124.]

The masts and spars formerly sent to Europe from America, were procured from the northern parts of New England; but they have been gradually cut, near to water-carriage, and are daily becoming more scarce and more difficult to be got in the American States, whilst the forests of Nova Scotia and Canada, abounding in timber of that kind, remain untouched. [Edition 2d, page 49.]

The best timber for pipe-staves and lumber in general, is to be found in Canada and Nova Scotia; and the forests in those countries have been hitherto almost untouched. They will be found, for a long time to come, inexhaustible, whilst timber has already become scarce in most of the American States, and in the Middle and Southward Pro-

* This reasoning seems to stand thus;—Britain and Ireland supplied both America and the West-Indies;—open the trade between America and the West-Indies, and Britain and Ireland will lose the supply of both.

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vinces is not of so good a quality. [Edition 2d, page 51.]

The lumber of the Southern Colonies is preferred, and is sold 20 per cent. dearer; it is mostly for building. [Edition 3d, page 68.]

Ships are now built in Canada little inferior to those built in Britain. [Edition 2d, page 64.]

From the great plenty of timber in Nova Scotia and Canada, and the beginning scarcity of it near water-carriage in the American States, these articles may be imported from the former on better terms than from the latter. [Edition 2d, page 75.]

The Sugar Colonies did not get so much lumber by prizes, and through neutral islands, as may now be got immediately from Canada and Nova Scotia. The lumber of those Colonies is as good as any in America, and may soon be sent cheaper than it could from the revolted Provinces in their present, or any probable state. Some little time may be necessary before a full supply of all the articles they can produce will be obtained; but it will be better for this country to allow a bounty on lumber, conveyed in British vessels from Canada and Nova Scotia to the West Indies, for a limited*

* That is to say, when the commodity we stand in need of does not exist, let us allow a bounty for carrying it to market.

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time, than to sacrifice our carrying trade; also a bounty on building ships in Canada and Nova Scotia, to be employed in the carrying trade to the West Indies. [Edition 2d, page 84. Edition 3d, page 144.]

In the article of wheat, it has appeared how amply Canada can supply our islands. It appears also, that no part of the world furnishes greater advantages for ship-building.—In short, it is unquestionably a fact, that Nova Scotia, Canada, and the island of St. John, will soon become capable, with very little encouragement, of supplying our islands with all the shipping, fish, timber, and lumber of every kind, and with mill or draft horses, with flour and several other articles they may want. [Edition 2d, page 85.]

The difference of price between French, Danish, Dutch, and British West India sugar, was so great, that above two-thirds of the sugar imported into America came from the foreign islands, and cheaper, notwithstanding the duty on the foreign of five shillings per hundred. The greatest part was regularly entered; that which was smuggled into America, is computed to have incurred an expence equal to half the duty, besides the expence of getting it in a clandestine manner from the foreign islands and Surinam. It is clear from this, that our sugars will not be taken

taken for consumption in the American States, and that they only mean to be carriers elsewhere, if permitted to go to our islands. Neither Holland nor France will suffer the American States to carry sugar from their ports in the West Indies, notwithstanding the connection now between them. [Edition 2d, page 65.]*

The license given lately by the court of France to erect sugar-houses to refine three millions of pounds of sugar in Martinico, for the American market, cannot, and will not be considered as a favour by the States, who cannot wish to avail themselves of it, having many refineries of their own. No indulgence is allowed by France as to raw sugars. South Carolina has made, in the article of refined sugar, a discrimination in favour of France, Spain, Holland, Denmark, and Sweden, of one hundred per cent. duty. The refined sugar of the British Plantations being subjected to double duty, and the raw sugars to twenty-five per cent. more than the foreign. Surely this conduct does not entitle the States to any indulgence in trading to our islands. The discrimination however is as odious as it is unnecessary. [Edition 3d, page 108.]

* That is to say, a merchant wanting to carry a commodity to a foreign market, will go to purchase it where it is dearest.

Molasses are of very great importance to the American States, on account of their numerous distilleries, and the extensive commerce carried on by means of the rum made out of them. They were chiefly imported from the French islands and Surinam. Before the Americans were allowed to go to the French islands for molasses (they are not allowed to carry away any thing else), it was an object with the French sugar planter to * contrive to get rid of his molasses, by conveying it into the sea, or to some waste, while the British planter converted his into rum. They are still considerably cheaper in the foreign than in the British islands. The Americans, who sold their cargoes in our islands, used to take the money and go with it to foreign islands, where they laid it out in molasses, &c. This has been a serious complaint a long time. [Edition 3d, page 108.]

The amount of rum imported and consumed in the United States, was more than equal to all the other articles of their importation, molasses excepted. The rum distilled from molasses in the United States, was mostly exported to Africa and the Northern Colonies. The rum imported was consumed in the country, and, except a small quantity from Demerary and Santa Cruz, the whole was, and may still be, imported from the

* There is scarce an animal that will not eat it, and thrive upon it.

British West India islands. We must take care, however, not to encourage English and American distillers to set up their business in the French and Dutch colonies, by suffering any burthens on rum going to the American States, which possibly can be avoided. The French make very little rum, and that of a bad quality. They do not encourage the making of rum; it might interfere with their brandies. [Edition 2d, page 67.]

The Dutch and French islands and settlements on the main cannot supply the demand of the American States, even if they should erect distilleries, and manufacture their own molasses. Nothing can be more trifling, and less founded, than the clamour on the supposition of losing the rum trade, which our islands had. The competition with our islands will be exactly the same, whether the molasses are distilled in the foreign islands, or on the continent of America. It is the interest of the American States, and not our business, to discourage the distillation of molasses in the foreign islands. It would be ruinous to New England in particular; and when the encouragements lately held out in the French islands to establish distilleries, are used as an argument for the purpose of frightening us into concessions, they can only be attended to by the most ignorant. [Edition 3d, page 112.]

It is absurd to suppose the Americans would confine themselves to the use of our West India rum, even if

if we were weak enough to give them every advantage held forth in the Bill which gave rise to these Observations. The Americans would certainly go to the cheapest markets, but they will require the same quantity they did before, consequently there will be the same demand; and they must have it from our islands, as they cannot have a sufficient quantity elsewhere. It is well known how much the Jamaica and Grenada rum is preferred by them. As our West India islands will be entitled to the monopoly of the rum trade with our remaining colonies,—they will be benefited in this trade, at least by the dismemberment of the American States. If any new competition could be raised in this trade, the monopoly in question would doubly compensate*. The quantity of rum consumed in our fisheries, and remaining colonies, is very great indeed; and through Canada, the inland parts of America, will be partly supplied. If our rum should be prohibited there, the Americans will be gratified by the opportunity of smuggling. [Edition 3d, page 114.]

By any violation or relaxation of the navigation act, that act will be entirely lost as to Ireland. That kingdom expressly adopted it only as long as it should remain unaltered in Great Britain. It is

* What proportion the consumption of the new inhabitants of our remaining colonies (for we supplied the old ones before) can bear to the doctrine here laid down, will appear from their numbers herein after stated:

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a principal tie between the two countries. But besides the loss of the Act, as far as it confines Ireland, we should involve ourselves most seriously with that kingdom in another respect. Ireland received, as a right, every advantage she had lately acquired, except the participation of the monopoly of the West India consumption of British products, and manufactures: For that she was thankful; and, in return, passed the Act which increased the duty on sugars, and other West India articles; and engages to augment them farther, in proportion to the duties which may in future be imposed upon them in Great Britain; and lays prohibitory duties on similar articles from foreign islands. By this Bill that monopoly would cease. Ireland will think Britain has done away the consideration which induced her to shut her ports against foreign sugar. The Irish Act, laying prohibitory duties, is biennial, and will expire next Christmas; and it is not to be supposed, under the circumstance alluded to, it would be continued. Her redress might be, to take foreign West India goods; at least, she would not think it necessary to charge her own consumption of sugars with higher duties than are required from America. She will expect to have West India goods on as good terms as the American States, now become foreign. West India planters should consider, whether a direct trade to the American States will recompense them for the loss of the
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Irish consumption; and parliament should consider what would be the state of smuggling from Ireland into this country, if Ireland should become the repository for foreign West India goods, or of our own, under low duties. [Edition 2d, page 82.]

Russia is, by treaty, to be considered as the most favoured nation. She will not easily be amused by any ridiculous attempts that may be made to treat the American States other than foreign. [Edition 2d, page 3.]

It has been said, The islands cannot exist without an open trade to the American States.—In answer, it may asked, how they have existed during the war, when even Canada, or Nova Scotia, and also England and Ireland, were not open to them, without great expence and risque? [Edition 3d, page 144.]

It has already been stated, that the Bermudians, in great part, supplied our Islands with fresh provisions. Our remaining Colonies, or at least part of them, will soon equip small vessels, and carry on the same trade. If our islands are so helpless, and would rather sacrifice our marine, than make so small an effort as to fit out vessels in addition to those of Bermuda, and our remaining colonies, sufficient to supply themselves with provisions

provisions and lumber, they deserve to suffer, or to pay an extraordinary price. Even if they should be so helpless, no man can say they will be subject to any other inconvenience than that of paying an advanced price for those articles, through the medium of foreign West India Free Ports; and, at any rate, the inconvenience can be nothing, when put in competition with the object of our navigation, and the unforeseen mischiefs that may arise. [Edition 3d, page 147.]

The means of reducing the price of West India commodities to the level of those of the foreign plantations, is extremely worthy the attention of the planters, and the legislature. It is an object of high national import, and might greatly promote the wealth and navigation of this country. And, considering the bulk of West India commodities, viz. sugar, molasses, and rum, particularly the former, the universality, and extent of its consumption; a consumption in its infancy even in Europe, and still more so in America, it is not improbable, that in a few ages, the nation which may be in possession of the most extensive and best cultivated sugar islands, subject to proper policy, will take the lead at sea. [Edition 3d, page 162.]

France is increasing her sugar plantations; and nothing but bad management, or extravagance, can prevent

prevent our islands from selling as cheap as the French, although they now undersell us so greatly. [Edition 2d, page 89.]

There is nothing to be complained of more, than the prodigious sums that have been spent in forming sugar plantations, when they might have been so much better employed at home. [Edition 3d, page 260.]

But above all, the utmost endeavours should be exerted to reduce the price of our West India produce, so as to enable this country to support a competition at the American, as well as European markets. [Edition 3d, page 158.]

* The difference of price between British and foreign sugars existed when our islands were open to all the shipping of America. It is said, the French are able to undersell us, because they raise a great part of their provisions in their islands, and also a considerable quantity of lumber; and that France can supply them with all articles cheaper than we can. The first is true; but the preceding examination, as to the probable future supply of America, seems to prove, that the latter assertion is by no means founded; and as to the supply of negroes, we have such a decided superiority in the African trade, that it is allowed we have slaves one-sixth cheaper. It is also said, and very truly, that the soil of our islands is more ungrateful than that of the French, and that our mode of cultivation is
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much more expensive*; and the French say, we do not exact so much labour from our slaves as they do†; that we feed them at a greater expence; and particularly, that we are less industrious. But the argument which is most strongly urged is, that the expensive manner in which our planters live cannot be accommodated to small profit: That the French planters, in their manner of life, resemble our yeomanry and farmers; and that our planters, except their having been lately rivalled by the magnificence of the East, are amongst the most splendid members of the empire‡. The answer to this difficulty does not immediately occur; but as long as so many of them generously spend their incomes among us, without expecting or requiring

* There are many other substantial reasons for the difference; but this is a point no way necessary to be here discussed.

† The planters with pleasure receive this testimony to their humanity from a generous enemy, and hardly think their fellow-subjects in Great Britain or Ireland would seek a reduction of the prices of sugars, at the expence of its violation.

‡ Perhaps this observation deserves no answer but silent contempt. It might not be impossible, even in the rank to which his Lordship has been elevated, to find example of ostentatious expence, equally unwarranted by the possession of an adequate fortune: But the rights and interests of large bodies of men, are quite a distinct consideration from the wisdom or folly of their individual members; and the price at which sugar can be cultivated and manufactured in the West-Indies, depends upon the rate at which plantations can be supplied with the essential requisites of their culture and manufacture, and not upon the way of life of the proprietors residing in England.

quiring the most essential interests of the country should be relinquished for their advantage, Englishmen will not be jealous of the affluence of this very considerable part of the community, or repine at paying a higher price than their neighbours for West India commodities: But if expectations or requisitions of the same kind should be continued, we shall only observe, that bodies of men are too apt to imagine the empire ought to be accommodated or fitted to their interest, without recollecting that their interest should rather be accommodated or fitted to that of the empire.
[Edition 3d, page 160.]

Having performed the laborious task of extracting these discordant grounds of that opinion which is contended for, from their native confusion, the Planters and Merchants proceed to state their reply.

In order to judge of the truth of the general proposition, "That the West Indies may be sufficiently supplied with the articles of North American produce from Canada, Nova Scotia, and St. John's," it is necessary to understand,

First, What the annual consumption of American Produce in the British Sugar Colonies really

really amounts to; which his Lordship's tables, blending the exports to the foreign, with those to the British islands, do not shew.

Secondly, How much thereof used to be supplied by those Provinces which now form the United States, and how much by those which remain British.

And thirdly, To review the present state of the remaining British North American Colonies, and see how far their present or probable Produce may be expected to exceed what they heretofore produced, or prove at all adequate to the demand.

There is extant an official return from the Commissioners of the Customs, dated the 15th March 1775, which affords a complete answer to the first and second heads of this enquiry, and an authentic view of the consumption of the British Sugar Colonies in time of peace. It contains an account of the importation into those Colonies from North America in the years 1771, 1772, and 1773, the totals of which, for all the three years added together, stand as follows:

An Account of the total Import from North America into the British West India Islands, in the Years 1771, 1772, and 1773; taken from an official Account signed by Mr. Stanley, Secretary to the Commissioners of the Customs in London, dated 15th March 1775.

Lumber.		From the Colonies now forming the United States.	From Canada and Nova Scotia.	From Newfoundland.
Boards and Timber	Feet	76,767,695	232,040	2,000
Shingles	N ^o	59,586,194	185,000	—
Staves	N ^o	57,998,661	27,350	—
Hoops	N ^o	4,712,005	16,350	9,000
Corn	Bushels	1,203,389	24	—
Pease and Beans	Ditto	64,006	1,017	—
Bread and Flour	Barrels	396,329	991	—
Ditto	Kegs	13,099	—	—
Rice	Barrels	39,912	—	—
Ditto	Tierces	21,777	—	—
Fish	Hogsheads	51,344	449	2,307
Ditto	Barrels	47,686	646	202
Ditto	Quintals	21,500	2,958	11,764
Ditto	Kegs	3,304	609	—
Beef and Pork	Barrels	44,782	170	24
Poultry	Dozens	2,739	10	—
Horfes	N ^o	7,130	28	—
Oxen	N ^o	3,647	—	—
Sheep and Hogs	N ^o	13,815	—	—
Oil	Barrels	3,189	139	118
Tar, Pitch, and Turpentine	Ditto	17,024	—	—
Mafts	N ^o	157	—	—
Spars	N ^o	3,074	30	—
Shook Calks	N ^o	53,857	40	141
Soap and Candles	Boxes	20,475	—	—
Ox Bows and Yokes	N ^o	1,540	—	—
Houfe Frames	N ^o	620	—	—
Iron	Tons	399 $\frac{1}{4}$	—	—

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From hence it appears, that the supply from the Provinces now forming the United States, was immense; whilst the supply from those which remain British was, before the late war, quite trifling, except in the single article of fish from Newfoundland, with which the independence of the American States has no connection, and of which there is nothing now to hinder the importation as formerly. This comparative view is corroborated by another account extracted from the Customhouse Returns for the year 1772, by which it appears, that of one thousand two hundred and eight cargoes of lumber and provisions imported that year from North America into the British Sugar Colonies, only seven cargoes came from Canada and Nova Scotia; and it is further confirmed by Lord Sheffield's table, No. 7; by which it appears, that of seven hundred and one topsail vessels, and one thousand six hundred and eighty-one sloops, cleared outwards from North America to the British and foreign West Indies in the year 1770, only two topsail vessels and eleven sloops were cleared from Canada and Nova Scotia. It stands therefore incontrovertible, that, previous to the late war, the supplies to the West Indies, afforded by those North American Colonies which now remain British, did not amount to a proportion of the whole consumption of the Sugar Colonies in any degree worthy of national attention. It remains to examine, how far their present

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state

In 1778, about three thousand barrels of flour were shipped for Halifax and New York, where the war had occasioned it to be very dear, and no more was exported.—In 1779, 1780, 1781, and 1782, the scarcity in Canada was such, that all exportation of bread, flour, or wheat, was prohibited. In the beginning of Summer 1783, about one thousand five hundred barrels of flour were exported to Halifax and Newfoundland, and none to any other place: but the crop again proved bad. Flour at Quebec was, by the last advices, at thirty shillings *per* hundred weight; and there was, at the time of Lord Sheffield's last publication, a ship loading with flour in the river Thames for Quebec, which failed the beginning of April last.

No trace appears, but in his Lordship's assertion, of the forty thousand quarters, or three hundred and twenty thousand bushels of Canada wheat, that used to be imported to Philadelphia and New York annually, before the revolt.

There are many good mills in Canada, and some very capital ones, and no want of the means of grinding any quantity of wheat they have to grind.

During the whole war, the army in Canada was obliged to be supplied with complete rations of provisions

provisions from Europe, except a part of one single year's supply of flour, for which the produce of the country was relied upon; and that small extra demand raised the price from eighteen shillings to thirty shillings *per* hundred weight, and occasioned great scarcity.

Thus it clearly appears, that for the nine last successive years, Canada has had no wheat or flour worthy of notice to export. Its greatest export, viz. that of the year 1774, amounted to a mere trifle, compared to the demands of the Sugar Colonies. And although it be true, that, in favourable seasons, an overplus of grain, beyond the consumption of the inhabitants, may now and then happen, yet such overplus can never be relied upon; and the frequency of disappointment must prove an insurmountable bar to new inhabitants settling with a view to the cultivation of wheat.

No pease have ever been cultivated in Canada, so as to form an article of exportation.

With respect to lumber; the quality of every species of the pine in Canada is vastly inferior to the pine timber of the Middle and Southern Colonies, and does not sell in the West Indies for much more than half the price. The Navy-board was lately led to believe, that masts might be had from Canada; and sent out a surveyor to examine them;

them; but he found none fit for the service. The white oak staves of Canada are of good quality, but they are manufactured to a size fit for the London market, which takes off the whole. The price of labour, which runs from half a dollar to a dollar *per* day, renders the cutting red oak staves, or other low-priced lumber, impracticable at any price which the Sugar Colonies can afford to pay for it, in a country so difficult of access as Canada.

There has not been a single ship built in the province since some years before the late war; nor, according to the latest advices, is there a single one building. All they have attempted is, boats and small vessels, fit for the navigation of their own river.

And finally, The state of population precludes all hope of a speedy increase of supplies. Not more than two or three British families have purchased lands for cultivation, since the province was first ceded to us by France: The few Loyalists who have lately gone thither are chiefly trading people: And the French Canadians, in number about one hundred thousand souls, have not yet exhibited any such signs of spirit or vigorous industry, beyond what is necessary for the sustenance of life, as to warrant an expectation of their surmounting all the disadvantages of climate, and
furnishing

furnishing a supply at all extensive to other countries. In short, any considerable additional produce must undoubtedly depend upon additional hands, not now existing in the province.

Secondly, as to Nova Scotia:

It has never yet produced grain sufficient for the sustenance of its inhabitants, which, at the commencement of the late war, did not exceed twenty-seven thousand souls; but are recently increased to about sixty thousand souls, by the emigration of Loyalists from the United States.

It has never yet exported any lumber worthy the name of merchandize; and so far from having any to export, it appears, by the latest advices, that a considerable *importation* was taking place from the American dominions on the opposite side of the Bay of Fundy.

It has never yet built any ships beyond the small craft employed in the fishery, and other services upon its own coast; and, considering that there are at present few or no ship-builders among the inhabitants, if ship-building in Nova Scotia were to be pushed, it must be principally by artisans emigrating thither from Great Britain and Ireland.

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It has never yet afforded any supply of black cattle to any other country whatever.

The quality of its timber is variously spoken of and very little known; but there is reason to believe, that all the pine species, especially those growing on the Peninsula, are inferior to those of the Middle and Southern Provinces of America. And although this Colony may, with great encouragement, in time become inhabited and productive, yet at present it affords nothing for exportation but what may, by indirect means, be brought into it from the settlements made in Frenchman's Bay, and other parts of the Province of Maine in the American dominions, from whence the run across the mouth of the Bay of Fundy to Port Roseway, now called Port Shelburn, is only about sixty or seventy leagues.

Thirdly, as to the Island of St. John:

It has never yet produced food for its own inhabitants, in number about 2000 souls.

It has never exported any thing that can be considered as merchandize, the produce of the island.

Its fishery is no better than that of Newfoundland or Nova Scotia, whilst its situation within the Gulph

of St. Lawrence shuts it up from all intercourse for more than five months in the year; and its fog, more impenetrable than even the fog of Nova Scotia, renders the country too uncomfortable to hope for population, while land remains unoccupied in happier climates.

Upon this review of the actual state of the British North American Colonies, it is difficult to treat a deliberate and persevering attempt to impress the Public with an opinion, that the wants of the Sugar Colonies may be supplied from thence, with that respect which the West India Planters and Merchants wish to preserve upon the present occasion. To suppose those Colonies *at all* productive for the purposes of a substantial exportation, is to anticipate the slow effect of many years of that steady and expensive system of encouragement from the Mother-country, which raised the other North American Colonies to independence; and to suppose that at any time their produce can be rendered adequate to the West Indian demand, appears vastly beyond what the climate and other natural disadvantages can ever admit, under any encouragement whatsoever.

The truth is, that the Sugar Colonies can alone be supplied with lumber from the Dominions of the United States, and that they cannot either well or cheaply be supplied with many essential articles of

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provisions

provisions from any other country. Flour in particular will not keep in the West Indies, and requires a constant supply by as short a voyage as possible: Even in the voyage from England it frequently grows sour; and live-stock of all kinds obviously require a short voyage at a favourable season of the year. Without these supplies, *the cultivation of the Sugar Colonies cannot be carried on*; and whether the circumstances of the case do or do not admit the intercourse, thereby created, to be confined to British ships, is the true question for the public consideration: The subject is highly important, and involves in it very extensive considerations, which require to be distinctly treated of.

Among the foremost stands the consideration how these supplies are to be paid for. This can only be done by bills of exchange upon Great Britain, which is to all intents and purposes sending so much money out of the kingdom; or by inducing the Americans to take the superfluous part of the produce of our Sugar Colonies in payment. This they constantly did, previous to the late war; and the following account of the total exportation from the Sugar Colonies in the years 1773 and 1774, distinguishing what went to America, from what came to Great Britain and Ireland, will best explain the natural course and extent of this trade, and shew how far it was any hardship to the Mother-country to part with the commodities which America took in payment.

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An ACCOUNT of the total Exportation from the BRITISH SUGAR COLONIES, in the Years 1773 and 1774.

N.B. The Packages are reduced to one common denomination of 1600lb. per Hhd. of Sugar, and 110 Gallons per Puncheon of Rum, and some Commodities of trifling Amount are left out.

	Sugar Hhds. of 1600 lb.	Rum Punch. of 110 gallons	Melasses.		Pimento Casks and Bags of unknown Weight.	Coffee.		Cotton.		Ginger Pounds
			Hhds. gauge unknown.	Gallons.		Casks and Bags of unknown weight.	Pounds.	Bags of unknown weight.	Pounds.	
To Britain and Ireland,	118015	25389	44	140	18263	235	3444731	1184	846810	462171
To America,	3776	32265	1277	2450	1521	53	364236	184	50080	90
Total in 1773,	122691	57654	1321	2590	19784	288	3808967	1368	896890	462261
To Britain and Ireland,	141460	26602		5379	14251	711	3145580	1385	929310	180425
To America,	5325	43488		134532	550	28	416693	171	4802	300
Total in 1774,	146785	70090		139911	14801	739	3562273	1556	934112	180725

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From hence it plainly appears, that the Sugar Colonies paid for their lumber and provisions chiefly in rum. During the interruption of this commerce occasioned by the war, our fleets and armies in North America and the West Indies have occasioned a demand for rum perhaps not much short of what America formerly took; but that demand is now at an end; and to expect that Great Britain and Ireland can take off an additional quantity of forty thousand puncheons of rum *per annum*, would be as absurd, as to suppose our Sugar Colonies could exist, if they were obliged, instead of making this use of their rum, to throw it away, and pay about four hundred thousand pounds sterling *per annum* for their lumber and provisions out of the rest of their produce. Nothing can therefore be more essential, than to take care that no regulations be established which can tend to drive the Americans into other modes of obtaining a supply of rum; and in as far as they can be induced to take sugar or other articles of our produce, will indeed must that policy be on our part, which would prefer their consuming in America the produce of French labour and industry, rather than British.

The Act of Navigation, or more properly the principle of that Act, branched out, varied, or modified, as it has been, by a great number of other Acts of Parliament down to the present times, must, like all other human institutions, adapt itself

to every material alteration of circumstances, or its provisions will be no longer wise or salutary. It originated when the national spirit of commercial enterprize, operating upon natural advantages long neglected, began to produce those effects which have raised this nation to greatness. Our ancestors then saw, that the British empire and its dependencies contained within them every thing that was essential to the establishment and support of their then infant Colonies, and, under those circumstances, wisely confined the intercourse of those Colonies to the Mother-country, and to each other, and the importation of foreign commodities into the Mother-country, to be by British ships (in that description, including the ships of Ireland and the Colonies) or by ships of the country from whence the commodities were imported. Our agriculture, manufactures, and the commerce thereon dependent, have since increased to an amazing degree, and (at a time when, they are treated in so subordinate a way, as men whose property and existence are to lay at the mercy of the most ill-informed prejudices of individuals), the West India Planters and Merchants may be allowed to say, that if any body of men have more eminently contributed to such increase than another, it is to *them*, and to the investment of at least fifty millions sterling of their property in the Sugar Colonies, that such distinction is due. Our agriculture, manufactures, and commerce have risen

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to greatness, and navigation and naval power have risen in their train: But navigation and naval power are among the *happy fruits*, not the *parents* of commerce; for if agriculture and manufactures, and mutual wants, did not furnish the subject of intercourse between distant countries, there must soon be an end of navigation. To sacrifice the sources of commerce, or cramp them, with a view to promote navigation, is therefore obviously destructive of the very end proposed: The *carrying trade* is of great importance, but it is of greater *still to have trade to carry*. Encourage cultivation and manufactures, and promote a demand for their produce, and render its conveyance to market easy, and the benefits of navigation will follow of course: But encourage the speculative fancies of those who think they can, by human institutions, strongly controul the natural course of things, and indulge them in cramping the operation of the *cause*, in order to increase the *effect*, and the manufactures, commerce, navigation, and naval power of Britain must sink together. The policy of the Act of Navigation is justly popular. Its regulations, until the loss of America, under the various relaxations which Parliament has applied to particular events and exigencies as they arose, have guided the course of trade without oppressing it; for the markets which those regulations left open to the consumption of the produce of the Colonies were sufficient to take off the whole, and no foreign country

country could have supplied the essential part of their wants materially cheaper, than the Colonies or the Mother-country could supply one another. The independence of America has totally changed all this, and yet we hesitate to follow the event with answerable regulations.

The intercourse between North America and the Sugar Colonies has at all times been carried on, chiefly by small vessels built in America, and navigated at a very cheap rate, which brought provisions and lumber to sell, and carried back their own returns. The expence of navigation in long voyages is vastly higher, in proportion to the length thereof, than in short ones; and the American vessels, thus making freight both ways, with very short voyages, brought their bulky commodities to our consumption at perhaps the cheapest rate possible; but still the expence of its transportation exceeded its original value. Whatever increases the expence at which the culture and manufacture of sugar in the West Indies is to be carried on, most evidently strikes at the root of every benefit derived from them; yet, in order to reduce the price of those commodities, and enable us, according to the noble Lord's idea, to contend for the consumption *even of America* with foreign Colonies, whose soil and other advantages are superior to our own, measures are insisted on, which must at once shut the American market against our produce, and oblige us to take

take theirs at an expence far beyond what the nature of the case requires, or our rivals pay. It has already been shewn what reliance is to be had upon the *shipping* of Canada and Nova Scotia. That of Bermudas amounts to a very trifling part indeed of the tonnage wanted, and whatever may be the noble Lord's facility in condemning our Islands to suffer for it, if they are so helpless, and will not make so *small an effort* as to fit out vessels, in addition thereto, *sufficient to supply themselves with provisions and lumber*, it would have been as well if his Lordship had adverted even to his own representation of the extent of that supply, and had taken the trouble to inform himself of the practicability of building or fitting out almost any ships whatever from our islands, before such doctrines were sported to the Public. If the intercourse by American ships remains prohibited, the bulk of the supply must be had either by indirect means from the Americans through the neighbouring foreign islands, or coming into ports where we have no Custom-house Officers, or else by ships sent in ballast from Great Britain to America, to fetch it under all the burthens which the policy of America, rendered adverse by such hostile institutions, can impose. The direct trade between Britain and America has not, at any time, afforded outward bound freight at all equal to the homeward bound; and consequently, ships not in the direct trade, but going there accidentally upon a circuitous voyage,

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have seldom obtained any freight out, unless from some casualty; and as the lumber trade could by no means bear the expence of navigation by ships so fitted out, and making the voyage from Britain to America in ballast, a very small proportion of the supply was at any time imported by such ships into the West Indies. But it will be asked, Why may not British ships, when in the West Indies, make a voyage to America with rum, sugar, &c. and bring back lumber, with the advantage of having freight both ways? Lord Sheffield gives a full answer. The prices have at all times been much lower in the foreign islands than in ours; and although, whilst we permitted the Americans to bring us *their* produce, and take back *ours*, the homeward-bound freight operated as a bounty, and the habit of intercourse led to the consumption of British produce, even under some small disadvantage; we can never expect, that while we prohibit this intercourse, and the French permit it, the Americans will consume any part of our produce which they can otherwise be supplied with. Upon this principle, besides what has been done in Carolina, as stated by Lord Sheffield, the Assembly of Maryland (one of the most moderate of the United States), immediately on receiving advice of our restrictive proclamation herein before mentioned, passed an Act, imposing a duty on all British ships coming into their ports, and on all merchandize imported therein being British property, and empowering

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powering their Delegates in Congress to agree to a law, confining all importation into America to be by American ships. Upon the same occasion, the Assembly of Virginia resolved unanimously, to authorise their Delegates in Congress, to prohibit British vessels from importing the produce of the British West Indies into the United States, so long as those restrictions should be continued; and ordered a Bill to be brought into their own Assembly accordingly. Advice is received, that the province of Pennsylvania has come to resolutions similar to those of Maryland, and the concurrence of the Northern Provinces, whose interest is more deeply concerned in the measure than the Southern ones, can never be doubted. How well founded Lord Sheffield's assertions are, that France prohibits the intercourse between her *Sugar Colonies* and the American dominions, let the following Proclamation bear witness. The French government could at all times give an effectual protection to American ships in their ports, notwithstanding any public edicts of prohibition; because *they* have no custom-house officers empowered by law to seize ships for their own benefit, independent of the will of the governor, grounded upon secret orders; and the Americans were well accustomed to trust to such protection: but all disguise is now thrown off, and the permission avowed.

Translation

Translation of a Proclamation by the Viscount De Damas, Governor of Martinique, and Commandant-General of the French Windward Islands, dated 23d July 1783.

WHEREAS the trade of our Colonies, and that of the Thirteen United States of North America, promises a reciprocal benefit and advantage to both nations, so are we willing to grant the last-mentioned every privilege in our ports or harbours. In order to animate them thereunto, it has appeared to us, as we find that the duty formerly stipulated on them was not calculated agreeable to the nature of the trade, lading, and size of their vessels; also for the reason of the long detention of their vessels in our ports, we find that they must have run into many unnecessary expences, which have caused the loss of their voyage and labour; to prevent those obstacles, we do hereby grant and permit to their merchants, to furnish our Colonies with every kind of their commodities which our nation cannot supply us with, and likewise to suffer them to purchase and load any kind of produce of our said islands, of which we also grant the same privilege to our own merchants; this being the will and pleasure of his Majesty, who has authorized and ordered us to have it published, and the following articles:

1st, All Americans that carry on trade in our Colonies, shall have no more to pay for every vessel

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vessel than sixteen livres ten sols * anchorage, and twenty-four livres fifteen sols † at the Admiralty-office, and the same sum and no more to the interpreter; for which he shall be bound to take the Captain to the General or Governor, and to assist him in every thing according to the laws and customs of the country.

2d, And as we want to favour as much as possible the speedy dispatch of all American vessels, we do hereby permit and allow to all those established merchants to build at the Bay of Gallery a rum distillery, and round about the city of St. Pierre proper cisterns, to keep a sufficient quantity of molasses, for which we hereby exempt them from all duty and tax-money, and every one of their negroes, for the space of five years.

We have thought proper to publish, register, and institute this at the Admiralty-office, and every Custom-house within our government; and also charged our Director General to use every diligence to see it executed, in order that no persons hereafter may plead ignorance.

Signed, &c. DAMAS.

Countersigned by the proper Officers.

But further; Lord Sheffield argues, that this permission to export produce in American ships

* About Fourteen Shillings. † About a Guinea.
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from the French islands, will, as far as relates to the great article of rum, be of no consequence; for the French cannot supply them, and consequently they must still take their rum from the British islands, where alone it is to be had. Such indeed would have been the case, had we been as early wise as the French, and had not by violence turned the channel of supply. The only obstacle to the making rum in any quantity in the French islands, is the want of stills and the other utensils of distillation, which are expensive in the first construction, but kept up and worked afterwards at very little expence. There is no ground whatever for supposing the quality of such rum at all inferior to that with which we have chiefly supplied the American consumption, and the longer we persevere in the measures which have raised against us this dangerous rival, the more we shall open the eyes of the French to our folly, and their own interest in protecting the manufacture. The argument drawn from the position, that the molasses can be distilled but once, and therefore it is the same thing to us whether the Americans distil them in their own country as heretofore, or distil them in the French islands, leaves out one small consideration, viz. that the foreign islands produce molasses abundantly sufficient for both purposes: And the argument grounded on its not being for the interest of the Americans to set up or encourage distilleries in the foreign islands, because

cause they have distilleries at home, is answered by the noble Lord himself: for he states, and the fact is, that (from whatever cause it may arise) molasses distilled any where else, and without the additions they receive in the West Indies from the skimmings of the sugar, do not in any country produce a liquor at all like West India rum, but much inferior to it: witness the quality of the molasses spirit in England, which is little, if at all, superior to the raw unrectified spirit of the malt distillers. As far as the internal consumption of America is concerned, there is therefore no competition between their own distilleries, and those establishing in the French islands.

The apprehension, that if American ships were suffered to take sugar from our Islands, they would convey it not to America, but to foreign countries, and rob us of the carriage of it, is fully answered by Lord Sheffield himself. Sugar is, and ever has been cheaper in the French Islands, where the Americans are at liberty to receive it; and it is past all doubt that British Plantation sugar may be conveyed cheaper through the medium of Great Britain to its consumption in any of the northern parts of Europe, where alone the demand for it can arise, than by any other channel whatever. The fear is therefore chimerical; but a limitation of tonnage to the ships employed in the American intercourse, confining it to be by vessels having only

only one deck, and not exceeding eighty or one hundred tons burthen, must surely satisfy the most timorous on this head; for such vessels can never be to any extent employed in transporting sugar across the Atlantic, nor could they be got insured. The planters and merchants think the caution wholly unnecessary; however, they do not mean to object to the limitation, because all the essential purposes of both countries may be effected under it.

In answer to the question, How were the Sugar Colonies supplied with lumber and provisions during the war? the parties concerned with great truth say, Very ill, and at an expence which, notwithstanding the high price of sugar in England, has been ruinous. At different times different parts of the Continent of America, where our arms have prevailed, were open to us: Georgia was mostly so; East Florida always; West Florida for a considerable time. The supply by prizes was great, and that derived through neutral islands by no means trifling. And finally, our islands were driven by necessity to that worst of all applications, for the public good of their own labour, *viz.* the raising provisions, and cutting lumber upon their own estates. It is evident that the Public can only be profited by the application of that labour to the cultivation and manufacture of articles of commerce; and in as far as any regulations tend to
make

make it more for the interest of the planter to raise any thing else upon his estate, they, by inevitable consequence, destroy so much of his power to produce articles of commerce; and from this consideration, another very powerful reason arises, for bringing to his hand, at the cheapest rate possible, those supplies of provision and lumber which are the very foundations of all his culture.

During the seven months that have elapsed between their receiving the news of the Proclamation and the date of the last advices, the islands have probably suffered less from the want of lumber and provisions than might justly have been apprehended. Various causes have contributed to their relief. The islands which had been conquered by the French, had the benefit, whilst under that dominion, of a free intercourse with the Americans, and have been ceded to us in a situation in this respect enabling them to supply much of the wants of their neighbouring islands. Before the news of the Proclamation reached Jamaica, many American vessels had carried large supplies thither. Some have since gone by British ships, free from the new burthens which the American States are but beginning to lay upon that navigation, and probably some subject to them; and there is no doubt but a great deal has been obtained by American vessels, either directly, or through the medium of Cape Nicolas in St. Domingo, notwithstanding the Proclamation. And
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it must not be forgotten, that it is still lawful, under the Free Port Act of 6 Geo. III. continued by an Act of 21 Geo. III. "To import into the ports of Kingston, Savanna La Mar, Montego Bay, and Santa Lucea in Jamaica, from any foreign Colony or Plantation in America," (within which description the Dominions of the United States now fall) "in any foreign vessel whatsoever, not having more than one deck, all manner of goods and commodities, the growth or produce of any such Colony or Plantation, manufactures excepted." By all these means, a sufficiency of lumber, to pack the crop of the present summer, will probably be procured at some price or other: but through whatever channel it comes, it is from the American dominions alone that it must be had; and the question, Whether it is more for the public good to take it in the cheapest way with reciprocal advantages that are essential to our existence, or in the dearest way, foregoing all those advantages, and transferring them to the French? would not seem to require much deliberation.

Under all these circumstances, it is hoped that no reasonable doubt can remain about the tendency of these fatal restrictions, as between us and America and rival nations. Instead of availing ourselves of those dispositions which similarity of language, religion, manners, laws, and ancient habits, and individual connections, could not fail
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soon to revive between the two countries under a wise and accommodating conduct, and thereby rendering the loss of America as little hurtful to ourselves, and as little advantageous to rival nations as possible, we are, by a narrow and petulant jealousy, driving her into the arms of those very rivals, to their aggrandizement and our ruin; and may find it no easy matter to resume channels of trade once lost.

The imaginary objections advanced on the part of Russia and Ireland, appear wholly foreign to the subject.—*Any* arrangement of the intercourse between the Sugar Colonies and America, must narrow, and not extend, those rights of intercourse under which Russia made her alliance with us; consequently, they can be no infringement of that alliance, and in truth are not in the smallest degree the objects of it. But put the case at the worst, and let it be even supposed that her Imperial Majesty should insist, that she too shall have the right of sending the produce of Russia from thence in Russian ships with one deck, and not exceeding eighty or one hundred tons burthen, to our Sugar Colonies, and bring back sugar; what could the evil extend to? Can any man believe that such a pretension would ever seriously be set up?—As to Ireland, although there be no doubt of the good endeavours of those who have shewn themselves ever ready to embroil us with our sister kingdom,
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they will not find it easy to confound two points so distinct from each other, as the *quantum* of duty payable to the revenue of their own country upon the importation of any commodity, and the right to go and fetch that commodity. Britain imparted that right to go and fetch it to Ireland, as a matter of favour; and Ireland is too just to conceive that Britain thereby precluded herself from regulating the trade of her own Colonies in other respects, according to future events. While Ireland enjoys the commerce of the British Sugar Colonies upon the same footing that England does, she can have no cause to complain; but hard indeed would be the lot of the Sugar Colonies, if, whilst both Britain and Ireland enjoy the freest intercourse with the Americans in American ships, they, to whom *alone*, from local circumstances, that mode of intercourse is *essential*, should stand precluded from it. The Irish think too generously, to wish to establish any such principle.

One other view remains to be taken of the restriction contended for, and it is an important one. If it were possible to confine the intercourse between the Sugar Colonies and America to British-built ships, is it quite so clear, as men imagine, that we have ships to carry it on, or can keep up such a stock of British shipping in the merchants service, as would be wanted? There is no doubt, but immediately upon the discharge of

the transport service, a great many ships built during the war expressly for that service, were thrown out of employment; but it is to be considered, that the American-built ships heretofore deemed British, are now beginning to wear out very fast, and that no more American ships can be received as British, unless some accommodating plan of adoption in *Nova Scotia* shall be fallen upon. Independent of the intercourse in question, which, as has been before observed, was carried on almost wholly in American bottoms, the proportion of the general trade of this country so carried on was very great. British and American privileges being before the war the same, it is not easy to come at exact information, what proportion the one class of shipping bore to the other; and probably no official documents are extant that would shew it; but an institution of the Underwriters of London affords a very good general ground of judgment. To guard against imposition in insurances, a society of merchants and underwriters have established surveyors at all the principal ports of the kingdom, who make weekly returns of every ship employed in foreign trade that enters the port; but take no cognizance of the coasting trade, upon which fewer insurances are made. Those returns state her name, tonnage and age, where built, who are the owners, her draft of water, her usual trade, and their opinion of her quality, both as to the hull and the rigging and outfit; and all these returns are posted

posted weekly into books for the use of the subscribers. In the year 1775, the surveying ports were *London, Bristol, Liverpool, Lancaster, Whitehaven, Workington, Maryport, Leith, Tinnmouth, Hull, Whitby, Lynn, Yarmouth, Portsmouth, Cowes, Pool, Topsham, Exeter, Dartmouth, Biddeford, Barnstaple, Appledore, Dublin, Corke, Belfast, Newry, and Waterford*; and the book of that year contains the last survey of every ship employed in foreign trade that had entered any of those ports in 1772, 1773, 1774, and till the Autumn of 1775, shewing the date of the last survey; but inserting no ship twice, although all the constant traders had in that period been many times surveyed. The number amounts to 6219 sail, which stand reported,

	Tons.
3908 British-built, amounting to	605,645
2311 American-built — —	373,618

The tonnage of both is much below the truth, being the tonnage the ships were registered at; but as there is no ground to suppose the one more so than the other, the proportion holds; and it follows, that as far as this survey extended, the American shipping employed in the foreign trade directly to and from Britain, amounted to a good deal more than half as much as the British. Now, the direct trade between America and Britain may still be carried on by American ships in as great a degree as before, but from every other branch they will be precluded; and except in that branch there

there appears no reason to fear a falling-off of the British trade : it will follow, that without meddling with the intercourse between America and the West Indies, we must add nearly one half to our stock of ships in the merchants service, as the American ships and those discharged from the transport service gradually wear out; and whether that can be done without too much exhausting the timber of the kingdom before it comes to the growth fit for large ships, will require the most serious consideration. To build ships in England with imported timber will never answer; and it must not be forgot that every increase of the price of a ship operates as a tax upon the manufactures and commerce which she is to transport; and that our price of ship-building is already perhaps the highest in the world where materials are to be had. It is not meant to draw this head to any precise conclusion, but to suggest the general consideration of it as very important in itself, and applying collaterally to the present question; in which the West India Planters and Merchants confidently trust they stand otherwise supported by facts incontrovertible, and opposed by no argument that does not sap the foundation of the very interests it professes to support.

JAMES ALLEN, Secretary.

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