

148-29



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475.

( 17 )

*Lane, 30<sup>o</sup> die Junij, 1800.*

MINUTES of Evidence taken upon the further Consideration of the REPORT which was made from the Committee to whom the " Bill to incorporate certain Persons by the Name of The London Company for the Manufacture of Flour, Meal, and " Bread," was committed.

COUNSEL and Agents called in.

The Counsel for the Petition of the Millers and Mealmen proceeded further in their Evidence; and called

Mr. HENRY WOODTHORPE,  
Assistant to the Town Clerk of the City of London.

*Mr. Woodthorpe.*

WHAT are those Books which you have with you?  
Records of the Returns of the Prices of Meal and Flour made by the Meal Weighers, and sent to our Office.

Do they contain the Prices of Wheat and Flour at the London Market?  
They do.

For what Period?  
They begin in 1774, and go down to 1796.

Are those Returns made Weekly?  
They are.

Have you any Returns later than 1796?  
Yes—to June 23d, 1800.

The said Returns delivered in.

Withdrew.

E

Mr.

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Mr. Woolhead.

Mr. TITUS WOOLHEAD again called in.

I was employed by the Lord Mayor to extract from the Meal Weighers Returns the Prices of Wheat and Flour for Twenty-one Years, and to calculate the Average. I have the Result, which I made myself from the original Documents, and I believe it to be correct.

Appendix,  
No. 3.

The said Extract delivered in.

*Examined by Members.*

Are the Averages in that Paper the Average of the Week for the whole Year?

They are.

Did the Court of Aldermen, subsequent to the late Act, fix the Price of Bread from the Price of Flour or Wheat?

I believe generally from Flour.

Did you every know the Price of Bread being fixed from the Price of Wheat of late Years?

I do not recollect at any Time.

Withdrew.

Mr. C. Pratt.

Mr. CHARLES PRATT again called in.

In all Cases does the Produce of a Quarter of Wheat depend on its Weight and other Qualities, or its Measure?

Upon its Weight more than its Measure.

Has the Quality as well as the Weight any Influence on the Produce of the Flour?

The Quality of the Flour depends on the Quality and Weight of the Wheat.

Have you any certain Rule by which you can judge of the Quantity of Flour a given Quantity of Wheat will yield?

From the Quality we have a Judgment to lead us as to the Quantity of Flour.

What are the Number of Mills within 20 Miles of London?

I cannot speak precisely, but I understand about 150.

What Quantity of Wheat are those Mills capable of grinding and dressing in a Week?

More than sufficient to supply the Demand of the London Market?

Are

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Are those Mills employed in supplying the Capital with Flour?  
They are—and likewise Mills at a much further Distance.

Mr. C. Pratt.

What is the Quality, besides the Weight of Wheat, from which you form your Judgment of the Quantity of Flour it will produce?  
It depends on the Harvest; the finer the Quality of the Wheat the heavier it will weigh, and the greater the Produce.

Can you describe any other Qualities, other than Weight, from which you judge of the Produce?

There are Wheats thicker coated than others, and unless well harvested cannot weigh well, and cannot produce so much Flour.

Did you ever know Wheat of superior Quality which would produce more Flour than heavier Wheat?

There is Wheat that weighs lighter which will produce more Flour than browner Wheat which is heavier.

What is the Difference in the Weight of a Bushel of such Wheat?  
2 lb. in a Bushel.

Is there any Thing in the Shape of the light Wheat by which you account for a greater Quantity being packed in a given Measure?

It depends on the Dryness of the Harvest, and the Manner in which it is housed afterwards.

What is the Average Difference to be derived from Foreign and British Wheat?

I conceive it possible (and it is continually done) that we can get more Flour from Seven Bushels of British Wheat, than from Eight Bushels of Foreign.

Do you know the Manner in which the Returns are made of Wheat in the London Market by the Act 37th Geo. III.?

I understand that the Wheat returned to the Lord Mayor should be such as to make good Bread for the Consumption of London; but a Return is made of Wheat of a different Quality; there is a Difference of from 50s. to £3. in the Quarter of Wheat on each Market Day.

Do you know whether Wheat sold in the Market at present under 100s. is consumed in London, the Price of which goes to constitute an Average?

I conceive a great Deal is carried Coaltwise, and to different Parts of the Country.

Does the Average at present drawn, give any fair Idea of the Difference

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*Mr. C. Pratt.* ference of the Price of Flour and the Price of Wheat in the London Market?  
 I believe in the Return there is Wheat as low as 80s. per Quarter; but from all the Wheat I have seen, I have not been able to purchase any for my Use under 112s. per Quarter.

Does not Wheat under 112s. produce Flour fit for the London Market?  
 It does not.

Is not Wheat under 112s. mixed with other Wheat, and ground for the London Market?  
 Not to my Knowledge.—I do not grind any such myself.

In the Difference between English and Foreign Wheat, do you mean to speak of the present Time, or generally?  
 I speak of the present Time, and to the present Importation.

What was the Average Quality of the Wheat which was brought to the London Market at the Time of the Albion Mills?  
 Taking the whole Time, the Quality of the Wheat was much superior than during the like Number of Years since.

Is not some of the Foreign Wheat as good and fine as the best English Wheat?  
 There is none equal to the English Wheat—there has been some Cargoes that would make a good Flour in Quality, but not so much in Quantity as the English; but there has been but a small Proportion of that Wheat.

What has been the Difference of Price between the best Foreign Wheat and the best English Wheat at the same Market on the same Day?  
 A Difference of from 8s. to 10s. per Quarter—the English has exceeded the Price of the Foreign Wheat.

Is not a certain Quantity of British Wheat necessary for the Purpose of working up the Foreign into Flour?  
 Those superior Qualities of Foreign Wheat I mentioned required little or no Mixture—the Foreign requires it more or less in proportion to its Quality.

Is it to be understood that in general a certain Proportion of English Wheat is necessary to be mixed with Foreign Wheat?  
 It is generally mixed—and it is the Interest of the Miller to mix the different Wheat of different Counties together.

Is it not necessary to mix generally Foreign Wheat with British Wheat for the making of Bread?  
 It is.

Have

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Have you used this Year any Foreign Wheat?  
 I had One Parcel of Foreign Wheat which turned out good, and was not mixed; but I have constantly done it this Year. *Mr. C. Pratt.*

What was the usual Average Price of the Foreign Wheat?  
 The Price I have given for this Month past was from 128s. to 134s.

What were the Prices of the British Wheat?  
 From 142s. to 146s. of good Quality.

What are the different Prices of the worst Quality of Foreign and British Wheat at present?  
 There may be some English Wheat sold as low as 120s.—I have not purchased inferior Foreign Wheat, therefore can only speak from the Returns.—I work for the London Market, therefore never buy the inferior Wheat, either Foreign or English.

What is the present Proportion in Quantity between English and Foreign Wheat in the London Market, compared with the Time when the Albion Mills were in Existence?  
 I should suppose the present Supply of the London Market consists of Nine-tenths of Foreign Wheat. During the Five Years of the Albion Mills, for 3½ Years of them there was no Importation, they worked all English Wheat of a fine Growth; and during the remaining 1½ Year, there was but a small Importation in proportion to the present Time.

What Proportion do you conceive to be in the Quantity of Flour produced from Six Bushels of Wheat during the present Year, and the Quantity of Flour produced from Six Bushels of Wheat at the Time of the Albion Mills?  
 Taking the Average of the Quality now, I conceive the Quarter could not yield so much Flour by a Bushel as during the first 3½ Years of the Albion Mills.

On what Grounds do you form your Calculation that the Supply consists of Nine-tenths Foreign Wheat?  
 My going round the Market, and seeing the different Samples of the English Wheat, and then seeing the Quantity in the Returns.

Do you know the Consumption of London, and what the Quantity of Foreign Wheat imported is?  
 For the Bakers of London, and within Ten Miles of the Royal Exchange, 16,000 Sacks Weekly; the Quantity of Foreign Wheat I cannot precisely speak to. The last Weekly Return was 20,000 Quarters of Wheat in the Whole, and I conceive, out of that about 2,000 Quarters of English Wheat in the Market. I judge from the Essex, Kent, and Sussex Samples, which I saw, but it was only a loose Conjecture. The Quantity of English Wheat is marked on the Samples, but not of the Foreign.

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Mr. C. Pratt. On what do you found your Opinion, that a Quarter of English Wheat would produce a Bushel of Flour more at the Time of the Albion Mills than at present?

There was Wheat produced last Year which would yield more than a Bushel of Flour of equal Quality to Wheat at the Time of the Albion Mills.

What Proportion of Foreign Wheat do you use with the English Wheat?  
That depends very much on the Quality of the Foreign Wheat.

On the Quantities for the last Six Months, what has been your usual Proportion?

It depends on the Quantity of English Wheat I could procure; if I could procure English Wheat, it would be cheaper to me at the advanced Price, than the low Price of the Foreign.

What is the Quantity of English and Foreign Wheat you have ground in the last Six Months?  
I cannot speak from Memory, but can easily obtain it.

Do you sell Flour of the same Quality as other Millers, which is usually sold for the London Market?  
That is my Trade.

Will not Foreign Wheat, of equal Quality, produce as much Flour as English?

If the Foreign Wheat is equal in Quality to the English Wheat, it would yield as much.

Is that the Case when equal in Weight?  
Certainly not.

Do you not know that there is steely hard Wheat, weighing 61 lb. the Bushel, which yields more than other Wheat though it weighs less?  
Yes.

What is the Reason of mixing Wheat of different Qualities?  
It has been found that Wheat from two Counties, of equal Qualities, mixed, will make Flour to please the Bakers better than of the one County only.

From whence does that arise?  
It is found to please them better—they find the Bread of a better Quality.

Is not Wheat imported from the Mediterranean, although it weighs more, so hard as to produce less Flour than English Wheat of the same Weight?  
I consider such Wheat not to answer my Purpose, therefore cannot answer.  
Are

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Are you aware that there has been no Importation from the Mediterranean this Year?  
I am not an Importer, we buy from such Samples as please us. Mr. C. Pratt.

Did you ever hear of any Importation except in one Year?  
I never have.

Do you find that the Red Wheat from its Strength, and the White Wheat from its Delicacy and Colour, being mixed, yield the best Flour?  
They help each other in the working together.

Is it then on Account of mixing Wheat of different Counties that it makes the best Flour?  
They mix the better.

Do you know the Quality of Wheat bought for Government during War?  
I believe they always bought English Wheat till within these last Three Weeks.

Do you know it of your own Knowledge?  
I have taken particular Observations, and I never saw them buy any but English Wheat, but have heard it talked of that they have lately bought Foreign.

Do you know all their Purchases?  
No.

Will uniting Mealman and Baker guard the Public against Adulteration?  
It will not.  
Withdrew.

Mr. TITUS WOOLHEAD again called in, at the Request of Mr. Woolhead. the Counsel for the Bill.

Have you made a Calculation of the Difference of Price between the Quarter of Wheat, and the Price of a Sack of Flour, for the Year 1796?  
I did, and delivered it to Mr. Druce, the Petitioners' Agent.

Did your original Calculation go down to 1799?  
It did.

What was the Difference in Price in 1796 between a Quarter of Wheat, and a Sack of Flour?  
The Average of Wheat was 67 s. 9 1/2 d.—the Price of Flour 61 s. 7 1/2 d.—Difference 6 s. 2 d.

G What



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*Times, 30<sup>th</sup> de Janij, 1800.*

MINUTES of Evidence taken upon the  
 further Consideration of the REPORT  
 which was made from the Committee to  
 whom the " Bill to incorporate certain Per-  
 sons by the Name of The London Com-  
 pany for the Manufacture of Flour, Meal,  
 and Bread," was committed.

499.

( 27 )

*Martis, 1<sup>o</sup> die Julij, 1800.*

MINUTES of Evidence taken upon the further  
Confideration of the REPORT which was made  
from the Committee to whom the " Bill to incorpo-  
rate certain Persons by the Name of The London  
Company for the Manufacture of Flour, Meal, and  
Bread," was committed.

COUNSEL and Agents called in.

The Counsel for the Petitions of the Bakers heard; and called

Mr. THOMAS LOVELAND,  
Master Baker about Twenty-nine Years.

*Mr. Loveland.*

HAVE you been lately at Birmingham?  
I have.

Had you an Opportunity of ascertaining the Difference between the  
Price and Quality of the Bread sold by the Birmingham Union Mills Com-  
pany, and the Bread sold by the Bakers at Birmingham?  
I had.

What was your Observations as to the Difference between the Price and  
Quality of the Union Mills Loaf which you bought, and the Loaf bought of  
the Baker?  
The Union Mills Loaf I bought for 15 $\frac{1}{2}$  d. the Bakers Loaf for 17 d.

State the Difference in Weight.  
The Difference was, the Common Baker's Loaf weighed 5 Ounces  
more than the Union Mills Company's, and the Quality of it was much  
inferior to the common Bakers Bread.

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*Mr. Loveland.* Can you produce those Loaves which you procured at Birmingham?  
I can.

Same produced.

The Loaf marked 1. I bought at Birmingham last Saturday; the Loaf marked 2. I bought at Birmingham of the common Baker; which Loaves I sealed up, and they have not been opened since; and the Loaf marked 3. is one I bought at a Baker's in London, in order to ascertain the Difference in the Price and Quality of the Bread.

State of whom you bought those Loaves respectively.

I bought the Union Mills Company's Loaf of Mrs. Tay, who keeps a Warehouse in Digbeth for the Sale of that Bread; and the other Loaf of Mr. Balden, who lives opposite Mrs. Tay.

Allowing for the Difference in Weight, what is the Difference in Price?

It is in that Case nearly equal, valuing the 5 Ounces the one Loaf wants to make up for the Weight of the other bought of the Baker.

Allowing for the Difference of Quality, what in your Opinion is the Difference of Price?

If they weighed the same, the Baker's Bread would be worth Two Pence more than the Loaf of the Union Mills.

What is the Difference of Price between the Quartern Loaf of Household and Wheaten Bread in London?

I make no Household, therefore do not know the Price.

Why do you not make it?

The Reason is, my Customers at the Time I did make it not liking it; and I have not made any for some Years.

Do you believe the People of London would buy Household Bread if you made it?

I believe the Majority would not—the poorer Sort of People in general would not.

Do you know whether the Union Mills Company at Birmingham continue to use Alum in the Manufacture of their Bread?

Not that I know of.

Do the Union Mills Company bake Meat for the Inhabitants of Birmingham?

I made some Inquiry, but did not find they did—they bake Bread twice a Day, therefore I think they could not find Time to do it.

Have you compared the Loaf of the Union Mills Company with the London Loaf?

I have—I bought the London Loaf of Mr. Johnston in King Street, Westminster.

What

What is their Difference in point of Quality?

The Difference in Quality is very material; I think the Difference in Quality, with respect to Price, that the London Loaf is worth 3d. more than the other.

*Mr. Loveland.*

What Effect has the late Act for prohibiting the Sale of New Bread had on the Consumption of that Article?

It has reduced the Consumption nearly One-sixth.

Do you know of any Advantage being taken by the Bakers in consequence of the late Act, by weighing the Bread into the Oven less than they did previous to the Act; or in any other Way?

I do not.

Do you object, or do you believe that the other Bakers of London would object, from your Knowledge of them, to bake Bread of an inferior Quality to Wheaten?

I do not object to bake any Bread inferior to Wheaten, nor do I think any other Baker would object, provided a living Profit is given them.

Is the Profit now allowed for baking Bread, inferior to Wheaten, a living one?

I understand not.

*Cross examined by the Counsel for the Bill.*

You have stated the Reduction in the Consumption of Bread to be One-sixth in consequence of the late Act, was that the Rate of Diminution which took place immediately on passing the Act?

It was more at the first passing of it than since, but I conceive the Diminution to be at present One-sixth.

Can you account for the Alteration in the Proportion?

I believe that the People have become more used to eat stale Bread, and that they now consume more—there was almost a total Stagnation in the Trade when the Act passed.

Do you imagine that Bread delivered under the new Act, Twenty-four Hours after baking, is as dry and stale as New Bread kept till that Time usually was?

More Care is taken now of the Bread than formerly, for when a Batch is baked it is not meddled with for Five Hours, it is then packed up in order to keep it perfectly moist for the Consumer.

Does that Care consist in enveloping the Batch in a wet Blanket?

I never saw such a Thing done, nor do I believe it.

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Is



*Mr. Loveland.* Is it Part of the Care to cover the Bread with a Blanket?  
I never saw a Blanket thrown over.

What is the Care used?

The Care is no other than formerly, only put up sooner—it is drawn at Seven o'Clock in the Morning; before the late Act, the Bread was delivered new between Seven o'Clock in the Morning and Two o'Clock in the Afternoon, what was not sold was packed up about Eight, Nine, or Ten o'Clock at Night; but now the Mode is, the Bread is drawn at Seven o'Clock and packed in Bins or other fit Places, at Twelve or One o'Clock, but I never saw a Blanket used.

Is the Bin closed so as to exclude the Air?  
It is not Air tight.

Withdrew.

*Mr. C. Pratt.* Mr. CHARLES PRATT again called in; and was asked,  
What have been the Quantities of English and Foreign Wheat purchased by you from the 25th of December last?

The Witness delivered in,

Appendix  
No 4.

An Account of Wheat purchased by him, and manufactured into Flour for the Consumption of London since the 25th of December 1799, distinguishing English from Foreign, and also shewing the Prices thereof.

Withdrew.

And then the Counsel for the Bill was heard.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

Appendix (No. 4.)

Weekly ACCOUNT of WHEAT purchased by CHARLES PRATT, of Tottenham Mills, Middlesex, Mealman, and manufactured into Flour for the Consumption of London, since the 25th Day of December 1799: Distinguishing English from Foreign, and also shewing the Prices thereof.

DATE.	English Wheat bought.	PRICE.	Foreign Wheat bought.	PRICE.	Price of Flour as sold by C. Pratt.
1799.					
December 28.	24	105/ a 108/	—	—	90/ per Sack.
1800.					
January 4.	196 2	105/ a 115/	—	—	90/
11.	175 1	105/ a 112/	180 qrs.	106/	90/
18.	230	106/ a 112/	—	—	90/
25.	64 1	105/ a 112/	480 qrs. 7	{ 130/ a 105/ } { 350/ a 108/ }	90/
February 1.	157 5	108/ a 115/	—	—	95/
8.	363 6	102/ a 118/	—	—	95/
15.	87	110/ a 124/	—	—	95/
22.	324 4	120/ a 124/	—	—	100/
March 1.	461 1	116/ a 122/	—	—	100/
8.	339 2	108/ a 116/	—	—	95/
15.	214 2	107/ a 112/	—	—	95/
22.	296 2	116/ a 120/	—	—	95/
29.	85 4	114/ a 120/	220	{ 120/ a 114/ } { 100/ a 113/ }	95/
April 5.	309 2	118/ a 124/	200	a 115/	95/
12.	27 6	118/ a 126/	—	—	95/
19.	128 4	120/ a 128/	—	—	100/
26.	62 2	126/ a 130/	—	—	100/
May 3.	252 7	128/ a 135/	70	a 122/	100/
10.	59	128/ a 132/	170	a 124/	105/
17.	203 7	124/ a 130/	126	a 114/	100/
24.	93	114/ a 128/	314	{ 154/ a 112/ } { 160/ a 116/ }	100/
31.	86	128/ a 134/	—	—	105/
June 7.	37	126/ a 136/	310 1/2	{ 250/ a 116/ } { 60/ a 115/ }	105/
14.	84 1	140/ a 146/	292 1/2	{ 176/ a 134/ } { 117/ a 128/ }	110/
21.	110 3	128/ a 142/	524	a 128/	110/
28.	6	142/	—	—	110/
	4478 qrs. 6		2887 qrs. 6		

Chas Pratt.

MINUTES of Evidence taken upon the further Consideration of the REPORT which was made from the Committee to whom the "Bill to incorporate certain Persons by the Name of The London Company for the Manufacture of Flour, Meal, and Bread," was committed.

Martin, 1<sup>st</sup> die Julij, 1800.

3

Mercurij, 25<sup>o</sup> die Junij, 1800.

MINUTES of Evidence taken upon the further Consideration of the REPORT which was made from the Committee to whom the "Bill to incorporate certain Persons by the Name of The London Company for the Manufacture of Flour, Meal, and Bread," was committed.

COUNSEL called in.

Mr. Plumer and Mr. Adam, Counsel for the Petition of the several Persons whose Names are thereto subscribed, Owners and Occupiers of Mills, Millers, Mealmen, and others concerned in the Flour Trade.

Mr. Randal Jackson, Counsel for the Petition of the Master, Wardens, and Assistants of the Company of Bakers of the City of London, and of the several other Persons whose Names are thereunto subscribed, on Behalf of themselves and others, Bakers within the Cities of London and Westminster, the Borough of Southwark, and Bills of Mortality, and within Ten Miles of the Royal Exchange; and also, for the Petition of the Master Bakers of the City of Westminster and Liberties thereof, and others, on Behalf of themselves and others, Bakers within the said City and Liberties.

Mr. Garrow, Counsel for the Bill.

REPORT of Bill read.

Petitions read.

Mr. Plumer heard; and called

Mr. CLAUDE SCOTT.

HOW long was you actually engaged on the Corn Exchange as a Mr. Claude Scott Corn Merchant?

Between Thirty and Forty Years as a Corn Factor—I have relinquished it some Time, and now act as a Merchant.

Do you recollect an Application by the Albion Mills' Company for a Charter?

Yes. A Had

Mr. Claude Scott. Had you any Occasion to give an Opinion of the Effect which that Charter would have on the Public?

Question objected to by the Counsel for the Bill.

One of the Counsel for the Petition of the Millers stated, that he meant to ask the Witnes;

- 1.—Whether he was acquainted with the Institution of the Albion Mills?
- 2.—What Effect it had on the Market at the Time?
- 3.—What the Consequences would have been had that Company been incorporated with the like Powers intended to be given this Corporation?

Counsel and Agents withdrew.

Counsel and Agents again called in.

Counsel acquainted, that there was no Objection to the Two First Questions, but to the Form of the Third.

Witness again called in :

Was you aware of the Institution of the Albion Mills?  
I was.

What Effect had it on the Market?  
The Agent for the Purchase of the Corn governed the Market whenever he appeared.

Do you know whether any Application was made for a Charter?  
I do.

Do you know the Result of it?  
It was refused.

Have you, as a Corn Factor, had Occasion to consider what the Effect of a Joint Stock Company, with a large Capital of £. 120 or £. 150,000, for carrying on the Business of making Flour, would have on the Price of Wheat?

The Managers of that Concern would have a great Influence in plentiful Times, but the Reverse in Times of Scarcity; then I think the Sellers of Corn would have the Power over them, knowing the great Demand they would have for Wheat.

Can you form any Opinion what the Effect would be on the Established System of the Corn and Flour Trade, as to Competition generally by such Institution?

It would very much tend to destroy that Competition, which appears to me to be the best Security the Public can have against Monopoly and undue Influence.

Are

Are you acquainted with the Number of Mills near London?  
Not the Number.

Mr. Claude Scott.

Are there a sufficient Number for the Supply of London?  
I have Reason to believe there are more than a sufficient Number to supply every Description of Demand when there is a sufficient Quantity of Wheat.

Have you had any Occasion to call for a larger Supply than the usual Demand for the Metropolis, on any public Emergency?

In 1798 I was directed to purchase 40,000 Sacks of Flour for Government; which I purchased of the Millers round London without any Advance of Price, and might have purchased a larger Quantity at the same Price; and this had no Effect upon the Market Price in the Metropolis.

To what Counties did you make Application for the Corn you purchased?  
Chiefly Middlesex and Hertfordshire.

If it was Part of the Plan of a Corporation for the Purpose of making Flour, to obtain large Quantities of Corn as Store to supply the Metropolis, what Effect would that have on the Market?

It would put it in the Power of the Managers of the Concern to influence the Market, presuming they had Power to bring it in the Market whenever they pleased.

What Effect would that have upon your Determination as a Corn Merchant to import Wheat during Scarcity?

It would have the Effect to discourage private Adventurers to import Corn.

*Cross-examined by the Counsel for the Bill.*

Do you consider the present Price of Grain in the Market to be influenced by any existing Combinations?

I am convinced to the contrary. Withdrew.

Mr. RICHARD BUSH, Malt Distiller.

Mr. R. Bush.

Was you engaged in the Flour Trade?  
For about Twenty Years.

Have you now discontinued it?  
I hold a Mill with my Son; but he carries on the Meal Trade; I have no Interest myself.

Do you recollect the Establishment of the Albion Mills when an Application for a Charter was rejected?

I was then a Mealman, and One of the Committee who opposed the Measure.

Was

*Mr. R. Busb.* Was there at that Time a sufficient Number of Mills for the Supply of London?

From Improvements in Machinery at that Time, the Mills employed could, in Seven Months, supply the Metropolis with Flour for the Whole Year.

Since that Period, has the Machinery of Mills improved?

Several have lately been rebuilt; every One of which has been very considerably improved in the same Proportion as my own, which 18 Years ago ground 120 Quarters per Week, and will now do easily, with the same Head of Water, from 300 to 320 Quarters per Week.

Besides Improvements in Machinery, is there a better Communication than formerly between Mills near London and more distant Mills by Canals?

I don't know of any material Difference in the Price of Carriage.

Were any Mills given up upon the Institution of the Albion Mills?

I remember a great many Persons were distressed by those Mills—myself on that Account relinquished the Trade, and engaged in a Malt Distillery.

Do you know whether any Mills worked by Steam have been given up since the Destruction of the Albion Mills?

I never knew of any of Consequence worked by Steam, near London, except One at Brentford, which was injurious to the Parties concerned.

What are the Advantages to be derived by working Mills by Steam for grinding Corn?

I can only speak as to myself; in consequence of some Circumstances we applied to a Steam Engine to grind some Corn for us, and they charged 3s. per Quarter for grinding Barley, and at my Son's Mill the Charge was only 1s. 6d.

What Influence had the Albion Mills on the London Market and its Neighbourhood?

The Purchase of nearly One-Third of the English Wheat in the Market had much Influence.

What Effect had it on the Price of Corn?

I cannot answer precisely; but in the Country Markets, wherever their Agents attended, it had an Influence in raising the Price.

In your Opinion, what would be the Influence on the London Market if a Corporation, with a Capital of £120,000, and making 120,000 Sacks of Flour per Year, was established?

That Influence on the Market which would be beyond the present Influence, and must tend to raise the Price in the London Market, which is the Rule to every Market in the Nation.

In

In your Experience, have you not found that when there is a sufficient Supply of Wheat in the Market, that there has been a sufficient Supply of Flour?

*Mr. R. Busb.*

I have found, that when there has been a general Crop of Wheat, there has been so much Flour, that the Wharfs and Warehouses could not contain the Quantity; and when that occurs again, the Mills in the Neighbourhood of London can only be Half supplied.

*Examined by Members.*

About what Time, within these Eighteen Years, has the great Improvement in Mills taken place?

Within these Twenty-five Years they have been improving, but within Fifteen Years to a greater Extent.

Has any additional Expence been occasioned to the Miller in consequence?

I can speak to my Son's Mill—the first Improvement in the gaining Power cost £2,600 and a further Improvement within the last Two Years cost more than £2,000.

Is the Annual Expence greater now?

The Charge arises when the Mill is worn down from the Old Power, and then we apply the Gaining Power to its full Extent.

Is the Annual Expence of keeping up the Mill more now than formerly?

Certainly.

Do you employ more Men now than formerly?

Instead of employing Six Men, we now employ Ten.

What is the increased Annual Expence?

There is a considerable Increase.

Is the Expence of Grinding the same Quantity of Flour now, greater or less than before the great Improvements took place?

I am not capable to answer.

Did your Son grind Barley for other Persons as well as yourself for 1s. 6d. per Quarter?

He does not grind for Hire.

Do you conceive that the Expence of grinding by Steam is double the Expence of grinding by Water?

I do not think it possible for a Steam Engine to grind Meal for the London Market so good as by Water.

B

Question

Mr. R. Busb.

Question repeated.  
I can only speak as to One Instance, which I before stated.

When you gave up your Mill upon the Institution of the Albion Mills, was it unoccupied?  
I never gave up my Mill till my Son fettled in it as a Mealman.

To what Use was it employed when you withdrew from the Meal Trade?  
Formerly I used it as a Mealman, afterwards as a Distiller; but in Summer it ground Wheat.

Do you state, that previous to the Albion Mills you carried on the Trade of a Miller, and that since your Mill has not been employed in that Trade by any one?  
As far as I have been concerned in it, I have only used it to grind Barley for the Distillery?

In calculating the Sums of Money laid out in your Mills by Improvements, do you not take into Account the Interest of the Money?  
The Advantages deriving from the Use of the Mill, satisfies well for the Interest of the Money.

Where is your Mill situate?  
On the River Wandle.

Whilst you held the Mill, what Proportion of the Grain did you purchase in the London Market?  
More than Three-fourths; from Three-fourths to Four-fifths.—The Price of Carriage was from 4d. to 6d. per Quarter for Wheat; for the Flour delivered, from 2d. to 3d. per Sack.

What do you mean by the present Influence which directs the London Market?  
I do not know of any Influence.

Do you know of any undue Influence or Combination at present?  
I do not; but am not at present in the Wheat Trade, so cannot ascertain.

What Term had you in your Mill when you incurred the last Expence?  
I applied for an additional Term of the Lease, and obtained Seventeen Years, which, with Twelve Years unexpired, makes Twenty-nine Years. Withdrew.

Mr. C. Pratt.

Mr. CHARLES PRATT, Mealman.

How long have you been engaged in the Flour Trade?  
Thirty-five Years.

Do

Mr. C. Pratt.

Do you remember the Period when the Albion Mills were established?  
I do.

Was there at that Time a Sufficiency of Mills to grind the Flour for the Supply of London?  
I always understood there were more than sufficient, and always a Supply when there was Plenty of Wheat.

How many Months could the Mills be employed?  
It was always thought they could grind One-third more than was wanted for Consumption, if they were worked all the Year.

Has the Power and Machinery of the Mills been improved?  
Very much improved and increased in Power.

Is there at present a Sufficiency of Business to employ the Mills throughout the Year?  
By no Means—but the Mills about London are now more employed on account of a Foreign Supply.

Is the Demand for Flour in ordinary Times sufficient to supply the Mills?  
Certainly not.

What is the Amount of the Deficiency at present, and the Power of the Mills to work?  
I cannot speak as to the precise Quantity; some Mills are employed more than others; some Mills a little Distance from London are not nearly employed, and several unemployed.

Is there at this Time an easier Communication by Means of Canals from the more distant Mills, than when the Albion Mills were in Existence?  
Wherever there are New Canals that must be the Case, but there are none where I reside.

Have you ever known any Interruption to a regular Supply of Flour when there was a Sufficiency of Wheat in the Country?  
Never—I always found the Trade desirous of manufacturing Wheat into Flour as quick as possible for the Supply of the Town.

What Influence had the Albion Mills Company on the London Market in raising the Price of Wheat and Flour?  
They had the Power of raising or sinking the Market as they thought proper.

Was the Market, in point of Fact, influenced by them?  
It certainly was—as they thought fit to buy or not, so they regulated the Market.

Do

*Mr. C. Pratt.* Do you remember whether, at the Period the Albion Mills worked, it was a Period of Plenty or Scarcity of English Wheat?

During the greater Part of the Time there was a great Plenty, for Three Years and an Half; there was an Importation at the latter End of the Time previous to their Destruction.

What Effect upon the Price of Flour has the Abundance of a Crop of Wheat?

The greater the Quantity of Wheat, in general the better the Quality; the better the Quality, the higher Price it bears to Wheat imported which is inferior.

Does that depend upon the Weight of the Wheat?

The heavier and finer the Quality, the greater is the Produce of Flour—the greater the Quantity of the Flour from the Grain, the cheaper it can be sold.

Is the Quantity of Flour produced from English Wheat greater than from Foreign?

Considerably greater.

As 3½ Years of the Five Years is stated as a Period of Plenty, do you consider that as accounting for the Difference between the Prices of Wheat and Flour at that Time?

I conceive it was.

Do you conceive if the Albion Mills had not existed, that there would be the same Difference between the Price of Wheat and Flour?

I should suppose not that Difference which there was if they had not been built, as their being built caused some Opposition at the Time.

In the course of your Knowledge of the Flour Trade, did you ever know of any Combination among the Millers to raise the Price upon the Public, or to keep back the Supplies?

Never—and I do not think any such Combination does exist.

Did you ever know of any Proposal to that Effect?

Never.

What would be the Effect of withdrawing, even in a good Year, 100,000 Quarters of English Wheat from the Consumption of that Year, upon the London Market?

I cannot answer.

Do the Millers depend in a bad Year upon the London Market?

I consider the Dependance of the Mills is upon the Growth of the Crop of Corn grown in the adjoining Counties where the Mill is situate; if there is a good Crop in the Neighbourhood of the Mills, the Millers go down into the Country to procure Corn; on the other Hand, up the Country

Country if there is a bad Crop, so as to cause an Import, the Millers come to London for the Corn and bring it to their Mills, and that for the Supply of those Counties in which we look generally for a Supply of Corn. *Mr. C. Pratt.*

In a plentiful Year, do the distant Mills send their Flour to London? Certainly they do.

When Foreign Wheat is imported, is there a Necessity to mix British Wheat for making good Flour?

That depends on the Qualities of the Wheat; in some Imports we get Wheat that will make good Flour of itself, but in general it requires to be mixed.

Is there at present a considerable Quantity of Foreign Wheat lying in the Thames? I understand there are very large Quantities indeed.

Why is it not manufactured into Flour?

A great deal of it is in such a State, as not to be fit to manufacture till properly aired and screened, and brought into proper Condition.

Is there besides a Want of good British Wheat to mix with it?

The Supply of British Wheat is very small at present, and there is a Want of British Wheat to mix with the Foreign to make the Flour fit for London.

What Proportion of the British Wheat, brought to the London Market, does it require to produce in Flour One-eighth of the whole Consumption of the Metropolis?

I should suppose about 2,500 Quarters—the Consumption of London and its Environs amounts to 20,000 Quarters weekly.

Suppose One-eighth of the Flour consumed in the Metropolis was taken by any Company of Persons, what Proportion of Grain would it be necessary to supply that Quantity of Flour?

In plentiful Times it would take nearly One-half.

In your Judgment, would the Establishment of an Incorporated Company for the Manufacture of Flour, have the Effect of supplying the Metropolis with Flour at a more cheap Rate?

I think not, as there is every Competition at present that can be.

*Cross examined by Counsel for the Bill.*

Do you know any Thing of the Author of a Paper containing Resolutions of the Millers in the Vicinity of London against this Bill, and signed "Charles Pratt?"

Yes.

C

[A printed

Mr. C. Pratt.

[A Printed Paper containing the said Resolutions shewn the Witnes.]

Was this Paper signed by you, and published by your Authority?

Question objected to.

Paper delivered in.

Appendix,  
N<sup>o</sup>. 1.

The Counsel and Witnes were directed to withdraw.

And the Counsel and Witnes being again called in, and the Question repeated—the Witnes was informed that he might decline answering it, if he thought the Answer would be injurious to himself.

The Witnes said, he signed it, and that it was published in the Newspapers by his Authority, and sent by him to several Members of Parliament and other Gentlemen.

Do you know the Author of a Paper, intituled, "Representation of the Millers in the Vicinity of London against a Bill now depending in Parliament, intituled "A Bill to incorporate certain Persons by the Name of "The London Company for the manufacture of Flour, Meal, and Bread," with an Appendix?"

And the Question being objected to;

The Counsel and Witnes were directed to withdraw;

And being again called in, the same Caution was given to the Witnes as before;

And the Question being repeated,

The Witnes declined answering it.

*Examined by Members.*

What is the utmost Distance of any Mill from which London is supplied with Flour?

It is not at all regular, it depends upon the Seasons, according to the Produce of the Crop. Withdrew.

Mr. Kingsford.

Mr. WILLIAM KINGSFORD, Miller.

Was you engaged in that Business when the Albion Mills were in Existence?

Yes, and before.

What Effect had these Mills on the Country Markets, with respect to Grain?

I can answer so far as concerns the Markets in Kent, particularly Canterbury and Sandwich; and whenever the Agent of the Albion Mills came into the Market, I may venture to say, the Market invariably advanced.

Can

Can you form any Judgment what the Effect would be of forming a Company for making Flour like the Albion Mills Company? Mr. Kingsford.

If the Quantity of Corn to be ground by that Company should amount to as much as that which was ground by the Albion Mills, and the Purchasers should come into the London Market, they would take off such a Quantity of the Supply; and from the Factors knowing that their Demands would constantly be large; I apprehend that it would operate, particularly in Times of Scarcity, to advance the Price considerably. It would also have the same Effect on the Country Markets, for that Company would not, in general, be able to get a sufficient Supply of Wheat of good Quality in the London Market; if the London Millers did keep on, they must be obliged to go into the Country Markets for Supply, and consequently it would operate the same upon the Country Markets as the London Market. They would also have it in their Power, from their immense Capital, to command the Markets in such a Way, as they could regulate the Exports and Imports of Wheat at their Pleasure.

If 100,000 Quarters of Wheat were accumulated in Store by such a Corporation, would it have any Effect on Importation in those Years when Importation is necessary?

Most certainly; for no Merchant of common Prudence would venture his private Fortune against the Operations of so large a Body of People, who could fix a Price on the Wheat which he should import, by bringing forward so large a Quantity of Wheat in their Possession, and of course hazard the Ruin of his Property so embarked.

Withdrew.

Mr. TITUS WOOLHEAD,

Out of Business—late Flour Factor.

Mr. Woolhead.

Have you any Returns of the Average Difference of the Prices of Wheat from the Meal Weighers to the Lord Mayor from 1781 to 1785? I have.

From whence did you take them?

I extracted them from the original Entries in the Town Clerk's Office, Guildhall.

Does that Paper contain an accurate Copy?

An abridged Statement, averaged by myself.

What is the Difference between it and the Original?

It is averaged by me into Weekly Returns.

Withdrew.

Counsel informed that the Paper was inadmissible, and Time given to produce a true Copy of the Original.

Witnes again called in.

*Examined*

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( 12 )

*Mr. Woolhead.*

*Examined by Members.*

Are you sufficiently acquainted with the Trade to know what would be the Effect on the Market by the Possession of a large Quantity of Meal in the Hands of an Individual or Company?

If a great Quantity was brought into the Market it would reduce the Price.

Supposing any Company possessed of a Capital of £. 90,000, what Quantity of Wheat would that enable them to keep in Store, over and above their ordinary Business?

That would depend on Circumstances.

If a Person had a large Quantity of Meal in his Possession, would not the Market be influenced according to the Use he made of it.

I suppose it might.

Withdrew.

*Mr. W. Smiton.*

Mr. WILLIAM SMITON,

Inspector of Corn Returns for the City of London, Essex, and Kent.

Have you any Paper of Returns of British Wheat at the Corn Exchange from 1782 to 1799.

Yes.

Appendix,  
No. 2.

Paper of Returns delivered in.

Is that a true Account?

It is—I prepared it myself.

Withdrew.

APPENDIX.

517.

[ 13 ]

A P P E N D I X.

Appendix N<sup>o</sup> 1.

RESOLUTIONS of the MILLERS in the Vicinity of London, against the Bill intituled "A Bill to incorporate certain Persons by the Name of "The London "Company for the Manufacture of Flour, Meal, and Bread."

**A**T a General Meeting of the Owners and Occupiers of Mills, and others concerned in the Flour Trade, held on Monday last, the 9th of June, at the George and Vulture Tavern, Cornhill;

Mr. CHARLES PRATT, in the Chair;

It was Resolved Unanimously,

1. That a Bill, now pending in Parliament, intituled "a Bill to incorporate certain Persons by the Name of The London Company for the Manufacture of Flour, Meal, and Bread," would, if passed into a Law, be productive of the most ruinous Consequences to all Mill Property; and, by the Overthrow of the established System of the Flour Trade, would be equally fatal to the Public.

2. That in the Confidence of the Security which all the Subjects of these Realms enjoy alike under the Laws, several Millions of Money have been embarked in the Construction of Mills, and in the Manufacture of Flour and Meal; that these Mills have of late Years been greatly increased in Number and Capacity; that the Canals by which the Country is intersected have greatly facilitated and economized the Circulation of Grain; and that the Number of Persons engaged in this Trade, unconnected with one another, dispersed over the whole Kingdom, whose Interests are constantly distinct, and even opposite, and the Mediocrity of whose Fortunes obliges them to make rapid Sales of an Article which is in itself perishable, have given Rise to a Competition in the Manufacture and Sale of Flour, so wide, active, and incessant, as to give the best possible Security to the Public for a regular and ample Supply, at the most reasonable Rate.

3. That the Flour Trade has gradually grown up to its present perfect State, by this open Competition, derived from the Freedom and Security it has enjoyed; that from the Abundance of Mills, no Obstruction by contrary Winds, Frosts, Floods, Droughts, or other Accidents, has been found to interrupt a regular and ample Supply; that no Speculation, Artifice, Fraud, or Combination, can now affect the Markets, as the Supplies come to the Metropolis by so many Channels, and from so many Persons unknown to one another; that the Wheat, by being purchased in small Quantities, at different Places, and in the most quiet and unconnected Manner, is bought at the cheapest Rate, the Interest of the Millers being the Check between the Grower and Consumer for keeping down the Prices, while the very great Contentment among the Millers themselves, serves to reduce the Expence of the Manufacture; so that the Price of Flour is almost invariably in the London Market much under the proportionate Rate of the Price of mealing Wheat.

4. That the Erection of One great Corporate Establishment, by Act of Parliament, with the enormous Capital of £. 150,000, divided into 4,800 Shares, and which, in its Progress, may be increased *ad infinitum*—the Proprietors of which are to be absolved from all Responsibility for their Transactions; beyond the Amount of their Shares—may become the Source of most serious Calamity, and cannot possibly be productive of any Benefits to the Public:

D

That



That it is called for by no proved or even apparent Necessity, since Experience has shewn that the Manufacture of Flour, Meal, and Bread, may be satisfactorily carried on by Men unconnected, and whose private Fortunes are answerable to the Community for their Acts:

That to grant a Charter, with exclusive Privileges, to a numerous Body of Persons, who must confide in Agents to carry on a Trade, which may be better conducted in an open Manner by Persons for the Maintenance of themselves and Families, would be inconsistent with the Protection to which all Tradesmen are entitled under the Law, and by which they enjoy the Fruits of their own Labour, in return for the Diligence, Skill, and Attention which they exert therein:

That the First Operation of this Charter would be to destroy and annihilate all the small Mills and Bakehouses, now dispersed over the Town and Country; by which not only great Accommodation is given to the People in their Vicinity, by the Supply of Offal for their domestic Animals, and by a Saving of Time and Fuel in the Preparation of their Victuals; but by which also the Competition would be destroyed, which is the best Security to the Public, both for an ample Supply at a reasonable Rate, and for preventing all improper Mixtures and Adulterations of Flour:

That, even if the Views of the Undertakers should be strictly adhered to, an Establishment of such Extent, and demanding, at one Spot, such enormous weekly Supplies, would necessarily govern the Market, or be governed by it. If all its Stock should be purchased in London, it would frequently require to buy up the whole Quantity exposed for Sale, and must lie at the Mercy of the Dealers as to Price; or if it became its own Importer, and drew its Supplies from various Quarters, it would take from the Dealers all Certainty of a Sale in London, and would deprive the Metropolis of a constant and regular Corn Market:

That if, in process of Time, it should degenerate into a Job, be left to a negligent Direction, or be transferred to Speculators, it might be productive of incalculable Mischief to the Metropolis; since, being left in the Bill free from all Restraints (the Objects of the Institution even being undefined, except in the Preamble); tied down to no Purpose, obliged to perform no one Service; rendered perpetual as to Duration; and the Proprietors absolved from all Responsibility in their Transactions beyond £. 25 per Share, they might enter into the most dangerous Speculations, and create the most extensive and destructive Monopoly; they might not merely dictate to the London Market, but intercept the Transit of Grain through the Country. They might import Quantities of Foreign Produce as Substitutes for British Wheat, to the Injury of the national Agriculture; and being relieved from all the Checks of Competition, and carrying on the joint Trades of Miller and Baker under the same Roof, they might impose any Species of Bread that they pleased upon the Public, at any Price:

That an Establishment of so enormous a Size, amassing under the Eye of the People such a Stock of Grain, must in Times of Scarcity give rise to Jealousies that would endanger its Existence, after it had destroyed all the other Sources of public Supply; and, finally, that it would be a most dangerous Thing to trust to any one Institution for so large a Part of the Subsistence of the People, since Experience has proved that no Precaution is sufficient to prevent the almost momentary Destruction of the most stupendous Work.

5. That the said Bill, so unprecedented in its Nature, and which strikes in its Principle at the Foundations of all legal Security for Trade, be therefore opposed in all its Stages; and that the Mill Owners and Occupiers in every Part of the Kingdom, whose Interests are equally threatened thereby, and whom it is not proposed to indemnify for the Destruction of their Property, be called upon to meet in their respective Districts; and to shew its infallible Tendency on their local Markets, which constantly take their Tone from that of London; And in the mean time, that they confide in the Wisdom and Prudence of the Representatives of the People in Parliament, that a Bill of such Magnitude, and pregnant with such Evils, will not be hurried through the House until Time shall be given to the Country to deliberate and to declare their Sense thereon.

CHARLES PRATT, Chairman.

## Appendix, No. 2.

RETURNS from the Corn Exchange, London, of BRITISH WHEAT for the following Years; viz.

Years.	Quarters.
1782 - - -	256,072
3 - - -	163,281
4 - - -	192,477
5 - - -	248,842
6 - - -	277,542
7 - - -	227,929
8 - - -	189,987
9 - - -	203,574
1790 - - -	235,027
1 - - -	234,743
2 - - -	285,612
3 - - -	239,896
4 - - -	193,672
5 - - -	186,540
6 - - -	169,711
7 - - -	272,066
8 - - -	248,458
9 - - -	275,572

WILL. SMITON, Inspector of Corn Returns.

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*Minutes, 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 1800.*  
MINUTES of Evidence taken upon the  
further Consideration of the REPORT  
which was made from the Committee to  
whom the "Bill to incorporate certain Pa-  
"tents by the Name of 'The London Com-  
"pany for the Manufacture of Flour, Meal,  
"and Bread," was committed.