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STATEMENT

OF THE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE

OF

SHIP OWNERS,

APPOINTED TO OPPOSE

The adoption of the principle of admitting Foreign
Vessels to Trade with this Kingdom,

ON THE

SAME TERMS AS BRITISH SHIPS.

LONDON, 30th May, 1824.

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STATEMENT

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THE earnest and unremitting efforts of the Special Committee of Ship Owners for opposing the "Reciprocity of Duties" Act, having unfortunately proved ineffectual, and His Majesty's Government having intimated their intention to regulate the future commercial policy of the Country by the principles and under the provisions of that Act, the Committee deem it their duty to lay before the general body of British Ship Owners, the Correspondence and Memorials by which they have endeavoured to effect the object of their appointment; together with such Remarks as appear to the Committee to arise from the alarming introduction of a principle, striking directly at the root of that protection under which the British Shipping Interests have attained their present magnitude and importance. To this measure the Committee are impelled equally, by an anxiety to arouse the attention of Ship Owners to a consideration of the perilous situation in which their property is placed by the abrogation of that protection on the faith of which their Capitals were embarked, and by a desire publicly and solemnly to record their own humble protest against the adoption of a system, which they conscientiously believe must, if extensively acted on, have the effect of increasing the Naval Power of Foreign Nations, by the destruction of the British Marine.

From the first introduction to Parliament of the principles of Freedom of Trade, the Ship Owners have felt that they have had peculiar reason to complain of the severity with which those principles have been applied to their injury, while other Interests, possessed of more powerful means of enforcing their claims to exemption from the operation of the system, have obtained the attention and relief they have sought.

The alteration in the Timber Duties, struck the first important blow at the principle of protection, on which the very existence of British Shipping depends. The New Navigation Act (3 Geo. IV. Cap. 43.) proceeded another step towards its subversion: the Warehousing Act (4 Geo. IV. Cap. 24.) followed in the same track; and the Reciprocity of Duties Act appears to put the seal to the declaration, that in the future policy of this Country, Naval pre-eminence is to be considered subordinate to the encouragement of Foreign Commerce.

In the latter part of the year 1822, the Ship Owners received the first intimation that it was in the contemplation of His Majesty's Government to recommend to the Legislature, the enactment of a Law adopting the general principle, "That the Vessels of Foreign Countries should be allowed to import into this Country all articles whatever that may legally be imported, on payment of the same Duties only as are paid by British Vessels importing similar articles, provided that British Vessels are allowed to import Goods into the Ports of the Country to which such Foreign Vessels may belong, on payment of the same Duties as are charged on similar importations by Vessels of such Countries."

Deeply impressed with the importance of such a measure;—alarmed by a conviction of the injury that must

result to every interest dependant on the prosperity of British Shipping, from the admission of a principle involving a sudden and entire abrogation of that protection which it had been the policy of ages to extend to those interests;—and feelingly alive to the injustice of exposing them, thus unprotected, to a competition, rendered hopeless by the burthens and restrictions to which that same policy continued to subject them, the Ship Owners urged on His Majesty's Government the consideration of the principles on which our Navigation System was founded: that the protection it afforded to British Shipping, was only an equivalent for the burthens and restrictions to which, for objects of great National policy, it was subjected: that any measure therefore which should withdraw that protection, ought to be accompanied by a removal of all those burthens and restrictions from which the Foreigner is exempt; for that, without such removal, it would be obviously impossible for British Shipping to sustain the competition to which it would be exposed.

In thus confining their first remonstrance against the principle, to the consideration of its injustice alone, and waving all argument on the general policy of its admission, the Ship Owners were neither insensible to its intimate connexion with the great question of National Security, nor ignorant of the utter impossibility of their being placed on a footing of real equality with Foreigners, by any remission of direct taxation, whether on materials used in the building and equipment of Ships, or in the shape of charges incident to their Navigation. Aware that, by the effect of national restrictions, and the pressure of indirect taxation, the expenses of building, equipping, and navigating British Ships, defied all possibility of successful competition with their

Foreign Rivals, the British Ship Owners might have urged the impolicy of hazarding, by the ruin of our Commercial Marine, the future naval supremacy of Britain; but conceiving that by simply placing in the strongest light, the intimate and inseparable connexion between restriction for National objects, and proportionate protection for their interests under that restriction, they were adducing an argument unanswerable, (and therefore, as they hoped, sufficient;) and were at the same time pursuing a course the most decorous and respectful to the Executive Government, they rested their protest on this argument alone.

Nor indeed did they then conceive it possible, that on re-consideration of a question so important in all its bearings, the illusions of theory could triumph over the practical testimony borne by experience to the soundness and wisdom of our Navigation System: They felt convinced that a sense of justice must continue to them the protection of that System, so long as the restrictions it imposes on building, equipping, manning, victualling, and navigating their Ships were retained; and they were satisfied that prudence would forbid the abrogation of those restrictions: How great then was their surprise at the introduction into Parliament of the Reciprocity of Duties Bill; and how serious their alarm at discovering, that while it proposed to abandon them at once to Foreign competition, it contained no provision whatever for that relief, by which even its supporters must admit, that competition can alone be maintained! A General Meeting of Ship Owners was convened, and some declaratory Resolutions, and a Petition against the Bill were unanimously adopted. (*Vide Appendix A and B.*)

Notwithstanding the strenuous opposition of several

enlightened Members, to whose exertions the Ship Owners at large are deeply indebted, the Bill passed the House of Commons on the 4th of July 1823; and at the very close of the Session, was hurried through the House of Lords with a rapidity admitting neither of opposition nor discussion, and which actually prevented the presentation of several Petitions against it. The Bill consequently passed into a Law; but in the course of discussion in the House of Commons, it did not escape notice, that statements were made of the comparative expences of building, equipping, and navigating British and Foreign Ships;—of their respective durability;—their relative capacity; and other circumstances, on which the power of competition must obviously depend;—which were so utterly at variance with the experience of the Ship Owners themselves, as at once to excite surprise that information so erroneous should have been adduced; and mortification and regret that no opportunity then remained for disproving it in Parliament; since it could not be doubted that, in sanctioning the Bill, the House had been influenced by those statements, on which its policy and propriety had been defended. Sanguine however in the expectation that as the Law only empowered, without rendering it obligatory on, the Executive Government to act on its principle, a refutation of the statements referred to might still prevent the actual infliction of the evil, the Ship Owners once more embraced the alternative of an appeal to His Majesty's Government, entreating them “not to exercise the powers vested in them by the Legislature under the Act in question, until opportunity had been afforded the Ship Owners of proving in what manner and degree the interests of British Shipping would be thereby affected.”

This appeal was contained in a Petition to the Lords of His Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council, dated the 4th of August, 1823. (*Vide Appendix C.*)

To this communication a Reply was received on the 14th of August, intimating the readiness of their Lordships to receive such further evidence as the Ship Owners might be prepared to adduce, and containing an assurance that it should be brought under the notice of His Majesty's Government, in reference to the exercise of the discretion vested in the Crown under the Act referred to. (*Vide Appendix D.*)

From this period till December, the Ship Owners were engaged in obtaining evidence to substantiate the allegations contained in their Petitions, by reference to the most authentic sources of information, British and Foreign. The result of their labours is contained in the Report of the Special Committee, which, agreeably to the resolution of a General Meeting, was forwarded without further comment, to the Lords of His Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council. (*Vide Appendix E.*)

On the 27th of February, a Reply was received from their Lordships, intimating that His Majesty's Government felt it their duty to act on the powers vested in them by the Reciprocity of Duties Act. (*Vide Appendix F.*)

Such are the facts connected with the history of a proceeding, which at once strikes at the root of the principle on which our navigation System is founded. When it is considered, how intimately the growth and progress of that System are associated with the brightest deeds and most prosperous eras of British history, and with what jealous care it has been fostered and cherished as the bulwark of National strength, by the most eminent of British Statesmen, its subversion may

well give rise to apprehension and alarm. Whether, however, the departure from its policy be, as modern Economists assert, the substitution of sounder & better principles of commercial intercourse, involving no hazard of National security; or, as the Ship Owners believe, a dangerous and ill judged experiment, striking a vital blow at the best interests of the Country, time must now determine. But waving for the present, the question of the relative merits of the two Systems, the Ship Owners conceive they have just reason to complain that they are singled out for this dangerous experiment; and that the consequent ruin of their property is disregarded by the defenders of other interests, who shrink from it when about to be applied to themselves. British Agriculture, and British Manufactures, are as much protected by Duties and Restrictions, from Foreign competition, as British Freight: All tend equally, in principle, (and the former infinitely more in amount,) to increase the cost of commodities to the consumer; and all are alike calculated to excite Foreign jealousy: Yet Agriculture and Manufactures continue to be protected by Duties and Prohibitions; while Agriculturists and Manufacturers join in the removal of the protection hitherto afforded to Shipping. The Manufacturer, seduced by the prospect of an increase of Foreign trade, throws his weight into the scale of the Economist; the Agriculturist, dazzled by the specious theories advanced in its support, contributes his assistance to the establishment of what is called a liberal system of Commercial intercourse; and the Ship Owner, unrepresented and unconnected, becomes the first victim of the delusion.

But surely it must be obvious that the same arguments which are now applied to his destruction, must recoil with unanswerable force on the other great

sources of National Wealth, should the principle of unrestricted Freedom of Trade be once generally established. In vain will the Agriculturist then contend, that as the expenses of cultivation are raised by political causes over which he has no control, to double the amount of those which are incurred by his Foreign Rivals, he is entitled to protection from their competition; (he will allege no more than the Ship Owners have proved, although ineffectually.) In vain will the Manufacturer urge the necessity for the like protection, on the plea that he has embarked his capital on the faith of the existing system, and that if it be abrogated, he is at least entitled to compensation: The property embarked in Shipping has been vested on the same faith; yet the Ship Owner is condemned to hopeless competition, and his property to uncompensated depreciation. Should the antiquity of the protective system, as applied to the other sources of National importance, be pleaded, the Ship Owner can adduce the most ancient Laws in his support. Should their association with national wealth be brought forward, the Ship Owner in addition may plead his connexion with national security as of much greater importance than national opulence: In short it is perfectly apparent, that if the new principles be adopted, which it is the avowed object of the political Economists of the day to establish, and if consistency be maintained, the consequences to all classes must, under the existing circumstances of the Country, be as destructive to other Interests, as its first application has been, and must prove to British Shipping.

But if, relying on the influence by which the Corn Laws have been retained; by which Silks, and Woollens, and Glass, have been exempted from the operation of the Warehousing Bill; and by which, even when ad-

mitted to competition, a Protective Duty of 30 per Cent. on Foreign Silks is to be continued; the Agriculturist and the Manufacturer imagine they shall be enabled to avert from themselves the injurious operation of the principle of Freedom of Trade, they surely will admit that it should not be applied to the ruin of one class, for the purpose of favoring another. If the soundness of the principle be such as its advocates assert, it should surely in common justice be extended to all; while if the theory be found unsafe for general application, those who are now selected as the victims of it, may reasonably expect that it should be abandoned.

Before closing these remarks, it is deemed proper to advert to another and more recent instance of inconsistency, in those who advocate the principle of fair and equal competition in Trade. It is well known that the Coal Trade, as the most valuable nursery for Seamen, has always been cherished with peculiar care, and accordingly, for its encouragement, Coal (except in very limited quantity,) has been prohibited from being brought by Inland Carriage, into the Metropolis. That attempts would be made to remove this prohibition, and to place inland and sea-borne Coal on the equal basis of open competition, was to be expected from the present disposition to under-rate the importance of Naval Power, and to disregard the claims of the proprietors of Shipping; but it was scarcely to be expected that, instead of an equality of Duty, the Legislature should have been induced to sanction the almost entire remission of Duty on Inland Coal, leaving that which is brought Coastwise subject to a Tax of six shillings per Chaldron! To subject the Ship Owner in one Session of Parliament by the Reciprocity of Duties Act, to the injury resulting from the general principles of Free Trade as regards

Foreigners, and to enact a Law to his detriment in the succeeding one, founded in violation of the most obvious of those principles as applied to the Home Trade, forms at once an inconsistency and a hardship, to which it is not easy to find a parallel.

In conclusion, the Committee would earnestly entreat the particular attention of Ship Owners to the documents herewith submitted to their consideration: to the uncontradicted statement of facts therein exhibited: to the proof they afford, that most of the assertions by which the Reciprocity of Duties Act was recommended to the support of the Legislature, were unfounded: that our Foreign Rivals enter the lists of competition with an advantage of 40 per Cent. on their Capitals employed in Shipping: and that, with the existing enormous disparity in their respective expenses, all hope of successful competition is vain, and must continue so, even under any remission of direct Taxation which it is in the power of the Legislature to grant. And since it is plain that in sanctioning the measure in question, the House of Commons were influenced by erroneous representations on these subjects, it must be obvious, that if any hope exists of inducing the Legislature to retrace its steps, it must be through the medium of a decisive refutation of those representations. That refutation the Committee conceive is now offered; and it must rest with those Ship Owners who have weight in the Maritime Ports represented in Parliament, to urge on their Representatives, a reconsideration of all the bearings of this interesting question. Such a remonstrance cannot be made in vain. It will at least induce an inquiry, which cannot fail to put Members on their guard, in the event of further measures oppressive to Shipping Property being proposed. It must teach caution in admitting

assertion as proof, and shew the necessity of inquiry into alleged facts, before they are allowed to become the basis of Legislation.

These effects will, the Committee are satisfied, be more extensively produced, the more minutely the subject itself is investigated: it remains to be seen how far united exertions for the dissemination of truth, may avert the further evils of a course of policy which the Ship Owners believe to be founded in error, and feel to be attended with injustice.

London, 30th May, 1824.

APPENDIX.

A

At a Special Meeting of Ship Owners of London, held at the City of London Tavern, the 16th June, 1823, conformable to public advertisement, to consider of the Bill proposed to be introduced into Parliament, to authorize His Majesty in Council to equalize the Duties on Goods Imported or Exported in British and Foreign Ships.

Resolved—That the Bill which is proposed to be introduced into the House of Commons, to authorize His Majesty's Government to admit the Importation of Merchandise in Foreign Ships at the same Rates of Duty as Importations in British Ships, from Countries the Governments whereof may think fit to act upon a similar principle, appears to this Meeting to contemplate a departure from the British Navigation Code, fraught with the most dangerous consequences to the British Shipping Interest.

That the British Ship Owner is not in a situation to maintain an open competition with the Ship Owners of those Countries which will be principally affected by the proposed measure.

That for objects of great National Policy, the British Ship Owner is, by legislative enactment, subject to the most rigid restrictions in the building, equipping, and navigating his Ships, and is made to pay heavy Duties on some of the most important articles used for these purposes.

That the Ship Owners of the Ports in the Baltic and Norway, have the means of building, equipping, and navigating Ships at infinitely lower rates than the Ship

Owners of this Kingdom, the former having all the materials for these purposes at hand in their own Countries, and being permitted to consume them free of Duties: the Wages paid to their Seamen being not one half the amount paid by British Ship Owners to Seamen in the same Voyages, and the cost of victualling in Foreign Ships being also much less.

That the present protecting Duty in favor of Importations in British Ships, is not found even adequate to enable them to sustain the competition to which they are exposed; the proportionate number of Foreign Ships employed in importing Goods to this Country from Prussia, Norway, Sweden, and Holland, having within the last three years materially increased over the proportionate number of British Shipping employed in the same trades.

That Ship-building has been rapidly on the decline in this Country, as will appear from the following returns for the last five years.

	Tons.
In 1818 { the amount of Tonnage built in } { the British Dominions was } 104,366	
— 1819	112,173
— 1820	84,582
— 1821	74,847
— 1822	62,534

That since the restoration of Peace, British Shipping has declined in value full one half, and the remaining half has for the most part been unproductive of Income to the Owners.

That under these circumstances, any decrease of the protection now afforded to British Shipping, appears to this Meeting to threaten its gradual and certain decay; and so to deprive the Empire of that resource for Seamen for the supply of its National Marine, which the

Commercial Shipping of the Country has hitherto been made the means of affording.

That the principle of protection to Domestic Industry from Foreign competition, has been recognized by successive Legislatures from the earliest periods of our history, and has from time to time received the sanction of the highest Authorities.

That under the operation of this principle, British Shipping, as well as many of the most valuable branches of Native Productions and Manufacture, have been fostered into importance, and are maintained in existence: That its relaxation, therefore, in favor of Foreign Shipping, to the injury of British Navigation, (while its protection continues extended to Agriculture and Manufactures,) would be a manifest act of inequality towards the Ship Owner.

That this inequality is rendered doubly severe by the extensive restrictions in Manning and Navigating, to which, for objects of National policy, he is subject, in addition to the burthens he sustains in common with other branches of the community.

That if, therefore, it be now deemed expedient to alter the Laws upon the faith of which British Ship Owners have been induced to embark their Property, the principle which has been so frequently recognized in other Acts of Parliament, of indemnifying vested Interests, ought in common justice to be extended to the present Proprietors of British Shipping.

That a Petition founded on these Resolutions be presented to the House of Commons, and that Thomas Wilson, Esq. M. P. be requested to present and support the same, and that the other Members of the City of London, and the Members for Middlesex, be solicited to give it their earnest support.

To the Honorable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament Assembled.

The humble Petition of the undersigned Ship Owners of the Port of London,

SHEWETH,

That Your Petitioners have seen, with the utmost alarm, that a Bill has been introduced into Your Honorable House, entitled a " Bill to authorize His Majesty, under certain circumstances, to regulate the Duties and Drawbacks on Goods imported or exported in Foreign Vessels;" which declares it to be expedient, " that His Majesty should be empowered to allow, the importation or exportation of any Goods, Wares, and Merchandise, in Foreign Vessels, upon payment of the like Duties, and with the like Drawbacks, Bounties, and Allowances as are now by Law paid or granted upon similar Goods, Wares, and Merchandise, when imported or exported in British Vessels, from or to those Countries in which no other Duties are charged, or other Drawbacks, Bounties, or Allowances granted, upon the importation or exportation of any Goods, Wares or Merchandise, into or from such Country, in British Vessels, than are charged or granted upon such Goods when imported or exported into or from such Countries in Foreign Vessels."

That as it cannot be doubted that a rule by which the Foreign Shipping Interest will be greatly benefited;— which subverts a principle that has been acted upon by this Country during the last 200 years;—and which has so essentially conduced to the establishment of her Naval superiority, will be readily and exultingly adopted by every Nation that has the means, and is desirous

of possessing an extensive Marine, Your Petitioners are unable to contemplate the proposed alteration in the Law, in any other light than as a change of system, directly tending to the exclusion of British Ships from all participation in the Trade of those Countries.

That Your Petitioners trust that such also will be the conviction of Your Honorable House, when you take into your consideration, that the British Ship Owner is subject to heavy Duties on some of the most important Articles used in the construction and equipment of his Ships; and, that three fourths of the Crews must be British Seamen, whose wages are higher than others; whilst the Ship Owners of the Baltic and Norway, have the means of building, equipping, and navigating their Ships at an infinitely less cost, having all the materials at hand, free of Duty;—the expence of Victualling their Seamen being much less;—and their wages not being one half the amount paid to British Seamen on similar Voyages.

That even the existing differences of Duties and Bounties on particular Articles, in favor of British Ships (the removal of which is contemplated by the said Bill,) are not found to be sufficient to enable them to sustain the competition to which they are exposed in the Trade of the North of Europe, as will be seen on a reference to the official Accounts; by which it will appear, that of the considerable increase in the Tonnage entered from Holland, Flanders, Norway, Prussia, and Sweden, in the last three Years, the largest proportion has been in the Ships of those Countries, viz.

	Tons British.	Tons Foreign.
In the Year 1820.....	160,288	137,335
1.....	181,484	136,432
2.....	199,484	187,181

the removal therefore of such difference of Duties and Bounties, cannot but be attended with the most injurious consequences to Your Petitioners.

That since the return of peace, British Shipping has fallen in value one half, and has been, for the most part, unproductive to the Owners; and the consequence is, that the number of Ships is annually diminishing; and that Ship-building is rapidly on the decline; as will appear from the following extracts from the Official Accounts:

Number of Ships, Tons, and Seamen employed in Navigating them, *belonging* to the British Dominions:

	Ships.	Tons.	Men.
In the year 1818....	25,507	2,674,468	173,607
19....	25,482	2,666,396	174,378
20....	25,374	2,648,593	174,414
21....	25,036	2,560,802	169,179
22....	24,642	2,519,044	166,333

Number of Ships *built* in the British Dominions:

	Ships.	Tons.
In the year 1818....	1,059	104,366
19.....	1,125	112,173
20.....	883	84,582
21.....	872	74,847
22.....	723	62,534

That Your Petitioners observe, that in the votes of Your Honorable House, the said Bill is termed the "Reciprocity of Duties Bill;" but Your Petitioners humbly beg to submit to Your Honorable House, that there is no "Reciprocity" in an equality of Duties and Drawbacks, so long as British Ships are subject to heavy burthens, of various descriptions, from which Foreign Ships are exempt: And as to Foreign Countries retaliating upon British Ships, in *their* Ports, the higher

Duties which, for the protection of British Shipping, are payable upon certain Articles when imported into this Country in Foreign Ships, (the effects of which it is proposed to avert by removing such difference of Duty) Your Petitioners humbly beg to remind Your Honorable House, that almost every Ship that arrives from those Countries, imports a Cargo; whilst not one in three of them takes back any Goods from this Country.

Your Petitioners beg further to point out to Your Honorable House, that an equality of Duties, as proposed by the said Bill, would, in effect, be a repeal of the most important part of the Act of the first and second of His present Majesty, Cap. 37, altering the Duties on Timber, which was passed after the most minute inquiry;—the examination of numerous witnesses on behalf of the Merchants, and others engaged in trade with the North of Europe;—and the most deliberate consideration of the subject by Your Honorable House: & if it was not then deemed expedient to make so important a concession to Foreign Countries, Your Petitioners confidently hope that Your Honorable House will not deem it to be necessary or proper at the present period, when the Shipping of those Countries is increasing with the increase of their trade, and the Shipping of this Kingdom engaged in Trade with the North of Europe, is evidently on the decline.

That Your Petitioners are not insensible, that attempts are making by Foreign Countries to induce this Nation to withdraw the protection hitherto afforded to her Shipping, by making distinctions in the Duties on Goods which they import, to the disadvantage of British Ships; (which proceeding they affect to consider as founded on a principle of reciprocity;) and that the effect of persevering in that system, and of the adoption

by this Nation of the necessary measures of counteraction, by increasing the Duties on Goods imported from thence in the Ships of such Countries, must eventually be, that the importations would be made in British Ships, and the exportations in Ships of those Countries; the return Voyages, in both cases, being in Ballast.

That Your Petitioners are no less sensible how greatly such a system of Commercial warfare would be to be regretted; but Your Petitioners are notwithstanding of opinion that such a state of things, supposing that any Foreign Country should think fit to persist in that system, (but which, from a regard to its own interest, it is conceived that no Foreign Country is likely to do,) would be infinitely preferable to that of superseding the employment of British Ships, in the Trade of Europe, by the operation of the said Bill; as this Nation need never be at a loss for an adequate supply of the Articles which such Country produces.

That the principle of affording protection to domestic industry from Foreign competition, has been recognized and acted upon from the earliest periods of our history; and under its continued operation, the British Shipping Interest, as well as others of the most valuable branches of native productions and manufactures, have been fostered into importance: Your Petitioners therefore humbly submit to Your Honorable House, that the relaxing that principle in favor of Foreign Shipping, to the prejudice of British Shipping, whilst protection still continues to be afforded to Agriculture and Manufactures, would be such a procedure towards the Ship Owners, as Your Petitioners confidently trust that Your Honorable House, in its justice, will not agree to sanction, without at the same time resolving to compensate the Shipping Interest at large, for the ruinous depreciation

of their property to which they will thereby be exposed.

That under these circumstances, Your Petitioners humbly hope that Your Honorable House will not think it fit to diminish the protection which the existing Laws afford to British Shipping, by passing the Bill in question into a Law; since the effect must be, to expose an important branch of it to gradual but certain decay; and so far to deprive the Empire of that resource for Seamen for the supply of the National Marine, which the Commercial Shipping of the Country has hitherto been made the means of affording; but, on the contrary, Your Petitioners humbly entreat, that Your Honorable House will discountenance every measure calculated to deprive British Shipping of protection from Foreign competition, until the former can be relieved from the burthens and restrictions to which it is at present subject; and instead of a power being given to His Majesty to equalize the Duties and Drawbacks upon Articles imported or exported in British and Foreign Ships, as proposed by the said Bill, that His Majesty may be enabled by Your Honorable House, to effect the purpose thereby intended, by an authority to make such alterations in the Duties and Drawbacks, as may from time to time be found necessary, to countervail those differences of Duty which may be made in Foreign ports, to the discouragement of British Shipping.

And Your Petitioners will ever pray,

London, 27th June, 1823.

To the Lords of His Majesty's most Honorable Privy Council.

The humble Petition of the Ship Owners of the Port of London,

SHEWETH,

That the Bill to authorize His Majesty under certain circumstances to regulate the Duties and Drawbacks on goods imported or exported in Foreign Vessels, which declares it to be expedient that His Majesty should be "empowered to allow the importation or exportation of any Goods, Wares, and Merchandise, when imported or exported in Foreign Vessels, from or to those Countries in which no other Duties are charged, or other Drawbacks, Bounties, or Allowances granted upon the importation or exportation of any Goods, Wares, and Merchandise, into or from such Country, in British Vessels, than are charged, or granted, upon such Goods, when imported or exported into or from such Countries in Foreign Vessels," having passed into a Law, and Your Petitioners being the more convinced, the more they have inquired and reflected upon the subject, that if the Powers given to your Lordships by the said Bill should be acted upon, and the Rules thereby laid down be applied to the Trading Intercourse between this Kingdom and the rest of the Commercial World (particularly the Northern States of Europe,) the most destructive consequences must result to the Merchant Shipping of Great Britain, and thereby to the nursery of Seamen which it is the means of maintaining; Your Petitioners, as individuals practically acquainted with the subject, feel it to be their duty to make the present most solemn appeal to your Lordships, against the adoption of measures so

ruinous to British Shipping, and of such infinite danger to the most important National Interests; or, at all events they do entreat Your Lordships, to defer the same, until you shall have received that evidence which Your Petitioners were prepared to give, if an opportunity had been afforded them, upon the important question, of whether the British Ship Owner will eventually be likely to retain any, and what portion of the Trade with the several Ship-building States of Europe, if the protection by differences of Duty, and Drawbacks and Allowances, which have hitherto been found necessary, should be withdrawn.

That Your Petitioners have no hesitation in declaring to Your Lordships, as their most decided conviction, that the disadvantages to which the British Ship Owners would be thereby subject, would be such as to make it impossible for them to compete with the Shipping of other Countries, particularly those in the North of Europe; and consequently, that the greater part of that portion of the British Trade with them, which the British Ship Owners now enjoy, will eventually be carried on by the Shipping of those Countries; in like manner as the intercourse with the United States, under the same system, is chiefly carried on in American Shipping.

That the Petition of the Ship Owners of London to The Honorable the House of Commons against the said Bill, contains extracts from the official accounts, which clearly shew, that the amount of British Tonnage is annually diminishing;—that British Ship Building is rapidly declining;—and that, of the late increased Trade with Norway, Prussia, and Sweden, Foreign Shipping has had much the greatest proportion.

That in the discussions in the House of Commons

upon the said Bill, the evidence afforded by those extracts from the official accounts, was opposed by further quotations from them, which shewed, that, the number of arrivals of British Ships in the year 1822, exceeded by 1474 Ships and 126,425 Tons, the number of arrivals in the preceding year.

That upon this head, your Petitioners humbly beg to submit to your Lordships, that although an increase in the number of repeated Voyages made in any one year, might be evidence of the increased Trade of the Country, it would by no means follow that the Shipping Interest was therefore in a flourishing State; with respect however to the fact itself, your Petitioners beg leave to observe, that although the official accounts of the number of Vessels arrived in *Great Britain* (including the arrivals from Ireland) exhibit an increase in the year 1822, beyond that of 1821, (as above stated); yet those accounts also shew, that the number of Arrivals in the *United Kingdom* in the year 1822 (which, your Petitioners humbly submit, presents the correct view of the subject,) was only 282 Vessels, and 64,204 Tons beyond those in 1821: and that, if the comparison of the Arrivals in the year 1822 be made with those in the year 1820, there is a falling off of 198 Vessels, and 4,433 Tons: and that, if the comparison be made with the year 1819, the falling off is 887 Ships and 145,501 Tons.

That your Petitioners, however, beg to submit to your Lordships, that in order to see the state of the Foreign Trade of the Country, the account should be taken *exclusive of the number of Ships arrived in this Kingdom from Ireland*; when it will appear, that the Arrivals in the *United Kingdom* from Foreign parts, in the year 1822, exceeded those in 1821, by no more than 236 Vessels, and 57,986 Tons; and that the Arrivals in 1822

were less than in 1820 by 311 Ships and 18,830 Tons; and less than in 1819, by 832 Ships and 138,890 Tons

That on the occasion of those discussions in Parliament, your Petitioners perceived, with the most painful feelings, the prevalence of great misapprehension on the part of those Honorable Members by whom the Bill was supported, on the subject of the relative durability of British and Foreign Shipping; and of the power of the British Ship Owner to build, equip, and navigate his Ships, upon such terms as to enable him to compete with his rivals in the North of Europe.

That your Petitioners are prepared to prove to your Lordships, that the maintenance of such competition is impossible; and that it must continue so, notwithstanding any remission of Duties on Articles used in the Building and Equipment of Ships, which it may be in the power of the Legislature to grant, as the British Ship Owner will always have to struggle against the effects of Freight and Expenses, on the Materials necessary for Building and Equipment, and likewise of indirect Taxation, which raises the Price of Labour, and extends to every Home Production used in their construction; together with the unavoidable and important difference in the expense of Provisions and Wages, which still remain, and form an irremediable disadvantage; and your Petitioners trust that the matter will appear in the same light to your Lordships, when you consider the following circumstances, viz.

First.—That no Vessel is entitled to Registry, unless British built, or prize.

Second.—That every British Vessel must be manned with a Master and three-fourths of the Crew British Seamen; & if exceeding 80 Tons, must have a certain number of Apprentices, according to their Register Tonnage.

Third.—That no British Vessel can be repaired in a Foreign Port (unless such repair as may be absolutely necessary to enable her to return home) to an amount exceeding *Fifteen Shillings* per Ton.*

Fourth.—That any Sails with which it may be found necessary to provide a British Ship, in a Foreign Port, are subject on the Vessel's arrival, to a Duty of £104. 9s. 2d, per Cent. *ad valorem*.

Fifth.—That heavy Duties are in like manner chargeable on any Spars, Cables, Cordage, or Anchors, which a British Vessel may have occasion to provide in a Foreign Port,

That the effect of these Burthens, with the other Duties and Charges to which British Ship Owners are liable, (as your Petitioners are prepared to prove) is, that a British Ship cannot be built and equipped for less than from £14 to £23 per Ton; whilst the Prussian pays from £7. 15s. to £10 per ditto; the Swede and Norwegian about £7 per ditto; the Frenchman about £10.

That the disproportion in the Wages and Victualling is not less than in that of the Cost of the Vessel, viz:

Present Rate of Wages for British Seamen, 45s. to 55s. per Month, according to the Voyage.

The Average may be	50s. per Month,
Prussian—24s. to 26s. Average	25s. Do,
Swede—12s. 6d. to 20s. Do.	17s. Do.
Dutchman	Do. 28s. Do.

That the difference in the expense of Provisioning being extremely variable, cannot be stated with accuracy, but is in proportion to that of the Wages; the result of all which is, that the Foreigner has an advantage of 40 per Cent. in the employment of his Capital over the British Ship Owner.

* The New Registry Act allows 20s. per Ton.

That under such disadvantages, nothing but the protecting differences of Duty, Drawbacks, &c. and the co-operating regulations of the Navigation Laws, have hitherto enabled the British Ship Owners to compete with those of Foreign Powers; and therefore your Petitioners submit to your Lordships, that if that protection be withdrawn, the exclusion of the British Ship Owner from a participation in many of the Trades with other Countries will be inevitable; whilst what remains will be unproductive of income: and that, in the event of War between Great Britain and any other Power, which would subject British Shipping to War expenses, all the considerations herein submitted to your Lordships, would apply with double force; especially if any further permanent stipulation be made with other Countries as to Duties.

That in support of what is thus set forth, your Petitioners beg to state to your Lordships, that previous to the protecting Bounties on certain Articles exported in British Ships, the whole of the Trade to Hamburgh was carried on in Foreign Vessels;—That, at the present time, British Ships have but a very small proportion of the Trade of the World not carried on from or to British Ports; as will be evident from the fact, that out of 208 Vessels arrived at the Free Port of Hambro' between the 1st January and the 3rd July 1823, only about Twelve were British;—and that, at the present time, Prussian Vessels are engaged for Freight at 20s. to 22s. per Load, for the supply of His Majesty's Dock-Yards and the London Market with Timber, &c. from Prussia, whilst a lower rate than 28s. to 30s. per Load, will not yield to the British Ship Owner an adequate remuneration for the employment of his Capital.

That since the Peace, your Petitioners have been

struggling against ruinous rates of Freight, and immense depreciation of Capital, in a degree nothing inferior to that which the Agricultural or Manufacturing Interests have sustained; and by the Navigation Act of the 3rd of His present Majesty, together with the West India Intercourse Bill, and the Warehousing Act of last Session, Foreign Vessels are permitted to engage in various branches of the Carrying Trade, which previous to the passing of those Acts had been confined to British Shipping.

That under all these circumstances, and there being many branches of the Carrying Trade in which it is impossible for British Shipping successfully to compete with Foreigners without the aid of some advantages in respect of Duties:

Your Petitioners most earnestly entreat, that your Lordships will be pleased not to exercise the powers given to you by the Act of Parliament in question, without affording them an opportunity of proving to your Lordships in what manner and degree the Interests of British Shipping will be thereby affected.

And your Petitioners will ever pray,

London, 4th August, 1823.

D

*Office of Committee of Privy Council for Trade,
Whitehall, August 14, 1823.*

TO RALPH FENWICK, Esq.

SIR,

I am directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, to acknowledge the receipt of the memorial of the Ship Owners of the Port of London, dated the 4th Instant, on the subject of the powers vested in His Majesty, by the Act of the last Session, commonly called the Reciprocity of Duties Bill, and I am at the same time to acquaint you, for the information of the Gentlemen who are parties to that Memorial, that the Lords of this Committee, will at any time be ready to receive the further evidence which the Memorialists state themselves to be prepared to give; and that Their Lordships will feel it to be their duty to bring such evidence, together with your Memorial, under the notice of His Majesty's Government, in reference to the exercise of the discretion vested in the Crown under the Act above referred to, for the protection of the Commerce of the United Kingdom, against the system of discriminating Duties adopted by other States.

I am, &c.

(Signed) THOMAS LACK.

E

WE THE UNDERSIGNED Members of a Special Committee appointed to prepare evidence in support of the Petition to the Lords of His Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council, dated 4th August last, praying that their Lordships would be pleased not to exercise the powers vested in them by the Reciprocity of Duties Bill, until opportunity had been afforded to the Petitioners of proving to their Lordships in what manner and degree the Interests of British Shipping would be thereby affected; having used our utmost endeavours to obtain such Evidence as might place in the clearest point of view the important question, whether the British Ship Owner will eventually be likely to retain any, and what portion of Trade with the several Ship-building States of Europe, if the protection by differences of Duty, Drawbacks, and Allowances, which have hitherto been found necessary, should be withdrawn; beg to submit the following

REPORT.

In entering on this momentous question, it was obvious to your Committee, that whatever reciprocity of advantage might be mutually conceded as between British and Foreign Shipping, by the reciprocal removal of those protections by which Maritime States have hitherto endeavoured to support their native Shipping, the balance of actual benefit must ultimately, under such a system of unrestricted competition, devolve on that Nation whose Shipping could be built, equipped, and navigated, on the cheapest terms.

To ascertain therefore, the relative expense of building, equipping, manning, victualling, and sailing British and Foreign Shipping, was the first and most anxious inquiry of your Committee; and when, by concurrent

testimony, it became apparent to them that in all these particulars the Northern States of Europe possessed a decided advantage, they next endeavoured to ascertain how far any efficient counterpoise to such advantage might reasonably be anticipated; in any superiority of construction or durability in British Ships, in the skill and activity of British Seamen, or the Capital and enterprise of British Ship Owners.

With respect to the relative expense of Ship-building, your Committee considering that from the various dimensions, scantling, and modes of construction, adopted in Ships of the same Tonnage, any actual statement of Cost might alone be deemed inconclusive, have prepared a calculation of the cost of a Vessel in Great Britain and in several of the Ports in the North of Europe, in which the same quantities of materials and labour as were actually expended on the British Vessel, are applied to the existing prices of those materials and labour in the Foreign Ports respectively.

This calculation, which exhibits an enormous difference in favor of Foreign-built Shipping, will be found in the Appendix marked **A**; and your Committee cannot forbear remarking, that they are confirmed in their belief of its accuracy, by having ascertained that a Vessel is at present building in London nearly similar in description to that on which this calculation is founded, at a price corresponding very nearly with the result of the calculation itself. But in further corroboration of this point, your Committee beg to refer to Appendix **B**, containing a statement of the actual cost of a number of Ships built in the different Ports of England, and in Foreign Countries; from which it will be perceived, that while in England the price varies from £28 to £15, it amounts in Prussia to only from £8. 8s. to £10. 10s.—

and that in several other Countries it is considerably lower. The greater part of these Statements can be verified by documents, and the remainder are derived from sources on which your Committee believe that implicit confidence may be placed.

While on this branch of the subject your Committee would remark, that it has been clearly proved to them, that a very small proportion of the difference in the cost of building and equipment of British Ships, arises from direct Duties payable on Articles employed therein; and that therefore, any relief to be expected by a reduction, or even a total remission of such Duties would be inconsiderable; and any hope of reducing thereby the scale of expense to any approximation to that of Foreigners, altogether fallacious.

The next important article of Maritime expense is the wages paid to the Officers and Seamen employed in Navigation; on this point your Committee request particular attention to Appendix **C**, from which it will appear, that in this particular the advantage on the side of the Foreigner is no less striking than in the cost of the Ship; British Seamen's Wages, in the Baltic Trade, being at the present moment from 50s. to £3, while the Prussian Seaman receives but 24s. the Swede 20s. and the Russian 15s. per Month. With respect to the British Wages, abundance of documents can be adduced in proof; and though the nature of the case does not admit of similar demonstration in the case of the Wages of Foreigners, your Committee have satisfied themselves of the truth of the statement, by personal inquiry on board Ships of the respective Countries.

In the Article of Provisions your Committee have experienced considerable embarrassment, from the difficulty of establishing any general standard of Victual-

ling.—The scale, however, taken for British Ships, is that usually adopted in the West India Trade; and for Foreigners, it has been ascertained by the most careful inquiry. A number of minor articles of Provision and comfort usually afforded in the British Merchant Service are omitted, in the desire of not overstating the comparison; and a further advantage to the Foreigner, in this relative view, will be perceived in the fact, that in British Ships engaged in the Baltic Trade, no limitation of Provisions is practised; and that the quantity actually consumed, exceeds that exhibited by the calculation referred to: The result will be found in Appendix **D**, and completes the chain of Evidence by which it is proved *that the positive expense of building, equipping, manning, and victualling, is infinitely less in the Ports of the Baltic than in those of the United Kingdom.*

But it has not escaped the attention of Your Committee, that great as are the advantages, in point of abstract cheapness, possessed by Foreigners, circumstances of a countervailing nature might possibly exist, calculated in a great measure to restore the equilibrium thus totally subverted by difference of cost: From the belief indeed which appears to be entertained that such difference does actually exist, your Committee were scarcely prepared to anticipate the result to which they beg next to solicit the most attentive consideration.

It has been asserted, that Vessels built in those Ports, the rivalry of whose Shipping is most seriously apprehended, though cheaper as to first cost, are wanting in durability, and are therefore ultimately as expensive as British-built Ships: In order to arrive at a correct conclusion on this point, your Committee beginning at a part of Lloyd's Register Book taken indiscriminately,

abstracted from thence in the succession in which they stand, the first twenty Ships of the following Countries, viz. England, Prussia, Sweden, Denmark, Russia, and Norway, marking the Ages of each; to the result of this abstract, which will be found in Appendix **E**, they would entreat particular attention, as it not only refutes the assertion of the superior durability of British Shipping, but exhibits them as the least durable of the whole; while the Norwegian Shipping, which is the cheapest, and has been considered in quality almost worthless, is actually proved to last longer than any, and to exceed the durability of the British by more than one half!

Your Committee next directed their consideration to the question, of how far the comparative view of the cost and expenses of British and Foreign Shipping was affected by the alleged difference in the mode of measurement: A reference to Appendix **F** will prove that whatever force this argument may possess with respect to American and French Shipping, it has no application to the Vessels of the North of Europe, which are stated, on competent evidence, to stow larger Cargoes in general than British-built Vessels, according to their nominal Tonnage, ascertained by the Rules prescribed by the British Registry Laws. A reference to the manifests of the Cargoes of some of these Ships, has convinced your Committee that this opinion is correct, though the difficulty of reducing mixed Cargoes to a uniform standard capable of accurate relative comparison, has prevented them from rendering the fact the subject of documentary evidence.

The next point that suggested itself to your Committee was, whether the disadvantage to British Ship Owners, in the high Wages and expensive Provisions

allowed to their Crews, is compensated by such a Reduction in the number of Seamen as might be expected to be consequent on the alleged superiority of British Sailors in activity and skill; Appendix **G** establishes, that instead of this being the fact, in the cases therein referred to, the Foreign Ship employed but 4 men to 5 in the British; while an extract from a Parliamentary return **H** shews, that the number of Men employed in navigating the whole of the Ships cleared outwards, from the several Ports of the United Kingdom, during the last 9 Years, including their repeated Voyages, was in the proportion of about 6 Men to every 100 Tons British, and only 5 to every 100 Tons Foreign.

But as, notwithstanding these conclusive demonstrations, it has been asserted that British Ships make quicker and more repeated Voyages than Foreign, and compensate thereby for their increased expense; your Committee have been at some pains to ascertain this point, as regards the Baltic Trade; they annex in Appendix **I** the Certificate of two experienced Brokers, conversant with that Trade, stating that the number of Voyages made annually by each description of Ships is equal; and though they have not been enabled to obtain more conclusive corroboration of the fact, which indeed is scarcely susceptible of direct demonstration, the result of all their inquiries on the subject leads them decidedly to the same conclusion.

It has further been asserted, that from the general prevalence of Associations for Mutual Insurance, the rate of Premiums paid by the British Ship Owner is comparatively trifling. Appendix **K** contains the most ample refutation of this assertion, in the fact, that in the Port of Newcastle, in which a greater number of ships are insured on that principle than in any other in

the Kingdom, the average contributions paid by the Owners for actual losses on Ships insured in all the Associations of the Port during the last Four Years, was £9. 17s. per Cent. per Annum; nearly equal to the rate of Premium paid at Lloyd's, which is about £10 per Cent.

The result of these differences on the employment of Capital in British and Foreign Shipping will be found in Appendix **L**, exhibiting an advantage in favor of the Prussian of £39. 11s. 5d. per Cent. on his Capital, if admitted to embark in the Carrying Trade on equality of Duties with British Shipping.

In the prosecution of the foregoing inquiries, Your Committee have had to contend with many difficulties; and on that part of the subject more immediately embracing information only to be derived from Foreigners, or those connected with Foreign Trading Interests, they regret to have experienced a very general unwillingness to impart it: Their investigations have, however, been conducted with all possible diligence and circumspection; and in every important calculation they have been anxious to avoid any charge of partiality, by giving to the Foreign Interest the benefit of any doubt that may have arisen. But with the most anxious desire to discard every prejudice, and to take the fairest and most impartial review of all the bearings of this interesting question, it can scarcely be matter of surprise, after the evidence they have adduced, that your Committee should come to the decided conclusion, *that all the apprehensions expressed by the Ship Owners in the Petition which has given rise to the present Report, must be fully realized, should His Majesty's Government determine on exercising the powers vested in them by the Reciprocity of Duties Act, in regulating the*

future Trading intercourse with the Northern States of Europe.

Nor is it on the abstract nature of the Evidence alone, that the Committee ground this deduction; they are supported in their conviction of its correctness by the more general observations they have been enabled to make in the progress of the inquiry;—by remarking the increasing degree in which Foreign Ships are even at present superseding British Tonnage in the Baltic Trade;—that they are Sailing at rates of freight so low, as to defy all British competition;—that in the Contracts by British Merchants for the supply of His Majesty's Dock Yards with Naval Stores, Foreign Ships are very extensively employed in the conveyance of those articles;—that the recent equalization of the Duties on Lights, of Pilotage, Ballastage, &c. have so increased their facilities, as to enable them already to engross the trade for the supply of this Country with Timber, to the extent to which they possess Tonnage to embark in it. Under all these circumstances, it appears clearly to your Committee, that they only require the further advantage of the encouragement they would receive by the abrogation of the protecting Duties, hitherto afforded to British freight, to induce such further embarkation of Capital in Shipping as would lead to their monopolizing the entire Trade with their respective Countries. Assuming indeed that this must be the result, if they are actually enabled to build, equip, and navigate their Ships at a cheaper rate than the British Ship Owner, it appears to your Committee an extraordinary inconsistency, that it should at once be contended that such advantage, in point of cheapness, does not exist, while the necessity for restricting British Navigation to Native Shipping and Native Seamen is defended. If British

Ships, either in point of actual cost, or from superiority of construction, are eventually as cheap as those built in Foreign Ports, the provisions of the Registry Act can be considered in no other light than an absurd and useless restriction on Trade; nor could any evil result from their repeal, since self-interest, the best and surest guide in matters of Trade, would most effectually prevent the British Ship Owner from seeking in a Foreign Country what he could procure on equal terms at home. But, if the continuance of the Act be necessary for the protection of the various branches of Native industry connected with the equipment of Shipping, from the overwhelming effects of unrestricted Foreign competition, the admission of such necessity involves also the admission of the superior cheapness of Foreign Shipping, and establishes at once the claim to protection: and it appears to your Committee, that to continue the restrictions on the Ship Owners, and at the same time to open the channels of his employment to unreserved competition, would be to place him in a situation of such peculiar hardship, as it could never have been the intention of the Legislature to sanction. The same observation applies with equal force to the restrictions on manning by British Seamen. If their wages be equal, or their peculiar skill and activity compensate for any difference that may exist, the same universal law of self-interest will induce the employment of Native crews, without the intervention of the compulsory regulations of the Navigation Act. If, therefore, the Legislature or the Executive Government, proceeding on a conviction that the British Ship Owner can successfully maintain competition with his Foreign Rivals, determine to annul the distinctions by which his freight has heretofore been protected, your Committee would strongly

advise an appeal to be made for the abrogation of all those restrictions by which he is at present prevented from maintaining it, as well as of those by which Agriculture and Manufactures are supported. How far such abrogation may be consistent with the maintenance of the important National objects for which these restrictions were imposed, it would ill become your Committee to inquire; but though they are by no means of opinion that the time has arrived when perfect freedom of Trade can safely be resorted to, they yet entertain a confident conviction, that such an appeal to the justice of His Majesty's Government could not fail to induce either the continuance of those protective Laws under which Ship Owners have vested their Capitals, under an assurance of that protection being continued to them which is extended to the other great departments of National industry, or, such a relaxation of the restrictions under which they exclusively labour, as would afford them some chance of maintaining that competition to which the measure in question would expose them.

Having thus, they trust, succeeded in demonstrating that the manner in which British Shipping would be affected by the operation of the Reciprocity of Duties Act, would be such as to expose it to most unequal competition; and having proved that the degree in which it would be injured, would be little short of its gradual annihilation in the Trade between this Country and the Northern States of Europe, your Committee cannot close their Report, without suggesting the expediency of embracing the opportunity afforded by the production of the evidence thus collected, to bring under the consideration of His Majesty's Government not only the propriety of continuing the existing pro-

tection to the Shipping Interest, but also its present inadequacy to enable them to maintain competition with their Foreign and more favored rivals, and the strong necessity established by the evidence, for a still further extension of assistance and protection, if either, on the ground of individual justice or national policy, the maintenance of the Naval Supremacy of Britain be considered an object of importance.

- GEORGE FREDERICK YOUNG,
- RA. FENWICK,
- RICHARD SMITH,
- HENRY NELSON,
- THOMAS URQUHART,
- CHRISTOPHER TENNANT,
- EDWARD HURRY,
- WILLIAM TINDALL,
- THOMAS FORREST,
- ROBERT DOUGLAS,
- J. NICKOLS,
- THOMAS GILLESPIE,
- HENRY BLANSHARD,
- J. D. POWLES,
- WILLIAM PARKER,
- J. M. MAUDE.

London, December 9, 1823.

F

Office of Committee of Privy Council for Trade,
27th February, 1824.

SIR,

The Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, having had under their most attentive consideration the Report of the Committee of British Ship Owners, dated 9th of December last, as well as all the previous communications received from you on the same subject, they determined to submit these documents, together with the representations which had been received from Prussia, and other States in the North of Europe, respecting our Commercial Inter-course with those States, to His Majesty's Government, accompanied with such observations as it became the duty of this Committee to offer on a matter of so much importance.

I am now directed to acquaint you that, after the most mature deliberation, embracing all the various Interests involved in the question, as well present as contingent, upon which His Majesty's Government had to form their decision, they have felt themselves called upon to declare their readiness to give effect to the Act of last Session, by equalizing the Duties, Bounties, &c. on articles imported into, or exported from, the ports of the United Kingdom, in the Vessels of those Powers, with the Duties, Bounties, &c. paid on similar articles imported or exported in British Vessels.

I am, at the same time, directed to assure you, that

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in communicating to you this decision, it is a matter of personal regret to the Lords of this Committee, that it is not in accordance with the sentiments entertained by the Committee of British Ship Owners.

I am,

Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

(Signed) THOMAS LACK,

GEORGE LYALL, Esq.
&c. &c. &c.

Summary of the Documents referred to in the preceding Report.

A Is a Statement shewing the relative expense of building the Hull of a Ship of 220 Tons, at the undermentioned Places; in which the quantities of the several Materials are taken from an accurate account of their actual expenditure, in an instance of a Vessel recently built on the River Thames; and the calculation is made on the application of the same quantities to the present prices in the other places respectively. As the Statement is detailed at great length, it has been deemed desirable to give here only the respective results, viz.

	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
In the River Thames	13	9	3
At Copenhagen	8	10	7
At Dantzic	5	12	10
— Kiel, in Holstein	5	5	11

per Ton. ditto

B This Statement, like the preceding one, is detailed at considerable length: as the results are given in the body of the Report, the particulars are omitted in this place.

C Details of this table are for the same reason also omitted; but the following calculation is founded on the results.

Expense of Manning for One Year a Ship of 400 Tons.

ENGLISH.

	£ s. d.
1 Master for 12 months, at 10 Guineas	126
1 Mate "	60
1 Carpenter "	54
12 Seamen each 12—144 months 2 10 0	360
5 Boys averaging 20s. per month	60
Total	£660 0 0

PRUSSIAN.

	£ s. d.
1 Master, 4 voyages, at £25 0 0	100
1 Mate for 12 months, " 2½ Guineas	31
1 Carpenter 12 "	31
12 Seamen 12—144 months 26s.	187
5 Ordinary Seamen and Boys, each 12—60 months, 18s.	39
Total	£389 4 0
Balance in favor of the Prussian	270
Total	£660 0 0

D A Comparative Statement of the Scale of Victualling, and the expense thereof, for 52 Weeks, in a Ship of 400 Tons, manned by 20 Seamen, in the British and Prussian Merchant Service.

BRITISH.

	£ s. d.
Bread, 7½. ½ man, ½ week, 7280 lb. at ½ cwt. 20s.	65
Beef, 8½. "	100s.
Pork, 4½. "	75s.
Pease, 1½ pints " bushel 11s.	13
Flour, 4lb. "	25s.
Total	£349 1 4

Or, 11½d. ½ man, ½ diem.

PRUSSIAN.

	£ s. d.
Bread, 7½. ½ man, ½ week, 7280 lb. at ½ cwt. 9s.	29
Beef, 5lb. "	65
Pork, 1½. "	19
Grey Pease, 2 pints "	3
White ditto, 1½ do. "	2
Barley, 1½ quarts "	7
Butter, 1¼ lb. "	32
Total	£159 11 1
Balance in favor of the Prussian	189
Total	£349 1 4

Or, 5¼d. ½ man, ½ diem.

E The results of this Table, give the average duration of Ships as under, viz.

English Ships	11	3
Russian ditto	12	9
Prussian ditto	14	3
Swedish ditto	12	10
Norwegian ditto	20	4

F Is the declaration of certain experienced Brokers, stating that Ships of the North of Europe are of capacity for Stowage equal to British Ships.

G H I K The results are stated in the body of the Report.

L. A Comparative Statement of the effect produced by the difference of Value between an English and Prussian Ship of 400 Tons, employed each for one Year.

ENGLISH SHIP.		PRUSSIAN SHIP.	
	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
An English Ship of 400 Tons, may be taken on an average, at £19 4½ Ton; her Value therefore is	7600 0 0	A Prussian Ship of 400 Tons, may be calculated at £9 4½ Ton, to be of equal goodness	3600 0 0
The Interest in England may be taken at 5½ Cent. which on the above Capital is	380 0 0	The Interest of Money in Prussia is 6½ Cent. which on the above Capital is	216 0 0
Ships depreciate at the rate of 10½ Cent. 4½ Annun, which on said Capital amounts to	760 0 0	The depreciation of Value, as in England, is 10½ Cent.	360 0 0
The expense of Insuring Ships at Lloyd's for 12 months, is 9 Guineas and Policy 5s. 4½ Cent.; and to this may be added those risks to which the Underwriters are not liable, making it about 10½ Cent.	760 0 0	The expense of Insuring may also be taken at 10½ Cent.	360 0 0
	£1900 0 0	Balance in favor of the Prussian in One Year is	964 0 0
			£1900 0 0

RESULT.

	£ s. d.
Balance in favor of the Prussian, on Capital, as above	964 0 0
in Wages, vide C.	270 16 0
in Victualling, vide D.	189 10 3
	£1424 6 3

Or, £39. 11s. 3½d. 4½ Cent. on his Capital.

N. B.—The Original Accounts of which the foregoing are abridgments, may be inspected by any Ship Owner, on calling at the Office of the SHIP OWNERS' SOCIETY, New Broad Street, London.

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