

## R E P O R T

## U P O N T H E

## P E T I T I O N S relating to the M A N U F A C T U R E of H A T S.

**T**HE Committee, to whom the Petition of the Manufacturers, and others concerned in the Making and Vending of Beaver Hats, and Hats made of Coneys-wool, Goats-wool, and other Materials, whose Names are there underwritten, on behalf of themselves, and the rest of the said Trade in *Great-Britain*; and also the Petition of the Manufacturers, and others concerned in the Making and Vending of Beaver Hats, and Hats made of Coneys-wool, Goats-wool, and other Materials, in and near the City of *Chester*, whose Names are there underwritten, on behalf of themselves, and the rest of the said Trade in *Great Britain*; and also the Petition of the Manufacturers, and others concerned in the Making and Vending of Beaver Hats, and Hats made of Coneys-wool, and other Materials, in the Town and Neighbourhood of *Manchester*, in the County of *Lancaster*, whose Names are there underwritten, on behalf of themselves, and the rest of the said Trade in *Great-Britain*; were referred; have, pursuant to the Order of the House, examined the Matter of the said several Petitions; a State whereof is as follows:

In order to shew, that the Art of making Hats hath arrived to great Perfection in this Kingdom; and that considerable Quantities have been heretofore exported; the Agent for the Petitioners called

Mr. *James Rossiter*, Hat-maker: Who said, That the making Beaver Hats in *England* hath arrived at very great Perfection; and that, about Twenty Years ago, our Hats were in greater Reputation abroad than the *French* Hats, or any other; but that of late the *French* Hats are in greater Credit than ours: That he had employed *French*, *Germans*, and *Swiss*; but he esteems *Engliskmen* the best Workmen:

That the Reason the *French* Hats are now in greater Credit than ours, is, There is a great Manufactory set

up in *France*; and the Manufacturers there can get Beaver-wool for 18 s. a Pound, that we give 32 s. for, and which formerly used to be at 13 or 14 s. a Pound; by which means they can use more Beaver, and consequently make their Commodity better, at the Price, than we can do:

That he had been concerned in exporting Hats upwards of Thirty Years; and has exported small Parcels to all Parts of *Europe*, but principally to *Spain* and *Portugal*, to the annual Amount of Eight or Ten thousand Pounds: That this Trade used to be very advantageous to the Publick; for that, in the House whereto he belonged, they used sometimes to employ 100 poor Persons.

Mr. *Henry Butler*, Hat-maker, said, He had been concerned in exporting Beaver Hats upwards of Twenty Years: That he formerly exported them to *Spain*, *Portugal*, *Holland*, *Germany*, and all up the *Streights*, and sometimes to *France*, to the Amount, in the Whole, of from Four to Six thousand Pounds *per Annum*; the Beaver in which was worth Two thousand Pounds: That he speaks to all sorts of Hats; but that the major Part of them had Beaver in them, more or less:

That, in this Trade, he used to employ near an Hundred Persons; and that now he does not employ above Fifty or Sixty, having lost the *Dutch* Trade, on account of the Dearness of Materials; That the Witness is acquainted with the State of the Trade in general; and that it is upon the Decline, and has been so these Two Years, owing to the Dearness of our Materials, particularly Beaver:

That there are several Manufactories of Hats set up abroad; particularly a very great one in *France*, which, of all others, is the most prejudicial to us, as the *French* now buy Beaver for Six Shillings a Pound, upon