

When America revolted from her allegiance, and manifested a design to become INDEPENDENT, it was judged expedient to restrain her from fishing on the Banks of Newfoundland; and a bill was accordingly brought into parliament, to confine the right of fishing to his majesty's subjects residing in the British dominions in Europe.

The construction and management of this bill was principally submitted to Sir Hugh Palliser, in consequence of his having had the command at Newfoundland for several years, and on that account supposed to have acquired a thorough and competent knowledge of the fishery. It sometimes happens, that Government is obliged to rely on the veracity of an individual, and on this occasion it was natural to apply to Sir Hugh Palliser for information.

His rank and situation gave him abundant opportunities to learn the true state of this invaluable branch of national commerce; and from the whole of his conduct on that service, it appears, that he was very careful and industrious to investigate every particular circumstance relative to the fishery. It is therefore less astonishing, that he should have been honoured with the entire confidence of ministry. It is only to be lamented, that the legislature has been betrayed into the approbation of measures at once injurious to their country, and oppressive to individuals.

The total exclusion of America from the fishery held out advantages to the merchants at home, specious and irresistible: several of them were flattered by the idea of engrossing the whole of the West India market, which till then had been supplied from Boston, and the northern colonies; who were considered as rivals, and of course detested.

It is allowable to distress our rivals in trade, and this is the spirit of commerce: It is, however, worthy of observation, that monopolies are at once universally sought after and reprobated.

We do not like to see our neighbours better off than ourselves, and this is one of the characteristics of human nature. Hence it is, that the merchants who were prevailed upon to give their support to this bill, being blinded by interest, were inattentive to
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