

G. R. PORTER'S EVIDENCE, QUESTION No. 2709.

Mr. Porter says, the duties first imposed on Colonial and Baltic timber were for the purpose of encouraging the introduction of an article of prime necessity, during war, when there was reason to believe the supply of timber might fall short. This is the only admission in the whole evidence, of the Colonial timber being of any value to the Mother Country. And of what vital importance to Great Britain is the circumstance of her being able, at all times, to procure an article of such prime necessity as timber. If the Canada timber trade were stopped, and a war in Europe should prevent any supply from the Baltic, the consequences would be serious, for it is a very mistaken opinion, to suppose that the Canada trade could be suddenly resumed, after once being abandoned. It has taken 33 years to bring it to what it is at present, and before it could be again brought into such a state as to ensure a sufficient supply, the most serious injury might be sustained by the Empire at large; the navy, for instance, might be useless for want of masts.

Mr. Porter says, the high price of timber checks ship building in England, and some of the other witnesses make the same observation; but Mr. Porter and the ship builders in England would find, if the Canada trade were stopped, that timber, instead of being cheaper, would, in all probability, be even higher than it is now; as the Baltic people, when they had no competitor in the trade, would put on their own price; and this is the great object of those who are now, for their own individual interest, raising the clamour against Colonial timber, and who have succeeded in inducing Mr. Porter, Mr. Hume, Mr. McGregor and other theorists, to join them in the clamour. With respect, however, to the effect the present duties on Baltic timber will have on ship building in England, it is well known to persons conversant in this business, that not one tenth, and in some instances, not one twentieth part, of the timber consumed in the construction of a good ship, is Baltic timber; therefore ship building cannot be checked to the extent Mr. Porter would wish people to believe; and it may also be observed, that it is the price of labour, and not the price of timber,