

tinued to increase their fisheries uninterrupted, until the year 1788; when the troubles in France commenced, and the whole civilized world being afterwards in commotion, and the British navigation system becoming much relaxed and deranged, the Americans availed themselves of the circumstances of the times, and, pushing their commerce into every quarter of the globe, and into the West-Indies in particular, so far supplanted the colonial trade, that, in the course of the war, and until the year 1804, the fish taken in these colonies found every little vent, except in the United States; where, strange as it may appear, it was sold for the purpose of *raisinment to the British West India Islands*; for the colonial merchants, except under circumstances by no means of a general nature, could not, unprotected as they were, stand a competition with the Americans; who, exclusive of other advantages, navigated their vessels, as Neutrals, under charges greatly below the British shippers of these colonies; who, independent of extravagant outlays, labored under the pressure of quadruple insurance;—high wages;—impressments;—delays;—demurrage;—numerous uncertainties;—loss of convoys;—and, in that event, the almost certainty of capture. Under this state of depression, the colonial trade, even of their own produce, passed, in a great measure, into the hands of the Americans; and these colonies endured the double mortification, of being deprived of their birth right, and of being reproached, on every struggle for redress, with their inability to furnish the West-Indies with the necessary supplies, and even with fish and lumber, with which they do, actually, so pre-eminently abound.

This state of affairs continued until 1804, at which time the colonial trade had dwindled to the lowest state of depression. The merchants of Halifax then ventured to lay their distresses before His Majesty's Ministers; and, finding their complaints were listened to by them, they established the Committee System, which has continued ever since to urge their rights, and to furnish information on every subject within their reach, connected with their interests.

In consequence of the reiterated representations of the Halifax Committee, and the enquiries which His Majesty's Ministers sat on foot, the Americans were greatly restrained during the two following years, but in the short administration which took place in 1806, they regained their ascendancy to that degree, that the Trade of these Colonies was reduced as low as formerly. In little more than a year, another administration took place in England, the Committee of Trade renewed its former efforts; and, shortly after, the Americans, were more rigidly excluded from the West-India ports than ever.—The regulations then established being, however, often, evaded, under one pretext or other, the Halifax Committee soon discovered that their single exertions were insufficient to withstand the weight of pro-