

vantage of this restriction by withholding all colonial acts from the Privy Council until the effects of their operation should have been practically tested. If no complaint or objection was brought against any of these acts, and if they seemed to work satisfactorily, the act was allowed to continue in effect till repealed by the colonial Legislature. Therefore in tracing a colonial act through its various stages, the fact that no record of any action by the Privy Council exists, is not necessarily any evidence of crass negligence on the part of the British officials. It should be noted on the other hand that this policy of the Board of Trade was quite in keeping with the let-well-enough-alone policy of Walpole and Newcastle, and that the period from 1714 to 1728 was the period of greatest laxity of the Board of Trade.\* For twenty-four years in succession Newcastle was the Secretary of State for the Southern Department which dealt with the colonies as well, and therefore absorbed many of the important functions of the Board of Trade.

However, the policy of the Board in allowing a colonial law to be probationary over an unlimited period either so that the success of its operation might be ascertained before sending it up to the Privy Council for confirmation or disallowance, or so that it might receive virtual confirmation through lapse of time, was no longer followed after 1730. From now on the Board was compelled to limit the probationary period to a definite term of two years, so that the number of colonial laws that received confirmation through lapse of time was greatly reduced. Moreover, all laws were required to be sent directly to the Privy Council which either in committee or as a whole submitted these acts to a preliminary reading before handing them over to the Board.

By about 1730, therefore, the following procedure in dealing with colonial legislation was generally adopted. First of

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\*For a full account of the Board of Trade and Plantations, the changes in its personnel and powers from time to time, see *American Colonial Government, 1696-1765*, by Professor O. M. Dickerson (Cleveland, Ohio, 1902). For the Colonial administration before 1696, see *British Committees, Commissions, and Councils of Trade and Plantations, 1622-75*, by C. M. Andrews, *Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science*, 1908.