

their selection, that committee could be influenced by any other consideration than a desire to appoint individuals the most competent to the discharge of their duties, and the most likely to exercise their authority with firmness and impartiality, it would be difficult to conceive a power more objectionable and open to abuse. Their characters as individuals, no less than their duty towards the public, who have a deep and direct interest in the impartial discharge of the functions delegated to them, equally require that such an imputation should not pass unnoticed. They trust your Lordships will accept as sufficient reply their solemn and emphatic disavowal, which on their part I am instructed to offer; and though the proof of a negative is difficult, they may advert to a fact in corroboration of their denial, which they think must carry some weight, even in the estimation of the committee of the North American Colonial Association.

A gentleman, who is well known as having long been one of the most active and influential members of that committee, has, since the year 1839, been regularly returned by the Shipowners' Committee as a member of Lloyd's Registry Committee, at which he is a constant and valuable attendant. The committee are satisfied that, had the slightest foundation existed for the suspicion suggested in the letter in question, the strongest representations from that gentleman, at least, would long ago have been pressed on their attention.

A consciousness of the impropriety of occupying their Lordships' time, by renewing a discussion when all expectation of practical result has been abandoned, restricts the committee to this vindication of the integrity of their motives and acts, or they would gladly follow the letter transmitted to them into its several details, the whole of which they believe they could satisfactorily answer; but it would be unbecoming to pursue the subject for the mere purpose of argument, and they will content themselves, therefore, with simply drawing their Lordships' attention to the striking absence of all fairness of reasoning exhibited in the letter of the committee of the North American Colonial Association. The suggestion of this committee was based on the position that a broad and obvious line of distinction is drawn in reason, and actually exists in law, between the importation of colonial productions into Great Britain and the free interchange of productions between the various parts of the mother country; but the reply of the North American Colonial Association, leaving wholly untouched the reasoning by which that position was supported, gratuitously and without argument, in a document intended as a refutation, assumes that the intercourse between the colonies and Great Britain is identically the same in principle as that between London and Sunderland, and on this utterly untenable foundation builds its whole superstructure of alleged inconsistency, injury and injustice.

In conclusion, supposing that it may be from the interposition of political difficulties, which it would not become this committee to discuss, rather than from any persuasion, that the measure, if practicable, would be opposed either to justice or policy, that their Lordships have refused to give encouragement to the proposition submitted for their consideration, I am requested to express the hope of the committee that their Lordships will regard the reasonings in the letter of the North American Colonial Association as now unanswered only from deference to their Lordships' declared opinion.

J. MacGregor, Esq.,  
&c. &c. &c.

I am, &c.  
(signed) *Joseph B. Chapman,*  
Chairman of the Committee.