

seemed to be a measure to serve the interested purposes of a few importing merchants. The instance I will now relate, contributed, I believe, to its discontinuance. At the sale of a cargo, or large quantity of the article, imported into Pictou, a purchaser was at liberty to take the portion or lot offered by the auctioneer, or the whole quantity. A farming person, not at all engaged in any fishery, made the offer of seventeen shillings and ninepence, per ton, for the portion put up, and then said he would take the whole cargo. He purchased it merely for the importing merchants, who, in that way, secured to themselves the bounty on the whole quantity. I was present on the occasion, and was so sensible of the way in which the affair was managed, that I said to one of the importing firm, who was present, you might as well have had it purchased in for seventeen shillings and sixpence, for then you would have got the whole bounty, but now you will only get two shillings and threepence per ton. The same, or similar selfish public impositions, are, doubtless, frequently, or occasionally, practiced, in cases of bounties. I may here offer the opinion, that bounties in trading and commercial business; and also what are called *protecting* regulations and measures in those affairs, are almost invariably found to operate, merely to the profit of a few, and either directly or indirectly, to increase the prices of articles of general consumption; and, in other ways, injuriously affect the great body of the population. For the general prosperity and welfare of a state, trade and business of every description, should be left as unrestricted and free as possible, consistent with the just duties and taxation which are