

desperate effort, I wrote a letter to the Lords of the Treasury, telling all the particulars, with a card direct to Mr. Pitt, as first Lord of the Treasury. To the honour of that great man, in course of post I received a letter signed by him, saying that if the case was as I had stated, of which he had no doubt, I had only now to apply for my goods to be sent to London for entry. I instantly set off to Edinburgh, and on my sending my card to the Board, I was admitted, and treated in a very different way from what I was before; and the Clerk was directed to make out an order to the Collector of Leith, to see the said goods shipped to the Customs at London. But before this was all done, the short peace with France took place, and prices fell from 30 to 40 per cent., as goods in place of going at vast expense to Hamburg with various commissions heaped upon them, were poured into the London market direct from the manufacturers. My goods netted about £600 less than cost and charges.

This case made a considerable talk in Pt. Glasgow and neighborhood.

A very intimate friend of mine, Peter McDougall, was at the time Collector's Clerk at Greenock.

Charles Oglevy, his uncle, Collector of Customs at Greenock, and Sir James Campbell, Collector of Customs at Pt. Glasgow, had at this time been displaced by the said Board in consequence of some very trifling error which they had committed in calculating the drawback on salt consumed in the fisheries. Although they offered to pay into the Treasury the amount lost, this zealous and pure Board would not listen to such a proposal, as they had their own relatives and friends hungering for the places.

Mr. McDougall on meeting me said, "you have been very badly treated by the Board of Customs, and if you wish to retaliate, I can give you the particulars of some gross mistakes of theirs, on the collection of duties on foreign sugars, by which the Government has lost from £200,000 to £300,000."

I promised to keep his name concealed, while I would follow out the case as I thought best.

He took from his pocket a very full and particular statement, giving dates, quantities, duties collected in separate Customs which should have been collected in others, and the results.

This statement I enclosed to Mr. Fox with a letter from myself pledging for its being a true and genuine statement.

In course of post I had a reply from Mr. Fox, thanking me for the information and assuring me a proper use would soon be made of it. The newspapers were filled with a strong charge against the Board of Customs at Edinburgh, for gross ignorance of the laws (what the Board accused me of) which they were largely paid for, having carried into effect, and that in Greenock and Port Glasgow alone, from £200,000 to £300,000 was lost to the Revenue of the country.

After much discussion it was ordered that said statement should be put into the hands of the commissioners then named, to be by them taken to said