

This Committee have been furnished with the means of instituting a complete and fair comparison between the relative expenses and advantages of ship-building in England and the colonies. The ship "Feronia," of 531 tons old measure, and 591 tons new measure, was launched at Pictou, in Nova Scotia, in September 1842; and the ship "Woodbine," of 424 tons old measure, and 492 tons new measure, was launched at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, on the 3d April 1843. Both were built by Messrs. Stephen, Lowrey & Co., at their own establishments at the respective places, and materials of precisely the same character were employed in the construction and outfit of both ships: the timber required for the one built in England was sent home by the partner residing at Pictou, and the iron, copper, and other articles required for the construction and outfit of the one built at Pictou, were purchased and sent out by the partner residing at Newcastle; the freight and other expenses being in each case added to the prime cost of the materials. The two ships were classed A 1. in Lloyd's Register-book, for the same number of years, under the inspection of the same surveyor at Newcastle, and I have the authority of Mr. Lowrey, who is an experienced shipbuilder and owner, to say, that the quality and value of the two ships are as nearly as possible equal. The accounts of the two ships are now before me, as they stood at Newcastle in the spring of 1843, when the vessels were ready for sea, after having been classed, and the freight of the "Feronia," from Pictou, having been deducted from her cost, and the results are as follow:

	Tons	Cost.	Per ton, o. m.	Per ton, n. m.
Feronia - -	531 o. m.	£.4,395. 10. 6.	- £.8. 5. 7.	- £.7. 8. 9.
	591 n. m.			
Built at Pictou.				
Woodbine - -	424 o. m.	£.3,448. 18. 9.	- £.8. 2. 8.	- £.7. 0. 2.
	492 n. m.			
Built at Newcastle-upon-Tyne.				

Showing that, instead of a bounty of 3*l.* or 4*l.* per ton in favour of building in the colonies, as stated in Mr. Young's letter, there is a difference of 2*s.* 11*d.* per ton old measure, and 8*s.* 7*d.* per ton new measure, in favour of the British builder.

Another argument urged in Mr. Young's letter is, that the colonial-built ships are inferior in quality to British-built ships, and, being incorporated with the latter, tend to depreciate the character of the whole. I would, in the first place, observe, that if the inferiority of colonial ships were so great as Mr. Young states it to be, his complaint of their greater cheapness would be completely answered.

The two arguments appear to be incompatible with each other. But it is not a fact that the colonial ships are universally or generally of so inferior a description. No doubt, when the demand for ships was most pressing, many vessels were built for sale, both in the colonies and at home, of very inferior descriptions. It is readily admitted that the North American colonies do not produce any ships equal to the best of those built in England; but this Committee are prepared to affirm, that a large portion of the ships built in the North American colonies is far superior, in quality and workmanship, to many ships built for sale in England.

It is true, that by the rules of Lloyd's registry of British and Foreign shipping, North American colonial ships rank in quality with the most inferior in the world; but it is also true, that one half of the Committee, by whom those rules are enacted are elected by the Committee of the General Shipowners' Society, and that the same gentlemen are among the most active and influential members of both bodies. The colonial shipowners and builders have long complained that in exercising the delicate office of fixing the relative value of their own property, and that of the colonists, the gentlemen in question have been unable to divest their minds of a natural bias in their own favour; and consequently they are not willing to admit that entire reliance is to be placed in the authority to which the Shipowners' Committee so confidently refer.