

That the Price of Labour is much the same of late as it had been some time; and he did not think the Number of Hat-makers had greatly increased: That there were indeed a greater Number at *Manchester* than usual; but that they are gone from other Places to fix there.

Mr. *John Butler*, Clerk of the Hatters Company, said, He had been Clerk of the Company Seven Years: That the Jurisdiction of the Company reached Ten Miles round *London*; and within these Limits none but a free Hatter can work, if the Company please: That no Hatter, though free, can have above Two Apprentices at a time; and he has known Persons prosecuted for working within the Limits of the Company's Jurisdiction; and upon that they have been convicted; and that no Person, not being a Freeman, can work as a Journeyman, even with a free Hatter: yet, he said, That, though this is the Law, it is sometimes winked at: That one *Duffield* was prosecuted, and convicted, for working within the Company's Jurisdiction; and said, He believed, if the Company were informed of any Person working within the said Limits, they would order him to be prosecuted: That he spoke in relation to the Master Hatters, and not to the Journeymen, though there is a Penalty on both: The Penalty on the Journeyman being 20 s. a Month, and on the Master who employs him 5 l. a Month.

Mr. *Escutt*, being asked, if it would not be of Benefit to the Trade, if the Penalty was taken off? he said, he believed it would; but he did not think the Freeman desired to have it taken off: That, at present, he himself employs Six Foreigners to One Freeman; and that, in general, more Foreigners than Freeman are employed; and he does not hear of any Prosecutions likely to issue on that Account.

Then the Agent for the Petitioners observed to your Committee.

That, by the Accounts laid before your Committee, from the Commissioners of the Customs, it appeared, That from *Christmas 1729.* to *Christmas 1739.* there were annually imported, upon a Medium, 86,063 Skins.

And that the annual Exportation, in that time, was 32,294 Skins:

So that there remained in the Market, for the Use of the Manufacturers, annually on a Medium, during these Ten Years, 35,769 Skins.

And from *Christmas 1739.* to *Christmas 1749.* the annual Importation, upon a Medium, was 63,510 Skins:

And the annual Exportation, on a Medium, was 34,441 Skins:

So that there remained in the Market, for the Manufacturers annually, for these last Ten Years, upon a Medium, only 29,069 Skins.

The Difference between the Quantity at Market, during the first Ten Years, and the last Ten Years, is annually, upon a Medium, 24,700 Skins.

The Importation in the Year 1750. was 62,043 Skins, and the Exportation 35,393; so that there only remained for the Use of the Manufacturers, in the Year 1750. 26,650 Skins.

From which it appeared, that there remained annually, for the Use of the Manufacturers, from *Christmas 1729.* to 1739. on an Average, more than twice as many as remained in the Year 1750.

And, by an Account of Beaver-wool exported, it appeared, that from *Christmas 1729.* to *Christmas 1739.* only 8,008 Pounds Weight of Beaver-wool was exported.

But from *Christmas 1739.* to *Christmas 1749.* the Quantity of Beaver-wool exported was 13,921 Pounds Weight; which is an Increase of the Exportation, in these last Ten Years, of 5,913 Pounds Weight of Beaver-wool.

And, with regard to the Loss the Publick sustain by the Exportation of unmanufactured Beaver Skins and Wool.

Mr. *Roffeter* said, He had made a Calculation on his own Business upon 6,000 *Hudson's Bay* Beaver Skins, by which it appeared, That 6,000 Skins, sold at 6 s. a Pound, would amount to 2,700 l.; and the Charge (chiefly Wages) of manufacturing them into Hats, from 7 s. to 12 s. or 13 s. apiece, mixed with Coney-wool, and other Materials, would amount to 3,750 l. besides the Coney-wool, Goats-wool, and other Materials, about 3,075 l. more; to which he added a Profit of about 8 per Cent. and that makes the Beaver, and the Wages upon the Beaver, exclusive of the Coney-wool, Goats-wool, and other Materials, to bring in 7,212 l. to the Nation, on the Exportation of 6,000 Beaver Skins manufactured into Hats; but if 6,000 Beaver Skins are sold, for Exportation, at 6 s. 6 d. a Pound, they will bring into the Nation only 2,810 l. so that the Difference to the Nation on 6,000 Beaver Skins, manufactured into Hats for Exportation, is 4,402 l. This Difference is exclusive of the Coney-wool, which, if worked up with it, will be an Addition of 2,750 l. and in this Manufacture of 6,000 Skins, 120 People would be employed all the Year, work as hard as they could.

Besides, there are Numbers of Persons employed in Warrens, and dressing of Pelts, or Beaver Skins, which, when dressed here, pay a Duty to the Revenue of 2 s. a Dozen; which is a loss to the Nation, if exported unmanufactured: And to them may be added, People employed in making Blocks, and other working Utensils, and of Linings of Silk and Linen, and other Trimmings: Therefore, he apprehends, the Loss to the Publick on 6,000 Skins, taking in all Circumstances, is about 8,000 l.

And he said, he valued the Coney-wool, which would be worked up with these 6,000 Skins, at 9 s. a Pound unmanufactured: But, if the Beaver Hat Trade for Exportation was lost, the Price of Coney-wool would be so reduced as not to sell, unmanufactured for Exportation, at more than 5 s. 3 d. or 5 s. 6 d. a Pound.

That he had made this Calculation upon his own Business only; but that it would be the same on any other House:

That he is very certain, if we could get Beaver upon as reasonable Terms as the *French*, we could regain our Export Trade, we having much the Advantage over them in Ingenuity:

That, if Beaver continues here at the Price it now is, we shall lose our Export Trade to all Parts of his Majesty's Dominions:

That, he thinks, if we could get Beaver upon reasonable Terms, it would be for the Benefit of the Landed Interest, as, by increasing the Consumption of Coney-wool, it would make Warrens more valuable: