

et a temporary bill be brought in, but not such a measure as the present.

Mr. HUME wished to throw out for the consideration of the noble lord the idea, how far this bill did not interfere with what ought to be the rule in all cases, that the legislation of the Imperial Parliament ought to be uniform. He was in favour of an entire change of system as regarded the colonies, and would rejoice to see the time when they took the whole of the Customs into their own hands, and thus enabled us to withdraw all the Custom-house authorities now in those colonies. He begged the noble lord just to look over the report of the committee of last session on colonial expenditure. He would there find that £575,000 had been levied under the head of the Imperial duties, and that not 1s of it came to England, being divided in various ways among the colonies, while we had to make up £24,000, out of the revenues of this country to maintain the system.

LORD J. RUSSELL.—I will state in the first place what I believe to be the state of the law. It was at one time attempted to make the colonial possessions of this country contribute to the expense of the mother country, to contribute to the expense of the army and navy and fortifications, by duties to be levied on those colonies. That led to the resistance of the United States of America, and Parliament passed an act by which they declared that all duties levied in future in the colonies, though imperial duties, for the purpose of trade, must be applied directly to the use of the colonies. If I understand my hon. friend right, he does not wish to alter that state of matters, or to revive the old demand upon the colonies. Then the question occurs, whether having given up that right, we should interfere further with regard to the trade of these colonies? Here I differ from the hon. member for Kendal, he has said that we ought not to allow a considerable power to the colonies to relieve their trade according to their own wishes; and the right hon. gentleman opposite, the member for the University of Cambridge, thinks we ought, as hitherto, to regulate all these matters by an Imperial act. Now, with regard to that, I should feel great difficulty in legislating on that subject in the present session. We have adopted for ourselves generally the principle, that we will not enact differential duties, and that we will not for the purpose of protection, impose duties on the produce of one country more than on another, or on colonial more than on home production; but in applying this principle we are not altogether consistent and uniform—we do make exceptions. (Hear.) The hon. member for Kendal supported well and ably the proposition of the late Government, by which a duty of 15s. was charged on foreign timber. That operated as a protective duty on colonial timber. I think the hon. member was perfectly right with respect to the view he took of the timber duties, but having taken this liberty of establishing free trade as a principle in the first place, and in the next place making certain exceptions to that principle for the sake of revenue, we ought, I think, to treat the trade of the colonies as we treat our own trade. Now, the whole power which we give by this bill to the colonial assemblies with respect to these duties is a power to repeal duties, not to enact differential duties. We do not give them any power to impose duties on British goods which they do not possess at present.—If applying the principles of free trade, we should hereafter say to the colonists—"Here is a protective duty, this duty is one which ought to be taken away;" the colonists might say—"True, it does act as a protective duty; yet it brings in so much to our revenue, that we cannot agree to remove it." I think, therefore, that it is better to leave the matter to the colonial assemblies, who are only to act with the assent of the Crown controlling their power, by which means a multiplicity of duties may be avoided. Also, the secretary of State for the Colonies will have the power to direct the governor of any one of the colonies to explain to that colony what are the general views and principles on which Her Majesty's Government wish them to act, and so the Secretary for the Colonies will be enabled to point out general directions for their guidance. In general, I think it best to treat the colonies as we treat ourselves, and if any general act can be passed in the next session of Parliament with the view of establishing these questions on a better footing Parliament will be competent to pass such measure; but I cannot agree with the hon. member for Kendal (Mr. Warburton) who seems to think that the people in the colonies are ignorant and do not know the true principles of trade, and that we ought not to let them have this power placed in their hands. I am for giving them this power pointing out at the same time to the colonists generally, what are the rules and regulations of trade which Her Majesty's Government would desire to act upon.

Mr. LABOUCHERE thought it was begging the question, to say that reducing the duties on foreign goods would diminish the revenues of the colonies. These additional duties were very generally a protection to us, but they were not necessary to the colonies.

Mr. C. BULLER considered it was quite clear that this bill made no inroad on the power of the Imperial Legislature to legislate for the colonies. The bill only said that the Imperial Legislature was not prepared to say how far it would repeal a certain act of Parliament, and delegated to the Colonial Assemblies the power of saying how far they wished the duties imposed by that act to be repealed. He thought there could not be a stronger instance of the power of Parliament, with respect to the Colonies than such an enactment. The right hon. gentleman (Mr. Goulburn) seemed to think that it was quite unexampled to give a Colonial Assembly the power to repeal an act of the Imperial Legislature; but that was not the case. An act of the British Parliament, called the Tenure of Lanes in Lower Canada Act, had given some time ago, as hon. gentlemen would remember much cause of complaint to the people of Lower Canada, against the Imperial Legislature, for having legislated on a local matter with which they were imperfectly acquainted. Parliament accordingly passed an act to enable the local Parliament of Lower Canada to repeal that act.

The CHANCELLOR of the Exchequer.—The act of the 8th and 9th Victoria imposed additional duties on foreign articles imported into the colonies. All that this bill enabled the Colonial Assemblies, with

the assent of the Crown, to do, was to repeal such portions of these additional duties as they should think proper.

On a subsequent day, when the Bill came on for a third reading—

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, that in consequence of what fell from the hon. members for Cambridge and Birmingham when this bill was last before the house, he should propose such words as amendments in the bill as would meet the objections raised, and prevent the colonial legislatures from laying unfair duties on British produce and manufactures.

Lord G. Bentinck then rose to move, that the Bill be read a third time that day three months, declaring, in a speech of some length, his conviction that its operation would be fatal to the colonial system of the country, by eventually leading to the abandonment of the Navigation Laws.

Lord John Russell replied, twitting the noble Lord on the little support he received from the House, and laying it down as a rule, that if Parliament decided that the manufacturing and agricultural portion of the population had a right to consume the cheapest sugar and corn they could get, the Colonies were also entitled to have their provisions and manufactures at as cheap a rate as they could be obtained. He would not go into the question raised by the noble lord, and discuss the policy of the navigation laws. If it were a mere question how the wealth of a country could be best promoted and distributed, then all the authorities from Adam Smith downwards, established that the principles of free trade were undeniable and irrefragable, and ought to obtain. But, if a case were made out on any particular article, why another principle than that of free trade ought to prevail. Parliament ought to give the subject due consideration. If the noble lord had succeeded in proving that sugar ought to be an exception to the adoption of free trade principles, that would be an answer to the application of those principles. But he had failed to make that out. So as to the navigation laws. If it were a mere question of the production and distribution of wealth, then he thought everybody ought to be allowed to use the ships he thought best. But then arose the consideration of the naval defence of this country, and its naval supremacy, and it became a question whether these might not be endangered by a change in the navigation laws.

After some remarks from Mr. Spooner, in opposition to the Bill, Mr. Bright declared his opinion that the principle which had been carried out with regard to corn and sugar must eventually be applied to shipping; and this without prejudice to the shipowners, to whom the Navigation Laws had been a great hindrance in trade, without affording protection.

Mr. BERNAL supported the Bill, because as the Colonists had been deprived of protection, he thought they ought to participate in all the advantages of free trade.

Mr. HEXTLEY considered that the Bill would place a very objectionable power in their hands of establishing differential duties against the Mother Country. Sir H. DOUGLAS believed that this Bill would lead to constant and angry conflicts between the Colonial Legislatures and Executives, and to frequent contentions, between the Home and Colonial Legislatures. The free trade measures recently adopted by Parliament had given great umbrage to our Canadian Colonists. He had received voluminous communications on the subject from all parts of those Colonies; and the Legislature of this country need not be surprised if, in consequence of their adoption of the free-trade principle, the Canadians—who had been deprived of protection—should demand that some concessions should be made to them.—From what he had heard, he believed they would require that the interest of the debt contracted for effecting internal improvements in the Canadas, should be remitted, or paid by the Mother Country; that they should be allowed to regulate their own commercial affairs, independently of the Mother Country, that all duties on the importation of Canadian produce, of every description, should be repealed; and that the Colonial Assemblies should have the right of dealing with the navigation laws, and of throwing open the navigation of the St. Lawrence.

The House divided:—

For the amendment..... 8

For the third reading..... 47

Majority.....39

The bill was accordingly read a third time and passed.

THE FLOUR TRADE.

The quantity of bread-stuffs received from the Western States, at the two great outlets of the New York canals, and the mouth of the Mississippi, are as follows, to August 1st:—

	1845.			1846.		
	Buffalo.	Oswego.	N. Orleans.	Buffalo.	Oswego.	N. Orleans.
Flour,....bbls.	263,650	133,196	197,471	681,640	190,025	912,266
Wheat, bush.	671,370	17,702	182,661	1,311,790	163,081	1,195,005
Corn,.....	21,685	5,031	1,142,901	638,743	240,559	3,439,954
Oats,.....	10,765	411,826	176,583	690,267

The total receipts at these points compare as follows:

Years.	Flour.	Wheat.	Corn.	Oats.
1845,	894,317	871,733	1,169,617	492,591
1846,	1,683,931	2,669,876	4,319,286	866,859
Increase,.....	799,614	1,798,143	3,149,669	444,250

This increase of flour and wheat, expressed in bushels of wheat, is equal to 5,769,213; or, say 724,526 English quarters. The inspections at three other points were as follows:

	FLOUR INSPECTED.	1845.	1846.
Philadelphia, 1st January to 1st July,.....bbls.		228,948	310,954
Baltimore, 1st July to 30th June,		550,846	769,130
Georgetown, D. C., 1st July to 30th June,		33,698	86,459
Total,.....		813,492	1,166,543