

passage; when being apprehensive that the legality of their charter might be brought into question, they thought it prudent to endeavour to secure an interest in the government: they therefore attended Sir Robert Walpole, and informed him that there was an arrear due from them to the late queen Mary, amounting to several thousand pounds, which they apprehended the present queen was entitled to, as no part of it had been paid to queen Anne; alleging that queen Mary was a proprietor; in virtue, I suppose, of her relationship to Prince Rupert, who was an original proprietor. Accordingly, a sum, at the rate of two or three hundred pounds per annum profit upon the trade, was paid to Sir Robert upon his Majesty's account; and while he continued in the treasury, another small sum was paid upon the same account; and since that time two other small sums, which the treasury was obliged to receive implicitly; for the Company excused themselves from producing their books upon this occasion, tho' urged to do it as the only authentic proof, that his Majesty was entitled to any share, and that the sum paid was the exact amount of it. The circumstances of which behaviour evidently shew, with what view they made this sacrifice; and with what view they now place the King's name at the head of the list of proprietors; little reflecting, that if at any time their monopoly and charter should be proved illegal, and injurious to the trade of Britain, his Majesty would be induced to screen them by any surrender that is in their power to make.

It was suspected, and upon good foundation, that the Committee of the Company, which is elective by the charter, had made themselves absolute and unchangeable, by engrossing the
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