

different manner: they are, in the first instance, well considered by the solicitor of the board of customs, who is qualified by his daily practice to form a sufficient opinion upon the point of law; they are usually submitted to the opinion of the attorney and solicitor general, whose judgment and discretion are looked to for advice and direction. These officers feel themselves responsible in their professional character for that which they advise and promote; and they will always have in view, that the opinion given in their chambers in such as they need not scruple to support in public argument. In addition to their own reputation, they consult likewise the honour of the crown, whose rights should never be brought judicially in question without a reasonable confidence of success. While such considerations have their influence, no points of law will be hazarded, that do not appear really and substantially to contain doubt and difficulty.

If few determinations of courts are to be found on this subject of Shipping and Navigation, there is not wanting information of another kind. This is from the opinions of law-officers, which have been taken from time to time ever since the reign of Charles the Second, by the board of customs, for the direction of themselves and their officers in points of practice as they arose. Wherever this can be obtained, I shall endeavour to make it supply the deficiency of judicial matter, in expounding and illustrating the laws made by the Legislature.