

the founders of that system being to promote navigation, in order to encrease the naval power of the kingdom. Commerce can be carried on as well in foreign as in British shipping, especially in time of war, because the former are free from capture, and are navigated at much less expence, consequently their freights are lower: it is therefore obvious that in case neutral ships are allowed to trade to and from Great Britain, to countries where British ships *can go*, the number of the latter must unavoidably be considerably *reduced*, and the nursery for British Seamen affected in the same proportion.

These relaxations have been attempted to be justified, first, on the ground of necessity, and afterwards on the advantages supposed to be derived by merchants to whom goods were consigned from abroad, and imported in neutral shipping into this kingdom, although they were not the growth or produce of the country from whence they came, or of the country to which the neutral ships belonged, and which were entered for home consumption, or warehoused for exportation. It may be admitted, that under the provisions of these acts, goods to a certain extent came to this country for a market, which probably would not otherwise have been brought hither; but the benefits accruing from such importations were infinitely too inconsiderable to counterbalance the serious injury done to British shipping, by allowing neutral vessels *not* belonging to the countries from whence the goods came, to bring articles for *home* consumption, which if such indulgences had not been granted to them *would have been brought* in British ships, except from the countries of the enemy, to which the suspension of the former system should have been confined; and even in that case limited to articles indispensably necessary in British Manufactures, and to them only; for the more bulky articles obtained from the enemy's countries, such as Brandies, &c. should not have been allowed to be imported *direct* in neutral vessels, but only to have been taken to a *neutral port*, and the importation of such articles *from thence*, confined to British bottoms; which would have been highly beneficial to the Shipping Interest and the West-India planters; for the *encreased* freight and expences on such spirits would have operated as a bounty on Rum from the British Colonies, without any injury to the revenue, whilst it produced a proportionate depression on the Enemy. It is understood an application to this effect was made by the Shipping Interest to