

The supposed exorbitancy of the public charges weighs as a night mare on the Board of Trade, whilst the Board coolly and distinctly states that the private charges must not by any means be touched, and that from competition alone are we to expect any reduction therein. But whence this predilection of the Board for the private charges? Why, on the one hand, advise a reduction in the public charges, and why, on the other, confide the private charges to public competition? The secret is soon told:—The public charges are principally borne, and the private charges pocketed by the very clique that sits in the Council of the Board—and because the Board well knows that competition in the matter of private charges is an event impossible under existing circumstances.

The number of wharves is very limited indeed, and for this reason a monopoly in that line can be with difficulty prevented or controlled. The Merchant to whom a vessel may be consigned here, easily finds a means of levying from the owner the customary *Black Mail*. In the first place the Merchant charges his *Commission*, which is but fair; again, the same Merchant being the possessor of a wharf, whether with or without title, it is not for us to say, charges as high a rate of wharfage as he possibly can do, during the whole period that the vessel usually takes to discharge and receive her cargo; this may or may not be fair. Most frequently indeed, if not always, does he oblige the Master of the vessel to lay out a considerable sum for towage of timber from the Coves to his wharf in town, in order that he, the Merchant, may profit by all this in the shape of wharfage. This is certainly not fair;—but the Merchant's profits in the shape of private charges do not end here. Should his conscientious scruples not be over nice, he acts much after the fashion of that ship-master who, on *suffering* shipwreck, muttered complacently to himself, "It is a speculation just like any other"; the Merchant purchases for himself the cargo which has been consigned to him, and as he