

the Pelt, for which we give Eleven Shillings; and consequently they under-sell us at Foreign Markets.

Mr. *William Estcutt*, Hat-maker, said, That he had been in Business about Twenty-five Years, and had exported Hats to *Holland, Portugal, Spain, and Leghorn*: That he used to export from Four to Six thousand Pounds Value *per Annum*; but that our Foreign Trade is upon the Decline, and has been so since the Conclusion of the Peace; and the Dearthness of Beaver is the principal Cause:

That the *French* out-work us, as they have their Materials (particularly Beaver) cheaper than we; and, by that means, they make their Manufactures finer than ours, as they can afford to put more Beaver in them.

That Beaver-wool is Thirty-two Shilling a Pound, which (except the last Year, when it was from Forty to Fifty Shillings a Pound) is much the same Price it has been at these Two or Three Years; but that, about ten Years ago, the Average Price was from Sixteen to Twenty Shillings a Pound; and that, in a Hat worth Seven Shillings, at the Price Beaver now is, the Manufacturers can't afford to make use of any:

That the Witness had Advice, the latter End of last Summer, from his Correspondent in *France*, That the Price of Beaver-wool there was from Sixteen to Eighteen Shillings a Pound; and at that time it sold here, at the *Hudson's Bay* Sale, from Forty to Fifty Shillings; nor could the Manufacturers get it at that Price, Foreigners buying it from them; and it is to Foreigners being allowed to buy it, that the Witness attributed the Rise:

That the Reason of its Rise within these Three or Four Years, is owing to the small Importation and the large Exportation thereof; for that, in general, the Importation is less, as well from *Hudson's Bay*, as from other Places:

That Beaver is exported to *Holland* and *Flanders*; but that, if the Exportation was prohibited, we should be the Manufacturers of Hats for those Places.

Mr. *Richard Crafton*, Hatter, said, That he had been concerned in exporting Beaver Hats, on his own Account, about Ten Years; and with his Father, before that time, Seven or Eight Years: That he used to export them to *Holland, France, Leghorn, Spain, and Portugal*, to the Amount of about Four thousand Pounds *per Annum*; but that the Trade of the House in which he is concerned, is considerably on the Decline, and has been so these Six Years; and at present they don't export One-half of what they did:

That several Manufactories have been set up abroad; particularly a very great one in *France*, which is the Manufactory that affects our Trade the most; and the principal Reason why the *French* Manufactory affects our Trade the most, is, They have their Beaver much cheaper than we, and, by that means, under-sell us at Foreign Markets: That Parchment Beaver has advanced here, within these Two Years, upwards of 75 *per Cent.*; that in *France* it is from 6*s.* to 6*s.* 6*d.* a Pound, upon the Skin; and here, the last *November* Sale, it was 11*s.* or thereabouts: and the *March* Sale before that, it was upwards of Sixteen Shillings:

That the Manufacturers here mix Beaver with other Materials, upon account of the Fineness of the Goods, as well as the Colour; and the excessive Price of Beaver

has obliged them to put less of it in the Hats, and consequently make them worse:

That, the last *March* Sale, the Price of Parchment Beaver was, upon an Average, about 16*s.* a Pound, and Coat Beaver 7*s.* 3*d.*; and, at the last *November* Sale, the Parchment Beaver was about 11*s.* and the Coat Beaver then about 8*s.*:

That he believed, upon an Average, rather more than Half the Coat Beaver imported is again exported, and all the Cubs, and most of the Parchment.

And being asked, How he knew what Quantity of Beaver was exported? he said, That there were some Brokers, who, he apprehended, always bought for Exportation; and from the Quantity they bought he formed his Judgment.

Then Mr. *Roffeter* was asked, What the Price of Coat Beaver was in 1745? He said, it was about 4*s.* 6*d.* a Pound.

Mr. *Crafton* said, That the Importation of Coat Beaver is not above One Quarter of the Importation of Parchment; and that Coat Beaver is never used but in Hats:

That the Average Price of Hats, usually exported from his House is about 9*s.* apiece; and, when Beaver is cheap, he puts in such a Hat about an Ounce and Half, besides about Four Ounces of Coneys-wool, and other Materials.

Mr. *Thomas Lawford*, Hat-maker, being examined, said, That he was bred in the greatest House for the Exportation of Hats in *Europe*: That his Master traded up the Straights, and, he believed, did not export thither so little as 12,000*l.* worth in a Year; but that he speaks to Twenty Years ago; and at that time they used to employ about 120 or 130 of all Sorts of People: And, upon Inquiry, he does not find any of that Trade here now.

Captain *Richard Pridie* said, He had carried Hats to *Cadiz*, some in the Year 1749, worth from 8*s.* to 18*s.* 6*d.* apiece; and was forced to bring them back, tho' he offered them at prime Cost; and the Reason he could not dispose of them was, that the *French* Hats were 10 or 15 *per Cent.* better than his, even at prime Cost; but that this was the only time he ever carried Hats to sell at *Cadiz*.

Mr. *Roffeter* said, The Reason of the Advance of the Price of Beaver was owing to the great Demand for Exportation, and also the Decrease of the Importation: That he apprehended one Reason of the great Demand for Exportation of Beaver, from hence was, That the *French* prohibited the Exportation of Beaver from thence; so that this was the only Market for Foreigners: Another Reason was, That there is an Encouragement of a Drawback of 4*d.*  $\frac{4}{12}$  on each Skin; and that the Duty on each Skin is 7*d.*  $\frac{1}{2}$ ; and that the Duty and Drawback are the same on a Cub's Skin as on a full-grown Skin, altho', upon an Average, Two Cubs Skins don't weigh One full-grown Skin: So that, in Effect, the Drawback is double on Cubs-wool, to what it is on the Wool of a grown Skin: And this, the Witness said, he apprehended, was the Reason, why Foreigners always gave a larger Price, in proportion, for Cubs than grown Skins, tho' the Quality of the Wool of a Cub is not so good as the Wool of a grown Skin:

That,