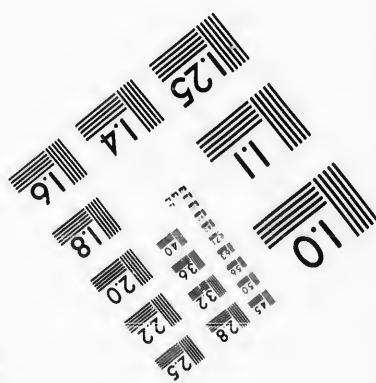
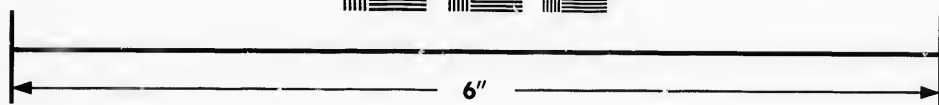
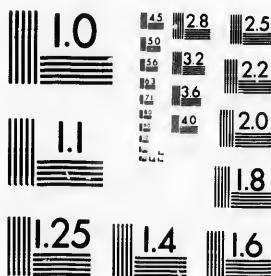


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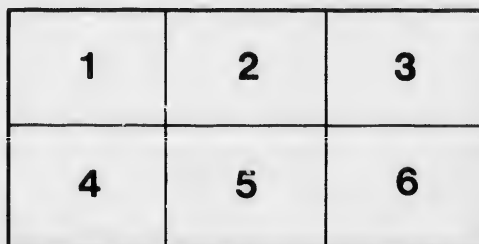
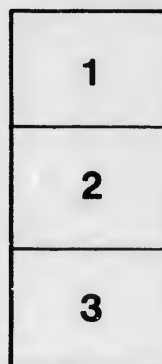
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THOUGHTS

ON

THE IMPOLICY OF ALTERING

THE PRESENT RATE OF DUTY

ON

FOREIGN TIMBER

AND

DEALS.

BELLONHOLM

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. HARDING, 36, ST. JAMES'S STREET;  
By B. M'MILLAN, Bow-Street, Covent-Garden.

1817.

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# THOUGHTS,

&c. &c.

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IT having been understood, that some alteration may possibly take place in the rate of the Duties levied on Norway and Baltic Deals and Timber, during the ensuing Session of Parliament, so strong a sensation has been excited in the minds of those who consider themselves interested in the question; that perhaps the following observations on the subject may not be deemed wholly devoid of interest.

The Duties alluded to, were imposed some years since by Parliament, as it was then considered, with a view to several objects of the highest importance to the welfare of the Empire. The obstacles which then existed to a free intercourse with the Baltic, and Norway, had shewn Government the importance of looking for a supply of Timber and Deals from countries under their own controul, and within the dependencies of Great Britain.

B

It was supposed to be of national advantage to facilitate the settlement, and to encourage the industry of the British North American Colonies; and to blend their interests with those of the Mother Country; but above all, it was felt to be of vital importance, to look for that lucrative and permanent employment for British Shipping, to which, driven from whatever Foreign Port, whether by the decrees of War, or the arrangements of Peace, the British Ship Owner, and British Sailor might look with equal confidence.

As far as time has yet been allowed for the prosecution of the experiment, the justness of the views on which it was founded, has been fully proved. Throughout the lower parts of Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia, extensive establishments have been formed; and abundant means of subsistence have hence been afforded to its Inhabitants, from a soil and climate otherwise but little favourable to the new settler. Along the immense extent of the waters which flow into the St. Lawrence, the beneficial effects of this policy have been felt. The Wood of the Forest has been exchanged for the Woollen, the Cotton, the Earthen, and Hardware, of British manufacture; the comforts and conveniences of life have been dif-

fused over countries which, but for these regulations, must have been doomed to the scanty and ill-organized manufacture of an infant state of society. Nor has the experience of these benefits been without its effect: the friends of Canada may look with pride and gratification to the willing spirit, and personal devotion with which its Inhabitants went forward to oppose an enemy, whose avowed object was their separation from Great Britain.

As respects the Shipping Interest, the object of these regulations has been answered. At the close of the War, the number of vessels discharged from the Transport Service was very great; the less protracted voyages attendant on a state of Peace, contributed also to diminish the necessity of employing so many ships; many were therefore laid up, yet there can be no doubt but that the number thus discharged would have been ruinously increased, had not a trade existed which employed, during the last season, at a very moderate computation, from eight to nine hundred sail of vessels. It seems, however, that some partial evils are complained of, and urged as motives to induce a change in the present system. It is said, that in consequence of the heavy Foreign Duty, the price of Timber and Deals are inconveniently high to

the consumer; that the Duties, as they respect Norway, are prohibitory; that, though not so as the Baltic is concerned, they would, if lowered, have the effect of increasing a revenue, which, within the last year, has been less productive than formerly; that the latter Duties, called War Duties, were laid on as matter of revenue, and not of commercial regulation; that, by way of putting Norway on a footing with the countries bordering on the Baltic, the Duties on long Deals should be increased, and made proportionate to their length; that unless we encourage an intercourse with Foreign Nations, we cannot expect that they should take our manufactures.

In reply, it may be fairly asserted, that the price of Timber and Deals, since the return of Peace, in consequence of the competition between British North America and the North of Europe, has been remarkably low, and if not ruinous to the Importer, so moderate as to afford but little prospect of reimbursement to those spirited Landholders in this Country, who a few years since, expended so much capital in the Plantation of Forest Trees, and whose patriotic exertions perhaps, deserve the continuation of parliamentary protection. It is also denied, that the Duties are prohibitory, even

as they respect Norway: if any Deals are excluded, they are those only of an inferior quality; the first, and even second Christiana Deals are for sale in every Timber-yard in London, and will be found to pay at this moment, a handsome profit to the Importer. So far from the Duties acting as a prohibition, if reference be made to the Custom House returns, it will appear, that the importation of 1815, and the early part of 1816, (no doubt occasioned by the high War prices, and the long blockade of the Norway Ports), were out of all proportion great;—that to the glut thereby occasioned, to the limited wants of Government during Peace, and to the diminished consumption, which has attended the distresses of the times, and not to the pressure of Duty, is to be attributed the reduced Importation which has taken place during the latter part of 1816. Those heavy stocks are, it is well known, now nearly run off, and a large Importation may be looked to during the current year.

The preceding observations will with even greater force apply to the Deals from the Baltic, as, though the British North American Merchants can meet on equal terms the Norwegian in the London Market, under the present regulation and duties, he can with little hope of

profit, enter the lists with the Importer from the Baltic, as the experience of the present year, to the former, avowedly the most favorable, has fully proved. This is to be attributed to the distant voyage to British America, admitting of but slow return of capital, requiring large stocks to be kept on hand, and to the necessarily high freights : to which may be added, that the rate of labour is much higher in America than in the Baltic ; and finally, that from the remains of prejudice, inseparable from the first opening of a new trade, the price to be obtained for North American Timber and Deals, is never so high as for those from the Baltic.

Hence it may fairly be inferred, that the Baltic Merchant has no founded cause of complaint ; since from the existing wants of this Country, a large supply will annually come from the Baltic as well as Norway, greatly to the benefit of the Revenue, at the present rates ; while, at a diminished rate of Duty, the gross amount of the Revenue would not be increased, though the North American Shipper must relinquish the Trade ; for let it be even supposed for a moment, that it were possible for Great Britain to withdraw the encouragement solemnly held out to the British North American Colonies,

and that in future all Deals and Timber consumed in Great Britain, were to be imported in British Ships from the Baltic, the most distressing consequences would result to the Shipping Interest. From the ease with which a Baltic Voyage is performed, from the Ships previously engaged in the British North American Trade being added to those already employed in the Baltic, double the number of vessels would be disposable to accomplish half the service; the greater part of those now obtaining freights, would therefore be thrown out of employment, to the almost total loss of the capital invested in British Shipping.

The same interest of the British Ship-Owner requires a continuance of the present Duty on Short Deals; as self-interest and self-defence would seem to make it a duty incumbent on Government to support the British Sailor, and British Commercial Navy, in preference to those of Norway, a country from which, connected with other Northern Powers, we may at some future period suffer annoyance.

It should be observed, that the Norwegians send their Timber and Deals exclusively in their own Ships, whilst the Baltic Trade, especially that from Russia, is chiefly carried on in British vessels.

From the easy access to the ports of Norway, at almost every season, their inconsiderable distance, and the size of their ships, the Norwegians possess the incalculable advantage of being able to watch the British market, and at a few days' notice to pour in their Deals and Timber, whenever and wherever they conceive any prospect of profit to be held out. The effects of this vicinity have been felt in the ports of Scotland, where the Larch and Firs of that country have been continually undersold by the Timber and Deals from Norway.

As to what has been suggested respecting the Protecting Duty, as contradistinguished from the War Duty, it is to be observed, that the Committee of Merchants who petitioned for the Protecting Duty, though, perhaps, that laid upon short Deals may have been sufficient, yet were not aware that the Baltic would enter so largely as she has done, into the importation of those of the longer description; and thus, in fact, avoid one half the Duty. If, however, the interest of those concerned in the employment of British Shipping in the Baltic were to be laid aside, and a change in the present Rates unavoidably to take place, the existence of the British North American Trade would absolutely require that all Foreign

Deals should pay Duty in proportion to their solid contents, taking that paid on the 12 foot for 120 of three inches thick, and nine inches wide as the standard, being that description of Deals of which the largest quantity will necessarily be imported.

It must, however, be said, in respect to the War Duty, that by the words of the Vote of the House of Commons in April last, it was made permanent. In consequence of that Vote, large undertakings in the building of Saw-mills near Quebec, which had been begun, and were suspended, were immediately resumed, and are now nearly completed. Many others of a similar nature have been extended; and many commenced in Upper and Lower Canada. The same exertions have probably been made in the other Provinces, as they all considered Government to be pledged to them for a continuance of the Duties.

With respect to a reciprocity of trade between this country and those of Norway and Prussia (the latter being understood to be the only Baltic State that has made any representation on the subject), it is to be remembered, that they have never been particularly good customers to England; their surplus produce being more frequently exchanged for the luxuries of

France, than for the manufactures of Great Britain: nor is this to be wondered at, their Woollens being in general cheaper than ours; it were therefore vain to believe, whatever may be their interested representation, that they should ever become our customers to any considerable amount for that article; were even more to be expected from them, there could be little doubt of the impropriety of encouraging a precarious Foreign Trade, at the expence of a greatly increasing one with our own Colonies.

These Colonies have a right, in justice, to demand a protecting monopoly for articles of their produce in the home market, as an indemnification for the loss of that free trade which they suffer from the existence of the Colonial system: community of interest is the only efficient bond which connects political societies together; sound policy will therefore strengthen by every allowable means, ties of so much importance to the well being of the Empire. An idea may here perhaps, without impropriety, be hazarded; that it is evidently the interest of those extensive and newly-settled countries of the United States of America, which border on the lakes and waters that fall into the Saint Lawrence, (and whose opulent population will

shortly render them invaluable customers to  
 British manufacture), that Quebec should ever  
 remain a Shipping Port in the hands of Great  
 Britain, as their Inhabitants have thereby two  
 markets for their produce, New York, and  
 Quebec, to which they may go at nearly the  
 same expence ; the one offering the advantage  
 of American, the other of British Shipment.  
 Were due encouragement held out to them  
 through the latter channel, it is not unreason-  
 able to suppose, that the people of those coun-  
 tries would consider it their interest to check  
 any disposition to hostility towards Great Bri-  
 tain; which might exist in any other quarter of  
 the Union ; and even were a war to take place,  
 the same feeling would paralyze the exertion of  
 a population, on whose hearty co-operation so  
 much must depend as to its success on the part  
 of the United States. To sum up all that is  
 to be said on the subject, in few words : the  
 simple question seems to be, whether Parlia-  
 ment will, in listening to the interested repre-  
 sentations of Foreigners, break in on the course  
 of an experiment in favour of the British Colo-  
 nies, attended with every promise of success,  
 and thereby alienate the affection of a people,  
 who have unequivocally proved their attach-  
 ment to the Mother Country : whether, to

please Foreigners, she will give up a certain means of Revenue, in her present financial difficulties: whether she will, for the doubtful sale of a few Woollens, encourage the growth of a Foreign Navy, and give up the certain means of fostering her own, by employing her ships on those long, and sometimes tempestuous voyages, which are the sure nursery of a hardy, expert, and numerous body of Seamen, ready at her call on either side the Atlantic: whether, finally, to gratify a few interested individuals, she will bring inevitable ruin on the heads of the already suffering Ship-Owners of this country, and throw into the parochial work-houses, thousands of those brave men, who so gloriously fought the battles of that country, to which they now look for the protection they afforded her in the hour of danger.

The Official Document subjoined, will serve to shew the rapidly increasing trade between Great Britain and her Colonies.

*An Account of all the Exports from Great Britain to Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Cape Breton, and Newfoundland; in each Year from 1800 to 1814, both inclusive; distinguishing each Colony or Settlement.*

## OFFICIAL VALUE OF EXPORTS.

		British Produce and Manufactures.			Foreign and Colonial Merchandize.			Total Exports.		
		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
TO CANADA:	1800	335,993	19	4	74,116	18	0	460,110	17	4
	1801	505,256	2	3	87,105	8	10	592,361	11	6
	1802	712,242	2	3	132,209	13	5	844,451	15	8
	1803	444,460	10	8	144,412	17	10	588,873	8	6
	1804	410,834	12	2	206,560	17	1	617,395	9	3
	1805	316,027	7	5	106,955	11	11	422,982	19	4
	1806	304,654	3	3	74,291	5	10	378,945	9	1
	1807	382,639	1	8	98,976	19	6	481,616	1	2
	1808	471,350	1	11	73,406	0	11	544,756	2	10
	1809	831,457	7	0	142,549	1	0	974,006	8	0
	1810	844,067	9	3	135,354	7	1	979,421	16	4
	1811	841,744	8	11	135,451	12	9	977,196	1	8
	1812	449,590	1	11	150,437	1	11	600,027	3	10
	1813	The Records destroyed by fire.								
TO NOVA SCOTIA:	1814	1,436,483	10	9	462,073	1	1	1,898,556	11	10
	1800	156,096	11	2	20,987	6	8	177,083	17	10
	1801	154,247	1	11	23,886	17	5	178,133	19	4
	1802	160,461	12	11	18,594	17	8	179,056	10	7
	1803	175,940	4	11	23,551	11	2	199,491	16	1
	1804	118,830	2	10	31,630	6	7	150,460	9	5
	1805	104,800	15	7	18,324	19	10	123,125	15	5
	1806	194,513	6	0	35,353	2	8	230,866	8	8
	1807	173,304	10	5	33,348	18	3	206,653	8	8
	1808	242,658	4	0	34,930	2	11	277,588	6	11
	1809	326,852	0	10	50,453	16	10	377,305	17	8
	1810	305,525	17	5	45,086	6	11	350,612	4	4
	1811	190,412	7	3	26,880	11	7	217,292	18	10
	1812	243,856	11	10	38,243	15	7	282,100	7	5
	1813	The Records destroyed by fire.								
TO NEW BRUNSWICK:	1814	949,586	7	7	100,279	2	5	1,049,865	10	0
	1800	70,934	3	4	10,296	12	0	81,230	15	4
	1801	53,396	10	11	5,181	0	10	58,577	11	9
	1802	71,457	11	5	5,292	7	6	76,749	18	11
	1803	54,584	3	9	4,352	12	4	58,936	16	1
	1804	47,035	12	7	4,196	1	4	51,231	13	11
	1805	43,012	15	10	3,114	15	3	46,127	9	1
	1806	48,665	16	7	5,189	10	2	53,855	7	4
	1807	57,622	2	11	6,773	14	1	64,395	17	0
	1808	59,332	18	8	4,683	8	8	64,016	7	4
	1809	113,554	18	2	11,676	11	3	125,231	9	5
	1810	92,848	14	3	5,948	1	6	98,796	15	9
	1811	266,320	9	7	7,732	1	1	274,052	10	8
	1812	125,371	0	7	9,870	6	8	135,241	7	3
	1813	The Records destroyed by fire.								
	1814	446,336	2	10	14,588	3	9	460,924	6	7

## OFFICIAL VALUE OF EXPORTS.

	British Produce and Manufactures.			Foreign and Colonial Merchandize.			Total Exports.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
TO PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND:									
1800	—			—			—		
1801	—			—			—		
1802	—			175	1	5	175	1	5
1803	3,555	17	2	308	11	9	3,864	8	11
1804	1,552	13	0	445	3	7	1,997	16	7
1805	—			—			—		
1806	1,206	8	3	221	18	0	1,428	6	3
1807	1,873	9	1	156	8	6	2,009	17	7
1808	2,919	5	7	775	17	6	3,695	3	1
1809	13,193	6	7	2,924	13	1	16,117	19	8
1810	16,783	16	6	3,850	11	7	20,634	8	1
1811	8,040	8	0	1,394	15	7	9,435	3	7
1812	14,455	6	9	2,627	13	10	17,083	0	7
1813	The Records destroyed by fire.								
1814	3,679	17	0	1,380	19	1	5,060	16	1
TO CAPE BRETON:									
1800	—			—			—		
1801	—			—			—		
1802	701	10	5	—			701	10	5
1803	—			—			—		
1804	262	13	4	35	8	0	298	1	4
1805	—			—			—		
1806	—			—			—		
1807	—			—			—		
1808	—			—			—		
1809	—			—			—		
1810	—			—			—		
1811	—			36	18	0	36	18	0
1812	499	6	4	57	14	7	557	0	11
1813	The Records destroyed by fire.								
1814	2,212	15	5	376	13	8	2,589	9	1

TO NEWFOUNDLAND:

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## OFFICIAL VALUE OF EXPORTS.

	Exports.	s.	d.		British Produce and Manufactures.		Foreign and Colonial Merchandise.		Total Exports.	
					£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
TO NEWFOUNDLAND:				1800	126,158	6	10	93,241	0	7
				1801	145,824	2	4	38,453	17	9
				1802	167,422	4	6	50,683	6	0
				1803	153,419	9	3	41,967	13	10
				1804	154,396	16	9	75,740	5	8
				1805	185,201	3	11	67,625	11	11
				1806	197,089	12	1	75,869	2	9
				1807	214,352	4	2	71,380	6	1
				1808	162,522	17	11	46,922	15	1
				1809	186,015	12	3	55,000	0	4
				1810	303,914	18	0	73,820	10	10
				1811	333,298	1	3	75,100	15	10
				1812	291,677	16	8	79,849	13	2
				1813	The Records destroyed by fire.					
				1814	573,025	0	1	90,968	15	6
									663,993	15 7

*Note.*—No perfect return can be made, containing the distinction of the articles exported from Great Britain to the North American Colonies during the above period, in consequence of the partial destruction of the Official Records by fire; but the official values of the aggregate amount of the Exports having been preserved, the above account is submitted to the Honourable House of Commons, as the best return that can now be furnished, of the comparative amount of the Export Trade to the Colonies during the last fifteen years.

WILLIAM IRVING,  
Inspector-General of the Imports  
and Exports of Great Britain.

Custom-House, London, }  
12th February, 1916: }

THE END.  
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