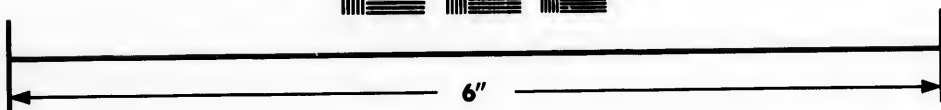
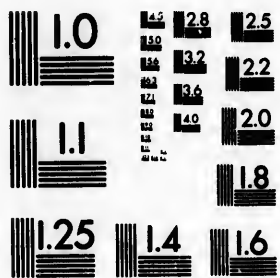


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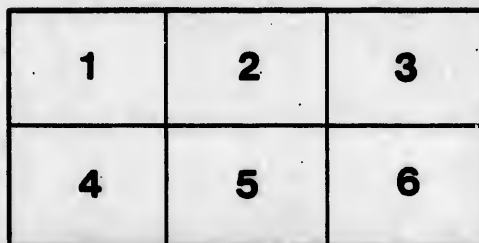
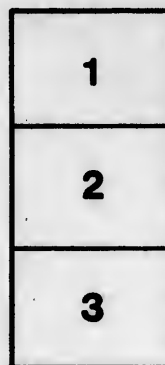
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FROM

THOMAS LACK, ESQ.

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BY THE

Special Committee of Ship Owners.

APRIL 29, 1917.

4, 5, Metcalf, Printer, & Governor Hall Court, Peabody.

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LETTER

FROM THOMAS LACK, ESQ.

**SECRETARY TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORDS OF THE
COMMITTEE OF PRIVY COUNCIL FOR TRADE AND PLANTATION,**

IN ANSWER TO

THE PETITION

OF THE COMMITTEE OF LONDON SHIP OWNERS;

WITH

THE REPORT THEREON,

OF A

SPECIAL COMMITTEE

OF

London Ship Owners & Deputies from the Out Ports.

30th APRIL, 1827.

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LETTER FROM THOMAS LACK, ESQ. TO GEORGE
LYALL, ESQ.



*Office of Committee of Privy Council for Trade,
Whitehall, 21st March, 1827.*

SIR,

THE Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, having had under their consideration your Letter dated 23d ult. stating that Deputations of Ship Owners have arrived in Town from Liverpool, Hull, and other principal Out Ports, with instructions to take such measures as they may deem expedient, to obtain relief to the Shipping Interest; and therefore praying that they may receive Their Lordships' decision on the Petition of the Committee of the Society of British Ship Owners presented in December last; I am directed to inform you that Their Lordships have nothing to add to the communication which they made to the Committee of Ship Owners on the 27th of February, 1824, in respect to the maintenance of discriminating duties upon Foreign Ships, upon the cargoes imported in such Ships, being articles which can be legally imported from the respective countries to which the Ships belong.

Discriminating duties could afford no real encouragement to British Shipping, from the moment they were countervailed by equivalent duties upon that Shipping in the Ports of the Foreign country. The imposition of such a countervailing duty, is within the power of every independent State; and so long as its amount does not exceed the difference of duty

imposed in this country upon the Foreign Ship, such an exercise of that power could afford to this country no just ground for remonstrance or complaint.

His Majesty's Government, however, did use such endeavours as appeared to them proper, to induce Foreign Powers to abstain from this system of retaliation; but, those endeavours failing, it was obvious that a perseverance in a system of mutual retaliation would be of no avail in affording special protection to British Shipping; and could not but be prejudicial to the general interests of commerce, and the other great interests of this country.

It was under this conviction, that His Majesty's Government found themselves called upon to stipulate with Prussia and other Powers, (as it had, many years before stipulated with Portugal and the United States of America,) for the mutual abrogation of all discriminating duties; and to these stipulations the good faith of this country is now pledged.

The Lords of this Committee do not call in doubt the fact stated by the Memorialists, that British Shipping experienced a considerable degree of depression in the course of the year 1826: Their Lordships are persuaded that this depression is to be ascribed, in part, to the cause mentioned by the Memorialists, namely, "the improvident speculations in "British Ship Building in the course of the year 1825;" but Their Lordships conceive that there were other coincident circumstances, which must have contributed, in a still greater degree, perhaps, to produce that depression. The circumstances to which Their Lordships allude, are to be traced to the general spirit of over-trading, which prevailed in the year 1825, and to the consequent comparative stagnation which affected almost every branch of our foreign commerce in the year 1826. If, by that over-trading, freight (as it cannot be denied) was rendered scarce and extravagantly dear in the year 1825, was it to be expected that it should not be affected in an opposite direction by the sudden and extensive revulsion which paralyzed the spirit of commercial enterprize in 1826? Could it be expected, when great losses were sustained in almost every branch of our foreign commerce, and of those manufactures by which that commerce is supplied, that the Shipping Interest of Great Britain should alone continue in a state of unabated prosperity? And can it, with truth, be said of that interest, that the nominal money-amount of capital vested in Shipping has, upon a fair comparison of the years 1826 and 1825, been diminished in a greater, or even in an equal degree, with the

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the nominal money amount of other capitals embarked in other branches of manufacturing industry or commercial speculation?

Nothing can be more remote from the intention of The Lords of this Committee, in urging these general considerations upon the attention of the Memorialists, than either to underrate the difficulties of which they complain, or to intimate an indisposition to take any steps in their power to relieve those difficulties; but Their Lordships feel perfectly assured, that it cannot be the intention of the Memorialists to claim, in their own behalf, any special intervention of His Majesty's Government, which should be inconsistent with national faith, or detrimental to the general interests of the country.

Their Lordships are not disposed to call in question the position laid down by the Memorialists, that "The Law of Navigation has always sought to secure to British Shipping, a proportion of the carrying of certain articles of European production, denominated *the enumerated articles*." They also admit, that, "recently, some latitude in respect to the importation of those articles into this country, was given to Foreign Ships;"—neither can they deny, that, by the Warehousing Act, some indulgence has been shewn to Foreign Ships, by allowing them to bring Goods to be warehoused for exportation, although the said Goods are such as cannot, from their nature, be admitted at all for home consumption; or, if so admissible, can only be admitted when imported in British Ships.

It is not affirmed in the Petition of the Memorialists, that either the relaxation of our navigation system in respect to the "enumerated articles," or the increased facility of warehousing above referred to, has caused any injury to the carrying trade of this country. The Lords of this Committee have never yet seen any evidence which tended to establish that any such injury had been occasioned; whilst, on the other hand, they are satisfied that these alterations in the law, have greatly contributed to the accommodation and facility of commercial intercourse; and that, incidentally, if not even sometimes directly, they must have become the source of additional employment to British Shipping.

The Memorialists, indeed, do not ask for the repeal of these indulgences to our commerce; but, as a consequence to their being granted, they request that the privilege of warehousing the "enumerated articles,"

for home consumption, should be confined to importations in British Ships; and that duties of Customs or Excise imposed upon all such articles, should be made payable, from the moment of their entry, if imported in foreign vessels.

The Lords of this Committee being advised that this proposition could not be carried into effect, without a violation of the engagements by which Great Britain is bound to other States, it becomes unnecessary to enter upon the merits or expediency of the suggestion of the Memorialists, in reference to the general commercial interests of this country; or, to the retaliatory measures which such a proceeding on our part might provoke on the part of Foreign States. It is enough to know, that, to adopt the suggestion, would be to violate public faith: and, in conveying this knowledge to the Memorialists, The Lords of this Committee are satisfied that it is unnecessary to say any thing more upon the subject.

In respect to the next suggestion thrown out by the Memorialists,—“That it would be desirable either to increase the duty on Timber imported from the North of Europe, or to reduce it on Timber from the British Colonies in America and Africa,” The Lords of this Committee have felt it their duty to communicate with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and finding his opinion to be in entire concurrence with their own, they cannot hold out to the Memorialists the slightest expectation that His Majesty’s Government can either offer to Parliament any proposition, or assent to it, if proposed by others, for altering the relative rates of duty upon European and British American Timber, as fixed, after much inquiry and investigation, by a Committee of the House of Commons in the year 1821. Their Lordships feel that there is the less ground for calling for any such alteration, as it is notorious, that, since that year, the annual importation of Timber from British America has very much increased; and that even in the year 1826, notwithstanding the general depression of trade, the quantity imported greatly exceeded that of any antecedent year, with the single exception of 1825, falling short of the extravagant importation of that year, only in the inconsiderable amount of 12,000 upon 467,000 loads—or about *one thirty-ninth part* of the whole; while, on the other hand, the falling off in the importation from the Baltic, in the year 1826, as compared with 1825, was from 286,871 to 156,078 loads, being a diminution little short of *One Half*.

The Memorialists further state, that other measures, although of minor importance, would give general satisfaction to the British Ship Owners.

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Among the measures enumerated by the Memorialists, there is one which would be at variance with existing Treaties; namely "a Regulation that timber, hemp, &c., delivered in performance of contracts for the supply of Government, should be imported exclusively in British Ships." This proposal, therefore, cannot be entertained. The other suggestions recommend the removal of certain pecuniary burthens, to which the British Ship Owner is still liable. The Society of Ship Owners cannot but be aware that, in this way, much has been already done for their relief, not only in the abatement and remission of taxes which peculiarly affected the Shipping Interest; but also, by putting an end to Custom House Fees; Quarantine and Levant Duties; Consular Rates, and other charges which had been long complained of as pressing heavily upon the navigation of this Kingdom. Other measures have also been adopted since the Restoration of peace, for simplifying the regulations affecting the navigation and commerce of the kingdom, the result of which has been to afford facility and despatch in the entry and clearance of vessels, and greatly to diminish the risk of detention and seizure, to which they were so frequently exposed under the former involved and complicated system of our navigation and revenue laws.

The Lords of this Committee do not advert to these improvements, as reasons for not paying every attention to the further measures of relief now suggested; some of which they hope may be adopted; but, in respect to others, such, for instance, as "the exempting from stamp duty, Policies of Sea Insurance," and, any further abatement of the duty upon hemp, (one half of which has been already taken off,) The Lords of this Committee apprehend that, in the present state of the revenue, it is not to be expected that the Chancellor of the Exchequer could give his assent to measures, which, whilst they would lead to a serious diminution of the public income, are represented by the Memorialists themselves, as of "minor importance" to their interests.

The Lords of the Committee have thought it due to the importance of the Interests which the Memorialists represent, to enter into this full explanation of the grounds on which they find themselves compelled to decline adopting those suggestions which the Memorialists recommend, and upon which they principally rely, as calculated to afford them relief.

Whilst the Lords of this Committee trust that these reasons, upon due consideration, will appear satisfactory to the Memorialists, they have only further to assure the Memorialists, that they shall, at all times, be

desirous to contribute to the advancement of the Shipping Interest of the United Kingdom, by forwarding any measures which may appear to them likely to conduce to that object, without exposing to hazard the other great Interests of the country.

I am,

Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

THOMAS LACK.

GEORGE LYALL, Esq.

Chairman of the Ship Owners' Committee.

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REPORT

Of the Special Committee appointed by the General Committee of Ship Owners of London, and Deputies from the Out Ports, held at the City of London Tavern, on the 26th day of March, 1827,

To whom it was referred, "to take into consideration, and report on a Letter received from the Lords of the Committee of His Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council for Trade, in reply to a Memorial presented to their Lordships by the Committee of the Society of Ship Owners, urging the distressed state of the British Shipping Interest, and offering suggestions for its relief."

YOUR Committee, sensible of the difficulty and delicacy of the commission entrusted to them, have directed their most anxious attention to the important document referred to their consideration. Impressed with great deference for the authority from which that document emanated, and conscious that their judgements were liable to influence from the personal interests involved in the question, it was not without reluctance they embarked in the examination; but having been induced by these convictions, to weigh with additional circumspection the various statements and arguments by which the decisive refusal of Their Lordships to entertain the prayer of the Memorialists, is supported, they are compelled, after the most deliberate investigation, to express their opinion, that the conclusions at which Their Lordships have arrived, are *not* justified by the reasoning on which they assume to be founded; and that the decision constitutes therefore a case of very peculiar hardship on the British Ship Owner, whose hopes of relief from the intervention of the executive Government, it appears entirely to extinguish.

In expressing this decided opinion, however, it is matter of sincere gratification, that, being furnished with the detailed reasoning on which His Majesty's Government have founded their determinations, Your Committee, in justifying the opposite conclusions to which they have been led, are enabled, by directing attention to the specific points at issue, and by careful analysis of the arguments advanced in the letter of the Board of Trade, to bring fairly under view the case of the Ship Owners, which they are aware has been very generally misunderstood, and very extensively misrepresented.

In presenting, consecutively, for consideration, the several positions maintained by Their Lordships, the first, and one of the most important is, that "discriminating duties could afford no real encouragement to "British Shipping from the moment they were countervailed by equivalent "duties upon that Shipping in the ports of the foreign country;" that "the imposition of such a countervailing duty is within the power of "every independent State;" and that "as long as its amount does not "exceed the difference of duty imposed in this country upon the foreign "Ship, such an exercise of that power could afford to this country, no "just ground of remonstrance or complaint." Your Committee have no desire to dispute the correctness of this exposition of international equity; but waiving the discussion of the abstract principle, they venture, with deference, but with firmness, positively to deny its applicability to the present case.

Discriminating duties between importations on native and in foreign Ships, do not, as assumed by those who oppose them, constitute positive imposts on the *Goods* imported, but are simply protective duties to domestic *freight*, to which that protection cannot be extended in any other mode, without the absolute exclusion of the foreign Ship. Discriminating duties, if equitably regulated, involve no unfriendly principle; their object is not foreign exclusion; (which is still an unquestionable right,) but domestic protection, a palpable and paramount duty. They are in fact, to maritime capital, precisely what a duty on the importation of foreign corn, is to agriculture; and on manufactured silk, and other articles of domestic production, to manufactures; and as long as they are so regulated, as to afford to the native Ship Owner no greater protection than is equivalent to the excess of expense incurred by him in the production and navigation of his Ship, beyond that incurred by the Foreigner, placing both, thereby, in a fair state of equal competition, they ought neither to give umbrage to the domestic consumer, nor to excite the jealousy of

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Foreign Powers. But however just in principle, and expedient in application, it cannot at the same time be denied, that if countervailed by equivalent discriminating duties in Foreign Ports, a measure clearly and equitably within the power of every independant State, the imposition of such duties could afford no real protection to British Shipping, *provided the employment of Tonnage in the exportations from this Country, equalled that engaged in the importations into our Ports*; in which case the reciprocal abrogation of such duties could not fail to be mutually and equally beneficial. But if, in the Carrying Trade between this and any other country, the bulky nature of our importations require a very considerably greater Tonnage than can be employed in the import trade of the Foreign Nation, it is obvious that the result of a mutual abrogation of discriminating duties must be, to throw into the hands of the country importing the smallest bulk of goods, all the advantage of the more extensive employment to which her Shipping is thereby admitted on equality. Such precisely are the relative circumstances of the trade between Great Britain and the North of Europe, the importations from whence require at least twenty times the Tonnage that can be employed in the exportations to those countries.

The right to impose discriminating duties to secure to our native Shipping their just share of this disproportionate trade, being admitted, and the expediency of Great Britain, if possible, exercising this right demonstrated by the disproportion itself, it only remains in examination of Their Lordships' position, to trace the consequences of an endeavor on the part of any Foreign State to drive her into its concession by the imposition of countervailing duties. Had Great Britain (as their Lordships most erroneously assume to be the fact,) even imposed a duty on the Foreign Ship, a countervailing duty on British Shipping in the Ports of the Foreign Country must have raised the cost of the commodity imported, to the precise extent of that duty, since, whether imported in a British or a Foreign Ship, the amount must have been paid either to the British or the Foreign Government. A mutual perseverance in this system, by continually raising the price, would have reduced the consumer to have recourse to other markets, if such could be found, where the article he required could be procured unburthened with such charge. It is plain, therefore, that unless it could be proved that every State from whence Great Britain could draw her supplies, had joined in a coalition to compel her to abandon the defence of her navigation, the consequence of such an endeavor must have recoiled on the Power by which it was attempted, in

the loss of the sale of the productions of that Power in the British Market, which would have been equally well supplied from other States.

But the case thus assumed, to meet the reasoning of their Lordships, is in fact hypothetical. Instead of imposing a tax on Foreign *Tonnage*, which would have applied equally to Ships, whether in ballast or with cargoes, and if countervailed, would have raised the price of the imported article as has been shewn, to the consumer, England adopted a milder, a wiser, and a more equitable course. She placed a higher duty on *Goods*, if imported in a Foreign, than in a native Ship. By this regulation, not only was the Ship in ballast exempted from the impost, but as long as the amount of difference, was only equal to meet the increased cost in the building, equipment, and navigation of the British Ship, no actual preference was given, no reason for countervailing duty afforded, and no hazard incurred of prices being raised by the imposition of really countervailing duties, if attempted. For if, in the exercise of the right of every independant State, the Foreign Government had determined to endeavor, by retaliation, to compel us to permit to its Shipping a *preference* in our Trade, the imposition of a similar discriminating duty on *Goods* brought into its Ports, in a British Ship, could, if pressed to its utmost extent, plainly have produced no other result, than that of confining the importations into each country, to its native Shipping. On the highly advantageous effects to Great Britain of such a result, from the far greater Tonnage required for her imports than her exports, it is obviously unnecessary for your Committee to enlarge; but they cannot forbear earnestly entreating attention to the fact, that the course they have traced is the only one which is compatible with that fair retaliation which it is the unquestionable right of every independant State to exercise.

But Prussia and the other States to which reference is made, did not confine themselves to this course: aware that from countervailing the additional duty charged in this country, on goods imported in a foreign, beyond that payable in a British Ship, by imposing a similar additional duty on goods imported into the foreign country, in a British, beyond that payable in a Ship of the country, the object they had in view could not be attained, they at once imposed a heavy charge on British *Shipping* in their Ports, not for the protection of their own Shipping from British competition, but for the express purpose of compelling this country to admit them into her trade, to the exclusion of our own citizens. That Prussia should have made such an attempt, can scarcely, to Your Com-

mittee be matter of surprise; but, that a British Government should be found to treat the attempt as a measure of fair retaliation, is only to be explained by that want of just discrimination between duties on freight, on shipping, and on goods, which appears to Your Committee, to have fatally pervaded the whole question of "Reciprocity;" and which is strikingly illustrated in the very paragraph to which they are now referring. In this paragraph, Their Lordships speak of "equivalent duties" on British Shipping in the Ports of the Foreign country," and subsequently of "the duty imposed in this country, on a Foreign Ship." Would it be believed that at the period to which their Lordships refer, no duty whatever was charged in British Ports on Foreign Shipping? Can it be conceived that Their Lordships were unacquainted with the fact? Or knowing it, can the expression be justified, constituting as it does, a *prima facie* defence of an act on the part of a Foreign Power, which instead of being, as Their Lordships infer, one of fair retaliation, Your Committee can view in no other light than that of insolent dictation, and unfriendly, if not hostile aggression? On this part of the subject, and conceiving they have satisfactorily proved that the charges imposed by Foreign Powers on British Shipping, were *not* equivalent duties to countervail those to which the Shipping of those Powers were subject in the Ports of this Country; but unprovoked attempts to exact from Great Britain the surrender of an important portion of her carrying trade, without even the semblance of an equivalent, Your Committee trust they shall be excused for quoting, in support of the principles they advance, an expression of the late Right Honorable Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in a recent and interesting correspondence with a Foreign Minister.—"It has never yet been held a duty of international amity, any more than of friendship in private life, to submit to unequal compacts; nor has it ever been held an offence against such duty, that a nation, any more than an individual, should decline to make uncompensated sacrifices." That enormous sacrifices have been made, the present ruinous condition of the Shipping Interest bears ample testimony. Where, Your Committee confidently ask, is to be found the equivalent compensation?

On this branch of the subject, then, Your Committee presume to maintain, in contradiction to the position laid down in the letter referred to them, that in the relative situation of this country, and those to whose representations (according to the letter of The Lords of Trade, of 27 Feb. 1824,) the abrogation of discriminating duties was accorded, those duties *would* have afforded protection to British Shipping, even under any imposition of really countervailing duties, in the ports of those countries: a retaliation which must have terminated most injuriously to the country making the

attempt; and that any endeavor to exact from this country an uncompensated sacrifice of its maritime Interests, by the imposition of arbitrary duties on its Shipping, for the purpose of depriving that Shipping of all protection from Foreign competition, must, if retaliated by the British Government, have terminated in the transfer of that trade to other countries; and was in itself an unusual, unreasonable, and unfriendly demand, which a paternal Government was bound in justice to its subjects to have refused; which national interest might have disregarded; and of which, national honor should have dictated the denial.

In the next paragraph to which the attention of Your Committee has been drawn, an assurance is conveyed that "His Majesty's Government did use such endeavors as appeared to them proper to induce Foreign Powers to abstain from this system of retaliation, but those endeavors failing, it was obvious that a perseverance in a system of mutual retaliation, would be of no avail in affording special protection to British Shipping, and could not but be prejudicial to the general interests of commerce, and the other great interests of the country," and that "from this conviction, His Majesty's Government found themselves called upon to stipulate with Prussia and other Powers, for the mutual abrogation of all discriminating duties, and to these stipulations the good faith of this country is now pledged."

It is not for Your Committee, in the absence of all information as to the nature of the endeavors stated to have been used to induce Foreign Powers to abstain from a system of retaliation, to call in question the arguments by which these unavailing endeavors may have been supported. They were no doubt, as affirmed, such as appeared to His Majesty's Government, proper to effect the object; but Your Committee trust they shall not be considered presumptuous in expressing their deepest regret, that on this failure of persuasion, His Majesty's Government did not deem it proper at least to make the experiment, whether those supplies for which recourse had usually been made to countries so little disposed to accede to the remonstrances of His Majesty's Government, could not have been obtained from other nations, less determined to insist on the displacement of British Shipping, as the only condition on which they would allow Great Britain to become the purchaser of their productions. To Your Committee it does, indeed, forcibly appear, that independent of the exhaustless supplies of Timber offered by our Canadian Forests, the Timber and Deals of Petersburg and Riga might well have compensated for the closing of the markets of supply at Dantzic and Memel; nor can

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Your Committee entertain a doubt that the spirited application of those retaliatory measures, from which it has already been proved that British interests could have sustained no injury, would have spared Their Lordships the pain of the declaration, that unable to induce Prussia, and other Powers, to abstain from acts which they had used their endeavors to prevent, they had felt themselves called on to abandon those endeavors, and to pledge the good faith of the country to a system against which their efforts had been ineffectually directed. Your Committee can, indeed, scarcely imagine that, in the negotiations which took place to induce Foreign Powers to abstain from the system of retaliation referred to, Great Britain could have assumed the humiliating tone of a suppliant. If then, negotiation for a mutual adjustment of conflicting rights, could not be brought to a conclusion mutually beneficial, it appears evident, that before an unconditional surrender of the principle contended for, was admitted, it should at least have been tried how far the legislation of each country, for the advantage of its respective subjects, would have averted or modified the terms of concession. From all these considerations, Your Committee are again driven to dissent from the conclusion of Their Lordships, "that perseverance in a system of mutual retaliation, would "have been of no avail in affording special protection to British Shipping;" and while they are totally unable to explain why the attempt, at least, was not made, they cannot avoid declaring their own decided conviction, that such perseverance would have terminated in the abandonment, on the part of Prussia, and the other States to which allusion is made, of their unreasonable and insulting demands, and in securing the ascendancy of British Shipping in the carrying trade of the Baltic.

Their Lordships next advert to the alleged depression of the British Shipping Interest, which they admit to be considerable, and which Your Committee are unfortunately aware is extreme. But in tracing the causes of this depression, some assumptions are made by Their Lordships, which if unquestioned, would place the case of the Ship Owners in a light very different from that in which Your Committee are satisfied it is entitled to be viewed. It is first contended, on the admission of the Ship Owners' Committee in their Memorial, that the depression is to be ascribed in part, to the improvident speculation in British Ship Building in the course of the year 1825. That speculation has aggravated the difficulties of the Ship Owner, Your Committee do not dispute; but if the fact be advanced to weaken his claims, by imputing his embarrassments to his own improvidence, the conclusion is both untenable and unjust;—the Ship Owner,

though the victim, was not the author of this speculation;—if any excess of supply beyond the effectual demand, press heavily on the Shipping Market, that excess will be found to consist entirely of North American built Ships, which were not produced by Ship Owners for the purpose of investment of capital in the carrying trade, but constructed by speculative individuals for sale, and by Merchants interested in the Colonial trade, for remittance; nor do Your Committee find difficulty in tracing the speculations of the former, to the direct acts of His Majesty's Government, in the reduction of the rate of interest on Funded Property, and the stimulus given when the excitement first commenced, by the assurance, that the effects of that excitement in the extension of our exports and imports, was actually a proof of commercial prosperity. And with respect to the latter, it should not be forgotten, that by the imposition of a duty on Colonial timber, the importation of that commodity in its unmanufactured state was discouraged, while it could still be imported in its manufactured state, as a ship, not only free from duty, but with a drawback on all those articles of foreign production exported from this country for the equipment. A line of policy unusual in itself, and affording strong inducement to the Merchant to seek payment for his exported Goods by the importation of Shipping.

Your Committee merely advert to these circumstances to prove, that if the difficulties of the Ship Owner be attributed to improvidence, it is not by His Majesty's Government such a charge should be attempted to be fixed on him. But Your Committee are enabled to press this argument to more conclusive demonstration, and merely glancing at the facts that Ship building has declined in a remarkable degree, during a succession of previous years, and that in certain branches of our trade new Ships are indispensably requisite, without reference to the quantity of existing tonnage, they affirm, that in British Ships there was actually *no* excessive production in 1825; that the tonnage built in that year, was only equal to the losses of 1824; and that the whole of the superabundance consisted in the excess of British Plantation Ships built in 1825, beyond the average quantity of that description of Ships built during the eleven preceding years. To substantiate these assertions, it is only necessary to refer to the Parliamentary return ordered by the House of Commons to be printed 16th March 1827—from which it appears that, the amount of tonnage belonging to the British Empire in 1824, was - - - 2,559,587 tons.

The tonnage built during that year, was - - - 143,741

Which added to the preceding, would amount to - 2,703,328

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<i>Brought on</i> - - -	2,703,328 tons.
But the tonnage belonging to the Empire in 1825,	
was only - - - - -	2,553,682

The difference, therefore, is the loss during the year	
1824, to be supplied in 1825 - - - - -	149,646
The tonnage of British Ships built in 1825, is 124,019	
The average tonnage of British Plantation	
Ships built in the eleven years preceding	
1825, was - - - - -	22,628
	<hr/> 146,647

If, therefore, only the average tonnage had been built	
in British America, there would have been a	
deficiency of supply in 1825, to meet the losses	
of 1824, of - - - - -	2,999
But instead of the average of - - - - -	22,628
The actual British Plantation tonnage, built in	
1825, was - - - - -	80,895
Being an excess of 58,267 Tons, to be attributed	
entirely to the causes above described.	

In pursuing the inquiry into the causes of the present distress, Their Lordships next advance as a fact, *not to be denied*, "that freight, by the "overtrading of the year 1825, was rendered scarce and extravagantly "dear." Your Committee are really at a loss to conceive on what evidence Their Lordships can have arrived at this sweeping conclusion, which, with every deference for their authority, Your Committee can, from their personal experience, distinctly disprove. They cannot indeed but imagine, that Their Lordships must have been misled into the expression of this opinion, by partial information applying to the Timber Trade alone, in which, Your Committee admit that in the latter part of the year, freights rose to a price which excited in the minds of prudent Ship Owners apprehensions of a reaction; but in the East and West India and Mediterranean Trades, the early voyages to the Baltic and America, the Transport Service, Fisheries, and other employments, in which the great bulk of British Shipping is engaged, scarcely any advance whatever took place in the rate of freight; and entertaining a firm conviction that the general amount of freight received by Ship Owners during the year 1825, constituted a very moderate return on the capital embarked in Shipping, Your Committee feel bound distinctly to deny that freight (generally considered) *was* scarce and extravagantly dear. That Shipping must, as their Lordships observe,

“ have been affected by the sudden and extensive revulsion which “ paralyzed the spirit of commercial enterprize in 1826,” Your Committee fully admit: all they contend for is, in opposition to the inference to be drawn from Their Lordships’ observations, that the Ship Owners did not bring on themselves the consequences of excessive supply, by their own improvident speculations, nor did they participate in the benefits of the excitement of 1825, in a degree to indemnify them for the depression of 1826. The acts which led to superabundant supply, were in a great degree the acts of others,—the consequences resulting from them, are unfortunately their own.

But in the concluding sentence of the paragraph now under review, the Ship Owners are asked, whether “ it can, with truth, be said of the Shipping Interest, that the nominal amount of capital vested in Shipping has, “ upon a fair comparison of the years 1826 and 1825, been diminished in “ a greater or even an equal degree with the nominal money amount of “ other capital embarked in other branches of manufacturing industry and “ commercial speculation.” It would ill become Your Committee, to affect so intimate an acquaintance with the various branches of manufacturing industry and commercial speculation, in which the capital of this great community is embarked, as could alone justify them in giving to this relative enquiry, a confident absolute reply; but from their own practical knowledge and personal interest in Shipping, they have no hesitation in affirming their belief, that the Shipping of the country, if brought to sale or appraisement, at the present moment, would not be valued at, or produce much more than half the amount at which it might have been sold in 1825; and they cannot but believe, that on those with whom this opinion may obtain credit, it must induce the same conviction which Your Committee themselves entertain, that, as compared with any other of the great interests of the community, the depreciation in Shipping fully equals that of capital embarked in any other pursuit, and far exceeds that sustained on the greater part, while that which remains is nearly unproductive.

It is gratifying to Your Committee to find, from the succeeding paragraph of the letter, that Their Lordships have no intention to underrate the difficulties of the Shipping Interest, and feel no indisposition to take any steps in their power to relieve those difficulties, and Your Committee are satisfied that Their Lordships do no more than justice to the sentiments of the great body of the Ship Owners of Great Britain, when they intimate their conviction, “ that it cannot be the intention of the Memorialists to “ claim in their own behalf, any special intervention of His Majesty’s

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Government, which should be inconsistent with national faith, or detrimental to the general interests of the country :” But as this assurance appears to Your Committee merely introductory to the remarks that follow, in reply to the first and most important remedial measure suggested by the Memorialists, in which it is also repeated, it may perhaps be most consistent to bring under review the whole of this portion of ‘Their Lordships’ Letter, in preference to offering any reflections arising from its partial consideration.

“ Their Lordships,” it is observed, “ are not disposed to call in question the position laid down by the Memorialists, that the Law of Navigation has always sought to secure to British Shipping, a proportion of the carrying of certain articles of European production, denominated the enumerated articles; they also admit, that, recently, some latitude in respect to the importation of those articles into this country, was given to foreign Ships; neither can they deny, that by the Warehousing Act, some indulgence has been shewn to foreign Ships, by allowing them to bring Goods to be warehoused for exportation, although the said Goods are such as cannot from their nature be admitted for Home Consumption, or if so admissible, can only be admitted when imported in British Ships. It is not affirmed,” it is continued, “ in the petition of the Memorialists, that either the relaxation of our Navigation System in respect to the enumerated articles, or the increased facility of warehousing, above referred to, has caused any injury to the carrying trade of this country; nor have The Lords of the Committee yet seen any evidence, which tended to establish that any such injury had been occasioned; whilst on the other hand, they are satisfied that these alterations in the law have greatly contributed to the accommodation and facility of commercial intercourse, and that incidentally, if not even sometimes directly, they must have become the source of additional employment to British Shipping. The Memorialists indeed,” it is further continued, “ do not ask for the repeal of these indulgences to our Commerce, but as a consequence of their being granted, they request that the privilege of warehousing the enumerated articles for Home Consumption, should be confined to British Ships, and that duties of Customs or Excise imposed upon all such articles, should be made payable from the moment of entry, if imported in foreign Ships. The Lords of the Committee,” it is stated in conclusion, “ being advised that this proposition could not be carried into effect without a violation of the engagements by which Great Britain is bound to other states, it becomes unnecessary to enter upon the merits or expediency of the suggestion, in reference to the general commercial

“ interests of this country, or to the retaliatory measures which such a proceeding on our part, might provoke on the part of Foreign States. It is enough to know, that to adopt the suggestion would be to violate public faith; and in conveying this knowledge to the Memorialists, The Lords of the Committee are satisfied that it is unnecessary to say any thing more on the subject.”

The inferences sought to be established by the foregoing paragraph appear to be briefly the following :

- 1st, That by the recent alterations in our Navigation and Warehousing Systems, some advantages have been extended to foreign Shipping in the British Carrying Trade, which they did not previously possess.
- 2d, That from these alterations no injury has been occasioned to British Shipping, but that, on the contrary, the Carrying Trade has derived some benefit from them.
- 3d, That the British Ship Owners do not desire the repeal of the indulgences extended to foreign Shipping, but are anxious only that the privilege of bonding the enumerated articles, when imported for home consumption, should be confined to importations in British Ships.
- 4th, That the Lords of the Committee have been advised that such a restriction of the privilege of bonding would involve a violation of national faith.
- 5th, That in consequence of this conclusive objection, the Ship Owners are expected, without further discussion, to abandon all idea of relief from this measure.

Of the correctness of the first position, “ that advantages have been extended to foreign Shipping” there can be no question; Your Committee object only to the limitation under which Their Lordships appear to admit those advantages, which, pervading our Colonial as well as Foreign Navigation Systems, are, in the opinion of your Committee, not of the partial nature implied in the Letter, but unequivocal, extensive, and important.

From the second, they are compelled to declare their decided dissent, believing that considerable injury has resulted to British Shipping from the alterations referred to. Of the precise extent of this injury it is difficult to form a correct estimate without Returns which it is not in the power of Your Committee to procure; nor would it be possible even with the advantage of official documents, to define with accuracy, what portion

of the Carrying Trade at present engrossed by Foreigners, under the indulgences extended to them by the alterations in our Maritime System, would have been retained by British Shipping, had those indulgences not been conceded. But Your Committee are well aware, that under the relaxation of the Navigation Law by which the enumerated articles are permitted to be imported from Holland; and still more by that alteration which has allowed their importation from the place of deposit, instead of confining it to the place of production, the distant voyage is in many instances secured to the Foreigner, even where the direct importation from the neighbouring ports of the Continent remains to the British Ship. Nor is this effect confined to the European Trade; for under the permission to import the productions of one of the distant quarters of the globe from another quarter, it falls within the knowledge of Your Committee that considerable quantities of East India goods have been imported from the United States, whither they had been brought by American Ships in exchange for American goods, to the great injury of the British Merchant as well as of the Ship Owner: And in the freedom of intercourse with our Colonial possessions; in the facilities given to foreigners for supplying them with those articles, which they had been in the practice of obtaining from Great Britain in British Ships; and in the encouragement held out for their exporting from hence for the supply of the Continent, that Colonial produce which was formerly deposited in, and conveyed from this country, Your Committee can trace most important causes of decline of British Navigation.

It is not for Your Committee at present to discuss how far these modifications were rendered requisite by political or commercial expediency; they only desire to prove that injury *has* resulted therefrom to the Shipping Interest; and from this conclusion, they find it impossible to exclude even the Warehousing Act, which through a train of operations too tedious to enumerate, has destroyed the preference formerly given to British Ships in the trade between the foreign West Indies and Northern Europe. It is, in fact, obvious, that every immunity granted, and every burthen removed by the relaxations and alterations made in favor of foreigners, must have conferred on them additional facilities in the prosecution of that competition in the general Carrying Trade, to which they have been admitted, and in which their advantages over British Shipping in point of relative cheapness, are in themselves overwhelming. Though Your Committee, therefore, are not prepared to contend that the whole of the employment afforded to foreign Shipping by the indulgences referred to, would have devolved upon British Shipping, under the continuance of the ancient

system of restriction, they are satisfied that a large portion of such employment might have been retained by a firm adherence to the principle of conceding no advantage to foreign Powers, without obtaining a positive equivalent for the concession; and on the whole they are persuaded from their own observation, and the concurrent testimony of those whose practical acquaintance with the subject confers on their opinion the greatest weight, that a full and impartial enquiry would satisfactorily demonstrate that the injury inflicted on the British Carrying Trade by the alterations referred to, has been deep and extensive; while if, as Their Lordships infer, "they have incidentally, if not sometimes directly, become the "sources of additional employment to British Shipping," of which Your Committee find it difficult to discover any trace, they are persuaded such benefit must be most partial and trifling, and can offer no equivalent whatever for the loss of employment they have occasioned.

Before quitting this branch of the subject, Your Committee, in reply to the remark of Their Lordships, "that it is not even affirmed by the "Memorialists that any injurious consequences have resulted to our Carrying Trade, from the recent alterations in our Navigation System," feel it but justice to the Memorialists to remark, that the Memorial itself having originated in the expression of a disposition on the part of His Majesty's Government to extend to the Shipping Interest, in its present difficulties, any assistance in their power, and of a desire to receive suggestions as to such specific measures as, in the opinion of those connected with that Interest, were best adapted for its relief, it would have been the height of indecorum and impolicy, for the Memorialists to have rendered such an invitation a vehicle for the general reprobation of measures, against which they had already struggled ineffectually, and in opposition to which they had vainly exhausted all the argument and proof of which the question was susceptible. Under these circumstances it does not appear to your Committee to be quite fair towards the Memorialists, to draw from their silence any inference whatever in support of the conclusions advanced by Their Lordships, which your Committee are satisfied are at variance with the universal opinions of British Ship Owners.

From the foregoing observations, it is obvious, in reply to the third inference of Their Lordships, that though the Ship Owners do not ask for the repeal of the indulgences stated to be extended to commerce, they have only abstained from doing so, under an anxious expectation, that some measure would be adopted, calculated to restore to them that portion of the Carrying Trade, which it was the object of the Navigation Laws to secure

to British Shipping, which object they conceived, would, under existing circumstances, be best attained by the restricting of the privilege of bonding the enumerated articles for home consumption, to importations in British Ships. Your Committee will not unnecessarily occupy attention by a repetition of the arguments in favor of this proposition, urged in the Memorial; but the principles of "reciprocity" being usually advanced as the unerring guide of commercial regulations, they cannot forbear adverting to the palpable inconsistency of Great Britain extending this privilege to foreign Shipping entering her ports, while it is denied to her own citizens in very many of them, and is not enjoyed by British Shipping in those of any other country whatever.

Your Committee are now brought to the consideration of the refusal of Their Lordships to entertain this proposition, on the ground of "their having been advised that its adoption would involve a violation of public faith." Your Committee trust it is almost unnecessary to remark, that could they view this question in the same light in which it has appeared to Their Lordships' advisers, no consideration could induce them to sanction it; and they are persuaded that they but express the sentiment of the great body of British Ship Owners, when they declare, that no extremity of difficulty or distress could induce them to seek relief by a compromise of good faith, individual or national, which, on the contrary, they would be foremost to stigmatize with decided reprobation: But Your Committee, with every deference for the opinions of those by whom Their Lordships are stated to have been *advised* that "the proposition could not be carried into effect without a violation of the engagements by which Great Britain is bound to other States," venture to question how far such advice would in itself, justify the decided declaration, that such violation is so plainly involved therein as to preclude the further discussion of its expediency; and from a careful examination of the Treaties constituting the engagements referred to, they cannot help entertaining serious doubts whether those engagements would actually be contravened by the proposition, even in its present form; while from the difference of the stipulations contained in the various treaties made under the authority conferred by the "Reciprocity of Duties Act," they presume still more confidently to question whether its adoption would, even in the opinion of the advisers of Their Lordships, be deemed to violate national faith, if confined to the importations from certain countries, in which Your Committee conceive would be included those from whose rivalry British Shipping has suffered most severely. Of the expediency of a reconsideration of the question under such a modification, Your Committee can entertain no doubt; of the strict right of this country

thus to legislate for the protection of its subjects, they are equally satisfied ; nor do they think it should be considered an unfriendly act, by those Foreign Powers who might be affected by the alteration, if, having by treaties with certain other States, barred ourselves from the adoption of a beneficial regulation in itself purely domestic, we refuse to render this disadvantage universal, and adopt the regulation where no such impediment exists.

In reference to the effects of such a measure on the general commercial interests of the country, your Committee do not apprehend any valid objection could be urged ; and with respect to the alleged possibility of retaliatory measures on the part of Foreign States, they cannot but remark, that from measures purely retaliatory, British Interests could sustain no injury, at all to be compared with the benefit to be derived from it ; and that if those to whose care the honor and the interests of the country are confided, are not prepared to despise and to repel, unfair and hostile dictation, the doom of the Shipping Interest is sealed, and the Ship Owners may spare themselves the task of future appeals for protection or assistance.

But Your Committee feel it impossible to dismiss this subject, without forcibly adverting to the cruelty of the situation in which the Ship Owner is placed, if it shall ultimately be found that, from the only efficient relief from his difficulties, he is actually debarred by Treaties, pledging the national faith, for a series of years, to the continuance of measures fatal to his interests, and detrimental to the public welfare. They cannot forget, that when parliamentary enquiry led to the first suggestion of a relaxation in our Navigation System, the proposition was strongly enforced on Parliament, by the argument, that although the alterations might be considered as experimental, or of doubtful expediency, as they were domestic regulations, they might be modified or revoked, "in the event of circumstances arising to render such modification essential to the protection of any of the great objects," (which, it was declared,) "every consideration of the national safety and power imposed the obligation of inflexibly maintaining."—(*Vide Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, on Foreign Trade.*) Nor can they fail to call to mind, the anxious solicitude with which Ship Owners themselves deprecated the concessions made to foreigners ; the prophetic warnings they urged on Their Lordships against them ; and the conclusive proofs by which they demonstrated the certain ruin that must ultimately involve every branch of the British Carrying Trade that should be exposed unprotected to the competition of foreigners : And if it shall now prove, that in neglect of all

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caution, in defiance of all remonstrance, and in contradiction to all demonstration, the Shipping interest has not only been sacrificed to a visionary experiment, but that the very application of a palliative to its difficulties has been rendered impracticable without a compromise of national honor, Your Committee are unwilling to trust themselves with the expression of the feelings, such a consideration is calculated to excite.

The next suggestion of the Memorialists referred to by Their Lordships, is that of an alteration in the relative rates of duty on European and British Colonial Timber, a proposition which is not only met by a decided refusal, but commented on with some asperity, from the alleged notoriety of the fact, that "since the period when the duties were fixed at their present amount, the annual importation of timber from British America has very much increased, and that even in the year 1826, it fell short of the extravagant importation of 1825, by a very inconsiderable amount, while the diminution in the importation from the Baltic in that year, is said to have been little short of one half." From the circumstance of a communication on this subject having been made to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whose opinion is said to be in entire concurrence with that of Their Lordships, Your Committee are led to infer, that financial difficulties are interposed to any reduction in the duty on Colonial Timber. To this Your Committee have only to reply by an expression of deep regret, as they are of opinion such a measure would be highly beneficial. But the objections to any increase on the duties charged on importations from the North of Europe appear to be, first, that those duties were fixed after much inquiry by a Committee of the House of Commons, in 1821, and secondly, that since that period, the importation has greatly increased. On this head it is painful to Your Committee to have to repeat the complaint of apparent harshness of dealing towards the Memorialists in the charge brought against them of having called for an alteration not justified by the actual state of the importations to which it refers. To them it appears that with this consideration the Memorialists had no concern whatever. The only object sought by them was, the suggestion of practical remedies for difficulties which they had reason to suppose were both admitted and deplored. Under this impression the proposition appears to have been offered by them as a remedial measure alone. It seems therefore no reasonable reply to their request for the adoption of a measure of relief, to advance the fact, that in the particular trade to which they wish further encouragement to be extended, an increase however considerable, has already taken place; nor does it appear more consistent to answer, that the subject has been considered six years ago, circumstances having since that period, materially changed.

But Your Committee cannot suffer the statements of Their Lordships to pass altogether undisputed, and still less can they permit them to remain unexplained. The increase in the importation of Colonial Timber, since the imposition of the duty, having been attended by a corresponding increase in that of Baltic Timber previous to the year 1826, prove only the increasing consumption of the commodity, attributable to various causes, among which must be included the natural extension of demand created by a rapidly increasing population; but it by no means disproves the position, that the relative proportions of the aggregate importation would have been more in favor of the Colonial Timber, had no such duty been imposed. It appears therefore a singular mode of reasoning, to contend, that when a channel is pointed out in which a portion of our unemployed Shipping might be advantageously engaged, the proposition should be rejected because the trade referred to, has already increased. Nor does the fact of the inconsiderable diminution in the importation of American Timber during the past year, at all bear out, in the judgement of Your Committee, the inferences drawn from it by Their Lordships. In the first place, when instituting a comparison between that diminution, and the falling off in the importation from the Baltic, it does not appear quite consistent with candid exposition to suppress the explanation, that the comparative returns being of the quantities of Timber alone, cannot exhibit the actual state of the relative imports, since from the absurd and impolitic mode in which the duties are imposed, a positively less amount is charged on the timber, when manufactured into deals, than when in its original state. The result of this regulation is not only that a premium is given to the employment of foreign labor, in the conversion of timber into deals, to the injury of the British laborer, but that a very large proportion of the gross import from the North of Europe, on which the duty is high, consisting of deals, which are entirely excluded from the return quoted by Their Lordships, the fact of relative proportions is exhibited in a most distorted and unfair point of view. Nor is this all. It has already been proved that a very large portion of the Ships admitted to registry in the past year, were the production of our American Colonies, and were strictly chargeable to the excitement of 1825, when they were constructed; but not being completed in that year, they were necessarily sent home in 1826. All these Ships imported cargoes, which, equally with the Ships, should be placed to the account of the "extravagant importation of 1825." And in addition to all, it is a fact well known to Your Committee, that the great reduction in Baltic Freights in 1826, threatening heavy loss to British Shipping, great numbers of Owners were induced to withdraw their Ships from that trade, and to import American Timber on their own

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account, a speculation in which they embarked from no desire of inordinate gain, but in the mere hope of securing a remunerating freight. But your Committee are further, unfortunately aware, that even this hope has been so entirely frustrated, that a large proportion of the timber so imported has been sold at an absolute sacrifice of the whole of the first cost, and that no inconsiderable portion is still remaining on hand, utterly unsaleable even at that sacrifice. With these appalling facts before them, it can scarcely be matter of surprise, that Your Committee, so far from coinciding with Their Lordships in the reasonings on which they ground their peremptory rejection of the prayer of the Memorialists, see in it only occasion for deep regret, that Their Lordships should assume such important conclusions from official returns, alone, unaccompanied by those explanations which might modify or altogether change the nature of the inferences justly to be drawn from them.

The next proposal of the Memorialists, that "Timber, Hemp, &c. delivered in performance of contracts for the supply of Government, should be imported exclusively in British Ships," is rejected on the ground of such preference being at variance with existing Treaties. This objection admits, of course, of no other reply than that which has been already given in a former part of this Report; but as a proof of the different spirit in which the obligations of Treaties are regarded by countries to which we have been so ready to concede advantages they are so incapable of appreciating or returning, Your Committee deem it right to mention, that although by the Treaty made with Prussia, under the authority of the Reciprocity of Duties Act, a cargo of salt may be imported into Prussia in a British Ship at the same rate of duty as in a Ship of that Country, yet that article being a Royal Monopoly, and the practice being for the Government only to purchase it when imported in a native Ship, the British Ship is virtually excluded from the trade in that commodity; and so far is this unfriendly and unfair principle carried, that a British Ship in a Prussian Port, having on board a small portion of salt for the use of her own crew, is absolutely prohibited from consuming it, and compelled to purchase what is requisite from His Prussian Majesty. In Sweden and other countries to which Great Britain has extended commercial advantages, her liberality is repaid by similar vexatious and injurious regulations; the avowed intentions of the Treaties are thus frustrated, if indeed their stipulations be not actually violated.

In conveying, in the succeeding portion of the letter, a decided rejection of all the propositions for relief from pecuniary burthens, which had

been submitted by the Memorialists, Their Lordships attempt to qualify the refusal by reminding the Ship Owners how much has been already done in this way for their relief, not only in the abatement and remission of taxes which peculiarly affected the Shipping interest, but also by putting an end to Custom House Fees, Quarantine and Levant Duties, Consular Rates, and other charges which had been long complained of as pressing heavily upon the Navigation of this Kingdom. On this subject it is far from the intention or wish of Your Committee, to disparage the disposition of His Majesty's Government to remedy abuses, or to undervalue the importance of some of those changes which have been effected in the Commercial regulations of the country, many of which, however, still imperatively require further revision. But it is impossible for them to avoid expressing their surprise at finding Quarantine and Levant Duties enumerated among the pecuniary remissions, as they could have scarcely conceived that Their Lordships could have been unacquainted with the fact, that these duties did not devolve on the Ship, but on the Goods; their removal therefore has benefited the Merchant and not the Ship Owner, who so far from even participating in the advantage, is subjected, since the alteration, to restrictions and impediments from the Quarantine Regulations more vexatious and buthensome than even those to which he was previously exposed. Nor can Your Committee consider with Their Lordships, that in a pecuniary point of view, much *has* been done for the relief of the Shipping interest; and coinciding as they do with the Memorialists in considering the further remissions requested, as objects of minor importance compared with the great point of protection from foreign competition, they cannot forbear recommending caution, lest by attaching weight to these insignificant and almost worthless details, the attention of Parliament and the public should be diverted from the consideration of the great principle, which should be unceasingly urged. They can at the same time only find in the refusal to grant these trifling boons, on the plea of the effect of such a remission of duties on the public revenue, a subject for the most humiliating reflections, and the most alarming anticipations.

Your Committee have now completed the painful task, of following Their Lordships through the succession of rejections with which they have met all those suggestions for the relief of the Shipping Interest, which they had themselves invited. If the views expressed by Their Lordships be correct, it appears evident that as objections of political expediency, honorable obligations, or pecuniary difficulty, are interposed to every measure that can be suggested, future appeal will be hopeless and

remonstrance vain. But Your Committee, confident that the whole of the Shipping case is misunderstood or misrepresented, and apprehensive of the inefficacy of further application to the Executive Government for relief, do not still despair of redress through the intervention of the Legislature. Disclaiming all wish for peculiar privileges to be extended to the Ship Owner, they cannot but believe, that when it shall appear to Parliament, that he is actually placed in the unprecedented situation of being condemned to struggle in hopeless competition with his foreign rival, without the slightest protection to counterbalance their overwhelming advantages, the delusion under which his case has hitherto been studiously wrapped in the mysterious details of Custom House Returns, must vanish, and the question exhibit itself plainly as one of principle alone, *whether he shall continue a solitary exception to the general rule on the faith of which his property was embarked, and under the departure from which it is now wrecked*, or whether that measure of protection shall be extended to him, which as far as Your Committee are aware, is afforded without exception to every other branch of British capital and industry. To obtain, then, the solemn and deliberate investigation of a Parliamentary Committee, they recommend the strenuous and united efforts of the Ship Owners; as before such a tribunal they cannot but entertain a confident reliance, that the misstatements by which interested and visionary opponents have succeeded in inducing the legislature to sanction a course of policy which has brought the Maritime Interests of Britain to the verge of destruction, will be disproved; the aggravated injustice of the measures adopted towards the Ship Owner will be demonstrated; and the paramount necessity for the restoration of protection established.

GEORGE FREDERICK YOUNG,
 GEORGE PALMER,
 WILLIAM TINDALL,
 WILLIAM RICHMOND,
 THOMAS FORREST,
 ROBERT ALEXANDER GRAY,
 W. WILLIAMS MORTIMER.

London, April 30th, 1827.

