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COLONIAL SHIPS.

COPY of a LETTER from the Honorary Secretary of the North American Colonial Association to the President of the Board of Trade, in reference to a Letter dated 28th May 1844, to the President of that Board, from G. F. Young, Esq., Chairman of the General Shipowners' Society.

(*Sir Robert Peel.*)

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
26 February 1846.

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COLONIAL SHIPS.

RETURN to an ADDRESS of the Honourable The House of Commons,
dated 26 February 1846;—for,

COPY of a LETTER from the Honorary Secretary of the North American Colonial Association to the President of the Board of Trade, in reference to a Letter, dated 28th May 1844, to the President of that Board, from *G. F. Young*, Esq., Chairman of the General Shipowners' Society, on the Subject of the Admission of Colonial-built Ships to the Privilege of British Registry, and of the Reply thereto.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed, 26 February 1846.

LETTER from *R. Carter*, Esq., Honorary Secretary of the North American Colonial Association, to the Right Honourable *W. E. Gladstone*, M. P., President of the Board of Privy Council for Trade, &c.

Sir,

No. 11, Leadenhall-street, 31 December 1844.

THE Committee of the North American Colonial Association having recently had their attention directed to a letter addressed to you by *G. F. Young*, Esq., the chairman of the Committee of the General Shipowners' Society, praying that a tax may be imposed on colonial-built ships on their admission to the privilege of British registry, which has been published in the Appendix to the Report of the Committee of the House of Commons on British Shipping, I am instructed most respectfully to request permission to submit to your consideration the views of this Committee thereon.

It appears to them that the proposed tax would be at the same time so unjust, since it would be charged upon the trade and industry of a portion only of Her Majesty's subjects, and so impolitic in singling out for such an infliction the inhabitants of the North American colonies, that they feel it would be both needless and improper for them to trouble you with arguments on the general question, which they are satisfied may safely be left in the hands of Her Majesty's Government; but they think it is their duty to the colonists whom they represent, to offer a refutation of some of the erroneous statements and assumptions contained in the letter of the Shipowners' Committee.

They have observed with surprise that the imposition of a tax upon colonial-built ships, the tendency of which must be to increase the cost of new vessels, is said to be desired by the shipowners in general.

The policy of this country has been directed of late years to the removal of restrictions from foreign trade and navigation, and has had the effect in great measure of reducing the British shipowner to a state of unprotected competition with his foreign rival; for the maintenance of which, economy in the cost and navigation of British ships is indispensable. It is not possible for the timber of Canada to compete with that of Norway, if the freight upon the former (forming a large proportion of the value) is to be enhanced by fiscal regulations increasing the price of the ship in which it is conveyed.

The competition of British with United States ships in the carriage of cotton from the American ports to England, is principally supported by the employment of colonial-built ships by the British shipowners; and the United States ships have so great an advantage, through the operation of their navigation laws, in the return freights to America, that it is impossible for British ships of great value to compete with American ships in the carriage of cotton. The inevitable consequence, therefore, of granting the demand made in the name of
British

ADMISSION OF COLONIAL-BUILT SHIPS

British shipowners, would be materially to injure two of the most important branches of carrying trade in which they are engaged, the timber trade from the North American colonies, and the American cotton trade.

It is asserted that the recent depression of the shipping interests from which the owners of colonial-built ships have suffered equally with the owners of those built in this country, is to be traced solely to the excess of production in colonial-built ships in the years 1839, 1840, and 1841, and that their production is governed by different laws from that of British-built ships.

These assertions appear to this Committee to be equally fallacious.

The inducement to build ships during the period referred to, was the same in the United Kingdom and in the colonies, viz. the deficiency in the then existing tonnage to supply the demand, and the consequent high price of ships, and correspondingly high rates of freight. Had not a single ship been produced in the colonies, it is evident that building would have increased at home until the deficiency were supplied to the same extent from the one source as it was in reality supplied from both, and the only difference would have been, that so large a demand on the building capabilities of the United Kingdom would have further enhanced the price of shipping, and greatly increased the distress of the shipowners, consequent on the revulsion from a state of activity and excitement to one of serious and general depression in the carrying trade of this country and the world.

Mr. Young appears to anticipate that the question under discussion may be considered as a shipbuilders' question, and, in the opinion of this Committee, it is entirely so. No doubt the introduction of colonial-built ships into the home markets at moderate prices has diminished the employment of shipbuilders in England, and curtailed their profits. It is true that colonial-built ships are less costly, and, generally speaking, less enduring than those built at Sunderland; but it is equally true, and perhaps in a greater degree, that the Sunderland ships are less costly and less enduring than those built in the River Thames; and if the Sunderland shipowner can to-day claim of the Government and Legislature that a differential duty shall be laid on the productions of his fellow-subject in North America, as a protection in favour of his own productions, there appears no valid reason why the London shipbuilder should not, to-morrow, be entitled to call for a similar duty to be imposed on Sunderland ships for his protection.

It is stated in Mr. Young's letter, that the combined advantage to the colonial shipbuilder of buying his timber at the place of its growth, and of carrying a cargo of timber to England on the first voyage of his ship, is equivalent to a bounty of 3*l.* or 4*l.* per ton in his favour. This statement is grossly erroneous. If the British builder, who uses colonial timber in the construction of his ship, is under the disadvantage of buying it charged with freight and other expenses, the colonial builder is, on the other hand, subject to the disadvantage of importing from England all the other component parts of his vessel, charged with similar expenses, and with duties much heavier than are now payable on colonial timber. This is the case with his iron, copper, canvass, cordage, and other stores; and, to crown all, the labour which he employs, forming one of the most important items in the expense of ship building, is also imported from home, and is more costly than the labour employed by his competitor at Sunderland, and the balance in the cost of building, if accurately struck, will be found to be in favour of the British builder.

The other presumed advantage on the side of the colonial shipbuilder is equally fallacious. If the ship built in Quebec carry to London or Liverpool a cargo of timber, the one built at Newcastle or Sunderland carries to Quebec a cargo of coals, earthenware, and other merchandize, and returns to England with a cargo of timber.

It appears that on this point, as well as throughout the letter under review, although it professes to be written on behalf of British shipowners generally, the views and interests of the shipbuilder have alone been consulted, for the comparison instituted between colonial and British-built ships can only mean, that the colonial shipbuilder has an advantage over the London shipbuilder, in the sale market of London, to the extent of the net profits resulting from the freight he has earned in bringing his new ship from Canada to London. This may well be admitted without laying any reasonable ground for the legislative remedy demanded.

This Committee have been furnished with the means of instituting a complete and fair comparison between the relative expenses and advantages of ship-building in England and the colonies. The ship "Feronia," of 531 tons old measure, and 591 tons new measure, was launched at Pictou, in Nova Scotia, in September 1842; and the ship "Woodbine," of 424 tons old measure, and 492 tons new measure, was launched at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, on the 3d April 1843. Both were built by Messrs. Stephen, Lowrey & Co., at their own establishments at the respective places, and materials of precisely the same character were employed in the construction and outfit of both ships: the timber required for the one built in England was sent home by the partner residing at Pictou, and the iron, copper, and other articles required for the construction and outfit of the one built at Pictou, were purchased and sent out by the partner residing at Newcastle; the freight and other expenses being in each case added to the prime cost of the materials. The two ships were classed A 1. in Lloyd's Register-book, for the same number of years, under the inspection of the same surveyor at Newcastle, and I have the authority of Mr. Lowrey, who is an experienced shipbuilder and owner, to say, that the quality and value of the two ships are as nearly as possible equal. The accounts of the two ships are now before me, as they stood at Newcastle in the spring of 1843, when the vessels were ready for sea, after having been classed, and the freight of the "Feronia," from Pictou, having been deducted from her cost, and the results are as follow:

	Tons	Cost.	Per ton, o. m.	Per ton, n. m.
Feronia - -	531 o. m.	£.4,395. 10. 6.	- £.8. 5. 7.	- £.7. 8. 9.
	591 n. m.			
Built at Pictou.				
Woodbine - -	424 o. m.	£.3,448. 18. 9.	- £.8. 2. 8.	- £.7. 0. 2.
	492 n. m.			
Built at Newcastle-upon-Tyne.				

Showing that, instead of a bounty of 3*l.* or 4*l.* per ton in favour of building in the colonies, as stated in Mr. Young's letter, there is a difference of 2*s.* 11*d.* per ton old measure, and 8*s.* 7*d.* per ton new measure, in favour of the British builder.

Another argument urged in Mr. Young's letter is, that the colonial-built ships are inferior in quality to British-built ships, and, being incorporated with the latter, tend to depreciate the character of the whole. I would, in the first place, observe, that if the inferiority of colonial ships were so great as Mr. Young states it to be, his complaint of their greater cheapness would be completely answered.

The two arguments appear to be incompatible with each other. But it is not a fact that the colonial ships are universally or generally of so inferior a description. No doubt, when the demand for ships was most pressing, many vessels were built for sale, both in the colonies and at home, of very inferior descriptions. It is readily admitted that the North American colonies do not produce any ships equal to the best of those built in England; but this Committee are prepared to affirm, that a large portion of the ships built in the North American colonies is far superior, in quality and workmanship, to many ships built for sale in England.

It is true, that by the rules of Lloyd's registry of British and Foreign shipping, North American colonial ships rank in quality with the most inferior in the world; but it is also true, that one half of the Committee, by whom those rules are enacted are elected by the Committee of the General Shipowners' Society, and that the same gentlemen are among the most active and influential members of both bodies. The colonial shipowners and builders have long complained that in exercising the delicate office of fixing the relative value of their own property, and that of the colonists, the gentlemen in question have been unable to divest their minds of a natural bias in their own favour; and consequently they are not willing to admit that entire reliance is to be placed in the authority to which the Shipowners' Committee so confidently refer.

This Committee indignantly repel the assertion that the interests of humanity are involved in the question as brought before you in Mr. Young's letter. If the proposed measure were to prevent navigation by unseaworthy ships of whatever build, and whether new or old, the plea of humanity might properly be introduced; but the tax is proposed to be imposed only on colonial-built ships, and practically, if so imposed, would be paid on them only when new.

Now it is well known that on account of their greater buoyancy colonial-built ships are "good sea boats," and I do not hesitate to assert that a New Brunswick ship of the best description is safer in heavy weather than the finest ship ever produced in the River Thames. Many instances are known to members of this Committee of colonial-built ships, with heavy cargoes of sugar, having survived, with little or no damage to themselves or their cargoes, the effects of hurricanes, in which the finest British-built ships, with similar cargoes, have foundered, within a few miles of them; and I also adduce the case of a New Brunswick built ship of 250 tons burthen, which arrived in London with a cargo of sugar from Jamaica, having suffered trifling damage from a hurricane, in which a Government packet of about the same tonnage, and of course without cargo, went down within sight of her, and all on board perished.

In conclusion, the Committee direct me to express their sanguine hope that you will not deem it either just or politic to burthen the industry of the North American colonies with the proposed tax; that you will not consider such a tax required for the benefit of the British shipping interests, on the ground of greater cheapness or other assumed advantages; that you will be convinced that the interests of humanity are not in any degree involved in the question; and that you may be pleased to make to the Committee such a communication of the views of Her Majesty's Government on the subject, as may enable them to allay the apprehensions to which the publication of Mr. Young's letter has given rise in the colonies.

I have, &c.
(signed) *Robert Carter*, Hon. Secretary.

Office of Committee of Privy Council for Trade,
Whitehall, 8 January 1845.

Sir,

I AM directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 31st ultimo, relative to the proposition of the General Shipowners' Association for taxing colonial-built ships on their admission to the privilege of British registry, which my Lords have perused with attention; and I am to state, in reply, that my Lords thought it due to the Committee of the General Shipowners' Association that they should not place any obstacle in the way of the publication of the letter from the chairman of that body, expressing the views it had been led to adopt on a proposition of great moment; but as the consequence of that publication appears to have been to draw attention to that proposal, and to create some apprehension in the minds of those whom it immediately concerns, my Lords deem it their duty to apprise you, for the information of the Committee of the North American Colonial Association, that they have at no time conveyed on the part of Her Majesty's Government any sanction or encouragement to the project, nor are they now inclined to view it with favour.

R. Carter, Esq.

I am, &c.
(signed) *J. MacGregor*.

LETTER from *G. F. Young*, Esq., Chairman of the Committee of the General Shipowners' Society, on the Subject of the Admission of Colonial-built Ships to the Privilege of British Registry.

To the Right Honourable *W. E. Gladstone*, President of the Board of Privy Council for Trade, &c. &c. &c.

Sir,

In the name and on behalf of the Committee of the General Shipowners' Society, I avail myself of the permission accorded to me at an interview with
which

which you some time since favoured me, by now taking the liberty of officially addressing you on the most important subject which at that interview I ventured personally to press on your attention: "The justice and policy of some legislative regulation on the admission of colonial-built ships to the privilege of British registry." Irrespective of the variety of circumstances of which the British shipowners have long complained, and on which this Committee are aware that much difference of opinion continues to exist, this particular question is regarded by shipowners in general with so deep an interest, that it appears to be imposed as a duty on the Committee to urge its consideration on Her Majesty's Government, which I trust will be admitted as my apology for this intrusion, as well as for any prolixity into which its examination may unavoidably lead me.

I abstain, Sir, from troubling you with argument in proof of the unexampled depreciation to which shipping property has during the last two years been subjected, and the fearful difficulties with which the British shipowner has at this moment to contend; because I believe these are facts as generally admitted as they are in themselves indisputable; and I readily assume that, admitting them, it must be the desire of Her Majesty's Government, as I know it is your own, to adopt any measure offering a rational prospect of relief to maritime commerce, that may not be inconsistent with the principles which should regulate the commercial policy of this great country, and with the just claims of other interests.

For the removal of present distress indeed, the Committee fear they must chiefly trust to the effects of time, and the energy and perseverance of shipowners; but it is to make some provision against the recurrence of such disastrous emergencies that they would now invoke the aid of Her Majesty's Government in furthering the measure they recommend, in order that, after they shall have succeeded in surmounting their present difficulties, they may not again be plunged into similar embarrassments by a repetition of the useless and improvident importation of that class of ships of which they believe the present excess of tonnage will be found almost entirely to consist; and as on the correctness of this belief must obviously depend the propriety of your entertaining the remedy they suggest, it may be right that I should, in the first instance, submit to you the reasons that have led them to the conviction that the present excess of tonnage beyond the legitimate demands of British maritime commerce, consists entirely of ships constructed in, and imported from the British North American colonies, in which principally colonial shipbuilding is carried on.

The year 1838 was the last in which the shipping interest can be said to have enjoyed any reasonable degree of general prosperity. In that year the tonnage of the empire was 3,041,729 tons, and the British tonnage entered inwards in the foreign trade 2,636,631 tons; it consequently appears that from an aggregate of 3,041,729 tons, a sufficient supply of shipping was derived to meet the demands of a foreign trade amounting to 2,636,631 tons, coincidentally with a reasonable return to the shipowner on his invested capital.

In the year 1842, the entries inwards in the foreign trade had increased to 3,130,237 tons; which, following the same proportions as in 1838, would have required for its supply a tonnage of shipping of 3,611,119 tons; but instead of this legitimate increase, the registered tonnage of the empire had advanced in 1842 to no less than 3,821,574 tons, being an excess of 210,455 tons beyond the effective demand, all which (the coasting trade having remained nearly stationary) was thrown into the foreign trade; and this excess, a brief examination will suffice to prove, is attributable entirely to the improvident and un-called-for importation of colonial-built ships during the three preceding years.

The average quantity of these ships admitted to registry during the ten years from 1828 to 1838, was 50,920 tons; the average quantity admitted in the three years 1839, 1840, and 1841, was 128,390 tons, being an annual excess of 77,470 tons; thus, in that brief period, no less than 232,410 tons of this cheap and inferior shipping beyond the legitimate production, as tested by that of the ten preceding years, was poured at once into the shipping and freight market; the total colonial tonnage admitted in the three years named amounting to 385,170 tons, and exceeding by upwards of 40,000 tons the whole quantity required to replace all the losses in the British commercial marine during that period. By this enormous production, the value of all

other ships was unprecedentedly reduced, and the most ruinous depression of freights caused in almost every part of the world. Nor can this over-production be regarded as likely to prove an isolated case; for while in this country ships are built chiefly by those who are interested in their employment, and the supply is likely therefore to be in the long run reasonably proportioned to the demands of maritime commerce, it must not be overlooked that those which are imported from the North American colonies are rarely built with reference to such considerations, their construction being either stimulated by any demand for timber the growth of the colonies, for which they literally serve as packing cases, obtaining the bounty of a homeward freight; or resulting from the necessity for remittances to England, in payment of advances made for general colonial objects; in both which cases they are consigned home as articles of merchandize, to be sold with their cargoes at any price on arrival.

I entreat, Sir, your candid consideration to this state of facts: the prudent shipowner, acting on sound principles in the investment of his capital, suddenly finds all his calculations deranged, his property depreciated, and his returns annihilated, by the unexpected competition of a mass of tonnage thrown suddenly on the market; constructed with great rapidity, and forced into sale or employment by a cheapness, partly the result of its intrinsic worthlessness, and partly of advantages extended to the colonial but denied to the home producer. Against such a contingency no caution can avail, no foresight can guard; it is, as shipowners universally believe, one of the prominent causes of the present depression of the shipping interest; it will be the fruitful source of perpetual discouragement to the pursuits of maritime commerce; and I submit that it calls loudly for the prompt and authoritative intervention of the Legislature, on grounds both of individual justice and of national policy.

Having thus, I hope, demonstrated the existence of the evil, and traced its cause, I am next led to the consideration of the compatibility of the remedy suggested by the committee, that of the imposition of a moderate duty on the admission of colonial-built ships to the full privileges of British registry, as being in accordance with those principles of public policy without which it would be as inconsistent for shipowners to ask, as I know it would be impossible for you to grant, that sanction and assistance which it is the object of my present application to entreat.

I am fully aware, Sir, that on this question scruples of a powerful nature exist, but I trust to be able satisfactorily to prove that they rest on no solid foundation; fully persuaded that to discourage, by a moderate tax on importation, the improvident introduction of colonial-built ships into the maritime trade of the mother country, would involve no violation of colonial rights, and an insignificant sacrifice of colonial interests; that it would be in harmony with all the analogies of British law; that it is required for the maintenance of important objects of British policy, and that it is demanded by a just regard for a class of British interests inferior to none in national importance, I appeal with strong confidence to your dispassionate consideration.

I would first briefly advert to the abstract justice of such a measure:—

That the colonies should be treated as integral parts of the British empire, and Her Majesty's subjects therein placed on a footing of perfect equality with those who are British-born, are positions which the shipowners may well afford to admit as incontrovertible; but in making this admission it is obvious that the equality is supposed to be real, and not one existing in name alone: to its existence no condition can be more indispensable than that burthen and privilege should be co-relative and co-equal; but the burthens imposed on Her Majesty's subjects at home and abroad are not and cannot be made equal. Not only is the colonist exempted from contribution towards the enormous taxation levied on the native subject for payment of the interest of the national debt and the maintenance of the dignity of the Crown, but his very protection from foreign aggression is provided at the cost of the mother country. He is free to import for his use articles of foreign production, without the cost being enhanced, as at home, by those fiscal exactions and regulations which the necessities of revenue or protection impose on the home consumer. Until recently the very timber of which his ship is composed was subject to duty on importation into this country; and although this and many other discriminating

nating duties connected with shipping no longer exist, sufficient distinction remains to demonstrate the inequality of burthen to be indisputable and great. On this ground to countervail the disqualification on the home produce, by an equivalent tax on the colonial production, is not to violate but to maintain the principle of equality, and involves consequently no infraction of colonial rights. But if the abstract justice of such a measure be clear, its accordance with the principles by which the commercial intercourse between the mother country and the colonies as actually regulated by law, is even more so. A glance at the schedule of customs duties will suffice to show the universal admission of the principle of taxation of articles of colonial manufacture, for the protection of the home producer. Manufactures of cotton, silk, or woollens can only be imported from the British possessions on payment of a duty of five per cent.; copper, iron, and lead, at various rates of charge. Oils, skins, soap, starch, bricks, tiles, and almost every article is taxed, and all for protection and not for revenue. Why, then, it is asked, should ships alone be exempt? If it be contended that this is rather a shipbuilder's than a shipowner's question, surely it may be answered, that it constitutes the strongest argument against the objection, that the shipowner himself, the consumer of the article imported, complains the most loudly of its unrestricted importation, as contrary to his wishes and injurious to his interests.

In the course of the debates in Parliament on the Canadian Corn Bill, it cannot, Sir, have escaped your recollection, that it was justly and forcibly urged as an argument to quiet the apprehensions of the British agriculturists lest domestic production should be injured by the free admission of colonial wheat into the ports of this country, that the cost of transport of so bulky an article across the Atlantic constituted in itself an important protection to the British grower. In the case of the colonial-built ship, the argument will be perceived to be directly reversed: first, by constructing the ship at the place where the timber is produced, a saving of the whole cost of transport on the quantity consumed in the construction, is directly effected; and secondly, by loading the timber as cargo, a freight is earned on its conveyance. These combined advantages operate as a direct bounty on colonial shipbuilding, amounting to from 3 *l.* to 4 *l.* per ton, and constitute a serious disqualification to the competing British shipowner, who has to purchase either the dearer timber of this country, or the timber of the colonies enhanced by the cost of freight and charges of importation for the construction of his ship, which, when completed, he has to send to North America in ballast, to bring home the very timber which the colonial ship loads at the port of construction.

Passing from reasoning founded on individual claims to those which are connected with public policy, I would venture very earnestly to press on your attention, first, the danger of permitting this maritime country to become in any considerable degree dependent for the building of the shipping, by which its vast commerce is to be conducted, on any extrinsic source of supply. I feel so sensibly, Sir, how much more this consideration falls within the province of the statesman than that of the shipowner, that I abstain from urging those arguments which the subject will without doubt suggest to your own mind: but it cannot be out of place, that I should assure you that the competition of colonial-built shipping has been and is now operating as a direct and powerful discouragement to shipbuilding in this country: a discouragement that may ere long stimulate to increasing production in colonies not destined perhaps to remain permanently possessions of the British Crown, and which may, sooner than many expect, prove formidable rivals in naval warfare, as well as in maritime commerce.

The next general consideration I would urge, is that which is derived from the quality of the ships constructed in the colonies. Whatever be the circumstances which have led to the proud pre-eminence which Great Britain has attained in the maritime commerce of the world, it can scarcely admit of doubt that the maintenance of her position in that respect must be greatly dependent on the universality of confidence in the quality of her commercial marine. This consideration derives great additional weight from the active and increasing competition to which British shipowners find themselves exposed in every part of the world. Every nation is labouring to encourage its shipping; all are improving, some in an extraordinary degree, the quality and construction of their ships; relative excellence is becoming increasingly the standard by which

the merchant is determined in selecting tonnage for his shipments ; and if, while the ships of other nations are advancing, British tonnage be allowed to deteriorate in quality, how can it be expected that it should maintain its position in general estimation ? A reference to the rules of Lloyd's registry of British and foreign shipping will prove that, in the opinion of those on whose judgment the most deserved reliance is placed, North American colonial ships rank in quality with the most inferior in the world ; and hence it is clear that if that class of vessels be allowed gradually to supersede tonnage of British build, the evils I have adverted to will become imminent and inevitable. I know it may be urged that motives of interest will, by the very arguments I have advanced, operate to induce the English shipowner to maintain the quality of his ship on a level with that of the shipping of other countries. If left to the simple exercise of his unfettered judgment, the reply would be unanswerable ; but I have shown that it is from causes irrespective of his volition, and beyond his control, that these ships are produced ; and being admitted to perfect equality of privilege with British-built vessels, cheapness will force them into employment, in spite of the acknowledged inferiority of their quality.

The last argument with which I shall trouble you, is one which I am persuaded will with you, Sir, be by no means the least forcible ; that of humanity. The fearful loss of life and property consequent on the insufficient state in which ships are sent to sea, is an evil so deplorable as to have powerfully excited public sympathy, and to have induced, on two recent occasions, the intervention of legislative inquiry. A reference to the records of those inquiries will confirm all that has been advanced as to the inferior quality of these ships, and will show how large a comparative portion of the losses that annually afflict humanity, occur in the cheap and inefficiently-built ships imported from the North American colonies. The competition they introduce compels the owners of other ships to vie with them in inefficiency, instead of rivalling each other in excellence ; and I scruple not to say that all endeavours to check the evil will be vain, unless the system be rendered such as to afford encouragement to the production of the best, instead of stimulating the construction of the worst description of vessels. In the name therefore of humanity, still more strongly than on the plea of policy or the claims of interest, I would venture to express a hope that, disregarding those obstacles which the supposed necessity for adherence to certain economical principles may interpose, you will be disposed to afford your sanction to the measure which we suggest.

Finally, Sir, in advocating the check on improvident and pernicious production we propose, it is right that I should explain that it is by no means the desire of the committee that any impediment should be thrown in the way of the colonial shipowner in the fair pursuit of his trade as a colonist. For all such purposes we believe a colonial register will suffice ; but if there be any case in which, either in his intercolonial or foreign intercourse, the want of a British register would injuriously affect his interests, the regulations of colonial registration may easily be extended to meet the difficulty. Nor is exclusion of colonial-built ships our object ; but just and salutary regulation alone. We ask only, therefore, such a tax on their admission to the full privileges of British registry, as shall place domestic and colonial production on a footing of reasonable equality ; a tax which the better class of such ships could without serious inconvenience bear, and which would only operate as a discouragement to the production of those which I have endeavoured to prove ought equally to be discountenanced on principles of justice, of policy, and of humanity.

I have, &c.

(signed) *George Frederick Young,*
Chairman of the Committee.

72, Cornhill, 28 May 1844.