



A REVIEW
OF THE SHIPPING SYSTEM
OF
THE EAST-INDIA COMPANY;
WITH
SUGGESTIONS FOR ITS IMPROVEMENT,
TO SECURE THE CONTINUANCE OF
THE CARRYING TRADE TO THIS COUNTRY;
AND THE
ADVANTAGES OF THE INDIAN COMMERCE
TO
THE COMPANY.

TO THE
PROPRIETORS OF EAST-INDIA STOCK.

THE Notoriety of the Individual Traffic to and from India, the Extent of it, the Decision on a late Trial in the Court of King's Bench, the Introduction of East-India Produce in neutral Vessels to Europe, even from an Enemy's Port by the Intervention of British Agents, to the manifest Injury of the Company, and the fair Trader; call for some Interference to preserve our exclusive Trade: and as the limited State of our Shipping must give Rise and Countenance to these Measures, and the Court of Directors have not thought themselves authorized to make any Alteration or Addition to the System their Constituents have framed—This Tract is submitted to your Consideration, to shew the Necessity of some Modification, and with a hope of its Adoption, as a Remedy for the Evils therein noticed.

I am,

Your most faithful,

And obedient humble Servant,

JOSEPH COTTON.

LONDON,

26th of December, 1798.

A R E V I E W
OF THE
SHIPPING SYSTEM
OF THE
EAST-INDIA COMPANY,
&c.

THE Shipping System of the East-India Company, independent of the professed Objects of Security to their Cargoes, and the Defence of their Settlements, involves many Interests;—the maritime Strength and Prosperity of this Country, the Extent and Certainty of its Revenue, so far beyond any other Branch of Commerce, that much Surprise has been excited at the little Attention as a national Object it has shared, and the Unconcern manifested by the Public at large, in the Disputes which it has occasioned.

The Contests between the Freight and Freighter were often high, always serious, and attended with most unpleasant Altercations; still the Wisdom of our Predecessors, was not to break the Connexion.

Much has the Point been laboured to impress an Idea that the former Courts acted in their Decisions under the Influence of the old Shipping Interest; and every Director who composed them, must feel the Importance of such a Charge.

A reference to the Contests since 1778, will shew the Court in most instances fixed Terms, and compelled the Owners to accept them; but the daily Improvements in Shipping and Navigation—the comparative smaller Interest for Money invested therein, on account of this Security—the Influx of Wealth, and the number of Officers who were Competitors for a Command, all tended to a Reduction of the Freights.

The Introduction of new Ships on reduced Terms, has been practised in repeated Instances, and thus the high Freights were moderated by every Competition*. But it is obvious, there is a Point where Competition must cease: viz. when the Rate of Freight is reduced below the fair and equitable Standard, and some indirect Measures are to make up the Deficiency. Though this Practice may serve for a Time, it cannot have that Permanency, or equitable Basis, whereon to establish a System; and Discredit attaches on all Parties concerned.

The Competition formerly, was for a Participation of the high Freight, and the Contest between the old and new Owners who

* Sir R. Hotham, Mr. Brough, Mr. Fiott, Mr. Curtis.

should supply the Company, certainly argued the object was worth it, or had some Equivalent attached.

Having professed my Determination both in Writing and otherwise, to adhere to the System of open Competition, I hope I shall have Credit for such Intentions ; nothing can more effectually manifest them, than an Endeavor to meliorate *that* System ; by grafting thereon some of those Advantages which the former one possessed, and it may be capable of. In its present State the Court may be involved in frequent Controversy, and the Company ultimately in Loss or Difficulty.

It will be admitted a Point of some Consequence to have an established systematic Plan. One leading Principle only is determined on, but the want of corresponding Detail or Regulation, leaves the Company open to Impositions, which, was the Whole complete and connected, it would be protected from.

One of the most important Bye-Laws under the Head of Shipping, was, that the Owners should be compelled to let the Ship be eighteen Months on the Stocks before Launching ; * common Attention to the Timber of the Country required Precautions to prevent the quick Decay of it, as well as the Strength and consequent Safety attached to the Ship by so doing ; and if this was needful when the Ships were permitted to go only four Voyages, how much more so when their Allotment is fix, and their Repairs are on the Commencement of the fourth Voyage ?

* The Calcutta and Walpole, that went out in the Spring, 1798 ; were not more than Ten Months on the Stocks.

This Palladium has been termed unnecessary, and the Words of the present Bye-Law are, “as long as reasonably may be.” This leaves the Matter to the determination of Judges who are fluctuating, and the door open for Application and Favor, where there should be none; the same Law may not be administered to all, and every Owner will be desirous of having his Capital six Months earlier employed, if it can be done.

The Construction of the words “a reasonable Time, it is presumed cannot be less for six Voyages than when the Ships went but four. The opinion of the Committee of Shipping will, no doubt, be the Criterion; but I should be sorry to have this essential Point left even to my own Determination.

Some few Instances have been quoted of Ships hastily built having worn well, but all Experience is against this Maxim, and the Practice of His Majesty’s Dock Yards, (where they would not intentionally err,) is against this principle.

Inspection, that necessary Guarantee to the Company as their own Insurers, may be supposed to be as little useful, for it appears in the Shipping Papers now in the Hands of the Proprietors, that four Times inspecting a Ship built at Liverpool, is all that is requisite for the Company’s Security. Under this persuasion,—the daily Visits to Ships building in the River must be considered as a needless Task. Yet certain Benefit, and Security, as well as Convenience, does accrue from the repeated Examination of those confidential Officers whom we have so long and so justly depended on.—These are,

The Surveyor, his Deputy, and Assistant.

The Master Attendant, his Deputy, and Assistant.

Some of the former, are in the daily Practice of visiting Ships that are building, examining each Timber, and every Plank, and article of Smith's Work, and as nothing of the Material escapes their Notice, so the Workmanship is equally liable to their daily Observation. The rest of the Business falls under the Cognizance of the Master Attendant, and his Assistants; and it is but Justice to state, how well they have fulfilled their respective Duties. The Experience we have had will better speak their Eulogy, than any thing I can offer. Indeed, the Checks on the Builder and Owner are such, as to prevent either inferior Work or Materials; and though they little need it, the Officers are checks on each other.

That this cannot exist at the Out-Ports is very evident, and to delegate this Trust of Surveying to any Individual, however high in Ability or Character, and at a distance from the controlling Power of the Committee of Shipping; would be opening a door to Neglect or Imposition; and would also be an Imputation on our Officers or ourselves for tolerating such an unnecessary expensive Establishment as we have had for Forty Years. If Sets of Surveyors must be appointed for every Out-Port where Ships are contracted to be built, it will open a field for Imposition and Speculation that may grow injurious to the Company, especially when the Surveyor is to be paid by the Builder, as at present.

The Ships now building at Liverpool have not been seen above Four Times, by one of the Company's established Surveyors; and
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the Doctrine that, in contiguous Yards, daily or weekly Examination should be needful, at an increase of Trouble and Expence to all Parties; and yet when built at an Out-Port four or five Visits only are requisite, is inexplicable; because it militates against common Sense, Experience, and a Practice which the Company have been tenacious of for many Years; and the Precedent it has established is another Inroad into the protecting Part of the System, without any apparent Benefit to the Company.

Under such Circumstances of Inspection, every Owner will build at an Out-Port, where Labor and Timber is cheapest; and this brings us naturally to the Consideration of the Policy and Eligibility of building at them in any Instance.

It is manifestly unfavorable to the Company, if Inspection constitutes a necessary Part of the System; and Winds and Weather proving adverse, the Ships might not reach the Port of London, so as to conform to the Periods of Lading and Dispatch, which suited the Company's Arrangement; and a Loss would disappoint them of the Tonnage. The Accommodation to the Company in this and many other Points is certainly worth something in the rate of Freight.

When the Building of 800 Ton Ships was confined to two or three Yards in the River, little Competition could arise to lower the Price; but there are a dozen Yards at present where such Ships may be built, and this is sufficient to secure all the Competition requisite; Mr. Humble, of Liverpool, building in the River,
(which

(which he has done) destroys the Monopoly which has been asserted to exist, equally with his doing so at an Out-Port.

The Permission to build the Company's 800 Ton Ships at the Out-Ports abstracted from the Reasons hitherto urged, "is a momentous Measure;" because, to use the emphatic Words of an Honorable Baronet, "if the Principle be admitted that the lowest Offers are to be accepted, the Out-Ports can build cheapest, and "it will be a *complete Exclusion* to the Port of London."*

Affuredly this involves Matter of the first Importance to the Company, to the Nation, to the Peace of the Metropolis, and the Welfare of Individuals. Some Characters may treat these Apprehensions as chimerical; and think that nothing is to be dreaded from the Innovation, and that any Risk should be hazarded to gain a Reform in this Line, and Tonnage at a cheaper Rate. But running from one Extreme to its Opposite, is surely neither rational or politic. We have seen a total Subversion of established Usages by such Speculations; and they are little conversant in Politics or Business, who will not consent to the Correction of Abuses by patient Methods; but plunge at once into radical Reform. Let us not be the Dupes of our own Imagination, to fancy the Defects in the new Manufacture will be guarded against,

* There will be no Limit in the Out-Ports between the Land's End and the North of Scotland on the present Plan; and though the late Tenders have, except in one or two Instances, been for building in the River, yet it is understood to be still open to every Port in the Kingdom, when it suits them to offer.

which

which could not be remedied in the old, without tearing the Web to pieces.

Under the System suggested to the Court, and which I shall by and by introduce to Notice, a general Participation in Ship-building for the Company's Employ would be established; and thus *new* Ships of the lesser Description be engaged instead of *old* ones, competent Officers to command them, and every possible Security consistent with low Freight given, not only to the Company but to the Proprietors of privileged Goods, and to the Insurers of them.

Another Trespas on the former Regulations, has been in the Engagement of Shipping for Six Voyages certain, which have never been inspected by any Surveyor, though built in the River; and many have been the Efforts, to introduce others built at the Out-Ports, and Indian-built Shipping, as regular Ships for permanent Employ. This would have decided against all Inspection, except what could be had of the Ship when built; and therefore in the Teeth of those Precautions which have been so long the Criterion with the Company. The Employment of Indian-built Shipping, involving great political Considerations, shall be reserved for farther Observation to the latter Pages.

If what has hitherto been deemed the Safeguard to the Company, in building their Ships, is thus dispensed with; and if we look to the other Parts of the System, which regards the Navigation and good Conduct of them, it must appear to every unprejudiced Mind, that dangerous Innovations, under the fascinating Idea of cheap Freights, are on foot.

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The Experience and Ability of Persons long in the Employ, has been thought of so little consequence as not to merit a Stipulation in their Favor, or to be worth any Addition of Freight however small. Nay, by the Sum reimbursed them for the Command, they are as it were bought off from any such Pretensions. Whoever can get a Ship built for him to command, though he may have passed only three Voyages as an Officer in your Service, to India, and back ; is admitted as eligible, if his Age be no Impediment. Such a Case may now readily exist, and though this held equally under the former System, it should now be corrected ; the Voyages being so short, and Opportunities of gaining a Command recurring so frequently on the present Plan. Of the Ships building and lately built, few old Captains will succeed to the Command. Thus Inexperience will have the Preference ; and without Impeachment of the Character or Talents of those who do succeed, the Principle must be admitted to be wrong. The uncertain Tenure by which the new Captains hold their Situation, their Instability, when arrived at the Summit of their Wishes, which a Casualty they could neither prevent nor avoid renders formidable ; must suggest Expedients for Independence, which were not before thought of, at the Company's Risk and Expence ; and a Succession of Juniors will always be employed, to the Detriment of the Service, and to the Prejudice of the Company's Concerns.

This Point leads to the great and important Question of the Sale of Commands, which it was the professed Object to remedy.

This Measure, so long reprobated, so often contended against, and considered as the very Cause of the high Freight, and all the Evils of the former System, is now thought impracticable to prevent. Nay, whilst it was combated by all the Advocates for free and open Competition, Bargains were made for the new Ships they introduced; and since the complete Establishment of the System, we have Reason to believe, that either in the Transfer of the Shares, or in some other Way, a Consideration is given to the original Contractor for the Privilege of nominating a Commander. The Company are thus receiving, in their Freight, the Value of the Command. The Oaths and Bond do not apply so as to prevent it. And though some farther Regulation has been adopted, the following occurs to me as the most adviseable, and only Remedy.

“ That the Tender of every Ship should express the Captain’s
 “ Name; this will prevent the Job of contracting, and then hawk-
 “ ing the Command about for Sale; and the Owners who tender
 “ the Ship being Parties to the Oath, Bond, and first Charter-
 “ Party, will effectually prevent a Consideration being paid in the
 “ Outset.” What was done by Sir R. H. in the Case of the Royal
 Admiral will otherwise be perpetuated; and if the full Import of
 the Bye-Law be attended to, I do not see how a Ship can be
 allotted to any one tendering, who does not mean to continue an
 Owner; for the Bye-Law was intended to prevent Jobs by an
 Agent, and to have the real and bona-fide Owners Contracting
 Parties

Parties with the Company, and which in no Case ought ever to be dispensed with.

By the present Bye-Law, where two Ships are tendered at the same Price, the Lot is to determine who shall build: if one should be tendered with an experienced Commander, and the other with a Person who has never before filled the Station, does not Reason dictate, and would not every Individual in his own Case decide, that the Preference should be given to the former?

In the Appendix (A.) will be seen the difference in Price at what a Ship may be tendered, and how much the Value of the Command will lower the Rate of Freight from 21*l.* 10*s.* if the Captain submits to furnish 5000*l.* toward the Ship, without Interest or Dividends:

If such Arrangements and Bye-Laws are not thought necessary in the present Day, still some systematic Plan, some full and precise Outline and Detail should be drawn; which would embrace every Point of Consequence, and put a Period to Controversy. Whilst the Regulations are undefined, the Whole is subject to Variation, from the different Sentiments of the Committee at different Periods; and the Influence of powerful Applications. It is painful to be liable to them; and the Line once drawn, Relief will be extended to every Member of the Court and Committee, and not less to those who apply.

A Regulation should also be made respecting Ships being taken up, as they arrive at St. Helena, or in the Downs: It may so happen,

that Two Ships built at the same Time, and let on the same Terms, fail together on their first Voyage, by the Exigencies of the public Service, one may remain a Season longer in India than the other, and perhaps arriving late in the Season she does come Home, is not taken up till the following Year; at which Time, her Consort will arrive from her second Voyage, and may be going on her third when the other is only on her second; and, on their Return, one will have earned Three, the other only Two Freights: Again, a Ship abroad, that may be loaded homeward before another arrives, is detained till they are ready to sail, the latter Ship, or Ships, by failing better, just on their Arrival, by an Effort first drop Anchor, and thus have the Priority of being engaged. The Ship which the Company's Affairs had detained a Season, and the One detained after Lading, ought to have the Priority of those Ships she sails with in being again engaged, and as it is a Rule they may all benefit by, so it serves as a Protection to all alike, under such hard Events.

Should fair and open Competition really mean the Extension of Building to every Port in the Kingdom (which has been contended for by many) and the lowest Rate of Freight is to be decisive; there is neither Option or Responsibility on the Part of the Directors. All Discussion thereon is precluded, and Evils of uncommon Magnitude must arise from such a general Outline; the Principle of Competition without limit, is the wildest of all possible Theories, and too like the Doctrines of the present day on other Subjects. I am not an
 Enemy

Enemy to the Principle, but wish to be hostile to all the Follies, Impositions, and Exactions of every System, and would as readily have opposed them in the old as in the new.

If the present outline of System admits of no Modification, it is peculiarly oppressive, or may be made so by its Application. Let me quote the recent Instance of Captain Patton, of the Ocean, one of those Commanders who, with Captain Farquharson, by superior Skill, Conduct, and Management, saved a Fleet of great Importance to the Company: This Gentleman, from the Exigencies of the Service, went a circuitous Passage to China, and his Ship was lost on an Island little known to English Navigators, and the Labours of his Life swallowed up. He has now no Prospect of Employ, but by Permission to rebuild his Ship, which is not thought admissible, "even at the Price others are hired under the present System," and which Permission, would neither infringe on, or overthrow any Part of the Principle on which it is founded—thus, the Intention of the Proprietors—so strongly expressed in Favor of the Commanders, is of no avail*.

The Principle of free and open Competition having been acted upon and established, it really behoves the Executive Body to recommend every possible Improvement of the present System, for the Adoption of the Proprietors; and particularly to guard against such Innovations as are hostile to the Interests of the Country—

* See the Resolutions on the Merit of the Commanders, and that the Change of System should be as little injurious as possible.

however

however the Company may be protected:—the Door is not shut
fully against Improvement.

The Extent and Importance of our Risques on the Ships, the Length of their Voyages, and the large Establishment of their Crews, make a Code of Maritime Law very necessary, beyond what is adopted for other Merchant Ships; and the repeated Instances of Infubordination, for want of Regulations authorized by the Company, and having the Sanction of Government, threaten the most serious Consequences, and is also a Point I most earnestly recommend.

This is ~~no~~ no Party Question, nor is the Foundation on such shallow Opinions or Biasses. It is true, that interested Individuals have always Pleas and Arguments in favour of that System which most favors their Views; we should have one entire Code of Regulation which will leave no Door open to Jobs or Favouritism, of any kind: at present it is otherwise. Where the Change may be frequent of those who are to decide, permanent Measures cannot be expected, unless the Laws are precise. And should incompetent Persons take the Lead, Error is perpetuated. That professional Men differ is no wonder, in every Line they do the same; but that a Plan which all condemned should be acted upon, manifests the little Credit their Judgment is held in, or how unable it is to resist other Impressions. I refer now to the Plan for building 656 Ton Ships, on the full Establishment. They were ridiculed by all Seamen out of the House; only one Tender received at the expected Price, and the Owner has made as many
Applications

Applications for some alteration as a Person who feels the pressure of a bad Concern can do. Thus far the professional Opinion within was justified, and proved the Whole to be a Fallacy, an undigested Plan; and the Fact of their supposed light Draught of Water contradicted by the Records in the House, as on a Reference will appear, (Vide Appendix B.) but this Idea is not yet abandoned.

Innovations in an established System are at all times dangerous. The India Ships have always been spoken of with Respect and Commendation excepting the high Freight; such Security must be paid for, it is the Premium of Insurance added to the Cost of Transit. This System of Things has had the Experience of Years to bring it to its present Maturity. Like the Constitution of our Country, it had been improved by the Hand of Time, and Abuses corrected as they arose. The Size of the Ships, their Equipment and Construction, the almost daily Inspection when building or repairing, the Time they were on the Stocks, to season the Timber, and ensure their Strength to the last, as far as human Precaution could do, are all Points of uncommon Importance to a Company who are their own Insurers. Add to this, the Experience and Ability which the Commanders and Officers are known to possess, beyond most Persons in this Profession, from the System adopted to make them so.

Thus the Company have been protected in their maritime Concerns, by the most efficacious Measures; and the Safety of their
Property

Property has ascertained the Wisdom of the Proceedure hitherto.

A Question naturally arises from the Contemplation of this great Shipping System :—Was it, or is it now necessary ?

The Records of the Company bear testimony to its great Utility in so many Instances, that it seems Folly to dispute it; the Efficiency of the Fleet all Parties agreed was needful, and ought to be maintained. The Value and Importance of it should be estimated by the real Cost, divested of all the incidental Expences and Charges of Demurrage for Delays and Detention in War, and on political Service.

The Injury sustained by their Arrival out of Time, late Dispatch, circuitous Voyages, and consequent Damage on their Cargoes, are all Contingencies not chargeable to the Establishment; for, in fact, the Ships have been dedicated to other Purposes beside commercial Ones, and the Defence of the Company's Settlements in India, affording Accommodation for Troops beyond Vessels of any other Description they have been detained for that Purpose at a great Expence and Risque. Yet with these, and many other Instances of Superiority, still from the Language and Conduct that has been held, it should seem as if their Force and Efficacy was but a problematical Good; that other Ships and other Commanders are sufficiently competent, that these Regulations are partial and unnecessary. It appears as if the Way was pointed out, and partly trod to paralyse the
Whole,

Whole, by the Employment of other Ships, even for the finer Cargoes; and the Intentions manifested to introduce Indian Bottoms.

It now ceases to be the Monopoly it was said to be; yet if every Monopoly, because it is profitable, is to be laid open to all the Subjects of the Realm, whose Pretensions are equal, and who would hazard the Undertaking, the Bank itself would be insecure in its Tenure. In this of Shipping there was a Capital of Two Millions engaged. The Ships are passing into the Hands of other Individuals, and it will be very long before we find centered in the Owners, that great Accommodation and Convenience, which Years and the liberal Freights had contributed to establish. Its Efficiency can never be what it was; and I lament, with real Concern, the Prospect of a reduced Fleet, when so much Security to our Cargoes and Possessions has been derived from its Superiority: It appears to me, like the removal of some of the main Pillars of a Fabric, to substitute a less substantial Support.

May these Apprehensions not be realized! Biass I disclaim, except that which arises in Favour of my Country and the Company; it is this alone that has led me uniformly to oppose the Introduction of any but British-built Ships for constant Employment. No Benefits to an Individual, (and the Company is but one compared to the Nation at large) ought to supersede those intended for the whole Community; and what the Act of Navigation se-

cures to them ought not to be intrenched on by any Charter or Monopoly.

The Acts relative to Colonial Shipping can never, but by a forced Constrution, or by some subsequent Act, be extended to the Company's Territories in India; for they were not in Contemplation when the Acts were framed. The Intention of the Legislature at the Time must be their Explanation; though nothing can be a stronger Exposition, than the Act introduced by the Earl of Liverpool, confining the Importation of the Produce of the East, in Indian-built Ships, *to the Term of the War, and 18 Months after it*: for if this was their's by Right, the Act was needless. As a farther Illustration, it is to be considered that the Acts in Favor of Colonial Shipping, were intended to create an Industry among our Brethren resident on the other Side of the Atlantic; to enable them to bear the Burthen of their own Governments, by making them a commercial People, and aiding and assisting us in War, by the Increase of Seamen. Does this apply to India? The Language of the Day among certain Characters, "that India is a British Colony," may be to claim for it all the Benefits granted to those in America and the West-Indies; it has been also said the Act of Navigation, the Foundation of all this Country's Wealth and Greatness, is framed upon obsolete Principles, and a mistaken Idea of Benefit to the Country, narrow Conceptions and Prejudices; and Day by Day Inroads are making into this Bulwark of our Strength, unresisted, nay, often unobserved.

The Navigation of those Seas, and the extensive Trade of the Inhabitants, is carried on in Ships du Pays, without the Interference of the Ships of Individuals from hence. The Surrender of the carrying Trade between this Country and that, is so contrary to all the Policy hitherto observed, that to admit it would be facing a Danger without Necessity, especially in these perilous Times ; and to encourage it, is little short of Treason toward the Mother Country. British Artificers and Tradesmen, British Seamen and Manufacturers, and the several Branches of Trade and Navigation, which furnishes and constitutes the Equipment of the Company's Ships, whether large or small, of the old or new Owners, are decidedly entitled to Preference. The supplies to India of Cordage, Canvas, and all Marine Stores, will be through foreign Channels, to the manifest Injury of this Nation ; and when it is considered that the Equipment of a single Ship in this Country gives Employment to British Subjects, British Shipping, and British Capitals in many other Lines, the Injury of a Participation must be more severely felt.

Having considered the Subject as affecting the Company in the Protection afforded to their immense Concerns, and the Individual Benefit resulting to the Mariner, Shipwright, Artizan, and the Shipping Interests of the Country, and ultimately the immediate Interest of the Country itself, I will advert to Circumstances of a more extensive Range, in which possibly its future Prosperity, Pre-eminence and Welfare, and that of all Ranks and De-

scriptions, is most intimately connected. My Conceptions* thereon may be fallible ; but persuaded of the Operation and Effect of the System alluded to, I should ill merit the Situation I hold, not to express the Consequence of those apprehended Measures, which involve so many interesting and important Points.

Let us recur to the Transactions of the three last Years, since the permanent Peace Freight was fixed on a Principle of constant Employment and short Voyages, under the absurd Idea of performing six in twelve Years. The Ships taken up in December, 1795, were, in June, 1798, not above One-Half returned, from Detention and Deviations on political Errands, dangerous and circuitous Tracts : and Loss or Distress the Consequence*. In Season 1795-6, Eleven Thousand Tons taken up by the Secret Committee, besides Part of those engaged for Rice and Wheat ; and 7186 Tons of Extra Ships, independent of the regular Ships, were sent to India. In Addition to the regular Ships of the following Season, 7200 Tons were engaged, besides 3500 rejected through Insufficiency ; for it was resolved in the Committee of Shipping†, they should be all furveyed in a dry Dock ; and the Result was, that only One-Half of those tendered were found competent.

The Provision of so much Tonnage, great Part of which has been floating about India on Demurrage, there being no Cargoes

* The Detentions very much owing to the different extra Ships in the several Fleets, the Loss of the Ocean, and Distress of the China Fleets.

† This should have been noticed in the last Debate.

for the Ships; has involved the Company and all concerned in a Train of Difficulties. They have been sent from Port to Port; and, after a Detention in India, which they were little calculated to sustain, many have been lost or taken, others rendered unserviceable, and some have returned with those Cargoes, heretofore allotted to Ships of superior Strength, Force, and Equipment. It is almost needless to state the Risk, the Losses, the Expence which must arise to the Company from this Procedure, and the Cruelty to those who had let their Ships at a cheap Freight, on the Expectation of different Conduct. Demands are now instituting against the Company, for not lading them Home agreeable to Contract, but employing them on other Services; to what Extent this may go, is yet unknown; and to shew the Sentiments of the Residents in India, on supplying such Tonnage for their Goods, I need only refer to the Letter from the Board of Trade, 22d of November, 1797.

The Proceedings of the Secret Committee has been approved of by the general Court: and it is proper to submit my individual Sentiments to theirs; but no Imputation was intended beyond that of Over-confidence in a Contractor, till the Justification of the Transaction challenged acquiescence, or the contrary. My Feelings and Duty produced the Observations; and I confess my Mind has been so tinctured with this, and other Circumstances, that Suspicion arises on every Innovation; and that every subsequent Information confirms my Opinion thereon, it is but Justice to myself to state.

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The Introduction of such a Number, and such a Set of Ships, as well as the Engagement in India of a great Quantity of Tonnage to bring home Goods, who were paid in some Instances Three-Fourths, and in others One-Half their Freight beforehand ; manned with Lafcars, and incompetently officered, (when compared to the regular Service) seem to carry the Appearance of a System, which, if admissible in Times of Peace, was surely most unadvisable in War, perhaps it was to manifest to the Country the Practicability of carrying the Trade to and fro in defenceless Vessels, save the high Freights, and conduct the whole Traffic of India as other mercantile Lines are ; an Idea once suggested of having Line of Battle Ships for Convoy during War, as the cheaper Expedient, justifies some such Inference. (Vide Appendix C.)

The Papers relative to Shipping which are now in every Proprietor's Hand, will shew a resolution almost annexed to the new System, or immediately following it ; that to provide for the Tonnage which would drop by the End of 1796, it was necessary to build eight Ships of 1400 Tons, four Ships of 800 Tons, and eight Ships of 600 Tons, constituting 19,200 Tons ; they will manifest also an Attempt to introduce East-India Shipping, for the Purposes which British Ships should alone be employed on, the Transit of Goods from that Country to this. They will exhibit that, in Feb. 1797, there was stated a Deficiency in the regular Tonnage of 8300 Tons, and in Consequence, Advertisements were issued for building ; but amongst the Tenders were several of Indian Ships
ready

ready built: that they were proposed to be introduced as Part of the 8300 Tons, and the Measure as strongly resisted. When this failed, instead of supplying the deficient Tonnage, only 3200, or 4000 Tons, was contracted for. This 3200 Tons was agreed for with one Person, under Circumstances so singular, that they merited more Observation than has been given to the Transaction. I will not enter into the Detail of this Business at present. It is but a small Concern compared with the momentous Measures that appear to be afloat on this Subject. Some Indian Bottoms not then introduced, are now on a temporary Voyage, to be laden Home on the Company's Account from China, at the express Request of the President of the Board of Controul; on their Return to this Country, a further Trial for being engaged for a Term in the Company's Employ, is to be expected. The present Situation of the Company's Shipping suggests this Conjecture, which now calls for the Court's Attention.

From two Papers lately submitted to the Court and Committee, which will appear in the Shipping Proceedings, a great Deficiency in the established Tonnage was asserted to exist:—In a subsequent Paper laid before the Court, and brought forward to prevent the building those Ships the Court had resolved on, it is asserted, there were already more than was necessary: When it is recollected that in the Beginning of the Year 1796, 50,000 Tons Annually was stated to be necessary for the Company's Commerce, and the Calculations laid before the General Court, was computed thereon,

on, it must excite astonishment, that so soon after it should (when the Tonnage has been reduced 20 Ships, as per Appendix D.) be asserted that there are too many; and the building of those the Court had agreed on be opposed; but unless the Deficiency which exists be provided for by farther Contracts, in following Years, the Wants of the Company for Tonnage must be supplied by that inferior Description termed Extra Ships; or by those Indian Bottoms which are expected Home, or by others which are now building in every Part of India, under this Expectation, and perhaps Assurance of being Partakers in the carrying Trade. The Terms may be so reduced, that Encouragement to offer British Ships will cease, and none but Teak Ships, navigated by Lascars, can undertake the Transit of our Cargoes.

Combining all that has taken Place, to pull down rather than amend an old and established System, with the Resistance to build for the Completion of that Tonnage, which in the Spring of 1796, was proposed to be done as the Ships dropped; with the Substances of Advices from India on this Subject, and the System of employing Extra Ships for single Voyages, for the inferior Cargoes and privileged Goods; instead of small, new, and competent Vessels for a Term of Years, which would tend to lower the Freight, and afford much more Security to the Proprietor and Insurer; and contrast this with the Suggestions to build not only the Company's Ships, but even Ships of the Line in India; who can say, the Apprehension is ill founded, that the Transfer of a Part of the carrying Trade is determined on?

Contending

Contending as a Principle, that the Welfare of this Country ought to have the Pre-eminence, I see with infinite Concern the Prevalence of a System, involving the dearest Interests of the parent State. Indian Politics must be subservient to this great and most interesting Object. Nor are the Court of Directors bound to consider India but as a secondary Object. Their Constituents are British Subjects, and the Welfare of Britain should be the ultimate Object of their Attention. Difference of Opinion may prevail, but there can be little Doubt, if we are to lose what India gains, that the Balance in the End is against us.

Impressed with this Idea, we should never consent but under a Resolve of our Constituents, that there should be any Participation of the carrying Trade, the Birthright of our Countrymen. That the Black Subjects of the Indian Domain are to have Employment, to the Exclusion of British Ship-Builders, Artificers, Tradesmen and Seamen.

It cannot be amiss or irrelevant to the Subject, to advert to the uncommon Channels by which the Indian Produce is introduced into this Country. Danish and American Bottoms are become the Means of Transfit for both Exports and Imports*. This I

* The Decision of the Court of King's Bench on the Construction of the American Treaty, must excite an Alarm to all East-India Stock-Holders, and many mercantile Characters, if it permits an American to have a direct Intercourse from hence to India: Where will be the Company's exclusive Charter? And on what Ground should an American possess more than a British Subject?

conceive to be annihilating the Trade and Consequence of the Company, by encouraging a Competition which could not exist, but by this Accommodation. The Company are said to be benefited by the Duties, which are clear Gain; but the Spirit of Enterprize in Individuals will, when permitted to interfere, always ruin a Company; and every House in India and England commence its Rival. The Facts now stare us in the Face. Vide Appendix (E.) The Acts of Parliament under which these Cargoes have been admitted, were intended (on Holland being taken Possession of by the French, and the Ships in Search of a Port to discharge their Cargoes) to protect the Dutch Property which was then afloat, or coming homeward.—A wise and salutary Measure. The Extension of this Act, to all neutral Bottoms during the War, though with certain Limitations, has sanctioned or permitted a Trade under American or other Colours; and Ships have even sailed from hence with assorted Cargoes, for the Enemies' Settlements in India; and Ships have returned from thence, with the Proceeds of such Cargoes, or the Produce of our Enemies' Settlements; which have been realized here to their great Accommodation and Benefit. Thus, whilst the fair Trader is debarred a Participation in the Commerce to and from India, but through the Medium of the East-India Company, and to an Extent of 3000 Tons only for the whole Country, the contraband Trader, under these Colours, and the Protecting Act referred to, is in the Enjoyment of it to any Extent.

Ships

Ships built at Bengal and other Ports, have sailed under neutral Colours to Batavia, Manilla, or Mauritius—drained India in Part of Specie, to purchase Cargoes for Hamburgh, or Denmark, intending to stop at a Port in the British Channel, to claim the Benefit of the Act; if granted, they unlade in the Thames, and the East-India Company sell the Goods*. I insert the Extract of a Letter from an intelligent Man at Bengal†, on this Subject, as a confirmation. Vide Appendix (F).

An Opinion is very prevalent, that if the Company's Trade to India was wholly abandoned to Individuals, the Revenue which constitutes our Advantages, would be remitted home to us at a more favorable Exchange than at present; and we are also told of the Necessity, as well as Propriety of encouraging the Exports from this Country, through every possible Channel; in fact, that to give

* Since penning the Above, the Court has a comfortable Assurance in Mr. Secretary Dundas's Letter to his Majesty's Advocate General, that a proper Cognizance shall be taken of these illegal Transactions.

What has been imparted to me seems to call for the most rigid Scrutiny, as Offences against the Traitorous Correspondence Act.

† "When Peace takes Place, there will be an immense Trade under Foreign Colours, from hence to Ostend, Hamburgh, and Copenhagen; to this latter Place, it is very great, even now. The Bill for granting Registers to India-built Ships, having been thrown out, all which, would otherwise have gone to London, will now go to other Places, under nominal Foreign Colours, mostly Danes, as Sarampore, a Danish Settlement, is only a few Miles from Calcutta; where Colours, Clearance, and every Requisite for disguising the Ship and Property, may be had at all Times."

Calcutta, 6th of January, 1798.

up the Monopoly, (the very Basis of our Charter) will not be injurious, retaining the Sovereignty. How long *that* may remain with us is problematical at best. When deprived of our Territory, and our Commerce surrendered to Individuals, it may truly be said the Company is a Nonentity.

There is one stubborn Fact against these Experiments existing in the Example of other Nations; with the Annihilation of the Exclusive Trade and Territory of their several Companies, has their Consequence and Commerce declined, till little or none remains.

And as a commercial Maxim it may be asserted, that you cannot increase the Consumption of Indian Articles here, or European Commodities there at Pleasure, or beyond a certain Limit. Therefore the less the Company are rivalled by Individuals, the Market will be more at their Command; and their Profits from the Regularity of their Supplies more certain, and of greater Consequence to them. The System of opening the Market here to all Adventurers to and from India, lest they should go to the other Ports on the Continent, is facilitating their Plans, establishing their Capitals, sacrificing the Company's exclusive Trade for a temporary Advantage, and, on the Return of Peace, we shall find our Object defeated. The Trade will again return to those Ports with additional Vigour, from the Countenance they have experienced. If British Capitals are engaged therein, for the Remittance of Fortunes acquired in the East, let us furnish the Ships
for

for this Purpose, by the Establishment of a Class competent to the Service; which, if built and engaged for the Term they are in Repair, may be navigated at 12*l.* per Ton Peace Freight, to any Extent they may be wanted*. We shall thus secure the Returns to this Country, and give Employment to the Natives and Subjects of these Kingdoms. This Measure, first introduced to the Notice of the Court by a senior Member of the Committee of Shipping, has never been considered; nor is there one rational Objection assigned for not adopting it.

If the Company's Exports were extended, and by this Class of Ships they might be Freight free, it would prevent the Interference of Foreigners† and contraband Traders, who presume on finding a Market from the scanty Supply of the Company's Exports; which, if increased, would exclude them and save in Part the Necessity of Loans, at an enormous Interest, for the Provision of Cargoes. The constant Intercourse between this Country and India, would be much strengthened and improved by these Ships sailing at all Periods of the Year.

* This Tonnage, if not wanted for the Company's Exports, at a small Expence for Demurrage, would convey Stores to the Cape, Botany Bay, or India, on Account of Government.

† “ The whole of the Madeira Trade to India, amounting to 1500 or 2000 Tons annually, is in the hands of Foreigners: the mercantile Houses there, are British, and in Order to prevent their Business being at a stand, are reduced to the Necessity of Shipping on the Foreigners, having no other means of Export to India.

They might be furnished by means of the 500 Ton Ships, at the usual Freight charged outwards with Tonnage, and which they would gladly pay---this Participation of Freight, would relieve the Company, and Individual on the homeward Voyage; and is another Argument in favor of that Description of Vessels.”

I have

I have no Hesitation in believing, that the Privilege and Gruff Goods, would give Employment to 40 Sail of 500 Ton Ships, in Addition to the Company's established Fleet. The consequent Employ of numberless Persons in the different Dock Yards, in their building, repairing, and refitting. - And its natural Result, the Extension of that Commerce which is to furnish the Articles of Equipment, are Objects of Importance infinitely surpassing the Repairs and Equipment of the India-built Ships; the Expenditure for which, great Stress has been laid on, as a national Benefit.

The Policy of permitting Ships of Force to be built in India, which might hereafter be at the Disposal of the Residents there, is a Subject that will be thought more for a Minister's Consideration than an Individual's; but as it constitutes an essential Point in preserving to us what I have been so strongly contending for, so I shall not hesitate to say a few Words thereon. Ships of Force should be admitted only in the Company's Employ, and the Pre-eminence in Naval Strength ought to be European. If Vessels of Force are built in any Number, or navigated by the Natives, the Tendency cannot but be alarming. Imperceptible are the Steps from Weakness to Power, from Restraint to Independence. The Trade, the Capital, the Resources of that Country are rapidly encreasing; what Concessions have been made but a few Years back to private Traders; what Stipulations are constantly making, and as readily complied with. The furnishing your own Tonnage is spoken of as a Disappointment, because

because they are building for this exprefs Purpose ; and we may soon be told, that the Cargoes they fend to Europe, fhall be on Terms of their own inditing.

The Profperity of the Country, its progrefs in the feveral Arts and Manufactures, the great Capitals employed, the numberlefs Europeans who are refident there with and without the Company's License, all tend to that Emancipation from Controul that will dictate, fooner or later, the Terms of Traffic with the parent State ; and when they have that Defcription of Ships, which can protect their Property, they may fupply every Nation in Europe and America with Indian Produce ; knowing that this Country cannot do without the Trade, or fuffer its Suspension for even a Year.

No Way inimical to the Welfare of India, or thofe refiding there, nor defirous to keep them back in the Scale of Improvement ; it is my chief Aim to inculcate the Subferviency and Subordination to this Country ; and the Perfuaſion I entertain that the Meafures in Contemplation lead to the moſt ſerious Injury to us, as a maritime and commercial Nation ; to the Eſtabliſhment of an improper Independence, and making this Country ſubſervient to Indian Politics, has been my Motive for this ſolemn Appeal to good Senſe and Patriotiſm. If my Apprehenſions are chimerical, no Harm is done, and your Trouble in the Peruſal is all I have to regret ; but if theſe Hints lead to a further Conſideration of ſuch important Points, I ſhall
reſt

rest satisfied with the Performance of a Duty incumbent on me ; trusting you will perceive the Policy, Propriety, nay, Necessity, by some restrictive Resolutions to confine the carrying Trade between this Country and India, as far as depends on you, to British Ships only. It is a Matter of little Moment, as a National Concern, who are the Owners ; but a Provision of good and substantial Vessels of both Descriptions, engaged for a Permanency, is the only Expedient to prevent Abuses, Losses, and Injury, which must result from employing small incompetent Vessels, and making extra Ships an annual Arrangement.

When you contemplate the Loss which has been sustained by the Company already, and what will inevitably attach to the Employment of these inferior Ships on making up the Account ; the Interference in our Commerce, both out and home, from the Enterprize of and Indulgence granted to Individuals under a British Flag, and British Capitals under a Foreign Flag ; the Accommodation to our Enemies and Rivals whom it would be Policy to suppress ; the Establishment of Capitals in every Nation in an Indian Commerce, for the temporary Benefits which accrue to us, and supporting a Rivalship to the Company at the very Threshold of the India-House ; or calculate, if possible, the Losses to the Company from the Interruption of their regular Commerce, from political Deviations and Detentions, circuitous Voyages and Dispatches out of Season, entailing Damage and Demurrage on the Company to a most enormous Amount ; or reflect
on

on the still more enormous Out-goings and Sacrifices of the Payment of the Nabob's Debts, the Army Arrangement, the unnecessary Remuneration to the Captains, with the unfortunate Speculation in Spices, and a new Government established at the Islands to furnish what we cannot want for Years; many other Circumstances, and several lesser Expenditures not considered, it must be obvious that any Events which tend to interfere with the Profits of our Trade, or give that to the Foreigner or Individual, which will benefit the Company, will be fatal; we want the Whole, and Nothing short of it, with the strictest Economy and Management, such as last Year and this has manifested, will extricate us *. The Establishment of a System of Indian Shipping will complete our Ruin. Its Advantage over this Nation is manifest by the Cheapness of Labour, the Exemption from those Taxes we are here subject to, and which have been incurred for the Defence, not only of the Commerce of the whole Empire, but our Existence as a Nation; and to which they are not contributors (either here or there) by any Impost or System of Taxation. Should, therefore, the Benefits of the carrying Trade to Europe be also thrown into their Scale, or they become formidable at Sea, by the building and Equipment of Ships of Force, our Authority over those distant Possessions will be the sooner questionable; and it is our bounden Duty, however partial we may feel towards them, and extend Encouragement to the utmost prudential Limit, still to consider the Claim, the irreverfible Right of the parent State to a Preference.

* The Public are interested to preserve the Profit to the Company, on account of the 500,000*l.* participation of their surplus Gains.

No Time or Circumstance should alienate from us this Birthright whilst it can be retained ; and we are reasonably privileged, if not entitled (from bearing the Burthen of our Public Debt) to have the carrying Trade exclusively our own.

Unincumbered from the Preffure of those heavy Charges and Expences, which are enumerated, (and which we shall sur vive by a prudent Economy,) and on the Adoption of a System so beneficial to the Country and Company, what might not the East-Indies accomplish? What is the Opinion of our Enemies on this Subject, and their Apprehension of its Resources?

Having given great Attention to the Shipping Concerns of the Company, dispossessed of every private Concern, that might be thought to bias me in the Discharge of my Duty ; and without a Relative or Dependant who can be affected by your Determination —I submit these Sentiments thereon for your Consideration.

The Subject is interesting, and Brevity on such a Topic not possible. It is for the Court to weigh these momentous Points of Trade and Shipping ; and I trust their Decision will be founded on the true Interests of the Company, which are inseparable from those of Old England. With the annexed Outline for Improvement of the present Shipping System, I conclude these Remarks, trusting that what has been thus unreservedly offered to your Notice, will be candidly received as the Dictates of an honest Mind, zealously attached to the Interests of the Company, and the Duties of that Station he has been honoured with.

PROPOSED

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS.

THE present System of free and open Competition to be meliorated by the Adoption of the following Detail :

1. That all Ships of 800 Tons or upwards be built in the River Thames, or within such Distance as will admit of the Inspection of the established Surveyors, at least once a Month, and not exceeding 100 Miles from the Capital.

2. That they be 18 Months from laying the Keel to Launching.

3. That the same Draft and Model be for every Ship, in Order that they may all have the same Properties.

4. That the Commander be named in the Tender for building, and the contracting Owner or Owners be Parties to the first Charter Party.

5. That any Set of Owners tendering an unexceptionable Captain as a Commander, shall have a Preference to build, if his Terms are on a Par with the Tender of any other Offer which may be accepted.

6. That no Person succeed to the Command of a Ship who had not been a chief Mate one Voyage, and a sworn Officer three Voyages inclusive.

7. That every Ship unavoidably lost or taken without Blame attaching to the Commander: The Owners of such Ship shall have the Option of building another Ship for the said Commander, at the Medium Price, at which any Ships may be then building for the Employ.

8. That those Ships which, from Events on their Voyage, have been, for the Company's Convenience or Interest, delayed, so as to lose a Season, or their Turn in being taken up, have a Priority when they do come home.

9. That a Code of Maritime Regulations be formed for the better Government and Discipline of the Crews of the Ships in the Company's Service.

That for the Importation of Gruff and Privileged Goods, Ships of 500 Tons be engaged under the following Regulations.

1. That they be built at any Port in this Kingdom where Two or more Ships of this Size have been launched, and whose Construction, as it respects Workmanship and Materials, has not been impeached.

2. That they be Twelve Months at least on the Stocks, and have all the same Dimensions and Frame.

3. That they be subject, during their Building and Repair, to such Inspection as the Court of Directors may think fit.

4. That they be commanded by a Person qualified as a Chief Mate in the larger Ships.

5. That they be navigated and equipped as the extra Ships of the Season 1798.

6. That their Employ be constant in Peace (not waiting the Periods of Lading and Dispatch as the larger Ships have been accustomed to) to create a frequent Intercourse and Opportunity of Communication with the Company's Settlements, and to enable them to sail on the lowest Terms.

APPENDIX.

(A.)

THE following is the Result of the different Calculations, which are too voluminous to insert. It may be necessary to state, I have taken the Outfit of the new Ship, as per Appendix 1428, in the Shipping Proceedings, and at the lowest possible Expences and future Outfits, and supposing the Ship to remain at Home for a Season twice in the Course of her Six Voyages.

An 800 Ton Ship let at 21l. and to bring 70 Tons Surplus, debiting the Account with 5l. per Cent Interest only, and Insurance at 8 Guineas out and home will, at the winding up the Concern, be in Debt - - - - - £3409

Remains the Hull and Stores to liquidate it.

If let at 19l. 10s. and all other Circumstances the same, and 4000l. be wrote off the first Cost, she will be in Debt 3420

And the Hull and Stores remain to liquidate.

An

An 800 Ton Ship let at 21l. 10s. per Ton, and all other Circumstances as above, will wind up £.898

In favour of the Ship, besides her Hull and Stores.

And it will require 5000 Guineas to be wrote off the first Cost, to enable a Ship let at 19l. 10s. to be equally favourable.

An 800 Ton Ship let at 21l. 10s. and other Circumstances as above, except debiting the Account, 6l. per Cent. per Annum, will wind up nearly the same with the Account at 21l. debiting the Account 5l. per Cent. per Annum.

These are comparative Statements, to shew the Result between the different Freights; and I have no doubt but the Sequel will prove, I have not brought more against the Account than should be, as no Allowance is made for Casualties of any kind. However Experience is the Touchstone, and not Estimate. If I am Right, the Inference is, that in the Freights, the Company receive the Value of the Command.

Comparative

(B.)

Comparative Statement of the Dimensions of the proposed Ships of 656 Tons, with their supposed Draft of Water, and the Draft of Water and Dimensions of other Ships of the same Tonnage.

		Length. Ft. In.	Breadth. Ft. In.	Depth in Hold. Ft. In.	Draft of Water: Ft. In.
New Ship, 656 Tons.	} -	110 0	33 6	13 6	{ supposed from 17 0 to 18 0
Lanfdown, 647 Tons.	} -	106 10	33 9	14 1	21 0 from Bengal.
Wycombe, 643 Tons.	} -	101 11	34 5½	13 0	19 4 from Madras.
Earl Spencer, 672 Tons.	} -	-	-	-	20 6 from Madras.
Afia,	{ all of 657 Tons.	{	-	-	19 6
Bute,			-	-	20 1
Northumberland,			-	-	20 1
Salisbury,			-	-	19 6
Talbot.			-	-	20 6

C.

An Account of the Ships taken up in India, under the Orders of the Court, of March, 1795, to make up the Deficiency of Tonnage arising from the large Ships having been taken into His Majesty's Service; and of those taken up under Orders from the Secret Committee of 14th July: with some preliminary Remarks.

In a Letter to the Supreme Council, signed by 23 Commercial Houses, April 18, 1795, they suggest "as there is 30,000 Tons of Shipping belonging to Residents at Bengal, that they may be employed in the Transit of the Goods and Privilege Tonnage; and the Proposals were, to let them to the Company at 12l. per Ton in Peace, and 16l. in War. That they be permitted to return in Ballast from England, or with the Goods of Individuals, (permitted by the Company to be exported,) at the Option of the Owners; or that the Company may load Naval or Military Stores on them to half the Ship's Tonnage."

Very opportunely did our Government engage the large East-India Ships to introduce the Measure to an unexpected Extent. In the Month of March, 1795, the Court (in Consequence of this Tonnage being taken into the Navy,) resolved, that the Bengal
and

and Bombay Governments be authorised to enter into an Agreement with the Owners of Ships, which may be offered, to bring Home Goods *on the Company's Account*; that such Ships shall be permitted to export from this Country to the East-Indies any Goods whatsoever, Ordnance and Military Stores excepted.

In the Board of Trades, Letter 14, July, 1795, to the Governor General, &c. they state, should the Honourable Court *not be able to procure Tonnage upon moderate Terms in England*; they submit the Expediency of *risquing Sugars, Saltpetre, and other Gruff Articles of Investment on Ships weakly armed*, which they suppose may be had at 16l. per Ton, if allowed to export any Goods whatever, except Ordnance and Military Stores.

Advertisements were accordingly issued at Bengal, and, as we must presume, the Government obtained the lowest Terms they could; the Rate at which they were proposed in April, and what they were engaged at, constitutes a remarkable Fact, that the Ship Owners in India, knew how to avail themselves of the Deficiency of British Tonnage: and must prove to the Company, the little Reliance on cheap Tonnage from thence, should it really be wanted: The Governor General's Minute contains this strong Statement, "It is an established Fact, that a large Proportion of the Produce of this Country sent to Europe, goes to Foreign Markets; that, during War, it is exposed in neutral Bottoms, in such a Mode, as to prevent Condemnation or Seizure by any of the Powers at War; and at all Times,

“ under such Coverture as to prevent Detection. That much of
 “ the Produce so exported, is *the Property of British Subjects*, and
 “ is conveyed on Ships *their Property*, so mortgaged and made
 “ over to neutral Nations, as to obviate Seizure or Detection, whilst
 “ the real Property is secured by Agreements, which do not appear.
 “ That this Channel is pursued *in Defiance of Law and its Penalties*,
 “ from the superior Advantages attending it, the Principle of which
 “ is, the comparative low Freight; and by the Continuance of it,
 “ both the Nation and the Company are deprived of profits, which
 “ they would otherwise receive, if the Goods were imported at the
 “ London Markets.”

How forcibly does this plead for the Adoption of a Class of Ships, such as I have described; who, by coming and going constantly, would supply the requisite cheap Tonnage, shut all Foreigners from an Intercourse with India; and extend the Exports from thence to the utmost Limits. The Governor-General's Conclusion is, “ It follows, therefore, that to appropriate to
 “ the British Nation these Advantages, which are to be considered relatively as the Gain of other Nations, and to obviate
 “ all the Evils and Inconveniences of the Practice, a Reduction in
 “ the Freight must take place; *and if this should be impracticable*
 “ *in England*, an Offer, for this Purpose is made here, by those
 “ whose Interests are most materially concerned in it; upon this
 “ Offer, it now rests with the Honourable Court of Directors to
 “ decide.

The

The Court of Directors not having decided, though the Subject of providing such Tonnage has been brought forward several Times, it is pressed again on their Notice in this little Attempt to improve the Carrying Trade. I maintain, that Ships better navigated and equally good, may be had at 12l. per Ton ; and the Outward Tonnage, *all the Company's*, Individuals benefited by lower Insurance, and the Country at large by their Building and Equipment.

Instead of resorting to Advertisements here, for Ships ready built to supply the deficient Tonnage in 1795, a Preference was given to India Tonnage; and above 5000 Tons of British was refused; this Predilection for Indian Bottoms is what I am noticing.

Many of the India Ships have been registered here as *plantation built*, and are entitled to the Privileges resulting from the Register, though navigated by Lascars; Numbers of whom lately have been a Pest to the Community, and Burthen on the Company.

The Advance in Bengal of One Moiety or Three-Fourths of the Freight, and the Ships being taken up at the full Price for as much as they could carry; contrary to the then Usage of freighting Ships in the Company's Service; was an Advantage of no small Magnitude, when the Interest of Money in that Country is considered, and what was never mentioned in their Offer in April.

In short, it is one of those Specimens which should put us on our guard against India Tonnage: I now furnish the List of Ships, with the Owners, and Terms on which they were engaged.

The

The Star against the Owners' Names, denotes those who subscribed the Letter tendering Tonnage at Bengal.

Chartered Tonnage.	Owners.	
Nonfuch - - 450	* S. Canning	{ Were taken up at 20l. for Piece-Goods; 16l. for all other Goods; three-fourth of the Freight paid at Bengal on their Chartered Tonnage or one fifth more than was laden.
Britannia - - 450	* L. Rofs	
General Meadows 350	W. M'Donald	
Eliza Ann - - 600	J. Lloyd	
Duckingfield Hall 600	Campbell & Radcliffe	
measuring only 365		

—2450 Tons chartered, yet they brought but 2062.

* Harriot - - 550	J. Farrar	{ Were taken up at 20l. for Piece Goods, and 16l. for all other Goods, half the Freight on the Chartered Tonnage paid at Bengal.
measuring only 373		
Chichester - - 450	R. Blake	

—1000 Tons chartered, yet brought but 753.

Lady Shore - - 550	J. Wilcocks	{ Taken up on the same Terms of 20l. and 16l. three fourths of the Freight laden paid at Bengal. Some of these Ships were so overloaded, as to be at great Risque, and to afford but miserable shelter for the Lascars.
measuring only 432		
Abercromby - - 750	* W. Fairlie	
* Anna - - - 800	* Ditto	
Bangalore - - 350	Edwards and Frayer	
* Cecilia - - - 473	* Lambert and Co.	
* Gabriel - - - 1100	* Hamilton & Aberdien	
Verrunna - - - 529	* Lambert and Co.	

Berwick - - - 458	M'Taggart & Rothman	{ Taken up at 20l. for Piece Goods, 18 for Rice; and 16 for other Goods; three fourths of the Freight on Tonnage laden paid at Bengal, at 17l. per Ton for Grain; three fourths of Freight on Tonnage laden paid there.
measuring only 420		
* Royal Charlotte 680	J. Higgins	

Chartered Tonnage.	Owners.	
Brought forward 9140		
Milford - 700	P. Bruce	{ Laden wholly on private Account; by being let to the Company, then re-let to Individuals.
Warren Hastings 450	*W. Fairlie	
Caledonian - 1000	*Ditto	
Ganges - - 650	*W. Fairlie	{ At 18l. per Ton; three fourths paid in Bengal; but no Freight on 80 Tons Sago.
Princess Royal 1100	Roebuck and Abbott	
Exeter - - 500	{ *W. Dreng and R. Whitford	{ At 16l. per Ton; three fourths on Tonnage laden, payable in India, $\frac{1}{4}$ in London, on Arrival; driven back to Bombay, and her Cargo changed. This Ship failed at 22 Feet draft of Water, when our own Ships are restricted to 20 Feet 6 Inches.
		{ At 20l. for Piece Goods; 16 for other Goods; three fourths of Computed Tonnage paid at Bengal.
Ships Taken.	Owners unknown.	
Amelia - - 1000	1100 laden	{ Freight and Compensation paid to these Ships amounting to - £48,436 for three fourths Freight on Tonnage laden, and something beyond on Account lesser Earnings. The prime Cost of these Cargoes, and that on Board the Hercules and Princess Royal, was - 21,415
Favourite - 800	873 } beside other	
Montrose - - 600	520 } Goods	
Hercules } - 750	750	
American }		
The Amelia is now in the River, as the Amelia of New York.		{ Lofs - - - £69,851 except what has been saved of the Princess Royal's damaged Cargo.
Total Tons 16690		

By late Advices from Bengal, it is understood, that the Governor General (Earl of Mornington) has favourably received the Application of the Merchants to send Goods to Europe on their own Ships.

*Surat

* Surat Castle	-	1059	} taken up at Bombay, at 20l. per Ton from thence to China and Home.
* Carron	-	1025	
* Anna	-	820	
* Britannia	-	700	
		3596	

Taken up at 35l. per Ton, for what they could bring from China a Voyage of a few Months, manned with Lascars, consequently almost defenceless, when the regular Ships of the Company, Outward and Homeward, were engaged at 34l. for 800 Ton Ships; and 30l. 15s. exclusive of Manning and extra Wages, for Ships between that and 1100 Tons; and though the Contract was drawn at Bombay, between the Surat Castle, and a Ship of the same Size in the regular Service, in respect of Kentledge, they never considered the Surplus Tonnage at half Freight in the latter description of Ships.

From Custom-House Data, which are too voluminous to insert, I have been able to trace that the Cargoes of these Ships have nearly equalled all the Company's Exports, an Interference surely of too much Consequence to disregard*.

In Fact, the History of these Ships seems an Object for Enquiry with those which have been under Cognizance of the Court. The Board of Trade were conscious, that weakly armed Vessels were unfit for any but Gross Goods. Whence comes it that valuable Goods were put on such Ships, and on others nearly as incompetent?

* By Advices just received from Bombay, it appears that these 4 Ships have supplied the Market for some Years with European Articles.

(D.)

List of Ships that have performed their contracted Voyages, taken or lost ; and of others built to supply the Deficiency.

1794. Earl Chesterfield

1795. Contractor

Valentine

Busbridge

General Elliot

Ponborne

Ganges

Walpole

Dutton

Tons.

10 Middlesex - - - - - 8000

1796 Francis

Northumberland

Earl Cornwallis

Osterly

Warren Hastings

Kent

Deptford

G

General

		Tons.
	No. 10, Brought forward	8000
	General Coote	
	Barwell	
	London	
	Earl of Oxford	
	Rodney	
13	Triton - - - - -	10400
1797.	Effex	
	Europa	
	Ocean	
4	Earl Wycombe - - - - -	3460
1798.	Asia	
	Lord Macartney	
	General Goddard	
	Hillboro	
	King George	
	Houghton	
	Sullivan	
	Raymond	
	Woodcot	
10	Princess Amelia - - - - -	8000
And 1799.	Six Ships more will be	4800
	Deficient since 1795 -	<u>3466</u>

New Ships engaged or built.

1795.

Princess Charlotte	-	610	
Sir Step. Lushington	608		
			1218

1796.

	<i>Tons.</i>	
Earl Spencer	- - -	645
Admiral Gardner	-	813
Ganges	- - - - -	1500
		1958
Dutton, or Dover Castle		820

Leave granted to build for 98—9.

Walpole	- - - - -	820
Calcutta	- - - - -	820
Humble (New Ship)		820
Ditto	ditto	820
Hamilton	ditto	656
		3936

For 99—1800.

1st. Contract	{	Curtis (New Ship)	820
		Charnock	- - - - - 820
		Cleland	- - - - - 820
		Gillet	- - - - - 820
		Princep	- - - - - 820
		Webster	- - - - - 820

2d. Contract	{	Larkins (2) - - -	1640
		Cleland - - - - -	820
		Wigram (2) - - -	1640
		Wilfon - - - - -	820

— 9840

New Ship in lieu of Middlesex - - - 1200

will be replaced in 1800 - 18972 Tons.

Deficiency of the Tonnage since 1795, 19 Ships, 15688 Tons.

Various

(E.)

Various difficulties concur to prevent my furnishing a correct Statement of what follows. It is an outline only of Facts which can be known but to a few—though its Accuracy be not demonstrable, yet it may be sufficient for the Purpose of calling the Subject which involves so much the Interest of the Company and Country to your Consideration and from what the Governor General has said, it surely cannot but be an Undertaking of the first Importance.

It must appear wonderful, that Gentlemen who are so much more competent to discover and expose these Transactions, and Abuses, should glance over them as of no Consequence, when they are of such Magnitude. For, independent of those Ships who claimed a Right to this outward Traffick, there have been Vessels under Danish and American Colours, which have loaded here for India; to elude Cognizance, their Clearance has been for Madeira or Lisbon, or some other Port, and from thence they proceed to India; nothing but the Insurance is regular: their numbers industriously concealed.

The best Account I have been able to collect is as follows :

Count Bernstoff,	Ill Kaunitz,
Bellona,	Crown Prince,
Conningholme,	Minerva,
Droninghard,	P. Frederick,
Harriott,	Sophia Frederica,
Johanna Maria,	Dannemar,
Rudimark,	Omelenburgh.

Juliana,

Juliana,	Elizabeth,
Bergen,	Ocean,
Stavanger,	Merchant of Genoa,
Mary,	Harmony,
Harriott,	Nancy,
Five Brothers,	Rodney,
Atlantic,	Indian Chief,
Hope,	Winyaw,
Ann,	Eliza,
Ganges,	Illustrious Friends,
Orion,	Commerce,
Kennington,	Triumph.

These Ships, many of whom have been a Voyage before, will in course return with Cargoes, beside those which appear on the Homeward Lift, and others that have sailed from the Out-Ports.

The

The following is a List of Ships under Danish or American Colours, the whole or Part of whose Cargoes, have been landed in this Country, and sold, or to be sold at the East-India Company's Sale. Some Articles, the Produce of our Enemies' Settlements, thereby realizing to them Advantages, for the Sake of a paltry Commission, to the Company and Houses of Agency.

Maria Wilhelmina	Eliza
Alexander	Merchant of Genoa
America	Amicable
Martha	Concordia
Fanny	Adventure
True Brothers	John Henderson
Cleopatra	Argo
Camilla	Connecticut
Hope	Superb
George, alias, West Capelle	John

(F.)

A *Lift* of Ships, under Neutral Colours, that have, in 1797 and 98, come from India; and though most likely not a fifth Part of those engaged in this Traffick, must demonstrate the Ground that the Governor General had to assert so strongly the extent of it.

To imagine that the actual and bona fide Traffick of the Danes or Americans is the Occasion, or that any commercial Houses of those Nations are equal to these Undertakings, is an Absurdity, and it is only to be resolved into that Species of Indirect Commerce so fully set forth by our President in Bengal, and it calls for some speedy and strong Measures, without respect to Persons.

Some of these Ships were engaged on the Manilla Expedition; on their return to Bengal, assumed Danish and other Colours (it is said near 20,000 Tons Shipping were wanted) to proceed to Batavia, and from thence to Europe. The Officers and Men of the Company's Ships decoyed from their Duty by large Pay or Bounty.

Some of the Ships have been captured, and very material Evidence obtained as to the Principals and Agents.

The strong Minute of the Governor-General before quoted, has never produced an adequate Effort here to prevent such Transactions; conciliatory Plans or Encouragements have only been held out,

out, which have had no Effect; but rather countenanced the Practice. Houses high in commercial Credit, are embarked very deeply therein.

Hence, perhaps, the difficulty we have experienced of procuring for the Company such Assortments of Goods as were necessary or indented for. The reluctance I have met with, to communicate Information on this head, by Parties, who, as Individuals, are reaping some Advantage therefrom; argues the Incorrectness of this Procedure, equally with what was stated on the Subject of Insurances; that a high Premium was paid (20 or 25 per Cent.) and if the Ship was stopped and carried into Port, the Insurer is to pay without farther Enquiry or Proof. It is surely incumbent on the Court to scrutinize these important Points. If a Bill of Discovery was filed against those supposed to be Principals or Agents in this Business, the Truth would be divulged; and Remedies might be applied. That the exclusive Trade of the Company requires it, needs no Argument to prove; and though I cannot Confirm what is said on these Topics by Evidence, the Facts are notorious, and demand Investigation.

The Governor-General says, the Individuals in India, *in Defiance of Law and its Penalties*, engage in this Trade: cannot the Company exercise some Authority in their own immediate Dominions, or exclude those who are concerned in it?

The following will corroborate his Assertions; and how British Subjects can engage either in the Furnishing or Navigating these
H Ships,

Ships, and be exonerated from the Penalty of the Law, or elcape the Notice of the Company, I am at a los to conjecture.

Lift of Ships under neutral Colours from India.

Bernstorff	Nancy
Cronberg	Margaretta Eliza
Duntzfield	Catherine Maria
Fredericksburg	Johanna
Juliana Maria	P. Augustenberg
Rosketler	Elizabeth
Little Catharine	Eundra
Elbe de Iongo	Amadaht
J. Parish	Rheinsburg, Capt. M'Call
Christianshard	Odin, Capt. Elmore
Columbus	Nancy, Capt. Wilson
Kromp Frederic	Yarmouth, Capt. Dawes
Commerce Port	Brudors, Capt. Smith
Orion	Iphigenia

If Policy permits this interference of Individuals, surely it is adviseable that the Means of Transfit should be *British Ships and Seamen* : this is the Period to establish it, when Peace returns, it may remain with us, and a direct Import must be more beneficial to the Individual and the Country, than an indirect one—exclusive of the manifest Advantage of employing Two Thousand additional British Seamen.

If India can dispense with the increased Quantity of those Articles the Company have usually sent, the Advantage must be greater than to Individuals who pay Freight, Insurance, and Duties in India. The Adoption of cheaper Vessels for the inferior Articles, when the defensible Ships might take the Warlike and Naval Stores, with the more valuable Exports ; and protect the smaller ones, seems no ineligible System.

The average Exports of the Company for Three Years in the following Articles, will form a Contrast to the Individual Export.

Copper.	Lead.	Iron.	Steel.	Anchors and Grappnails.	Canvas.	Cordage.	Pitch&Tar.
Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Ells.	Tons.	Barrels.
1756	738	928	115	45	56520	172	811

In about Ten of those Ships from India, which had leave to load on private Account outward, exclusive of what has been carried by Ships reputed to be Danes and Americans, the Quantity, from authentic Information, amounts to .

Copper.	Lead.	Iron.	Steel.	Anchors and Grappnails.	Canvas.	Cordage.	Pitch&Tar.
Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Faggots.	A. G.	Ells.	Tons.	Tons.
200	641	2280	2501	30 82	143627	100	103
					and 89 Bales.		

Though many Reasons operate to conceal the Extent of the Export of most Articles, yet the Quantity of Iron and Canvas, on Account of the Drawback on one, and Bounty on the other, is certainly correct ; and in these, the Excess is remarkable.

Several of these Ships are not entered at the Custom-House for Cargoes of any Description ; and I cannot find, in the Ballast-Office at the Trinity-House, any Entries for Ballast but to two Ships. How they could navigate from hence to India, without one or the other, I leave professional Men to judge.

AN
A N S W E R
TO
MR. COTTON'S
R E V I E W.

AN
ANSWER
TO
MR. COTTON'S
REVIEW
OF THE
EAST-INDIA SHIPPING SYSTEM.

BY A PROPRIETOR.

LONDON:

1799.

AN
ANSWER,
Ec. Ec.

The Figures in the Margin refer to the Pages in Mr. Cotton's Pamphlet.

THE attention of the Proprietors of East-India Stock has lately been claimed by the elaborate speculations of a Director of that Company on various and interesting subjects: which he has introduced to their notice (whether judiciously or not was for his own consideration) under the title of "A Review of the Shipping System of the East-India Company."

This Essay contains many bold animadversions; controverts the judgment, and in some instances arraigns the justice of his Colleagues; accuses British subjects of combining against British interests, by furnishing capitals, and acting as agents in contraband trade; holds forth that the Navigation Act is daily infringed with impunity; and that to encourage the carrying

26

B

trade

19 trade between India and England, in the manner the Legislature has au-
 32 thorized, is little short of treason towards the Mother Country ; it alarms the
 33 Proprietors with general assertions of great losses, hardly within the possibility
 8 of calculation ; of enormous outgoings, and sacrifices ; of unnecessary remun-
 31 erations ; of unfortunate speculations ; and of improvident establishments
 to furnish what cannot be wanted for years to come. It states that dange-
 rous innovations are on foot ; and that the prosperity of India will be the ruin
 of England.

This is taking a very extensive range ; but the Legislator, the Proprietor,
 and the Merchant, who are to be judges in this cause, may cease to be
 alarmed, when they find that most of this impending ruin can be averted by
 returning to that old System of Shipping which Ministers, Directors, and Pro-
 prietors, have so lately and so loudly reprobated and destroyed ; but which
 1 this Honourable Director says, “ the wisdom of our predecessors would never
 do away.”

The Proprietors are, very early in this publication, entreated to give the
 3 Author credit for a determination to adhere to the System of open Competi-
 tion ; but in the same sentence he acknowledges a desire to graft thereon
 some of those advantages which the former System possessed. How, there-
 fore, can he be resolved to support *that* System of Competition which a great
 majority of the India Company has agreed upon ? On the contrary, it evi-
 dently appears from this address, that he hopes at least to induce the Pro-
 prietors to depart from that System, and to make experiment of another,
 compounded of the two, with a certain mixture of his own speculations.

He expresses great surprize at the unconcern manifested by the Public at large to the Shipping System of the India Company: he taunts the Senior Directors with a charge of having acted in their decisions under the influence of the Old Shipping Interest: and he asserts that the Court of Directors, in most cases since 1778, fixed terms, and compelled the Owners to accept them. 1 2

The Proprietors will not readily agree with the Honourable Director in the first of these sentiments, when they recollect the decided opinions given by his Majesty's Ministers at different times, and the very numerous appearance of Proprietors repeatedly assembled on Shipping Questions. And in answer to the last, there is the testimony of the Directors themselves upon record, declaring the very contrary, and that they were often obliged to give way to the Owners from the necessity of the case. As to the second, the Directors only can answer, under what influence they have acted, and whether at any time under that of the old Owners; few, it is imagined, of the Proprietors doubt this fact.

The Honourable Director thinks it necessary in one place to remark, "that there is a point where Competition must cease, viz. when the rate of freight is reduced below the fair and equitable standard;" and he declares in another place, "that experience is the touchstone, and not estimate." Yet he offers to the Proprietors several estimates to prove (what his friends by the very same means attempted to prove some years ago, when their freights were much higher and their expences much lower) that the Owners, at the present price of tonnage, must be considerable sufferers; endeavouring thereby to persuade the Proprietors that the Company is already past that point 2 40

point where Competition should cease ; instead of following his own precept, and allowing “ experience, and not estimate, to be the touchstone.” It were to be wished that the Honourable Director were more consistent, and would uniformly support that character he has obtained for candor in public as well as private life ; but surely it will be questioned, when he would persuade the Proprietors that the System of Competition has already failed, or had a fair trial ; whereas the fact is, that only four ships * at the most have yet failed under this System ; three more are now ready to proceed, and twelve are upon the stocks. What trial then has this System of Competition had ? Affuredly none. But the alarm becomes very serious indeed to the enemies of it, when they observe that every advertisement for building brings in great numbers of tenders, (and some even from Old Owners) on such moderate terms, as plainly indicate that the real and *bona fide* price of tonnage is not yet ascertained ; and the Proprietors are, if possible, to be induced to consider all extra ships, taken up during this war, as they were during former wars for the same purposes, and the ships lately engaged to bring home rice, as making part of the New System, and as affording evidence to a point from which their engagement is as foreign as it is from the Old Monopoly. It is to be hoped this will not prevail ; but that due time will be given, and the Honourable Director’s prayer be heard, “ that experience and not estimate “ may be the touchstone.”

He next strongly infers that the Owners who supply ships for the India
 4 Company are of so perverse and singular a temper, that they will join with
 5 the Builders in defrauding themselves, by allowing the work and materials of

* Walpole, Calcutta, Ganges, and Admiral Gardner.

their ships to be of an inferior quality: and the course of his argument on this point is to convince, that it is the interest of the Owners to give into this contradictory practice. Let the thing speak for itself; is it reasonable to conclude that a merchant building a ship for an engagement of six voyages to India, or any where else; that a man investing 30 or 40,000*l.* in a single vessel that is to be under contract to perform services, that will require the long term of twelve or fifteen years to complete; let it be asked whether a merchant so circumstanced can be expected to enter into a collusion against himself, and connive at the builder's introducing either inferior work or materials? The same argument would be as reasonable between the Honourable Director and his architect, if he were building a house. On the contrary, the Owner is to be considered as the best check upon the Builder, because he is to pay for the ship: and the very contrary conclusion to that of the Director is to be drawn, because (to use his own words) it militates against common-sense, experience, and practice.

He asserts that every Owner will build at an outpost, to the complete exclusion of the port of London; and at the same moment he states an instance of Mr. Humble, of Liverpool, building in the river Thames. Can this, however, be advanced with a sincere desire of promoting the System of fair and open Competition? or, has it not rather the appearance of desiring to gain over certain descriptions of men, by an alarm for their own interests, to join in further attempts, to narrow or destroy it?—There should be more consistency kept up, when a gentleman calls upon the Proprietors for their confidence. Would it not be handsomer at once to say, that he in his heart thinks the present System intolerable, and therefore, that he will do all he can to induce the Proprietors to abandon it. Before the Proprietors, how-

ever, agree to prohibit the building at outports, they would require very strong evidence of the advantage and the justice of such a restriction, for they cannot but recollect the combination of the London Builders with the Old Owners a few years since, which was carried to a most unjustifiable extent, in order to embarrass the Court of Directors, and to compel them to some unreasonable submissions.

He quotes the words, or, as he chooses to call them, the emphatic words of an Honourable Baronet, to prove that "the permission to build 800 ton ships at outports is a momentous measure, and that it will be a complete exclusion of the port of London;" and the consequences, as he states them, are to be dreadful to the Company, to the nation, to the peace of the metropolis, and the welfare of individuals. Now all this may, or may not be so; but it does not actually follow that it will be, because the Honourable Baronet and the Director join in thinking so. It is incumbent on them to prove, or at least to shew strong reasons for asserting, that all the evils they dread will ensue from the outports being permitted to build ships of 800 tons. As a matter of national importance, let them shew the national detriment which will result from the port of London being excluded, if it will not, or, as they say, it cannot build as cheap as an outport. Let them shew why the port of London should have the preference of all other ports to build these ships, notwithstanding the expences are considerably greater, and what the national advantages will be by granting this preference. Let the Honourable Director point out in what manner the peace of the metropolis will be disturbed by this measure; and in what further manner the welfare of individuals will be injured than by others participating of a trade, to which the Capital can have no exclusive privilege. Until he does point

point out these probable consequences; and unless he will particularize the evils, and shew in what manner they result from his premises, "his apprehensions will, no doubt, be treated as chimerical." 7

With regard to his general reflection, that "running from one extreme to another is neither rational nor politic;" and "the good of correcting abuses by patient methods, instead of plunging into RADICAL REFORM, &c." one can only say, that it is a trite observation which, as a general maxim, is uncontrovertible; but certainly does not apply to the particular case in point. And, as to the phrase of RADICAL REFORM, why that should be introduced is utterly unaccountable; it belongs to a very different subject and description of men: but, whether the Honourable Director perceives any similitude between the OLD SHIPPING OWNERS, and the OLD OWNERS OF BOROUGHS, it is for him to explain. 7

The Honourable Director would have "some full and precise outline and detail drawn, which should embrace every point of consequence, and put a period to controversy." Can the Honourable Director frame such an outline and detail? Or does he seriously think any man can have wisdom and foresight sufficient to provide for all the various cases that must, from time to time, present themselves in the course of the India Company's affairs, so as to put a period to controversy? Even if he could perform this Herculean labour, where is the security that he would not complain of it himself? For he very soon after observes, "that if Competition really means the extension of building to every port in the kingdom, there is neither option nor responsibility on the part of the Directors: all discussion is precluded;"—and, 11 12
if

- 13 “if the present outline of System admits of no modification, it is peculiarly
“oppressive.”

He is very fond of blending Politics with his subject of Shipping, for which no other reason appears than that of withdrawing the mind from the proper
12 object of its attention, and of working a little on the honest prejudices of those who are averse from theoretical experiments in governments. But it is straining the point a little too hard, to find an analogy between the abuses of Old Owners and Old Governments. And why the experiment of fair and open Competition in building ships for the East India Company should be compared with that of destroying all legal governments, cannot be well conceived.

- 15 In another place he adverts to his favourite analogical reasoning, and compares the Old Owners' System to the Constitution of Old England. This mode of reasoning must be objected to, even though he should allow that the New Owners are like the Patriots who introduced the Bill of Rights. But, adhering to the only point in question, let him be asked, if he does not again argue like the advocate for the Old Owners, rather than a Director contending for justice to the Company. He passes very warm, nay very just encomium on
15 the East India Ships; and, speaking of the high freight, he says, “such security
“must be paid for; it is the premium of insurance added to the cost of transit.” Here is something specific; the point at issue is, whether or no this security has not been paid too much for? Has not this premium of insurance been too great? What should be paid for this security, and this premium, is the great question in debate, and has been these twenty years? Will the Honourable Director say the Company have not been overcharged by the Old Owners; and that, under the plea of paying high freight for fine ships, they have not
paid

paid too high a freight? And will he venture to deny, that if a stop had not been put to the practice and system of the Old Owners, that the Company could not have carried on their Commerce? The Honourable Director's arguments, like those of the Old Owners, are a repetition of what has been asserted by them, and denied by their opponents, ever since the contest commenced; nor will the subject ever be at rest, till a fair trial has been made of this only expedient for putting an end to it, namely, fair and open Competition. When the "touchstone of experience" has been fully applied, then, and not till then, will this long agitated question be decided. But the power of the Company does not seem equal to insure a fair and undisturbed experiment: those who are interested, and others from misconceptions, will daily rise up to assail it and embarrass the process; no time should therefore be lost in petitioning Parliament to interpose, and put an end to all these controversies, which are contrary to the wishes of the Company at large, but which private interest will perpetually renew, upon some specious plea of public advantage or private humanity, until an act of the Legislature shall convince the Old Owners, and their adherents, (amongst whom the Honourable Director is frequently classed) that open Competition shall have a fair and uninterrupted trial.

Again, he says, "We should have one entire code of regulations which 14
 "will leave no door open to jobs or favouritism of any kind; *at present it is*
"otherwise:" but the Director does not go further into this serious charge; if it is matter of opinion only, he should have stated it more at large, that the door might be shut; if it is matter of fact, that there are jobs and improper favours going forward, he should have made the charge, and not have let it rest merely as vague insinuation; he is deficient in his duty if he does not.

Notwithstanding this declaration, however, it will be found, on examination of some parts of his Publication, that he wishes to keep this door open in favour of the corps to which he lately belonged.

16 It is impossible to understand an argument, without a person defines the terms he makes use of, and explains what meaning he affixes to them. What does the Director mean by “ a question naturally arises from the contemplation of this great Shipping System: Was it, or is it now necessary?” There can be no doubt that the Company must necessarily employ ships to carry goods to and bring them from India; and that these ships must be of a particular description. There can be no question about this, any more than about the utility of it. The question, therefore, is not, as he seems to infer, about the necessity or utility of a fleet; but the question is, Which is the best manner of providing a fleet for the Company’s interest as well as use? The manner of procuring ships was originally by proposals from those who were willing to undertake to build on certain terms. In process of time, these undertakers contrived to get the business exclusively into their hands, and it became thereby a Monopoly. It was not an original intended Plan or System, as the Director calls it. But when these Owners had found the means of creating enormous profits from this trade, they strenuously endeavoured to keep them to themselves, and they succeeded for a considerable time, till their combination and their extravagance became so alarming, that they threatened the very existence of the Company with danger. Persons may endeavour to gloss the matter over, but let Mr. Cotton say, as a Director, whether he thinks the Company could possibly have carried on their trade under the Old System, and whether it had not become absolutely necessary to reduce the freights in some way or other.—Which was the best way of doing it,

it, argue till doomsday, is the question that must be recurred to—is the question that was settled, but is now revived again.

After having earnestly solicited credit with the Proprietors for his intentions of supporting the System of Competition, followed by this decisive exclamation, “ Bias I disclaim, except that which arises in favour of my Country 3
 “ and the Company.” He tells his reader that “ this system of things (i. e. 17
 “ the exploded System of Old Shipping) has had the experience of years to 15
 “ bring it to its present maturity. Like the Constitution of our Country it
 “ had been improved by the hand of time, and abuses corrected as they
 “ arose.” If so, why all this unpleasant controversy at present? Why the
 long debates and struggles that have disturbed the India House for so many
 years past? and why at last annihilate a System that could be entitled to such
 an eulogium? Can there be a stronger proof of some *BIAS* than this lavish
 praise bestowed on a System which has been reprobated by a Majority of Proprietors and Directors, and also by his Majesty’s Ministers?—A System
 which has been exploded because there was no other method of correcting
 its abuses—a System which has introduced, among other evils, wearisome
 contentions, that his Publication seems calculated to provoke and revive. It
 is needless to state more than one point to prove, that instead of abuses being
 corrected as they arose, so inveterate had the abuse of selling commands become, that the Company found themselves obliged to compromise the matter with the Monopolists of the Old System, and pay near 400,000*l.* to liberate themselves from the embarrassments of disobedience.

The Honourable Director further observes, that “ the injury sustained by 16
 “ the arrival of ships out of time, late dispatch, circuitous voyages and con-
 “ sequent

“frequent damage in their cargoes, are all contingencies not chargeable to
 “the Establishment.”—These observations are taken notice of here only to
 shew what the Director considers as injuries to which the Company and the
 36 Owners of Ships in their service have been subject; and to contrast with it
 what he offers in his Plan of Shipping for the conveyance of private merchan-
 dize, wherein it might reasonably be expected he would remedy these ob-
 jections; yet the Proprietors will find, that he recommends the Establish-
 36 ment of Shipping for the British Merchants to be exposed to all these inju-
 ries by a premeditated plan. He recommends their employ to be constant,
 not waiting the periods of lading and dispatch, in order to enable them to
 sail on the lowest terms. Decided as the Honourable Director is that the
 Company must engross the whole trade of India, this can only be meant as a
 discouragement of private adventurers, and in support of such a System of
 general Monopoly; for they are here plainly told, their merchandise shall be
 exposed to perils, to which the Director thinks he ought not to risk the pro-
 perty of the Company.

17 Does the Honourable Director mean, when he says “it appears as if the
 “way was pointed out and partly trod to paralyse the whole by the employ-
 “ment of other ships, even for the finer cargoes,” that his Colleagues are de-
 viating from the System of fair and open Competition laid down by the Reso-
 lutions of the late General Courts, and by the Bye-Laws now in force? If so,
 why does he not point out the instances, and adduce his proofs? The Pro-
 prietors would return him their thanks for any assistance he gave to carry
 that System into effect, which, if it is paralysed, will be by the frequent at-
 tacks made upon it, and upon those who have been its principal supporters,
 by Gentlemen who at the same time advance that “experience should be the
 “touch-

“touchstone.” It is only desired of them to abide by this declaration, and let the present System have a fair trial.

The situation of the Commanders and Officers in the India service has constantly been brought forward to bolster up the old exploded System of Shipping; and they have all very naturally exerted themselves to support that Establishment, and those Owners to whom they looked up for promotion and favour. The humanity of the Proprietors is in the usual style appealed to again by the Honourable Director, and such an appeal will always have its influence on a British audience; but the Public will recollect, ere they yield to the present attempt, that part of the New System went to free the Company from the claims and complaints of the Captains.—At the time the change took place their complaints were all discussed by the Directors; and the General Court confirmed what was recommended in their behalf. Can the Honourable Director be seriously inclined to make good his professions, and support the New System, when he brings up again all these instances of complaint? for not one of them is new. Nor should the Honourable Director himself think it uncandid in any man, who reads his Publication, to impute to him a desire to overset this System; in which he is pointing out such a multitude of defects, and among others that of oppression, ingratitude, and neglect of those who have served the Company with fidelity and merit. He says, “the experience and ability of persons long in
“the employ (of the Company) has been thought of so little consequence as
“not to merit a stipulation in their favour.” The best evidence to this point is to be found in the Code of Bye-Laws.

One directs, a register to be kept from which all Commanders and sworn Officers shall be selected.

Another directs, their pay and privilege to be ascertained and fixed ; and that no Officer shall be removed without the consent of the Court of Directors.

A third directs, that no office in a ship shall be sold ; but that the Owners shall appoint the Commanders without any pecuniary consideration.

Besides which, the Court of Directors have many standing regulations respecting the time of service and the qualifications for each station. All of which are positive proofs, that much instead of nothing has been stipulated in
 9 favour of experience and abilities. “ Yet,” says the Director, “ whoever can
 “ get a ship built for him to command, though he may have passed only three
 “ voyages as an Officer in your service to India and back, is admitted as eli-
 “ gible, if his age be no impediment.” Are not the regulations the same in
 respect to age and time of service as usual ? and was it ever thought necessary
 to alter the rule, whilst the Old System continued, even by this Gentleman
 himself ? Indeed the Honourable Director confesses it was not, because he
 9 says, “ it should *now* be corrected, voyages being so short, and opportunities
 “ of gaining a command recurring so frequently on the present plan.” In
 another place he ridicules the idea of performing six voyages in twelve years :
 if he is correct in his opinion, a vacancy is not likely to happen in less than four-
 teen or fifteen years, except in cases of accident to a ship or a commander. Does
 he mean this period as giving rise to such frequent opportunities of gaining
 commands ? and it may be asked, without offence, what he really means, when
 he

he declares in one place that voyages are "so short," and in another, "that it is absurd to think voyages can be performed, one with another, in two years;" surely a term exceeding two years cannot be thought so short for a voyage to India and back; nor three such voyages in stations of confidence and responsibility subject to strict examination after each, as an insufficient share of experience. But still further to add to what appears to be a jumble of contradictions, it is said, "that the present System is peculiarly oppressive 13
 "on Captain Patton, of the Ocean, (which ship was lost in the China Seas) for "he has now no prospect of employ." Is this consistent with the opinions just quoted, "that voyages are so short, and opportunities of gaining a command occur so frequent on the present plan?" If it is so, the chance of Captain Patton should be the greater, and his prospect of employ cannot be so entirely without hope as it has been represented.

The Proprietors are told in another part of this Publication, "that inexperience will have the preference, and a succession of juniors will be always 9
 "employed, to the detriment of the service, and to the prejudice of the Company's concerns." But will the premises on which this conclusion is founded bear the Honourable Director out? No man can command an Indiaman unless he is of the age prescribed by rules of long standing, (during which time he admits the service has been well executed) and unless he has served in the several gradations required by the same regulations. By the New System, these laws have not been altered; therefore every Commander must have all the experience the Directors have ever thought necessary: and the New System has put some difficulties in the way of, if not totally prevented that continual changing which before prevailed among the Captains for one or more voyages as they could make their bargains. By the present System

System the command of every ship built for the use of the Company is open to every gentleman qualified according to the established rules, and *to none other*. It will therefore be rather difficult to prove (and those who attempt it must fail as the Honourable Director has done) that "inexperience will have the preference, and a succession of juniors be always employed," for in this System no preference is given to one qualified person over another; and the succession to a command depends upon a man sufficiently experienced, having friends and acquaintances, who understand the nature and expence of Shipping, and will apply that knowledge to his advancement; satisfying themselves with a reasonable benefit upon the capital they advance. By this means, and this only, can the Company ascertain the real price of tonnage: they are gradually approaching towards it, but they are at the same time powerfully assailed, sometimes on the score of humanity, and sometimes by unfounded alarms; they must withstand both, or they will soon return to all the recorded extravagance, and partialities of the Old System, ruinous alike to the trade of private Merchants, and the Company.

It is asserted, that "whilst the sale of Commands was combated by all the advocates for fair and open Competition, bargains were made for the ships they introduced." Does this Gentleman know of such a fact, and has he not brought it forward? He must not expect to gain adherents by such general assertions, especially when he holds so responsible a situation. The Old Owners and Captains would never admit that Commands were bought and sold, until their System tottered, and remuneration was talked of: and is report now to be admitted as proof? No, the Proprietors will not admit the present System to be undermined by insinuations, and interested whispers; but, if the fact is so, who is the Honourable Director pleading in favour of?

Men

Men, who in his own belief, have been persisting in a course of disobedience, and, notwithstanding the present serious penalties, have been bargaining for the commands of ships, engaged under the New System. The accusation can apply to none other, because the office is open only to Gentlemen duly qualified.

Again, the Honourable Director says, "I do not see how a ship can be allotted to any one, who does not mean to continue an Owner."—If this imports any thing, it is, that the Owners shall be bound, not to sell their shares. As a Merchant, will this Gentleman say, that tying up money in any particular manner, for a number of years, is the way to encourage Competition? And, can that man sincerely support such a System, who would lay an unprecedented restriction on those who are willing to contract with the Company? Under such discouragement, the Company would never get ships at a fair price. The Director here clearly aims at making shares in East India ships an article incapable of being carried to market; let the appeal be made to himself, will such restriction be a means of supporting, or of destroying fair and open Competition*?

* Another Gentleman of great experience, an Owner, and a Husband of Old Ships for many years (Mr. William Palmer), has addressed the Proprietors in support of Mr. Cotton's Pamphlet, of course, *in support also of fair and open Competition*. Let him speak for himself, the quotation is short, but it is satisfactory to shew *what sort of Competition* he and his associates are willing to support. He says, "I can have no difficulty, in subscribing to a System of fair and open Competition when ships are to be built, *provided that power be given to the Court of Directors to reject such offers, as from calculations, or experience in their own Shipping, ought not in their opinion to be accepted*. This power of rejection I conceive to be peculiarly necessary in the case of ships to be built for defence, as well as for the purposes of trade."—That is to say, in all cases.

He also contends, that the Directors should be empowered to give leave to build again, in cases of ships being lost or taken: in short, make but an impression on the System some how or other, the humanity of the Proprietors is most likely to be wrought upon with success, in the first instance. Begin the assault there, and trust the rest to time and perseverance.

11 The case of two ships tendered at the same price, when the lot is to determine who shall build, is next stated, and the question upon this is, "If one should be tendered with an experienced Commander, and the other with a person who has never before filled the station; does not reason dictate, and would not every individual in his own case decide, that the preference should be given to the former?" This may be answered decidedly in the negative; and in return, the Honourable Director may be asked, what has been the uniform practice of his own friends, under the Old System? Have they in cases of vacancy, ever chosen experienced Commanders out of employ? He knows they have not: yet they have not been deficient in reason on such occasions; they have decided, as every other individual would, in instances of the same sort: they have looked among their own families, their relations and friends, and, after having ascertained the party to be duly qualified, according to the rules of the Company, very generally from having watched the young man's progress through the several gradations of the service, the vacancy has been bestowed by the acting Owner, upon his nearest relative: friendship in other instances has decided the choice; and sometimes motives of interest may have determined the point: but assuredly, the experienced Commander has never had the preference; and therefore, as it has never been the custom of the service, it can never be stated as a grievance, that it is not so at present.

12 The Honourable Director next points out the cases of ships suffering by detention in India; he says, "By the exigencies of the public service, one may remain a season longer in India than the other, and perhaps, arriving late in the season she *does* come home, is not taken up till the following year. The ship which the Company's affairs had detained a season, and
" the

“ the one detained after lading, ought to have the priority of those ships the
“ fails with, in being again engaged.

This is not a new matter of debate in the Court of Directors ; it has from time to time engaged their attention, probably for these forty years past ; and they, it may be presumed, conceive, that the present regulation is upon the whole, the most equitable line they can draw. The principal object is, to induce the Captains to dispatch ; and to prevent their putting into, and delaying at out-ports, for purposes of their own. The general regulation may now and then bear a little hard upon one or two particular ships ; but this is unavoidable, if it is to have any efficacy. Besides, it should be known, that, generally speaking, when a ship is wanted for public service in India, it is attended with advantages to the Captain, which makes it a matter of canvass and solicitation, and is granted often by the Governor as a favour ; therefore, the Captains cannot reasonably expect any alteration in this rule. And it should be as generally known, that the Court of Directors have compensated the Captains with great liberality indeed, when they have suffered in their fortunes by such extraordinary services*. As it respects the Owners, it might have been imagined, the Honourable Director would have preferred *a full and precise outline that would have put an end to controversy*, instead of making a regulation which shall upon every such occasion bring into discussion, whether the Captain has used his utmost diligence in the service he has been upon, or whether great part of his delay may not have arisen from a mixture of his own interests with the concerns of the Company. Besides which, it goes to this point, it destroys in every Captain, whose ship is detained or sent

* The following instances are lately on record :

Sir Charles Michell	-	-	-	-	-	£. 8000.
Captain Cheap	-	-	-	-	-	4000.
Captain Hudfon	-	-	-	-	-	3000.

upon

upon a deviation from his first appointment, that stimulus which would induce him to all possible expedition afterwards; because he will know, that under the regulation proposed, he is entitled to a priority, in being taken up
 4 for his next voyage, let him return when he may. Surely, "this would leave
 "the door open for application and favour, where there should be none; and
 "the same law may not be administered to all;" and it may be possible,
 "the Honourable Director may be sorry to have this essential point left even
 "to his own determination."

As the feelings and humanity of the Proprietors have been appealed to,
 in the case of Captain Patton, it may not be irrelevant to revert to that
 13 point again. His ship was lost in the China Seas, by which accident "the
 "labours of his life were swallowed up, and he has now no prospect of em-
 "ploy."

That Captain Patton's case is an unfortunate one, cannot be denied, but it is not singular, and every Proprietor would be happy to hear the Court of Directors had given him some assistance under it. But, if, "whenever a
 "ship is unavoidably lost or taken, without blame attaching to the Com-
 "mander, the Owners shall have the option of building another for the said
 "Commander," there is an end to the System of Competition, and a system of favour and partiality, is from that instant adopted. How many applications would follow this of Captain Patton's? Some on similar grounds; some on grounds nearly the same; some on different grounds; but equally as unfortunate to the Commanders, and, therefore, equally as well entitled to relief. How often might it happen, that the skill and judgment of the Captain, in the navigation or defence of his vessel, might be doubtful, and
 the

the Directors be divided in opinion. In such cases, it would become a matter of canvals, and of private interest. The Honourable Director would be liable to "the influence of powerful applications," which he describes as being so painful; and he would be deprived of that relief which he confesses to arise, and to be necessary, from the line being once drawn. It naturally follows here, to inquire how the line came to be drawn so tight: the answer is, the experience of the Old System made it necessary: the objections to which were so great, that it was indispensable every avenue that might lead to a return to it, should be completely shut. Leave to build for the service of the Company, is said to have originated in a reward for some service, or a consideration for some misfortune; and the Company has paid millions for the consequences of that ill-advised indulgence. Yet that is the very thing which is now asked for again; and it is imagined, that the Company may, in humanity, be induced to grant it, even with all this woeful experience staring them in the face. It will be urged, that the case of Captain Patton calls loudly upon the gratitude, as well as the benevolence of the Company; so it may, but the relief cannot be given in the manner proposed, for the Company have experienced the fatal effects of such indulgences; and if they mean to avoid absolute ruin, they will keep the door completely shut, now it is once closed. Give Captain Patton one of the Maritime Offices in the appointment of the Court of Directors; give him a sum of money, if on strict examination his case entitles him to it; do any thing except trenching on your System of fair and open Competition. But possibly the Old Owners, who are Captain Patton's friends, and sensible of his merits and misfortunes, may appoint him to one of their vacant ships; or, they may on the first occasion, give in a moderate proposal, and if accepted, nominate Captain Patton to the Command. It cannot well be said, that he has no prospect of employ, when all this is possible; and surely there were

cases under the Old System, of equal hardship and misfortune. The Honourable Director may in this instance be guided only by his humanity, but he must in his official capacity consider the consequences to the Company. He is called upon to decide as a Judge and not to plead as an Advocate. The Law has been made strict and precise, in order to guard against every event that might lead to an infraction or an invasion of it; and it is the special duty of the Judges of the Law to guard as much against their own feelings as against any other motive which might tend to a breach of it. It is not in the power of man to frame a general rule which may not prove a hardship on some particular occasions; but if the peculiar case of an individual is to supersede the more material consideration of the general benefit which the rule intends, it is impossible that any general law should stand. If you yield to the claims of one man, you must yield to those of another; and the Honourable Director cannot say such events as are pointed out will not follow, when positive experience proves the like effects from similar causes; and every one that gives into his proposition may not accede to it for the same end, but may like the idea as well or better for the inroad it makes upon open Competition, than for the relief it affords to Commanders.*

It is not possible to quit this point without taking some notice of the concluding observations of the Honourable Director respecting Commanders. He says, "Add to this the experience and ability which the Commanders and Officers are known to possess *beyond most others in this profession*, from the System adopted to make them so." It is not the intention here to attempt to pass any decided judgment on the merits of these Gentlemen; those who have been in the same corps, and the Directors of the Company,

* If this indulgence is granted, there are five or six Captains ready to make similar claims, which may amount to 5000 tons of shipping, and that for three voyages on a medium, at a difference of 4l. per ton, compared with the present lowest price, will be a loss to the Company of 60,000l.

bear testimony to their merits and professional abilities ; which fact it is not meant to contend against. The persons who have given such opinions are respectable, and their judgment is entitled to the accord of the Proprietors ; but when this is so unnecessarily forced upon the notice of the Public, when it is asserted that they have more experience and ability than most others in the profession, and that, from the System adopted to make them so, it must be felt that this is an attempt to gain the favour of the Proprietors by an unwarranted reflection upon the Navy and Merchant Service of Great Britain. Is the indolence, comparatively speaking, of a long voyage in a beaten track, principally in trade winds, and in tropical climates, best calculated to make a practical seamen?—Would any man, wishing to make his son a complete seaman, send him on board an Indiaman as the best school? Professional men have been heard to declare the contrary. Can any man assert that the ability of our Naval Officers is not equal to that of the Officers in the India Service? Will any man say that those who navigate through the narrow seas and among the islands of Europe, during short days and winter nights, have not as much experience, and as much ability, as those who make longer, but not such tempestuous voyages to the East? It may be enquired, whether a System, which distracts the minds of Commanders and Officers between the characters of seamen and of merchants, is deserving of praise, as best calculated to make them the most accomplished and able of their profession? It may lastly be asked, whether there is that economy on board an Indiaman which is most likely to instil maxims of prudence and moderation, such as are suitable to a seafaring line of life? These are questions that a landsman may ask, and yet he may be willing to acquiesce in the Commanders and Officers in the India Service having a very competent degree of knowledge, and performing the duties of their several stations with judgment. This is shewn on the testimony

timony of many very honourable and able judges ; but when India Captains and Officers are exalted above all others, in general declamation, and upon particular occasions, for particular purposes, it must be imputed to *a bias* ; it cannot be from a judgment totally impartial.

“ Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem

“ Testa diu.”

It is now time to advert to other parts of this Publication, which found an alarm to the merchant, the ship-builder, the carpenter, ropemaker, and sail-maker, and, indeed, every tradesman and handicraft, who may be engaged
19 in the construction or the furnishing of a ship. They are told, “ That the
“ Carrying Trade between this Country and India is about to be surrendered.”

45 “ That a preference has been given to India tonnage.”

“ That many India ships have been admitted to the privilege resulting
“ from the register.”

33 “ That British subjects in India may become formidable at sea by building
“ and equipping ships of force, and the authority over those distant posses-
33 sions be the sooner questionable.” And, “ That the Establishment of a
“ System of India Shipping will compleat our ruin.”

Terrible as these predictions and dangers may appear to the fancy of the Honourable Director, the time of the Proprietors need not be considerably encroached upon to do away any effect they may have had on the minds of
those

those who have perused this extraordinary representation. They, perhaps, will feel but little if any of this melancholy alarm, when they are informed that so important a subject has not escaped the vigilant eye of Government; that they have long and seriously considered the matter; and that, after mature deliberation by the Earl of Liverpool, and others, to whom the investigation properly belonged, it has been submitted to Parliament, and an Act has passed, which admits of ships built in India to navigate to and from the port of London for a limited time; that is, during the present war, and for eighteen months after the conclusion of peace. It cannot be necessary here, it might not be entirely decorous, to enter into a discussion of the reasons which led to this arrangement; for such is the confidence of the Public in the present Ministers of the Crown, that the wisdom of the measure will be acquiesced in; and the Nation may repose in confidence, not only that the present temporary measure is, on a comprehensive view of the business, fit and suitable to the circumstances of the times; but that the matter will again come under consideration in due season; as evidently appears from the present Act, which is only for a limited period.

As to the Establishment of a System of India built Ships*, where does it appear that the Court of India Directors have ever seriously entertained thoughts of such a measure? It is no where to be found. They have taken up India ships occasionally, and it is to be hoped they will continue that useful practice as long as the Law allows them, and they find it is serviceable towards the reduction of the exorbitant price of

* In order to quiet any fears that may be raised in the mind of the Public, on the subject of India built ships, copy of a letter long since written by the Minister for India, to a Committee of Ship Builders who had taken the alarm, as well as the Honourable Director, is annexed.

tonnage. If this is not a fit subject to be left to the discretion of the Executive Officers of the Company, the Proprietors had better withdraw their confidence altogether. Whilst the Directors regulate their conduct by the Act of the Legislature, surely they should be supported; and if they engage some India built ships upon emergencies, they cannot thereby put the interests of the East-India Company to extraordinary risk; for no one has yet been hardy enough to challenge these ships as inferior to the best of those which are built in Great Britain.

- 25 The Honourable Director passes from the subject of the Company's Shipping, and adverts to the uncommon channels by which Indian produce is introduced into this country, he asserts,

“ That Danish and American bottoms are become the means of transit
“ both for exports and imports.”

- 26 “ That ships have even sailed from hence with assorted cargoes for the
“ enemy's settlements in India, and ships have returned from thence with
“ the proceeds of such cargoes, or the produce of our enemies' settle-
“ ments.”

“ That the Court has a comfortable assurance in Mr. Dundas's Letter to
“ his Majesty's Advocate-General, that a proper cognizance shall be taken
“ of those illegal transactions.”

- 27 “ That what has been imparted to him seems to call for the most rigid
“ scrutiny, as offences against the Traitorous Correspondence Act.”

These

These extracts are put together to shew to the Proprietors that the Court of Directors are attentive to such illegal transactions; that they have made earnest application to his Majesty's Minister for India; and that he has assured them a proper cognizance shall be taken of such offences. The Proprietors and the Public therefore may rest assured, that those who have offended against the Laws, and, if public report can be relied upon, they are not a few, will be made subject to its penalties; at the same time, it is but justice to many respectable characters in the City of London and India to observe, that under so general an imputation as is here laid upon the body of British Merchants, many may be suspected of an improper participation, when, in fact, they have not known the object of the speculation, but have acted only in some particulars as agents justified by the Law, either under the Protecting Act (36 Geo. III.) or under the Act of 1793, which renewed the Charter of the East-India Company. It may not be proper at this time, when so many rumours are afloat, to go further into this subject; the charge is a very serious one, extending even to high treason; and every candid man will patiently wait for the result of the promised examination. That it is an invidious task for any one to have the duty of this investigation fall to his lot, must be acknowledged, but to high and public situations that responsibility must attach, and when individuals are selected for offices of pre-eminence, it is necessary, among other qualifications, that they should possess firmness of mind equal to every important trial, and mix with their resolution such a spirit of impartiality that their Constituents may be satisfied they have nothing under their contemplation in their public conduct but the attainment of public justice.

It is however very reasonable, when so much is said about the increase of contraband trade, and the trade of neutral nations to and from India, to
take

take a short view of the legal private trade, and consider how much of it comes to the port of London, according to the terms allowed by the Act of 1793.

It is well known that it was the policy of the East-India Company, a few years since, to throw impediments in the way of all private trade whatever ; that they limited their Captains and Officers to small privileges ; that they mulcted them for excesses, and would seldom allow any other persons to import or export any article whatever. This policy was often contested, and at last successfully ; the Company most evidently could not carry on the trade themselves ; it was not within their power ; and if it had, it evidently was imprudent for them to undertake it, because it consisted of a variety of articles not suitable to them as a public Company, and which would have terminated in loss instead of advantage. The Company by degrees became sensible of this ; and to do away the great benefits which they thought foreigners enjoyed, they resolved to enlarge the privileges of all their Officers, as well as to allow private Merchants in India to import goods upon the Company's ships on certain conditions. The good sense of this arrangement was so generally admitted, that it was more enlarged from time to time ; and on the renewal of the Company's Charter, his Majesty's Ministers and the Proprietors of India Stock agreed upon a plan to admit individuals to trade both to and from India on certain conditions. So that the amount sale of the private trade at the India-House, which in the year 1783-4 did not exceed 144,176l. in the year 1795 amounted to 1,189,296l. in the year 1797-8 to 1,200,000l. and upwards, and in the present year promises to approach near to two millions. This surely proves the inclination of the British Merchants to trade through the regular channel that has been opened
for

for them ; and were the obstacles removed which yet are in the way of the private trader, who consigns his goods to the India-House, all the present alarm about contraband trade would subside, and the Public would be satisfied by the increasing sales in Leadenhall-Street, that Great-Britain enjoyed as much of the East-India Commerce, as in justice and good policy she ought.

But to effect this, many impediments must be taken away.—It ought to be examined whether the Merchants are well grounded in their complaints *, when they assert,

That they cannot depend on having the tonnage they require upon the Company's ships.

That the time of lading and sailing is always uncertain.

That the Merchants do not know what ships their goods will be shipped upon until they are laden, which prevents their making insurances in time.

That the times of Sale at the India-House are distant after the goods arrive.

That the times of making up accounts and paying the proceeds are also late.

That the duties and expences are very heavy, and lastly,

That the freight is intolerable.

* Some of the Complaints of the Merchants of Bengal are set forth in a letter to the Governor General, which is annexed.

So that although the Legislature has admitted the expediency of opening this trade to individuals, the detail of the management is such, that the private Merchant cannot enjoy the benefits of it ; so as to make London, what is desired, the Emporium of Indian Commerce. Yet, fighting with all these difficulties, the private trade homeward is seen to increase in a few years from 144,000l. to 1,200,000l.—and this year is expected to be near to two millions. What would it amount to, were these obstacles removed ?—Of all these complaints, excessive freights are the most material. Nothing can put this in a clearer light than the offers of private Merchants to find their own shipping at much less expence: for instance, they have proposed at Bengal to charter ships to the Company at 16l. per ton, and by a second agreement undertake to find lading for them ; on condition, that they shall be charged only the same expence.* This operation is surely a very simple one ; it secures the Company against all possible loss by finding tonnage for private trade ;

* The following Advertisement, extracted from a Bengal Gazette, has been received since this was written. The business will now have a fair trial, but it will require firmness to withstand the increased clamour which will be raised, as soon as this important Commercial Arrangement is known. It is an early, and it is a very wise, Act of Lord Mornington's Administration.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISEMENT.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN,

- 1st. That the Board of Trade, in pursuance of authority from the Governor General in Council, proposes to hire, on account of the Company, Ships duly qualified according to Law, to proceed with Cargoes from Bengal to England, in the present season of 1798-9 ; and that the Owners will be permitted (under the Restrictions stated in the 11th and 12th Articles) to occupy the Tonnage of their respective Ships with their own or other Goods, to be delivered at the Port of London.

2d. Tenders

trade ; it removes every complaint of the Merchants on account of bad ships, or bad management, or uncertainty of having what tonnage they want ; or of undue dispatch or diligence in the course of the voyage, or of exorbitant freight ;
the

2d. Tenders of Ships will be received at the Office of the Secretary to the Board of Trade, on or before the 31st of January, 1799 : and they must contain the following particulars :

Name of the Ship.

Ditto of the Owners, and their place of residence.

Ditto of the Commander.

By whom the Ship was built.

Ships burthen by Carpenter's measurement.

When the Ship will be ready to commence loading.

Ditto to leave the River for the Voyage.

3d. Ships not at present in Port, but expected, may be tendered.

4th. The Ships will be taken up on their measured Tonnage.

5th. Should any Ship not be ready to commence loading at the time specified, or not be ready to leave the River for the Voyage at the time specified, the Owners will be liable for failure in the former to have their Ships rejected, notwithstanding the previous acceptance of her ; and for failure in the latter, to a penalty (payable in Bengal) of twenty-five sicca rupees per ton of the Ship's chartered Tonnage, unless such cause for delay be assigned as the Governor General in Council, or the Board of Trade may deem satisfactory.

6th. The Board of Trade shall be at liberty, previous to the acceptance of any Ship, to cause her to be surveyed.

7th. The Board of Trade reserve to themselves the right of rejecting any Tender, without assigning any reason to the Party.

8th. Every Ship, after the delivery of her Cargo in England, will be permitted to return to India, and to bring all such Goods and Merchandize as may legally be brought. Ordnance and Military Stores excepted.

9th. Each Ship, if not already registered either in India or in England, must be registered in Bengal, according to the mode practised with respect to the Ships which were taken up in Bengal in the season of 1795-6. And no Ship will be permitted to take in Cargo until she be registered accordingly, or until the Certificate of her former Registry be produced to the Board of Trade, as the case may be.

10th. The Goods must be manifested at the Export Warehouse, for passing on board the Ships, in the same manner as is done with private Goods, which go on Ships taken up by the Company in England.

manager; and the Company should by a special clause, still retain that authority over every ship navigated to and from India, that would prevent any bad

To the Sub-Export Warehouse-Keeper on the Manifests of the Goods shipped being completed, and for preparing the Documents necessary for dispatching the Ship - - - - -	Gold Mohurs	If under 500 Tons. Six.	If 500 Tons or upwards. Ten.
To the Master Attendant, his Deputy or Assistant, on mustering the Crew upon the final dispatch of the Ship - - - - -	—	Two.	Three.
To ditto upon mustering the Crew upon the Ship's return to Bengal - - - - -	—	Two.	Three.

19th. It is requested the Tenders be made out in the following form :

To W. A. EDMONSTONE, Esq. *Secretary to the Board of Trade.*

SIR,

1st. In consequence of the Advertisement, bearing date the 5th of October, inviting Tenders of Ships to carry Cargoes from Bengal to England, in the season of 1798-9, I beg leave to tender the undermentioned Ship; and subjoin the several particulars required respecting her, viz.

Ship's Name	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(	)	
Sole Owners	(							)	Inhabitant of	(	)
	(							)	ditto-	(	)
Commander	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(	)
Built at	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(	)
In the year	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(	)
By	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(	)
Burthen by Carpenters' Measurement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Tons	(	)
Will be ready to commence loading by the	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(	)
Will be ready to leave the River for the Voyage by the	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(	)

2d. I agree (on behalf of myself and of the other Owners) to abide by all the Conditions contained in the Advertisement, and in the Draft of the Charter Party.

3d. As Securities for my performance of Engagements, I beg leave to tender the undermentioned persons, whose assent is hereunto annexed :

()
()

I am, &c.

Calcutta, the of 179

We agree to be Securities,

()
()

K

20th.

bad consequences resulting to their rights. That the private Merchants will, at last, have all that facility given to them which the Legislature intended by the Act of 1793, and without which that Act is not fairly enforced, can be little doubted, because it is a national benefit: and it might have been expected from the Honourable Director when he disclaimed all bias, to have noticed a Bill that has been long before the Court of Directors, and it is hoped will soon be brought into Parliament with their approbation, which has for its object to give many of those facilities, by allowing the Company and private Merchants trading under them, to import goods at the Port of London and export them again upon paying a very moderate duty; and, in other respects, to put that part of the trade from India, which consists of articles intended for the consumption of any parts of the world except Great Britain, upon such a wise system, as will prevent illicit Trade, and must make this kingdom the general mart for East India Commerce.

It were much to be wished that the Public could have some clew given them by which they might judge of the share of East India Commerce at present enjoyed by the English in comparison with foreign Nations. The following statement may, in some degree, answer that purpose. It is well known that the Company's Sales amount annually of late to upwards of six millions, and the Sales of private Merchants are getting on rapidly towards two millions:—the Honourable Director gives a long list of Shipping, Danish,

20th, Persons tendering Ships on behalf of Constituents must, with their Tenders, send, for the inspection of the Board of Trade, their authority for making the same.

Published by order of the Board of Trade,

Fort William, October 5, 1798.

W. A. EDMONSTONE, Sec.

American,

American, and others, which have arrived from India in the years 1797 and 1798, and he makes them amount to twenty-eight—but he is uncertain as to the number altogether, and he believes there were many more. To meet these doubts, let it be admitted that forty ships return every season, and that the amount of each cargo is 40,000*l.*; when it is recollected that they bring sugar, cotton, and various gross articles, as well as the fine manufactures of India; and when it is also known that they are ships of small tonnage in general; this will be allowed to be an ample sum for the produce of them, taken one with another; the whole amount then is no more per annum than 1,600,000*l.*; but to do away the possibility of objection, let that sum be increased a million more, either by the ships or their produce being greater in number or in value—say that their produce is 2,600,000*l.* per annum, and then let the appeal be made to the good sense of this Country, taking the whole or any part of this sum which they may judge most proper: will they assert, that foreign Nations have more than their share, or more than they are able to find a capital to manage. There is not a doubt but they have ability to carry it on, and that they do carry it on in a considerable degree for their own account. British Merchants may sometimes be concerned; but whilst they are only agents within the limits of the Law as it now stands, they will often be suspected of being principals.

It is also well deserving of recollection, in considering this subject, that previous to the commotions which now agitate the whole world, the French, Dutch, Portuguese, Danes, Imperialists, and Swedes, had all large establishments, and many of them public companies, whose trade far exceeded the whole of what is at present carried on under foreign flags; but the circumstances of the times bring whatever is now transacted more immediately within
the

the view of the English observer, and make him imagine it is excessive in value and extent.

Look at the increasing Sales of the Company—look at the Sales on account of private Merchants, even under all the heavy expences and impediments they complain of, and then let it be answered by any dispassionate man, whether Great Britain has at present a very disproportionate share; but to those who think otherwise, even admitting the foreign trade exceeds what it is here estimated at, what is the proper remedy? Let the authority of the Honourable Director himself be taken; he tells the Proprietors that their Governor General

44 says, “to obviate *all the evils* and inconveniencies of the practice (of British “subjects trading under foreign flags) a reduction in the freight must take place.” —This is what fair and open Competition is effecting, and will succeed in, if it is not checked and interrupted.—Withdraw the temptation, which such excessive charges create, and as smuggling ceased with the repeal of the high duties on tea, so also will any evil practice that may prevail with foreign Nations be annihilated and destroyed, when the allurements are removed. But this would not satisfy the Honourable Director: if every British subject, without excep-

33 tion, was religiously attentive to the law, while foreigners have any trade with India, the Honourable Director is not content.—He says, “it must be obvious “that any events which tend to interfere with the profits of our Trade, or give “that to the foreigner or individual, which will benefit the Company, will be “fatal.—*We want the whole*, and nothing short of it, with the strictest economy and management, such as last year and this have manifested, will “extricate us.” This is saying, in other words, that the India Company is completely ruined; for they never can obtain the whole. This opinion, however,

ever, of the Honourable Director is probably singular, for it clearly is not the sentiment of the Court of Directors; nor does his Majesty's Minister for India think so, if there is any credit due to his annual Budgets. By the Act of 1793, it appears he did not judge it necessary, or good policy, to suppress the rivals of the English; on the contrary, he very wisely granted them accommodations, at the same time that he recommended many indulgencies to individuals under the British flag. It was then clearly his opinion, and that of the Directors, and it is to be presumed it is so still, that the interest of the India Company was best consulted by dealing with liberality towards foreigners, and by admitting British Merchants to a large participation in the East India Trade under certain conditions. If the monopoly of the whole trade of India is a desirable object, politically considered, it must be brought about by other instruments than the East India Company, as at present constituted and managed; and how much soever it may be wished, it must remain problematical at least for a long time, as every foreign nation will from time to time, meet the British Legislature, and counteract their measures for this end, by opposing to them equal favour and immunities to their own subjects who shall be willing to adventure in India Commerce. But to make out the premises of the Honourable Director, *that nothing short of the whole will extricate us*, it is incumbent upon him to shew, that the trade the Company at present carries on is really profitable. This has been denied by many experienced men.—It has been said, there is no profit in the Company's East India Trade, and for the very best of reasons, because they have no commercial economy. To prove this, let a view be taken of their present and former Capital and its annual produce in Great Britain, and also of the Charges Merchandize as they have been, and as they now are. These are increased in the very contrary proportions to what they ought according to all established commercial principles.—For instance:

The Capital of this Company until 1787 was never more
than

£.2,800,000

And the Sales at that time were - - 4,650,000

In 1794 the Capital was increafed to - - 7,780,000

And the Sales in 1796-7 were - - - 6,153,310

This fhews that with a fmall Capital the Sales at the India-

Houfe exceeded it within the Year by - - 1,850,000

And with the increafed Capital that the Sales within the

Year are lefs than that Capital - - - 1,600,000

It is left to the Reader, if he choofes to go into the calculation, to afcertain the fair difference between thefe two ftements—it is evidently im-
menfe.

And, with refpect to Charges Merchandize, the contraft is as furprifing.

In 1784-5, that account is only ftated at £.202,874

In 1796-7, it ftands at no lefs than 841,231

It is not the intention here at all to mislead, and therefore it is to be re-
marked that, in both thefe accounts, there are articles not purely commercial,
and in the latter many more than in the former; yet allowing all that can be
claimed on fuch account, it muft appear to commercial men, that the charges
do not bear a proportion to the difference in the Sales.

It is incumbent upon the Honourable Director, to prove as much economy
as heretofore in thefe expences, before he can expect credif for a profpect of
benefit

benefit from such a trade : and even if that was admitted, and a profit at the former period was clearly ascertained, it would still be a very difficult task to establish, that such profit would be now forthcoming ; when it is evident, that the increased Capital affords so inadequate an annual return to what the smaller Capital had done. On these premises, therefore, and further documents which, if time did not press, might be here stated, it is but too manifest that instead of allowing that nothing but the whole trade will extricate the Company, it might more reasonably be said, nothing but the whole trade will ruin them.

It may be asked of the Honourable Director, whether he can prevent those losses and disadvantages he at present deplures ; such as political deviations and detentions, circuitous voyages, and dispatches out of season, and demurrage to an enormous amount.

If his System of Shipping is followed, will not needless remunerations (as he is pleased to call them) to Captains and others be required again ? Will no more unfortunate speculations be set on foot, when the Company engrosses all the trade ? And will not other needless governments be established, to furnish what cannot be wanted for years ? These are all general complaints made by the Honourable Director ; but, of the particulars and extent of many of them, the Proprietors are at present ignorant, and wait his explanation to judge of their real consequence. Assertions like these may alarm for a moment only, but are not sufficient for the satisfaction of a public body, especially when they come from a Director, and when they indirectly charge those, who have the superintendence delegated to them, with mismanagement, and want of judgment and discretion in the discharge of their public duty.

It

It is needless, however, to pursue this argument further; for the Public know it is impossible, even if it were politic, for the Company to monopolize the whole of the East India Trade; and it must be matter of surprize to any man, who only recollects the Establishments of some European Nations to the eastward of the Cape, and those that will be restored to others on the return of peace, to hear a Director of the East India Company solemnly declare, that they must have the whole of the Trade of India to themselves, and that nothing short of it will save the English East India Company from destruction. It is wonderful also, that any man should court a share in the administration of those affairs which he knows to be so desperate; for, upon him, much unpleasant responsibility, at the least, will attach, when he shall appear with his three and twenty Colleagues, within the Bar at the India Court, to render an account to a ruined Proprietary, of the melancholy result of this catalogue of misfortunes, which he has pronounced to be inevitable.

This mad ambition for monopoly must be checked, or the vain attempts of some such men may precipitate those evils, which wiser characters, by their moderation, will avert. The Honourable Director may, possibly, and many of the Proprietors certainly will, feel some respect for the opinion of a late celebrated Author, who says, “ Among precautions against ambition, it may “ not be amiss to take one precaution against our own. I must fairly say, I “ dread our own power and our own ambition; I dread our being too much “ dreaded. It is ridiculous to say we are not men; and that, as men, we “ shall never wish to aggrandize ourselves in some way or other. Can we say “ at this very hour we are not invidiously aggrandized? We are already in “ possession of almost all the commerce of the world. Our empire in India

“ is an awful thing. If we should come to be in a condition, not only to have
 “ all this ascendant in Commerce, but to be absolutely able, without the least
 “ control, to hold the Commerce of all other Nations totally dependent upon
 “ our good pleasure, we may say, that we shall not abuse this astonishing and
 “ unheard of power. But every other Nation will think we shall abuse it. It
 “ is impossible but that, sooner or latter, this state of things must produce a
 “ combination against us which may end in our ruin.”

A very extraordinary passage in this Publication still remains to be noticed, 31
 and that is, where the Honourable Director has stated, that “ the prosperity
 “ of the Country, its progress in the several arts and manufactures, the great
 “ capitals employed, the numberless Europeans who are resident there, with
 “ and without the Company’s licence, all tend to that emancipation from
 “ controul that will dictate, sooner or later, the terms of traffic with the Pa-
 “ rent State.” Admitting all this to be fact, when “ they have that description
 “ of ships which can protect their property,” that is a fleet of men of war,
 (but it must be a very powerful one indeed), they may certainly dictate terms
 to this, or any other country. There is, however, in this, as in preceding in-
 stances, something more than mere assertion necessary to satisfy the Public that
 this imminent danger is impending over the nation. The prosperity of the
 Country, and its progress in the several arts and manufactures, combined with
 all the other circumstances mentioned by the Director, cannot be admitted as
 sufficient, or even probable, causes, to produce so extraordinary and alarming
 an effect as emancipation. The servants of the Crown, and of the Company,
 both civil and military, must unite most cordially in bringing about such a
 revolution. They, and they only, can be the efficient movers in such a dread-

ful work. Has the Honourable Director, in the course of his knowledge in the Company's affairs, discovered any such disposition in the conduct or writings of those servants? What are his reasons for founding this alarm? Surely they should be explained; and no time should be lost in endeavouring to avert so serious a calamity. In regard to the manufactures, they have been the wonder of the world for ages; instead, however, of making any progress in them, it is an admitted fact, that they have been long on the decline; the records within reach of the Honourable Director, in Leadenhall-Street, would prove this; but, it is apprehended, his pursuit there, or any where else, would be fruitless, if he searched or enquired for their progress in the several, or in any of the arts. As to the large capitals employed, there is a very great misapprehension among men of experience on this subject, if it is the fact, that larger capitals are in circulation now than in former times; that Europeans residing in the East India Company's territories are at this time not so rich as formerly, is beyond dispute, and that native Merchants have very much withdrawn themselves from any but inland trade; and, in some degree, from that, is equally well known. Where, then, is this great capital to be found, and in what is it employed? If the Honourable Director means the private, the neutral, or the contraband trade, which he has so much enlarged upon in his Publication, he is welcome to all the advantage that it gives him in his argument, when fairly understood. That Europeans are residing there in such numbers as to be dangerous, he, as a Director may be best able to determine; he will not cease to exert his influence to remedy an evil of that nature. It is not suitable to the extent of these observations to go at large into the subject; but, whenever the Honourable Director explains himself further, and adduces any thing that he considers as proof of these general positions, he will find opponents who,

for

for the sake of ascertaining the truth, and not from any desire of depreciating the British Possessions in India, which, to this Nation, are invaluable, will undertake to shew, “ that the trade, the capital, the resources of that Country, “ are not rapidly increasing.”

So many diffuse and important subjects are introduced by the Honourable Director in his Publication, but which are not at all relevant to the main question of fair and open Competition, that it would be an unpardonable tax upon the time of any man to offer further answer. Too much may possibly have been already said in reply. It will, therefore, now rest with the Proprietors to decide, whether they will remain firm and determined in what they so lately, and upon such convincing evidence, resolved; or whether they will be induced to depart from what promises a happy result, by the false alarm that has been founded, and which clearly must bring with it a triumphant return to the Old System of Shipping, with all its extravagancies.

The proposed amendments in the System for regular Ships, as detailed in seven 35
separate articles by the Honourable Director, have already been observed upon in
respect to the most material points; what is not ascertained by express Laws, may
very safely be left to the Court of Directors. But the Honourable Director's plan
for the importation of gross and privileged goods, the property of individuals, 36
is particularly deserving of attention. These ships may be built at any out-
ports, subject to any or no inspection; they may be a short time on the stocks;
they may be commanded by Officers inferior in skill and experience; they may
be equipped in a more humble style; they may be laden and dispatched out
of season, or at all seasons. In short, what has been so strongly represented by
this

this Gentleman as likely, in future, to occasion, and as having occasioned already, losses incalculable to the Company's Commerce, is seriously recommended by him as a Plan for the accommodation and security of British Merchants!!!

19 Here these observations shall be closed ; but, in taking leave of the Honourable Director, it is impossible to pass unnoticed the ardent zeal with which he undertakes the cause of the Public at large. He says, " Having considered the subject as affecting the Company in the protection afforded to their immense concerns, and the individual benefit resulting to the mariner, shipwright, artizan, and the shipping interest of the Country, and, ultimately, the immediate interests of the Country itself, I will advert to circumstances of a more extensive range, in which, possibly, its future prosperity, pre-eminence and welfare, and that of all ranks, is most intimately connected." Warmed with the subject, he mounts still higher, and 'soars with no middle flight : ' from this height, looking down with contempt on India Shipping, and India Politics, he boldly avers, that " the Court of Directors are not bound to consider India but as a *secondary object*. Their Constituents are British subjects, and the welfare of Great Britain should be the ultimate object of their attention." With these aspiring notions, and enlarged sentiments, it is to be apprehended, that the contracted bound of the India House is too narrow a sphere for his vast conceptions: it may be thought they are more adapted to the station of a Cabinet Minister, than an East India Director, in that the welfare of Great Britain ought certainly to be the first, and India the secondary object ; but whether this sentiment is suitable to the other station, is not quite so clear. In the opinion of common understandings

standings, the first duty of any man towards his employers, is the business on which they employ him, and he undertakes to perform; and it may, perhaps, be worth the Honourable Director's while, to consider whether his Constituents will not be better pleased to have him regard their affairs as his primary duty, and leave the national interests to the Rulers of the Nation.

“ ————— Quod medicorum est

“ Promittunt medici, tractant fabrilis fabri.”

P O S T S C R I P T.

IT is no immaterial part of this subject, though it is not connected with the general arguments of it, to consider the manner of this Publication, and its mode of circulation. A book is published by a Director of the East India Company, for the perusal of the Proprietors, and through these means given to the world at large; which contains, chiefly, animadversions on the conduct of the Company's Affairs, through all their extensive combinations of Commerce, of Policy, and Navigation; and in all of them much fault is found, and many abuses stated to exist, that in their consequences tend to the destruction of the Company. Has it never occurred to the Honourable Director, that he has a responsible share in this conduct that he disapproves? That these are subjects which appertain peculiarly to the deliberation of the Court of Directors; that it is their appropriate office to consult how these abuses are to be corrected; and that it is his specific duty to deliver his sentiments in the first instance, to them in their Ministerial capacity?

As a member of that body, he is to propose, as well as to deliberate, and the very reason for appointing him one of the Directors was, that he might have an immediate communication with them who are selected for the special purpose of acting in council together. If the Honourable Director has performed his particular duty, by pointing out to the Court of Directors all these evils, with such means of remedying them as might occur to him, and they have not listened to him; or, if after considering, they should have rejected them, and he should think it incumbent on him to appeal to his Constituents; or, if there be any other reasons so urgent, that he thought it was necessary to endeavour to compel where he could not persuade; there might then be some justification for an appellatory claim to the attention of the Proprietors, but it should have been by calling them together. No such reasons, however, have been stated, and if the Honourable Director has not, in the first instance, laid all these matters before the Court of Directors, it may be fairly asked, what would be the consequence, if each Director were to publish his sentiments on the Company's Affairs, and appeal to the Proprietors instead of submitting them to his Colleagues? It certainly is a point worthy consideration, whether there is not an evident impropriety in such conduct, and in this propensity of running to the Press on every occasion, whether the case requires it or not.

APPENDIX.

A P P E N D I X.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. DUNDAS, in answer to one sent him by a Committee of the Ship-Builders, requesting his Advice and Opinion, as the Ship-Wrights, and various other Workmen employed in Ship-building, were considerably alarmed at the East-India Company having the Privilege of importing Goods in East-India-built Shipping.

Wimbledon, July 1st, 1797.

GENTLEMEN,

I RECEIVED your letter of the 15th ultimo, which the urgency of various pressing occasions has prevented me sooner from acknowledging. In the conversation I had with you in Downing-Street, I shortly stated to you my opinion, that the idea of prohibiting all India-built Shipping from coming to Great-Britain, was not only in itself an act of great injustice, but would in its tendency have an effect on the interest of the Ship-builders in the River Thames directly the reverse of what they seemed to apprehend.

The

The injustice of the proposition consists in depriving a great description of the subjects of Great Britain of a right undoubtedly belonging to them. The British territories in India are under the sovereignty of Great Britain, and the ships built there are equally entitled to all the privileges of British-built Shipping, as those built in the West-Indies or Canada, or any other foreign Dependencies of the Empire; and I have never heard that the Ship-Builders in Great Britain have set up any claim to prohibit any of the Shipping in those quarters from bringing home the produce of their own territories in ships of their own building, if they found it convenient so to do; and yet it is obvious that the same plea of interest and supposed injury would equally apply. I think it however the less necessary to dwell upon this topic, because, upon a due consideration of the subject, no proposition can be more clear to my mind, than that the apprehension entertained is perfectly erroneous, and that the restriction wished for would prove of no immediate use, and ultimately be injurious to the interest of those who suggest it.

Upon grounds of general Policy, both political and commercial, I assume it as an incontrovertible proposition, that, if possible, the whole trade and produce of India should, in the first instance, center in Great Britain, either for the consumpt of this Country or for re-exportation to supply the wants of other countries.

If I was to draw my conclusions from the proposition only, I should, on commercial principles, be obliged to say, that the produce and trade of India should be brought home on that species of Shipping which can be got at the cheapest rate; but I am well aware that there are grounds of great and essential national importance which stand in the way of that general proposition.

The

The large ships built for the service of the East-India Company have always appeared to me necessarily connected with the permanent interests of this Country, in so far as they afford a steady and invariable employment to the Ship-building interests of Great-Britain, and by that means secure to its naval interests a ready supply of workmen and manufacturers of ship-building materials, when the exigencies of the State may require it.

These considerations have always operated on my judgment as a satisfactory answer to the objections founded on the larger freight required by those ships than it might otherwise be obtained for; and likewise to the objection, founded upon the quantity of large timber which they necessarily consume, to the detriment of the supply requisite for the Navy of Great Britain.

On these grounds, I have never failed, so far as my authority had any weight, to give it as my opinion, that the whole of the China trade, and the whole of the regular trade of the East India Company, should, if possible, be carried out, and brought home, in ships of the description of those to whom I have just alluded. By the regular trade of the East India Company, I mean the trade indented for by them, which they know is ready prepared for them, by their servants abroad; and with regard to the provisions, of which they have no reason to apprehend any disappointment, on the arrival of their ships in India.

If this System is adhered to, it is impossible that the Ship-building interests of Great Britain can have any cause to complain; and they ought to recollect to what an additional extent this interest has been carried within these very few years, and is likely to be still farther carried, by the encreased and

increasing commerce of the East India Company, arising from various causes, but, in a particular manner, from the effect of the Commutation Act passed some years ago.

Those who bring forward the idea upon which your letter is founded, altogether forget that the commerce of the East India Company must, of course, be regulated by the extent of the capital which they can afford to lay out upon it, or which, under all circumstances, it may be prudent for them to speculate with.

It is a notorious fact that, at all times, a great share of the produce and manufactures of India have been brought to Europe by other channels than that of the East India Company, and to other ports than those of Great Britain.

The other channels must remain more or less, according to the circumstances I have referred to; but, although there may be several channels for bringing that produce to Europe, I do think there must be a fatal error in the commercial policy of the East India Company, if these channels are not so connected with them, and so much under their own eye and controul, as, in reality, to a certain extent, to form a part of their own trade; and, as a consequence of this, it would necessarily follow, that the port of London would, in the first instance, be the Emporium of the great bulk of the Commerce of Asia.

It is idle to suppose, that all this can be effected by the regular ships in the actual employ of the East India Company. The large freight which the
construction

construction and outfit of those ships necessarily require, but, above all, the uncertainty to what extent those ships, if they were to be sent out, would find cargoes prepared for them, render any such speculation impracticable.

These are no new sentiments of mine : it is more than two years and a half since I had occasion to give that opinion to the East India Company. I then stated to their Chairman, “ that, when the Company were certain of an “ investment being actually prepared, they should lay it down as a rule, to “ send from this Country their proper Shipping, to bring home that private “ valuable investment ; but whenever they saw it necessary to make experimental speculations of the nature then in question, or where they are “ bound to make provision for the bringing home private or privilege trade, “ it would be infinitely more wise to give a power to their governments “ abroad to take up Shipping on the spot to the full amount requisite.”

These are the general principles by which, in my opinion, the question should be ruled ; and, if it was invariably adhered to, I am positive it would amply protect the Ship-building interests of Great Britain, and, at the same time, extend the great interests of her Commerce and Navigation.

There are several material errors operating on the minds of those who have applied to you ; they conceive, that the prohibition of India-built ships coming to Great Britain would make a proportionate degree of room for the Shipping of the East India Company ; it would have no such effect ; it would have no other effect than that which it has always had, of driving those ships, with their cargoes, into foreign ports, and thereby establishing, in foreign countries, an Asiatic Commerce founded on British Capital, which, by contrary

trary policy ought, in the first place, to center on the River Thames, and be from thence re-exported for the supply of other European Nations.

They are not aware of another essential point. Such a prohibition would very rapidly injure the regular trade of the East India Company itself; for, in consequence of the trade being carried on, to which I have last referred, foreign nations would be supplied with their assortments of Indian produce and manufactures, without having recourse, for that purpose, to Leadenhall Street; and, in proportion as that mode of supplying themselves increased, exactly in the same proportion would the regular trade, and the regular shipping, in the employment of the East India Company decrease.

The decrease of British Shipping would not be the only consequence, the loss of commission, and other consequences of British agency being employed in providing assortments for Foreign Countries, would also be withdrawn from the national Capital.

The Ship-Builders in the River Thames are under another material error, if they suppose that their own immediate interests would not be injured by driving the India-built Shipping from the British Ports to be the Carriers of Indian produce and manufactures into the Ports of Foreign Nations; this Country in general, and they in particular, would of course lose the benefit which in various shapes results to this Country from the refitting those in the River Thames. I have endeavoured to inform myself what were the India-built ships which came to this Country in the course of last season, and what might be the probable amount of their expenditure in the articles of refitting. I believe my information is pretty accurate as to the number
of

of ships of this description which have entered during that period in the River Thames, and they amount to twenty-five in number. I have not had time to inform myself as to the expenditure laid out on the refit of eight of these ships, but I have what I consider to be creditable information as to the other seventeen; and it is stated that upon those ships the expenditure of refitting amounted to near one hundred and seventeen thousand pounds sterling; this is exclusive of the premiums of insurance, which must be great, and arises upon the following articles, viz.

Copper	-	-	-	-	-	-	£4,996	14	4
Butcher, brewer, cooper, baker, and provisions	-						15,839	7	0
Brazier, ironmonger, and shipchandler	-						12,296	13	11
Ropemaker and failmaker	-	-					21,441	0	7
Carpenter, mast and blockmaker	-						21,485	14	10
Advance to seamen, and contingent expences	-						40,820	9	6
							£.116,880	0	2

You will not fail to observe how great a proportion of this sum has gone to those immediately connected with the Ship-building interest in the River Thames, all of which must of course be transferred to Foreign Ports, if the suggestions which have been laid before you were to be adopted.

From an anxiety that there should be no misunderstanding upon this very important subject, and with a view to quiet the minds of a very useful and meritorious class of men, I have perhaps detailed my sentiments with more minuteness than may appear to be necessary.

The result of my opinion is, that the regular Shipping of the East-India Company ought to be kept up at an extent equal, nay, greater than it ever was ; but it is an egregious error to suppose that this can be done by giving way to the unfounded alarms, which have been taken up on the subject of India-built Shipping, the very reverse would be the consequence of adopting those inconsiderate suggestions which have been recently brought forward.

It is, however, proper for me to observe, that the execution of the principles upon which my opinion rests does not depend upon me ; they are connected with the Commercial System of the East-India Company, upon which they are liable to no control but what Parliament may think proper to impose ; but if it is any satisfaction to you to know the foundations of the opinions which an individual, whose public situation has led him to attend to subjects of this nature, entertains respecting them, I trust you will do me the justice to admit I have done it without reserve, ready, certainly, at all times, to alter those opinions, if, upon candid discussions, they should be found to be erroneous.

I am, GENTLEMEN,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

(Signed)

HENRY DUNDAS.

Copy of a Letter from the MERCHANTS OF CALCUTTA to the Honourable SIR JOHN SHORE, Bart. Governor-General, &c. &c.

Fort-William.

HONOURABLE SIR,

THE commercial advantages which Great Britain derives from the Honourable Company's possessions in India, are now generally felt and acknowledged. To encrease these advantages, a legal channel of conveyance was opened by the late Act of Parliament, which renewed the Company's Charter for transporting the goods and merchandize of individuals from India to England. By the printed correspondence which passed between his Majesty's Ministers and the Honourable Court of Directors previous to the renewal of the Charter, it appeared to have been the intention of both parties to furnish individuals with a sufficient quantity of tonnage, through the Company, both to and from India, at fair and moderate rates, for certain goods which are enumerated in the Act. When the Act reached us, we were sorry to observe, that the provisions it contained for this purpose, were not likely to produce the effect intended, under a strict adherence to the letter thereof. Ignorant, however, as we then were, how the intentions of the Legislature might operate in this respect, we have waited the result of experience before we presumed to offer an opinion thereon. Two shipping seasons are now nearly elapsed since the Act took place here, and we are sorry to be under the necessity of representing that we have hitherto derived little benefit from the prospect which it held out, of an equitable conveyance of our goods from hence to England.

The

The 3000 tons of freight, which the A&E directs to be appropriated to individuals, is very inadequate to the demand; nor are the rates of 15*l.* per ton in time of peace, and 22*l.* 10*s.* in time of war, sufficiently moderate for the exportation of gruff goods, or those of great bulk or weight in proportion to their value. These rates are from 3 to 5*l.* per ton, or $33\frac{1}{3}$ to 50 per cent. in the former period, and 7*l.* 10*s.* or 50 per cent. in the latter, beyond the rate of tonnage furnished by foreign ships. The consequence of this disproportion in the rate of freight between the Company's tonnage and that of foreigners is sufficiently obvious. They will always be able to underfell us in the Europe market to that amount, or to overbid us in the same proportion in their purchases here; a preference which precludes competition on our part in all low priced goods, and must continue to force all the surplus produce of this country, beyond the Company's Investment, or the greatest part of it, to foreign ports.

The price or insufficiency of conveyance are not the only evils of which we have to complain. There are other causes that nearly exclude us altogether from any benefit which the A&E holds out, or that the Company intended, by the appropriation of freight to private traders. We never can know what proportion of 3000 tons may have been previously taken up in England, or rather what quantity is appropriated for individuals in India. The regulations also for receiving tenders of freight here, limit the time for offering proposals to the 1st September. At this early period of the season very little of the internal produce of the country reaches Calcutta, nor are we ascertained of the prices at which goods of the season can be shipped, yet we must previously determine to apply for tonnage, which accident may prevent us from filling, or the state of the market afterward, or other circumstances,

cumstances, render it ruinous for us to export, otherwise we can have no conveyance for that season, under the provisions of the Act; or should we provide goods positively at an early period for exportation on the Company's tonnage, they must be bought at the hazard of being disappointed of a conveyance, by a previous appropriation. It is true that the Company's tonnage has been opened again this season for private goods since the 1st September, but the rate of freight is left to be settled in England, and although it cannot be less than 22l. 10s. may, we are informed, amount to 35l. per ton. Under such an uncertainty in the price of conveyances, nothing but the most urgent necessity could induce a prudent Merchant to avail himself of the offer. To trade on these terms is rather a species of gambling than a sober regulated Commerce, which is best maintained on moderate profits, whilst those can be secured by the avoidance of any great risk.

In pointing out the obstacles which oppose an increased export trade from hence to England by individuals, we are actuated by no other motive than a wish to see these impediments removed, as far as circumstances will admit, that we may experience the full effect of the benefit which the Legislature intended, by drawing the produce of Bengal to England. We are well aware, that unless applications were received here, and transmitted home previous to the period of taking up outward bound ships, the Company cannot know what tonnage will be wanted, and therefore cannot, under any idea of accommodation to individuals resident in India, take up extra tonnage for that purpose, which may not be called for, and the ships return empty. We are all sensible, that the Company must be apprized here, at an early period of the year, of the quantity of tonnage required by private traders, that time may be allowed for filling up any part that is unoccupied.

To remove the obstacles which prevent individuals from exporting goods to Europe, without inconvenience or loss to the Company, and without interfering with their established Europe tonnage, We humbly suggest the propriety of employing the British Shipping of the Country. There are upwards of 30,000 tons of Shipping belonging to British subjects resident here; of which forty-one sail, carrying upwards of 16,000 tons, have been built at Bengal. These ships, we are legally advised, are entitled to the rights and privileges of British bottoms, on complying with the regulations of the Act of Parliament of the 26th of George the Third. The terms on which we conceive these ships, or any others built in the British settlements in India, may be employed with advantage to the Nation, the Company, and Individuals, are as follows :

To accept of tenders of such ships as are legally eligible, provided the Owner engages to load the ship himself, or procure a cargo from others, of such goods as the Company permit private traders to export to England. The person tendering the ship, to enter into an engagement not to exact a higher rate of freight, for that part of the freight which he does not occupy himself, than 12l. per ton in time of peace, and 16l. per ton in time of war. That the goods exported on these ships be landed at the port of London, and deposited for sale in the Company's warehouses, from whence they are to be sold in the manner prescribed for private goods laden on the Company's tonnage, and subject to the Company's duty of 3 per cent. That full and adequate security be given, that all ships tendered for this purpose shall be amenable to the Company's orders and regulations, in the same manner as the regular chartered ships; or the Owners may be made to sign a charter-party agreement, similar to that executed in England, for the freight of the whole ship,

ship, the Company refreighting the tonnage to them on the same terms. That these ships be permitted to return to India, after discharging their cargoes, in ballast, or to bring such goods as private traders are permitted by the Company to export to India at the option of the Owners. That, in case the Company should have occasion to occupy any of the returning tonnage with military or naval stores, they shall have a right to fill up one half of each ship's tonnage at the rate of 4l. per ton, and also to send out troops on the same allowance as is made to regular ships.

On these outlines, or something similar, we humbly conceive a considerable encrease would speedily take place in the exports of Bengal, all of which would center in England, to the improvement of cultivation here, and the extension of commerce and revenue in both countries.

Should these suggestions meet a favourable reception, there are many whose signatures appear to this address, are ready to step forward with tenders of ships and cargoes conformably thereto; but if what we have ventured to propose is inconsistent with the regulations of the Company here, we take the liberty of requesting that you will forward this address to the Court of Directors for their consideration.

We are, &c. &c.

Fairlie, Reid, and Co.

Lambert, Ross, and Co.

Colwins and Bazett.

Paxton, Cockerell, Trail, and Co.

Barber

Barber and Palmer.

Campbell and Radcliffe.

Porcher, Gardiner, Moscrop, and Co.

Frushard and Laprimandaye.

Perreau and Palling.

Hamilton and Aberdeen.

George and Thomas Gowan.

Champaign, Reisch, and Terraneau.

Dring, Cleland, and Co.

Tod and Miller.

Charles Rothman.

John Canning.

George Tyler.

Walter Daves.

John Blythe.

Henry Abbot.

Foreman and Bacon.

Edwards, Gillet, and Larkins.

James Ede.

CALCUTTA,
APRIL 10, 1795.