

THE SUBSTANCE

OF A

SPEECH

DELIVERED BY

ROBERT SPANKIE, Esq.

BEFORE

A SELECT COMMITTEE

OF THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

On the 24th and 27th Days of June, 1814.

IN SUMMING UP THE EVIDENCE

In Support of a Bill

— “To make further Regulations for the Registry of Ships built in India.”

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SELECT COMMITTEE
ON
EAST INDIA SHIPPING BILL.

Friday, June 24, 1814.

THE RIGHT HONORABLE THOMAS WALLACE IN THE CHAIR.

MR. SPANKIE.—May it please you, Mr. Chairman, it is now my duty to lay before the Committee what appears to me to be the result of the long and painful investigation in which they have been engaged. I feel it extremely difficult, however, to give them even a short review of such a body of evidence upon so great a variety of topics, and the bearing of which upon the question it is sometimes not easy to discover. Indeed, I am afraid, that the observation of my learned friend, Mr. Harrison, as to the circumstances in which one of our witnesses made his survey of the oak timber, applies, in some degree, to the whole discussion; and that the superfluity of leaves, with which the case is surrounded, tends to conceal its solid contents.

I shall not enter into a very minute examination of the evidence, which would, probably, carry me farther than is

necessary for the occasion,* or would be convenient for the Committee.

With respect to the great and more important considerations, embracing almost every branch of political economy, and every question of national policy, which the measure before the Committee involves, I shall refrain from them as much as possible; feeling that my learned friend who preceded me went over that ground so luminously, and with so much ability, that the impression he must have made renders it unnecessary for me to dwell upon that part of the case, even could I hope to follow him with equal success.

In summing up the effect of the evidence which has been presented to the Committee, it will be necessary to call back to their recollection the grounds upon which the parties have thought fit to rest their case; and to shew more clearly what has been proved, compared with the object with which they set out. The argument on the other side seems to reduce itself to this, that if the building of shipping for the East India Company and the trade to India is removed, the consequences will be ruinous to the establishments on the Thames, and that such removal will produce great danger to the general ship-building interests of the country, and also to the public naval service: Connected with this, something has also been introduced with respect to the danger that may arise from transferring to India so large a portion of ship-building. The other side have likewise anticipated a part of what was supposed to be our case, by going, at very great length, into the question, whether there exist a scarcity of timber. To that part of the case we have been, in some measure, compelled to

* It was understood that the Committee did not intend to report any opinion on the matters of the respective petitions.

answer, not at the same length, but at considerable length. I must confess, however, notwithstanding the time it has consumed, that this part of the case does not appear to me necessarily to decide the measures of government upon so great a subject as this. That a scarcity of timber may be an argument with some to acquiesce in the bill before parliament, I can easily believe; and so far it justly claims a considerable share of attention. We have endeavoured, therefore, to shew, that the scarcity which has been represented to exist, is a real one; and, upon that ground alone, some aid to the ship-building resources of this country is necessary to enable us to carry on that extensive commerce which we now enjoy.

The ship-builders in the Thames come before the Committee, insisting, and boldly avowing, that the teak ships must be excluded from the trade between Great Britain and India altogether. *They represent the introduction of them to be pregnant with the greatest danger.* We, on the other hand, contend that, up to the largest extent to which teak ships can be called into use, they ought to be permitted, according to the letter and spirit of the navigation laws, and to every principle which hitherto has regulated the policy of this country, but we confine ourselves, on the present occasion, to maintaining, that the limited concession of the right we are to enjoy, under the proposed bill, is the least that can be given to us, and it is absolutely necessary for carrying on the trade between great Britain and India.

The ship-builders in the Thames, I am afraid, have been actuated, in their present opposition to the Bill, by a spirit of mercantile jealousy, too frequent when competition is apprehended. In this case, they say, that they must be excluded from any competition, because the teak ships enter into the trade with such advantages as to exclude them altogether.

This is the common pretence of all those who claim exclusive advantages, or protection against rivalship. The competition which is beneficial to the public, they represent as ruinous to themselves. Dr. Smith, vol. i., p. 229, gives a whimsical instance of this jealousy, in a class in whom such jealousies are not very common, and which a good deal resembles the apprehensions entertained by the Thames builders on this occasion. He mentions that the proprietors and occupiers of lands in the home counties petitioned parliament that no turnpike roads should be made beyond fifty miles from London, pretending that the cheapness of labour, and other advantages in the distant counties, would make it impossible for the petitioners to sustain any competition with them. The Thames builders would deprive the country of what is something analagous in its importance to turnpike roads—cheap conveyance of commodities by sea. Their present opposition is founded on the same principle. They would exclude the teak ships from entering into competition in the trade of India, because they would have no kind of chance if India were suffered to avail itself of its natural advantages. I am not prepared to admit, however, that, taking the durability into account, as well as the original cost of a teak ship, (certainly not less than that of a Thames built ship,) even that superiority would give a virtual monopoly to the teak ship. Various other circumstances must concur to determine in what degree, if at all, the one vessel would be preferred to the other. The cheapness of labour in building, the original cost of the vessel, or her durability, will not, of themselves, decide whether the teak ship or the Thames ship is to carry on the commerce of India. A man in India, who lays out his capital in an India ship, must bring himself round to a mercantile profit, at a rate proportionate to the mercantile interest of money in India. A British merchant might be repaid by a profit which would not indemnify his Indian

competitor. The mere cheapness of the ship would not, of itself, decide whether the Thames ship builders, or rather the owner of a Thames ship, could enter into competition or not. Our opponents are alarmed to a greater degree than is necessary; but were the consequences to the Thames builders to be even such as they represent, I apprehend we are still entitled to contend, that the share proposed to be assigned to us by Government (admitted to be a limitation of our rights as now defined by law,) is as little as could be allowed to us.

A leading argument on the other side is, that the basis of the establishments in the Thames must fall, if the building for the India trade, represented to be their main support, is removed, and that it will be the ruin of the establishments themselves. It is for us, on the other hand, to shew that even in this narrow view *their calculation is over rated.*

They have proved that prior to the time of teak ships they were in the habit of building a great number of ships, annually, for the Company, the average building, per annum, from 1795 to 1804 being 7 ships, and that the average of the last ten years is reduced to between 2 and 3. (Minutes, p. 16.) Among other errors of that average my learned friend shewed, that in that abstract for the first ten years 7 ships were included as built for the India Company's service, which, in fact were built for Government. But, Sir, we shew, and I think our evidence is quite decisive to that point, that the employment of the Thames yards has arisen in by far the greatest proportion, as to building for the last twenty years, from building for Government, and the recent distress that has prevailed in those yards has been produced, in the first place, by the suspension of that employment, and, in the second place, in a very considerable degree, by the change

which has taken place in the course and period of employment of the India ships by the company, that is, by the extension of the number of voyages from 6 to 8, and from 4 to 6, which has dispensed with the necessity of such a frequent repetition of building. It is quite clear, therefore, that any argument drawn from that abstract of the average building during the first ten years and the last ten years is erroneous.

To begin with the quantum of employment given by Government, it appears that 97,789 tons were built for the Company during the last twenty years by five great building establishments, and that the same houses (Minutes, p. 639,) built 119,415 for Government, besides that, the seven ships alluded to ought to be withdrawn from the building for the Company and added to that for Government. Taking the building for other purposes, during that period, into the account, amounting to about 42,000 tons, (Minutes, p. 16,) the East India building for the last 20 years has been hardly a third of the whole.

Now, Sir, according to these abstracts, it is perfectly clear that the business of the river, during the last 20 years, has, in building, been supported, in much the largest proportion, by the employment of Government; but it is quite natural that when the Government business, upon the return of peace, is no longer continued in the same degree, a considerable distress should be experienced by the workmen in the river. Although that distress must be a subject of regret, it must be expected to happen in those divisions of labour which have been turned towards the supply of the war. Upon the return of peace great fluctuation must be produced in every thing connected with that supply, and a number of persons turned out of employ. The extent of suffering in the river Thames, such as it is described, does not exceed

that occasioned by many fluctuations in commercial enterprise, and must be expected in those large divisions of capital and of industry, put in action by the extensive war which has now ceased.

If, however, I were to allow the full effect of all that is contended for in this argument, it is quite clear that the builders in the river Thames cannot ascribe to the introduction of the teak ships in past times that distress which has been experienced in the last year. The number of teak ships in the India trade, and which can be considered as substitutes for those which would have been built in the river, is not of that magnitude which could be attended with the effect ascribed to it, for less a sudden effect. The whole of the building which that number would have furnished, if they had possessed it, would not have prevented that decay which they have endeavoured to prove. Allowing that the exaggerated number of six or seven a year would have been built, that, according to their own evidence, could only have given work to 360 artificers of every description. You find from the evidence of Mr. Hughes, in page 63 of the Minutes, that 60 artificers of all sorts were competent to build a 1200 ton ship in 14 months. At that rate (the number of men being now reduced to about 600 or 700,) would only have been increased by 360, leaving the amount still far below the average number employed on the Thames in preceding years, while government afforded full employment.

Now, Sir, that the business of the river, as to *building*, has been furnished, in the greatest proportion, by the Government service during that period, appears most clearly from the quantity of tonnage built in the river. That it has also arisen from the repairing of ships there can be no doubt. We have had great difficulty in ascertaining the amount of that

repair; but it seems to be admitted by the witnesses, that the repairs might be about one-half; I find that stated by Mr. Fearnell, in page 114, in the Minutes; and by Mr. Sparrow, in page 130. The other side, had they found it for their interest, could have told us exactly.

In proof of the building for government being a principal source of occupation to the river builders, I ought to refer to the two Abstracts in the Minutes, marked U. and W. (pages 639, 640;) in that of U. will be found the amount of the tonnage of ships built for government, and of those built for the India Company; the whole tonnage built for the India Company as already mentioned, is 97,789; of those for Government, 119,415; and the number of men employed in the principal yards has not at all corresponded with the quantity of building for the company. By Abstract W. it appears that in the year 1804, Messrs. Wigram, and Co. employed 498 men, when they had no East India building; in 1805, they employed 604, when they had no East India building; in the year 1806, they employed 598, and one Indiaman was built; in 1807, they employed 505, when not one Indiaman was built; in 1808, they employed 496, when there were two built; in 1809, they employed 462, when there were none built; in 1810, they employed 554, in which year there was one built; in 1811, they employed 616, when there were three built; and in 1812, they employed 392, when there was one built. The year 1813, perhaps, ought hardly to be taken into the account. The number of men is 738, but in that year Messrs. Wigram's built ten fir frigates, which accounts for the additional number of men. Now, sir, I say, that the whole of the tonnage of India built which at present remains, or ever was in the Company's service, would by no means account for the falling off of the building in the river so as to cause the present distress, because the

whole extent of the India built tonnage now in their service, is of regular ships, 9,254 tons, extra, 4,228 tons.* The whole extent of teak built tonnage, the introduction, or rather the registry of which is complained of, is 60,939, in the course of twenty years. Of that total, part consists of ships employed coming home with rice, in consequence of an expected scarcity, and which cannot be considered as having any rivalry with the business of the builders in the Thames. Now of the 60,939 tonnage, a very large proportion, consisting of no less than 32 ships, making 19,769 tons, have been totally lost. There are employed in the transport service, and sold to government, 2,803 tons. Ships employed as store ships, and sold to government, 2,613 tons, so that very few remain to enter at all into competition with the Thames ship builders, or any other class of British ship builders. But perhaps it is unnecessary for me to trouble the Committee with those statements from the Minutes, to which, as soon as they are printed, they will have an opportunity of referring; they will see that the amount of tonnage of the teak ships now in the India trade, (Minutes, page 635,) is such, that it is impossible that could have produced the distress complained of, by the subtraction of any employment the River builders could have expected to possess. The whole quantity brought into the whole registered tonnage of the empire, and now existing, is under 30,000 tons. As to the past, therefore, I feel confident that it will be altogether impossible for the Thames builders to sustain their complaint, because they have not proved that they have depended upon the India Company's building in the degree they have contended. I must admit, indeed, that allowing that the distress complained of were to be explained as we

* P. S. Since this account was made up, contracts for three ships, amounting to 2,001 tons have terminated, as per Minutes, page 663.

have done, it is not to be denied, that if the Thames builders were to lose the whole of the building calculated for the India trade for the future, it might affect their interests in a degree, that no doubt would obtain your consideration. The question, however, must be discussed after all, less with reference to the past effects of the employment of teak ships, though erroneously represented by the other side, than with a view to its policy for the future; and I apprehend that the question how the building of ships for the India trade is in future to be regulated, will be decided on principles very different from any that are to be collected from these partial considerations.

It ought not to be forgotten, however, that of the trade which is brought to London through the teak ships, a large portion of it has been created by the employment of those ships, and the Thames builders have derived the greatest benefit from the consumption of all the various articles in which they deal, which those ships have occasioned. The Thames builders would not, were they to lose the building suffer a loss to the extent which has been stated. But there ought certainly to be taken into view in this case, a material distinction between the situation in which the ships in private trade stand, and the situation of the ships in the service of the Company. If the commerce carried on for the private ships had been confined to the East India Company's shipping, it could not have existed. The whole evidence * shews that it has been created out of this very employment. The Thames builders would not be benefited by excluding the private ships; for the trade brought to London by the teak ships on private account, no other ships would have

* See Minutes, pages 527. 549. 574, &c. the evidence of Messrs. Mitchel, Martland, McTaggart, and others.

been employed. The expenditure and disbursement in repairs, and otherwise arising from ships coming from India, (pages 622 to 625,) has been an addition to the profit of the Thames builders, and also an addition to the national wealth of the country, without being a competition or rivalry with any British trade or employment whatever.

Now, Sir, in going over these details, it may be necessary to state, that while the other side have ascribed their distress solely to the teak built ships taken into the India trade, they have omitted to notice that there has been another description of tonnage taken into that trade, not built in the river, and to which, on their principles, some part of the present distress must be owing. In page 594 of the Minutes, it will appear that the tonnage of ships in the Company's employment, built in the outports, amounts to 8,028 tons, and therefore it would have been fair to have taken into consideration this part of the tonnage in the service of the East India Company, as tending to diminish the building in the river, and contributing to its present distress.

In referring the Committee to the accounts which have been lately presented, with a view to shew the effect of the additional voyages in which the Company's ships have been employed, they will find that 13 ships have been recently discharged the service, upon the completion of their contracts, (Minutes, page 663;) and that the number of those whose voyages are just expiring is 40, (Minutes, page 594;) so that there will be according to the practice of the Company, even allowing for the voyages that have been renewed, the number of 53 ships to be replaced within a very short period, and considering the number of 40 is the proportion going out of service of a total of 84 ships, it must shew that there has been an extraordinary suspension of

building, which of itself would explain the falling off in the last ten years in that description of employment.

It is therefore clear, that if the prosperity of their trade continue, the Company in a very few years must take into their service ships either built in England or in India to the extent of nearly two thirds of all their tonnage; and I believe no man, allowing the utmost for the capacity of India to build ships, will say, that India could supply so great a number in so short a time, on so sudden a call; not to mention the increase of price which such a sudden demand would occasion. It appears to me, therefore, that the case of distress so far as we can be considered responsible for it, entirely fails; and that in all probability that distress and the cessation of employment which has caused it, will not be permanent.

But, Sir, passing from that head, I will consider the aid that is said to have been given to government by the Thames builders. On this branch of the discussion, I shall take up very little of your time; the Thames builders certainly have endeavoured to erect a claim upon the country for the assistance they have rendered to government. It is not my intention to find fault with the manner in which the Thames builders have conducted themselves in their contracts with government, or to take any part in the controversy as to the quality of men of war built in private yards; but, Sir, when the Thames builders claim credit for their exertions in the service of government, they strengthen one part of our case, by establishing the quantity of employment for the public service which they have performed, and to the want of which we ascribe their temporary distress. Let it be admitted that they have meritoriously conducted themselves in every engagement in which they have been concerned; yet it is

surely a most extravagant inference to conclude that the public is interested in the degree they represent in the magnitude of their establishments, and in the question whether they shall or shall not retain the building for the East India trade. In page 594, it appears that the whole tonnage in the service of the East India Company is 70,000, including 12,000 of extra shipping taken up for the private trade. Now that is the amount of tonnage, of which in the possible event these gentlemen anticipate they would lose the building; certainly not 5 or 6000 tons per annum. Now suppose the whole of that 70,000 were built in India at the rate of 5 or 6000 ton per annum, what aliquot part does that 70,000 form of the whole tonnage of the country. From the argument of my learned friend Mr. Harrison, of the danger to the country from the transfer of it to India, I was inclined to think it must be a very great proportion indeed; but you will find, that in 1813, the whole commercial tonnage of the country is 2,514,484 tons, (Minutes, page 627;) so that the whole of this tonnage, upon the building of which in the Thames the salvation of the country is to depend, does not make a thirty-fifth part of the commercial tonnage of Great Britain! This prodigious alarm for the naval greatness of the country is quite exaggerated: because when we compare the whole of the tonnage with the naval means this nation enjoys, it is not very appalling to take into consideration the utmost extent of the injury likely to arise from the transfer of 70,000 tons of building to another part of the empire. The public interests, I apprehend, are in no danger from the measure. With respect to the aid said to have been derived to government from the Thames building, the aid derived from the outports is in a much greater proportion. In a paper circulated by the other side, and to which your attention has frequently been called, (page 53,) I find the quantity of tonnage now in the service of government built in the out-

ports, stated to be 197,851, and in the river, 166,000. In confirmation of this too, it became material to see what was the proportion of men employed in the different public yards derived from the outports, and from the Thames; on this point Mr. Sepping (Minutes, page 451) says, that the greatest part are obtained from the outports; from the accounts before the Committee, it will appear, that the building of London is about one-eighth of the building of the whole of Great Britain, and it is probable that the supplies of men in the dock-yards from the whole country, must be in proportion to the business performed in the country at large. Therefore most of the persons employed in the yards must be bred in the outports; but, Sir, I am quite sure it cannot be considered as a very conclusive argument upon this subject, with reference to a great public measure, merely to assert or prove, that in point of fact, the Thames builders have been employed extensively in the service upon particular occasions, when it is a question of public policy (into which, I shall not enter,) whether they should be employed at all or not; it is now proved, however, that by the arrangements lately made by government, it will execute a great part of its own building. (Mr. Seppings ubi Sup.) And if the public establishments should require aid either for building or repairing the ship building establishments in the country at large, will even without any aid from the Thames be fully adequate to afford whatever assistance may be necessary, as well as to train up a race of able and experienced workmen. In the infancy of our commercial establishments, and of our naval greatness, these considerations might have had weight; but at this period they afford no argument of policy or public expediency.

Sir, I now come to that part of the case which has so enormously swelled the volumes of evidence before you. I mean the investigation of the state of timber in this country. I

must, at the same time, protest against any supposition, that our case depends solely on the issue of the debate, as to the plenty or scarcity of ship-building timber. We do not reject this, as an auxiliary topic, but it hardly enters at all into the great views of policy by which our claims are recommended.

It has been said, by the other side, that the state of the timber is most flourishing; and much evidence has been brought forward, in order to prove it. That evidence we have met by parole testimony in direct contradiction to it; but I think it necessary again to draw the attention of the Committee to what we have considered the presumptive proofs of the decline of ship-building timber in this country, and which, of themselves, lead to the conclusion that, compared with the consumption and demand, there is a real scarcity. I refer to those proofs with confidence, because they have not been made up for the occasion, and afford conclusions which it is impossible to dispute. My learned friend who preceded me, stated a number of grounds, which he powerfully illustrated, from which he established the fact, that the quantity of timber in this country must have been reduced. It appears that, as a mere matter of profit, it is not advantageous to those who wish to make the most of their land, to convert it into wood-land. It is proved by the evidence of all the intelligent witnesses who have been examined, that the land best adapted to oak timber, is land which is adapted to wheat; but, Sir, without going in detail into these considerations, I should be inclined to maintain, that timber fit for ship-building must be greatly reduced in quantity, by the actual consumption that has been made of it, and the immense demand there has been for it, during the last twenty years. Sir, it is a fact perfectly notorious, that for a great many years prior to this, the most serious alarms

were entertained, upon the subject of the scarcity of timber; and we have, I think, a most powerful evidence, that there was such a scarcity. An enquiry into the state of oak timber in the country, was set on foot in the year 1771; evidence was collected from all quarters, and from all descriptions of persons, growers, ship-builders, some of them the ancestors of the present petitioners; and all concurred in the fact of scarcity, to a serious and alarming extent, requiring the interposition of the Legislature. In consequence of this investigation, the East India Company were prohibited by the Act of 12 Geo. 3d, c. 54, from building more ships in England, till their tonnage was reduced to a certain amount. The Act shews the object and the apprehension of Parliament on this subject: It is entitled, "*An Act for the more effectually securing a quantity of Oak Timber, for the use of the Royal Navy.*" It then goes on to state, "Whereas, the tonnage of the ships employed, and of those now building, in order to be employed in the service of the India Company, greatly exceeds the tonnage of shipping requisite to carry on the trade of the said Company: And whereas the building any more ships for the service of the Company, till those which are now employed, or building to be employed, shall be reduced in tonnage to the quantity requisite for carrying on their trade, will occasion an unnecessary consumption of oak timber, fit for building large ships, for remedy whereof, &c." It then goes on to restrain the East India Company from building, till their tonnage is reduced to 45,000 tons. And was there any opposition to this measure? This prohibition was at variance with the interests of all those concerned in the shipping of the East India Company. It was at variance with the interest of the land-holders, because it necessarily took away, for a time, the markets for their produce; nay, it transferred it, for the Company were not prohibited from building in India or the Colonies; but, on

the contrary, they were allowed, and almost recommended to build in India. This is a deliberate Act of the Legislature, following a detailed enquiry upon the subject, and adopted in time of peace, without any pressure of immediate danger, but founded upon a sober conviction of the necessity of lessening the consumption of native oak timber. The conduct of the Legislature, in such circumstances, has the effect of the most direct evidence of the fact on which they proceeded. There were so many interests concerned, to counteract and refute any false impression that might have been made upon the minds of Government at that time, and leading to such a measure, that it is impossible to conceive that every opposition would not have been called into exertion as much as in the present case, had not all men agreed, that a real scarcity existed, or was to be apprehended. Now, I take that to be the most convincing testimony in our favour, that at that time there was a scarcity of timber; and by what had that scarcity been produced? If the pressure of the demands of ship-building had so exceeded the means of the country at that time, can it be doubted that the late enormous consumption of our gigantic naval power, military and commercial, not to mention the consumption caused by extensive internal improvements, must have, in a greater degree, outstripped the means of supply. I find, in Anderson's History of Commerce, Macpherson's edition, that in 1702 the whole tonnage of England was 261,222 tons. In 1753, he estimates the tonnage at 500,000. In 1777, the whole tonnage of the country, according to official register, was 979,263 tons, of which tonnage, of American built, was 373,618. I shall not trouble the Committee with tracing the progress through intermediate periods, but come to the period of the Register Act in 1788.* At that time the number of ships belonging

* 4 Macpherson, 181.

to England alone was 9,358 making a tonnage of 1,052,990 tons, being 112 tons per ship. The whole tonnage of the British empire that year, was 13,827 ships, being a tonnage of 1,363,488, being 91 tons per ship. In the year 1792, the whole tonnage of the empire was 16,079 ships, making a total of 1,540,145 tons. Now, Sir, not to trouble you with intermediate periods, I will just refer you to the finance paper, page 178; in the year 1811 the commercial tonnage of England alone will be found to be 16,164 ships, giving a tonnage of 1,943,406 tons. The tonnage of the whole empire that year was 24,106 ships, making a tonnage of 2,474,774. (See Minutes, pages 626, 627.) I will pass over the year 1812. In 1813, there were 16,602 ships, making a tonnage of 2,296,037, of which, the average per ship, is 122 tons. I have in these statements noticed the average per ship, in the general amount of tonnage, from which it appears that the size of the ship has encreased, particularly in the shipping of England taken separately; and I did so, because it has been asserted that, though the registered tonnage is encreased, the size and importance of the ships have fallen off, whereas it is proved that, both in extent and in value, the shipping of the country has greatly improved.

Now, Sir, I have given these different statements for various reasons; I give them to shew, in their application immediately to this argument, the enormous pressure which has taken place from the growing increase of our commercial marine, during the last 20 or 30 years, upon the timber of the country. You find that our commercial marine is, since the year 1788, a good deal more than doubled, deducting even the prize ships which are registered, amounting to 518,439. The whole tonnage of Great Britain in 1788, was 1,363,488; but at that time there was a very considerable number of ships allowed to be registered till they wore out, and it is well

known that the registry included a great number of ships not entitled as British built, and that, by Lord Liverpool's Act, the abuses in granting registers being corrected, the register now gives a more accurate account of the British tonnage than formerly.—What then is the application of this argument? That the pressure upon the produce of the country as to oak timber has been excessive, and must have exceeded any resources that could have been called into existence from the period when a scarcity was felt and acknowledged. Without any direct proof at all, it must have been manifest that the consumption of the last 20 years, during which the royal navy has been so prodigiously augmented in number and quantity of tonnage, could not fail to thin our forests, and to reduce the ship-building timber.—How stands it upon the evidence—almost all the witnesses agree that there is not one-third of the timber fit for ship-building now standing that was 15 or 20 years ago; see the evidence of Thorn, (page 602,) Staples, (page 640.)

The statements of the increase of our commercial shipping are exceedingly material, in shewing that an extraordinary and disproportionate consumption of our own native means of ship-building must have taken place; but they likewise shew that no detriment can arise in a public view, from allowing so small a part of our whole tonnage, as that engaged in the India trade to be built in India, such a proportion would not operate to discourage ship-building in this country, or the growth of timber, considering what a favourable market the growers of timber would have to resort to in the immense ship-building that would still remain at home.

But, Sir, in addition to the evidence of the scarcity of timber, I would appeal to the conduct of the Thames builders themselves in 1805, when they made it a matter of enquiry

whether government had authorized an agent to buy timber to the amount of 40,000*l.* of the next fall, which you will find upon the Minutes, page 356. If these builders had not been convinced that a scarcity did prevail, it would be absurd to suppose they could be alarmed at the effect of the purchase of 40,000*l.* in an article so abundant as they now represent; and in procuring which, they now say, they never had any difficulty.—Besides this, Sir, it appears from various documents (as well as generally from the testimony of the witnesses) that in the years 1805, 1806, 1807, 1808, and 1809, when government were building largely in private yards, the supply for the dock-yards fell off nearly in proportion, (Minutes, page 662,) and it happened in every instance that whenever government had employed the private builders to do their business, their own supply of timber fell off exactly in the same proportion. I do not mean to say they had so much demand for it when part of the public work was done in the private yards, but such difficulty was then experienced in procuring timber, that both the private yards and those of government, whatever pressure of service arose, never could be employed fully at the same time, or procure an adequate stock of timber.

Now, Sir, there is another material circumstance arising out of a piece of evidence that has been introduced to day, (Minutes, page 663,) and which I think proves clearly the conviction of all sides upon the subject of a scarcity of timber, and the difficulty of procuring it. The contractors with government, Mr. Larkin and others, were so much impressed with the danger of competition of purchasers for the river builders, that their contract provides for a reduction in the quantity the contractor is to furnish in the proportion in which government shall contract with private builders for building the different classes of ships of war. If a 74 was to

be built in the private yards there was to be a reduction of 1000 loads, and so on in proportion.—That appears to me to be a decisive proof of the difficulty of obtaining timber.—The contractor knew that the competition would be such in the case provided, for that he would be a loser by his contract, because those who were building for government would come into the market and raise the price, which could never happen in an article, the supply of which was abundant.

These various circumstances shew that a serious difficulty was experienced in obtaining naval timber, of which it is now contended there is such an abundant supply, and independent of direct proof would satisfy ever impartial man of the fact; but if we refer to the positive proof upon the subject, we shall find that the scarcity is proved by witnesses who cannot be impeached; witnesses have been produced on both sides, and I shall say a very few words upon the character of those on the other side, without at all calling in question their general veracity.—I must say, however, that little reliance is to be placed on the testimony of persons who passing through the country and seeing plenty of trees, carelessly draw an inference of plenty of naval timber, when a great quantity of that which adorns the face of the country is not fit for the purposes of ship-building,—but we have a great deal of testimony of this description.—We have the testimony of persons who have been called by their employers, the ship-builders, to prove what abundance is to be found, persons who have been in the constant habit of dealing with the river builders, and though these gentlemen may not have come here with an intention to falsify, yet they are come with a bias upon their minds, and a bias which is too obvious not to be seen;—they come with an alarm which has been excited that their own business will be gone if this Bill is

carried into a law ; that the whole of the building in the Thames will be utterly extinguished, unless they can retain the building of ships for the India trade here ; and that their whole employment must perish with it.

Now, when men entertain such notions, we may expect to hear from them that they have seen vast quantities of timber all over the country, and that there is no scarcity ; but there is this to be observed, that they have been commonly speaking of the quantities of timber that may be found, without the least view to the general consumption of the country and what it requires ;—with respect to that, I should have been glad if we could have laid before the Committee an accurate statement.—Perhaps all that can be done is to make an approximation, as it hardly admits of being accurately ascertained.—One of the witnesses, Mr. Driver, estimates the consumption at 200,000 loads a year, probably much under the truth, and, with all the evidence of plenty, is there any proof of a supply for so large a consumption ? Mr. William Driver says, that the consumption of timber in ship-building has increased very much of late years ; that the foundation of canals and various other things have consumed a great deal of timber. Several of our witnesses, Mr. Ramage, (page 409,) Mr. Mumford, (page 543) say, that in going about the country to find timber for the navy they found but little ; they saw a good deal of timber, but great part of it was useless for the navy.—In the yards government have adopted new plans to supply the place of large timber, which have been also adopted by the Thames builders. In this, the witnesses all agree ; Mr. Seppings most particularly states the effect of those alterations, and though calculated to supply the place of the largest timber, they tend to augment the consumption of the timber itself.—Mr. William Driver, (page 164,) states, that a scarcity will probably take place in 25 years.

Mr. Abraham Driver, another witness on the other side, indeed, says, that in his opinion there will be no scarcity ; and he thinks that a great quantity of timber will come into use much sooner : but there is one circumstance in his evidence which struck me, as shewing the inconsistency of the testimony that has been given from mere loose observation, and how little it is to be relied upon. Mr. Abraham Driver, who had himself surveyed the Forest of Dean, says, (as you will find in page 215 in the Minutes,) that it contains a great deal of fine timber : yet, though Mr. Abraham Driver states the Forest to be so well stocked, the whole quantity (as appears upon the Minutes, page 345,) was in 1807, 22,822 loads round measure, that is, about 33,000 square measure. Now, there has been cut no less, since 1807, than 13,000 loads ; and I find that the quantity of 22,000 loads round measure, would afford meetings only at 32, that is the square measure at 48 ; so that the whole quantity that existed in the Forest of Dean in 1808 amounted to 33,000. Mr. Abraham Driver states in his evidence, that he knows the Forest of Dean, that it contains a great deal of fine timber from 60 to 70, 80 and 90 feet that would come to the high meetings. I do not suppose that Mr. Driver meant to impose upon the Committee ; but I avail myself of the difference between the actual survey and his parole statement, to shew that a man of this description speaking from loose recollection, deceives himself.—The survey proves incontestibly that the Forest was exhausted of large timber ; yet Mr. Abraham Driver's testimony leads us to suppose that it is abundantly stocked.

It is quite clear there could not be the quantity of timber that he represents : he may not have been conscious that he was stating that which was untrue ; but he stated it at random. We know, besides, that witnesses, not giving their evidence upon oath, do take a liberty that they would not do

if they were upon oath; and I only give the specimen of Mr. Driver to shew what may be expected from that species of evidence. Another witness, Mr. Kershaw, was asked as to the consumption of the outports, and he said, he thought it must be very small. Now, it is clear, taking the quantity of ship-building in the country at large, that it must be six or eight times the consumption of the river; and therefore the evidence of such witnesses must be received with a great deal of allowance, and as comparing the supply with the demand, it is worth nothing. A part of the evidence much relied upon, on the other side, is that of Mr. Harvey, who appeared to be a very respectable man; but it is manifest, that the witness giving so stupendous an account of the timber on Lord Bagott's estate, had not examined it with accuracy, or with a view to such an enquiry as this. He stated that there was a great deal of timber: of that timber, however, *a great deal is ornamental timber, not fit for the navy*; and even Mr. Harvey himself, when he was pushed to say what was the quantity of timber Lord Bagott's estate could regularly supply, stated that not above 2 or 3000 loads which could be annually brought to market. He said likewise, that he believed the whole which the county of Stafford could supply, might be 10,002 loads a-year: but you see, when we take the testimony of such witnesses to inform us practically what is the supply of timber fit for naval purposes, compared with the actual consumption, they speak without reference to the wants of the country, and merely from very loose observation. There is another witness upon the head of timber, Mr. Major Bull, whose evidence, and that which is opposed to him, will no doubt produce some discussion. He certainly stated, that in the part of the country with which he was acquainted, an immense quantity of timber might be obtained for naval purposes, and so largely, that it struck every body with surprise. It became necessary, therefore, to

ascertain what the real quantity of timber was in that part of the country. I understand, from hints thrown out by the other side, that the evidence to contradict Major Bull will be the subject of considerable observation. Major Bull was brought here to give evidence upon a subject with which his acquaintance was not very accurate. He never had occasion to ascertain the precise amount of timber upon any of the estates he spoke of; scarcely even upon that of his employer, Lord Carnarvon: he knew little of the timber in the country but from riding through it, and measuring it by his eye. Luckily we have obtained so direct and pointed a contradiction to the evidence of Major Bull, as will induce the Committee to receive cautiously all the evidence of the same kind on the other side. Mr. Fermor, a timber-surveyor, was employed to look at the estates of which Major Bull had given an account: he told you, on a very strict cross-examination, *that he had no notion as to what might be the result of his survey before he made it, and he came here to state that survey, without knowing whether it would be advantageous to those who sent him, or whether it would make against them.* The result of Mr. Fermor's testimony is, that Major Bull's estimate of the timber on the estates in his neighbourhood, at from 90,000 to 103,000 loads, is reduced to about one-fifth, or about 19,000 loads. Now these witnesses differing so much in the result, you must suppose, either that they are inferior to each other in point of honesty, or that the one has not taken the same means to procure accurate information on the subject as the other. Mr. Fermor, who gives the statement I have mentioned, speaks of the same estates with Major Bull. He went over the whole property, taking an accurate survey of every tree, as if he had been to buy or sell; and, in his calculation, lest he should have omitted any trees, he makes an allowance for

such omission. Major Bull says, too, that in the forest of Marlborough, as he believes, there is 600,000*l.* of timber; and Mr. Fermor estimates the whole timber, above 25 feet, at 2,480 loads of large timber. Mr. Bull, not knowing the quantities, never having taken any means to ascertain them, gives an estimate which he may believe true, but which dwindles to nothing when put to the test of actual examination. Of the same description is the testimony of several witnesses on the other side, even when they are free from any bias or interest in the representations they have given. To the evidence of Mr. Major Bull and Mr. Harvey, we oppose that of persons who are free from interest, and who, we think, are better informed. The general result is, that the country is not stocked with large timber as it was fifteen or twenty years ago, by at least two-thirds; and that twenty or thirty years must elapse, in which it will be necessary to introduce *fresh supplies from other quarters, in order to furnish a resource for that trade which has been carried already to so great an extent, provided the consumption goes on in any thing like what it has been.* Sir, it will not be necessary for me to go over in detail the whole of the evidence of all these witnesses, because the result of all is nearly the same; I shall refer generally to the evidence of Mr. Thorn, Mr. Fermor, Mr. Staples, and Mr. Clare. These gentlemen are timber surveyors, or timber dealers; and it appears to me that, as far as interest is concerned, they have a most manifest interest in supporting the case of the other side; because they have been inoculated with the apprehension that the employment for timber-merchants and timber-surveyors must nearly cease, if the measure proposed is carried into a law. Their testimony is not a loose testimony, unsupported by probabi-

* Minutes, pp. 602, 582, 635, &c.

lity; but their evidence is such as you would expect to be given, after those presumptive proofs from so many quarters, to shew to you that the stock of large timber must have fallen off. These witnesses all agree that two-thirds of the large timber has been consumed; and of that which remains a large part cannot be employed for the purposes of ship-building at all.

Sir, in addition to these demonstrations, as I think I may call them, that a scarcity of ship-building timber has been felt, and does exist, I would refer the Committee to the letter of Lord St. Vincent, in 1802, recommending the East India Company to limit their builders of large ships in as far as it might cause a consumption of that timber which it was necessary to reserve for the purposes of the navy; in obtaining which, much difficulty was experienced. I do not cite that letter as *binding evidence, but as the opinion* of a person in a public station fully competent to form that opinion, on the best means of information, and forming it upon actual inquiry. The object of the letter met with the concurrence of the Directors of the East India Company, including many individuals who were well acquainted with the subject of ship-building. This shews at least the opinion of those persons, that the scarcity supposed to exist was no delusion imposed upon them by interested persons, but that it was an actual evil which called for a powerful and immediate remedy.

Sir, there is another part of the evidence upon the Timber case to which I shall allude, and that is, the representations given by various witnesses as to the fall in the price of timber. Mr. Richardson stated that the market-price was 7*l.* 10*s.*

and *that he should be glad to dispose of his timber of 60 feet meeting at that price: and most of the witnesses on the other side wished to shew that there was a fall, in consequence of the failure of demand. But how is it when these gentlemen come to buy, notwithstanding their representations of plenty and of a failing market? We find that, so lately as May last, Mr. Sparrow, the agent of one of the petitioners, goes to Newbury, and buys a lot of timber at 5 per cent. under the price in 1813, that is, at 8*l.* 2*s.* per load. The effect of that evidence appears to me to be very material. If the gentlemen, coming here to prove a cessation of demand and a fall of price, can, even pending this enquiry, lay in a stock of timber at the rate mentioned, they must either doubt the fact of abundance, or must have the expectation of much more employment than they would, for the purpose of this enquiry, have us believe. Had there been no scarcity of timber, I should have expected, under such a proceeding as this, the object of which, on the other side, is to proclaim abundance, that a much greater reduction of price would have taken place. The fact alluded to, however, confirms the statement of Mr. Morrice, so much cavilled at, who said he was ready now to buy timber for the purpose of the contracts, at 5 per cent. under the price of 1813. I know a great deal will be said, as a great deal has been insinuated, in the course of the evidence given before the committee about Mr. Morrice's anxiety to represent a scarcity of timber to exist; but surely it is the interest of Mr. Morrice, as a great dealer in timber, rather to encourage the opinion of plenty, in order to be able to supply his contracts at a better rate, than to encourage the notion of scarcity, to raise the price against himself. As a great timber merchant, too, Mr. Morrice must have the same sort of interest against the teak ships, that*

the builders have; for if they interfere with the Thames builders, they will interfere with the business of Mr. Morrice, who deals largely with those very builders who must be among his best customers. Notwithstanding this interest, you find Mr. Morrice comes forward and states, that there has been the utmost difficulty in supplying the Government contract; and that the large timber in the country is greatly exhausted. In so saying, Mr. Morrice is confirmed by all the documentary evidence in the cause, and by every fact and circumstance from which confirmation can be derived. I apprehend, therefore, that whatever observations may be made upon Mr. Morrice, his testimony cannot be shaken; and his evidence is of great importance, from the extent of his dealings, and the accuracy of his knowledge in the matter which is now the subject of investigation.

*I cannot pass over, among the proofs of scarcity, the high price which Oak timber has for several years borne in the market; but as it has been so ably illustrated by my learned friend, I shall barely call it back to notice. We find it has risen from 4*l.* to 9*l.* and upwards, in the last twenty years; and even now, at the conclusion of peace, the price is above 8*l.* It is said, however, that all other consumable commodities have risen also; but certainly none in so great a degree. So much indeed has been the price of oak timber advanced, that Mr. Arthur Young, in the tract cited by my learned friend, excludes it from his tables, as shewing an excessive rise to be accounted for by the extraordinary demand for naval purposes. If a commodity be abundant, it never can advance beyond the proportion of other consumable commodities without a demand beyond the supply. The comparison of price in this article shews that the demand has exceeded the supply, and the fact of price corresponds with*

all the other facts of the case by which the scarcity of oak timber is established and explained.

Sir, I shall not trouble the Committee further in detail respecting the scarcity of timber; I apprehend that both the documentary evidence, and the oral testimony upon which any reliance can be placed, prove the fact to demonstration. I might refer to the testimony in detail given by the various witnesses, but I believe it will be admitted that the home counties have been greatly exhausted, and those who could not deny that the home counties were thinned, expected a supply only from the remote ones with which they are acquainted, and the produce of which is taken off by the outports. Six out of twelve, even of the witnesses on the other side, speak to that fact. The effect, in short, of all the evidence upon that subject is this, that the quantity of large timber has decreased very much within 10 or 12 years. Mr. Staples, (Minutes, p. 635,) whom I cite as an example, says, that even if the growth of oak is encouraged, it would not come into use till about 30 or 40 years, leaving that interval without adequate supply. Every one of our witnesses states that this is the result of his dealings, observations, and experience. Mr. Staples, referring particularly to the county of Kent, says, he is a manager of timber for different gentlemen, and knows the timber in the county to the extent of 20,000 acres, and that there is not 20,000 loads of large timber putting it altogether; he says, also, that the quantity of large timber bears a very small proportion indeed, to that which is cut down, and the same fact is proved by the testimony of most of the other witnesses.

Now, Sir, not to trouble the Committee with going over the detail of the evidence upon the subject of large timber,

I shall content myself with stating that which I have mentioned to have been the result of the evidence of our witnesses, that it does not amount to more than one-third of what it was 20 years ago.

Adjourned till Monday.

MONDAY, JUNE 27.

The Committee having adjourned on Friday,
Mr. SPANKIE resumed this day.

Mr. Chairman,

When the Committee adjourned on Friday, I had arrived at that branch of the discussion which, I must confess, appears to me of principal importance in this case, and compared with which all others sink into insignificance. I allude, Sir, to the consideration of the relation which subsists between Great Britain and India, which cannot fail to influence the arrangements adopted for the commercial intercourse between the two countries. The Parliament of Great Britain is invested with the superintending authority over all the empire, and is bound to consult the interests of all parts of our extended dominions. It cannot be unimportant to consider what privilege or protection is due to the inhabitants of India, whether native there or British, in the conduct of that trade which it is desirable to promote between the two countries: I am persuaded, that the interests of Great Britain, and those of India, as far as regards this subject, may well be reconciled. I do not believe, whatever the claims of individuals or particular classes may represent, that the Parliament of Great Britain is called upon to exercise the invidious and doubtful policy of sacrificing the clear and obvious interest. I had almost said the unquestionable right of India to pretended public interests here, which wear so much the appearance of a selfish and monopolising spirit. If a real conflict of irreconcilable interests should be found to exist, the claims of the empire must prevail over those of a

subordinate part, however considerable. But I am convinced, that in this instance, if the claims of the different parties before you be considered, there will be no ground for sacrificing the interests of India to any higher considerations of policy and public advantage.

Then let us consider what is the relation which subsists between Great Britain and India, that we may the better see how the claims of commerce and navigation now before you, ought to be adjusted. If our Indian territories constitute a colony, why is India to be placed in a worse situation in point of navigation than any other part of the empire? if it is not a colony, it is a dependency upon this country, connected with it by ties as strong, and implying on our part, as imperious duties of protection and favour, as those of any colony. *The whole revenue, and the whole produce of the country is subject to the controul of this country through the East India Company, and whatever improvement that country makes in wealth and in resources, they go towards the advancement of the strength and resources of the British empire.* In our intercourse even with foreign and rival states, we should conduct ourselves upon the principle of giving and receiving reciprocal advantage. Now what do we receive from India? We receive the dignity of governing with great advantage to ourselves, a numerous class of the population of India, and in return for that commerce which in all ages has been the envy of mankind, and from which we have derived so much benefit. What is it that India asks from us upon the present occasion? It is only that its inhabitants, whether native or those who are more immediately our fellow subjects should have an opportunity of employing ships built in that country, and those ships to be manned by British sailors, in wafting to our shores the produce and manufactures which those territories yield.

We do not call for an exclusion of British ships from the trade; but that we may be permitted to carry on the trade upon fair terms with others, and that India may be permitted to avail itself of its natural advantages in a way that may be most conducive to herself, and to the interests of the British empire. I am much afraid indeed, that those who claim on the other side so much exclusive benefit, would throw impediments in the way of the interests of the British empire, were they to succeed in the objects for which they now contend. It never yet has been attempted, and I fancy never will, to exclude foreigners wholly from resorting to the shores of India. They do resort to the territories under the protection of Great Britain, as well as to the settlements possessed by other European powers. If India were to be considered as a colony, you might say, they shall trade with *Great Britain only, and by making the intercourse similar to that of other colonial monopolies, you might limit the productions of India in the first instance, to the market of Great Britain; but the produce of India is destined not only for Great Britain, but a considerable part for the rest of Europe, and even for the more distant demand of the West Indies.* Now, if you cannot carry on the trade through Great Britain to supply the foreign market as cheap as other nations can, you must be unable to secure the trade as it has been the endeavour of this country to enjoy it. What will be the consequence? If you exclude foreigners, you establish a monopoly in favor of British navigation, directly adverse to the interests of India, as a producing and manufacturing country, but not so effectually as to destroy the competition of other nations altogether?

If, on the other hand, you permit, which you cannot indeed prevent, the resort of other nations to India, they will deprive you of a large share of that commerce for which

you have so many other advantages, unless you are enabled to meet them in the markets of Europe on the principles of fair competition.

Sir, by referring to the papers upon the table of the Committee, it appears that, of the produce of India brought into this country, more than half is re-exported for the foreign markets. It is proved, by the paper No. 191 of the papers which were presented to the house last year, and now on your table, that the quantity of India produce, distinguished from that of China, imported into this country in twenty years, from 1792, was 87,971,482l. official value; the goods re-exported from this country were 47,876,394l. so that considerably more than one half was destined to be sent to foreign countries. Indeed, in analysing the account in detail, it will appear, *that the re-export consists, chiefly, of manufactured articles, for which there is not only no demand, but which are prohibited here.* Therefore, unless you are able to sustain a competition, it will be impossible to carry on the trade. With respect to the China trade, it appears that only one seventh part of the whole imports from thence is re-exported. In such circumstances, it is in vain to attempt to secure the advantage of a foreign market, but by supplying upon cheap terms, and, therefore, the India trade requires to be conducted in such a way as to give us a superiority even in competition.

So far as the home market is concerned, it may, perhaps, be thought, provided the market is properly supplied, all the disadvantages are obviated, or, at all events, the natural ill effects of the monopoly are counteracted by some benefit not otherwise to be obtained. The monopoly of the China trade may, therefore, be, on the whole, best for the country, while that of the India trade would be prejudicial. That is

the distinction on which the legislature, last year, seems to have acted, and that is the distinction we now endeavour to establish. Unless, therefore, you are capable, by some act of authority, or some act of power, to enable your own subjects here to carry on the India trade, as far as respects the supply of the foreign market, in such a way as to rival these competitors, it is impossible that England can be the depôt for the commerce of India. The claims, on the other side, I am afraid, would render that impossible, because the rest of Europe will have other sources of supply; and nothing but the superior cheapness of our supply, of which the mode of navigation is one ingredient, can continue the trade in the British Channel, in which it is so desirable that it should be conducted.

Sir, the extent of the trade of foreigners to India is very considerable, as appears from the papers laid before the house last year, and now on your table. I shall merely present to you a view of the trade between British India and foreign Europe and America, to be found in those documents. It appears, that in ten years, ending in 1811, the whole amount of the trade of foreign Europe and America was upwards of 11,041,000l.; that is, the exports from India. Now, Sir, if foreigners have been enabled to obtain such a proportion of the trade with India, what have been the causes?

In the opinion of intelligent persons, most conversant with the subject, it has been solely owing to the disadvantages in which the commerce of India has been placed, by withholding from India the means of exporting its own produce in its own ships. That is the ground of the opinion so ably illustrated in the celebrated Letter of Lord Wellesley, to which I beg leave to refer, as an authority of the greatest weight on this part of the subject. To official statements I shall refer for the facts necessary to raise the discussion; for

the principles which ought to govern the decision of such a question, I cannot appeal to the authority of any statesman superior to that of Lord Wellesley.

It may be important, therefore, to call the attention of the Committee to some extracts from an official report of Mr. Brown, the reporter of external commerce in India, from May, 1795, to May, 1800, which is a most important application to the points now under consideration.

This document appears in a paper laid before the House of Commons last year, No. 171, in which he states the following circumstances: He says that,

“ From the 1st of JUNE, 1795, to the 31st of May, 1798,
 “ the quantity of sugar shipped to *Hamburgh and Copen-*
 “ *hagen* (supposed to be principally on account of British
 “ subjects residing in *Calcutta*, was 140,729 maunds, or
 “ 103,031 cwt. If this quantity had been shipped to *Lon-*
 “ *don*, and the sale price had been 45s. per cwt., the duty of
 “ customs, at 37 per cent. on the sale price, would have been
 “ 85,773l. sterling, and if the piece goods and other articles
 “ shipped on freight to *Hamburgh, Copenhagen, and Lisbon*,
 “ in those three years, had been also sent to *London*, it may
 “ be estimated that the British revenue of customs, on the
 “ terms of the late warehousing act, would have been bene-
 “ fitted above 500,000l. sterling by the trade thus forced to
 “ foreign ports by means of the high freight on *gruff* articles,
 “ and the heavy duties on piece goods in *London*.”*

“ In 1798-9, when British merchants in *Calcutta* were per-
 “ mitted to load their own ships, or to make their own

* Paragraph 6, page 10.

“arrangements for the freight to London, there was not a
 “single bag of sugar or bale of cloth shipped by them to any
 “foreign port; whereas, if such permission had not been
 “granted, the shipments in Anglo-Danish vessels would have
 “continued; as merchants, in every part of the world, will
 “run many risks sooner than allow their ships to rot in har-
 “bour, if employment can be obtained for them. To this
 “cause it may be attributed that, in 1797-8, seven ships,
 “supposed to be Anglo-Danes, sailed to Penang and the
 “eastward for Batavia and Copenhagen, as before stated.”*

“The exports on Danish ships from Calcutta and Seram-
 “pore were,

In 1795-6, only . . . 1,000,000

1796-7, 1,900,000

“Whereas, in 1797-8, when the Danes, or Anglo-Danes, got
 “the carrying trade, the value of the exports on ships under
 “Danish colours in Copenhagen was 270,000. In 1798-9,
 “when British merchants were permitted to send their own
 “goods in their own ships, in the manner they desired, then
 “the trade, which had formerly been carried on in ships
 “under American colours to Hamburgh, and, subsequently,
 “under Danish colours to Copenhagen, ceased, in so far as
 “respected the trade carried on by British merchants residing
 “in Calcutta, to those ports.”†

The imports from foreign Europe and America, exclusive
 of the imports to Serampore, were, in the three first years,
 agreeable to the statement No. 6, sicca rupees 7,963,426,
 or pounds sterling 999,178; and the exports, during the same

* Paragraph 11, page 11.

† Paragraph 20, page 12.

period, were agreeable to statement No. 5, 11,978,877 sicca
 rupees, or pounds sterling 1,459,859.*

The difference between the imports and exports to and from
 foreign Europe and America, was during this period, sicca
 rupees 4,015,451, or pounds sterling 460,681, which may be
 considered as the amount of the Asiatic Anglo foreign trade,
 carried on by British merchants, residing at Calcutta to fo-
 reign Europe and America, exclusive of about 60 lacks of
 rupees in value, carried on in the same manner, and cloaked
 in various ways from the foreign settlement or Serampore.†

During the last period, when indulgence was granted by
 this Government to the merchants in Calcutta, to load their
 own ships in the manner they thought most conducive to
 their own interest, *this Asiatic Anglo foreign trade, either in*
respect to shipments of goods, on freight, or of sales in the
manner before stated, has not existed.‡

The value of the merchandize imported from foreign
 Europe and America, during the three past years, as per
 statement No. 6, was sicca rupees 3,432,034, or pounds ster-
 ling 429,004, and the treasure sicca rupees 4,531,392, or
 pounds sterling 566,424; whereas, when the foreign merchants
 in Europe and America were advised of the Indulgence
 granted to British merchants in Calcutta in 1798-9, although
 the value of the merchandize imported during the three last
 years, was only sicca rupees 3,798,576, or pounds sterling
 474,822, they have actually imported in treasure sicca rupees
 17,696,201, or pounds sterling 2,212,025, from the conviction
 that the Asiatic Anglo foreign trade would no longer exist,

* Paragraph 15, page 14.

† Paragraph 16, page 14.

‡ Paragraph 21, page 15.

as the event has justified. For it appears that the foreign trade to Europe and America, from 1796-7 to 1800-1, (if the report trade from Serampore is also included,) actually did exceed the exports, on private account, to London; whereas in 1801-2, when the whole of the foreign trade was shipped from Calcutta, in consequence of the capture of the Danish settlement of Serampore, the total value of the exports to foreign Europe and America in this season was only sicca rupees 6,257,269, or pounds sterling 782,158; whereas the export on private account to London was sicca rupees 13,197,428, or pounds sterling 1,649,678.*

Now, Sir, from these extracts, and from the notorious fact which appears fully established in this paper, as well as by other evidence before you, it is clear that the foreign trade has *been very great; that it has been carried on by British funds, and unless encouragement is given to British merchants, unless they have those advantages with which this measure will be attended, you compel them to have resort to those foreign disguises.*

It may be said, why do you permit foreigners to have access to your ports at all; to which we answer, it is impossible this country, in point of justice or policy, to establish such a monopoly in favour of itself, and against the dependent country, as to shut out foreigners from the market of India. A country, consisting of 60 millions of persons, can not be considered like an insignificant colony in the West Indies, of small population, and slender produce. India was not peopled from this country. It was not civilized by this country, or brought into its present state of splendour from any efforts of ours. It would be a thing so ungracious, so

* Paragraph 22, page 15.

inconsistent with the first principles of justice, that I believe no nation ever conceived the idea of applying the colonial monopoly to a country like India, and I think nothing would be more likely to produce the germ of a new war, than to establish such a monopoly. The attempt would give rise to those feelings of indignation and resistance which all unnatural and unjust schemes of Government must necessarily produce, unless, therefore, you will take such measures, by authority of parliament, as will exclude foreigners measures of the most questionable policy, you have no alternative but the loss of a great part of the trade altogether.

It is universally admitted, however, that the foreign trade of Europe and America is beneficial to our territories in India. It feeds the sources out of which the wealth of this country, coming from there, must necessarily be derived, and if you cut off the subsidiary stream from the people of India, if you withdraw that encouragement to their produce and industry, you impair the agriculture, the manufactures by which that country has sustained so much burden, and contributed so largely to the wealth of this.

Sir, it appears, from the evidence of various gentlemen examined before the Committee, that no ship can possibly be so advantageous to the merchant in India as the teak built ship, which is to be found in the country ready to his hand, and by which he can send his goods to the market where they are required. If you deny him the facility of using that sort of ship, you place him in a situation of much severer difficulty than he was even under the monopoly of the East India Company; but, Sir, upon the footing on which things now stand, a material change must take place in the situation of a merchant of India, unless you allow him this resource. The East India Company, by the charter of 1793, were

obliged to supply tonnage to the merchant, and when the chartered tonnage was found inadequate, extra ships were allowed, by which the commerce of India was to be brought to England. Even that expedient was found insufficient to the demands of Indian commerce: nothing would answer the purpose but to permit the merchant in India to load his own ship in his own ports, and bring his produce to the British market at his own convenience. The East India Company will probably send out ships for their own trade, but they will not any longer supply tonnage for private individuals. It is therefore now contended, that the tonnage ought to be sent from Great Britain, and that the Indian ships shall be excluded from the ports of this country. But will that supply of shipping be found to be an adequate mode of conveyance for the merchant of India to send his goods and manufactures to the British market? If India be the exporting country, as undoubtedly it is, can you conceive any thing more burdensome, more in the nature of a prohibition upon commerce altogether than that a merchant residing in a country so distant should be forced to depend upon tonnage sent from Great Britain to India. A shipment of goods is a mercantile adventure throughout, in all its details. The produce there is to go to a market, which may be good or may be bad, it may be profitable or it may be unprofitable, and the merchant must make his arrangements to ascertain whether he can carry on his trade with that rapidity, which is the life of commerce, and how is he to calculate upon tonnage from Great Britain. In India, where money is at 6, 7, 8, or 10 per cent. interest, the whole profit may be absorbed by a few months delay, or by the difference of freight upon the goods. Depriving him of the means of sending his goods to the market at his own time, and in his own way, is prohibiting his trade. No prudent merchant would subject himself to the inconvenience of a trade so to be conducted. The merchants in India there-

fore would be placed in a worse situation now than they have been since the charter of 1793 was passed, so that the freedom of trade, so much hailed by the people of England, would, to India, be the æra of bondage and oppression.

But it will be said on the other side, that under the system of free trade now established, shipping from this country will resort to India in such abundance as to answer all the purposes which the Indian exporter can desire. That is the speculation of those who now claim exclusive privileges more fatal to India than were those of the Company. But is it probable, that shipping from Great Britain would be found to supply the wants of the Indian exporter? On the contrary, several most intelligent witnesses,* who have resided many years in India, tell you that no reliance can be had upon tonnage to be sent from India—What is the reason? In the first instance it is highly probable, that persons in England will send out ships on voyages of speculation, and that they will be disappointed. We know that in the circle of the Indian adventure, the outward voyage does not, in point of extent, make one-third of the whole. (See the evidence of Mr. Mitchell.) The English adventurer will therefore hardly attempt a voyage twice, in which he is compelled to return from India without a cargo, or is obliged there to wait for it till the concern is turned to a losing one.

Now the merchant in India only asks this, “ Let me, if I
 “ find it convenient, ship my goods on board of my own
 “ vessel, if it do not answer to load on board of yours.
 “ I have no wish to exclude you; but have you a better

* See Minutes, the evidence of Messrs. Mitchell, Maitland, McTaggart, Gilman, Gillet, &c.

“right to ship goods from my own country than I have?—
 “and are you to monopolize an advantage, from which I
 “am to be wholly excluded?” Surely a more extravagant
 and unjust pretension than that advanced by the other side,
 to seize the exclusive monopoly of the carrying trade be-
 tween India and Great Britain, never was made to the sove-
 reign authority of any country. They seem to act as if
 others could have no rights; and that their convenience
 was to be the standard of justice and policy. No man would
 think of treating a rival or foreign state on such a footing
 of inequality; and yet here the power of being unjust to
 India would be made the measure of her rights.

But I am afraid that an illiberal policy would not in this
 case be compensated by gain.—The consequences of error
 cannot be concealed.—We know from experience what will
 be the effect of shutting out the merchants of India from
 the natural channels of commerce by any species of mono-
 poly. You may deprive the merchants in India of the
 power to send their produce to Great Britain in their own
 ships; but you will compel them to go into foreign channels.
 It is against their natural wish, and against their natural
 connexions so to do; but unless facilities are given to bring
 the trade directly to this country, it will, as formerly, be
 diverted into foreign channels. From the accumulation of
 private fortunes in India, seeking a mode of remittance to
 Europe, a ready capital is formed which naturally finds the
 most beneficial course of remittance. It is well known that
 the French, the Dutch, the Danes, and the Americans, have
 successively, and at different times, derived great advantage
 from such funds; so that by presenting the most favourable
 mode of remittance, they have obtained the means of carry-
 ing on a trade, which might have been fairly monopolized
 by this country. In such circumstances the trade can only

come to England by making it advantageous to bring it
 here: and if you surrender the opportunities of successful
 competition, you surrender the objects which have led you
 to aspire so much, and struggle so long, for the sovereign
 dominion of the territories of India.

It may be necessary perhaps to distinguish between the
 trade of the East India Company and the private trade.—
 With respect to the East India Company it is impossible
 for me to say how far they are able to give to the ship-
 builders of the Thames the monopoly of building ships for
 their service. So far merely as concerns the case which it
 is my business to lay before the Committee, I have no objec-
 tion that the ships of the East India Company should be
 built in the Thames, if by doing so the trade can be carried
 on to as great an extent and as beneficially for the public as
 by means of ships built in India.—But so far as regards the
 private trade I am convinced you have no alternative, and
 that if you determine that ships for that trade must be built
 in the Thames or in England there can be no private trade
 at all.—The builders in the Thames may build for the East
 India Company, because perhaps the Company's trade stands
 in a different situation from the private trade.—They may get
 an Act of Parliament in their favour, but so far as concerns the
 private trade they will obtain little practical good from it.—
 It is not merely that the teak ship is more durable and can
 be navigated on the whole at a smaller expense, and conse-
 quently afford to carry at a cheaper rate of freight, but the
 commercial situation of a merchant and exporter of goods in
 India renders it impossible that an English built ship can
 answer his purpose so well as the superior vessel which he
 can procure in India. The English built ship cannot stand
 the climate of India so well as the teak built ship, but
 would require frequent and expensive repairs.—The teak
 built ship, possessed by the merchant in India, is not intended

solely for the European voyage : It is destined sometimes to carry on trade to China and other coasting trade of India, and an occasional voyage to England will form part of its general employment ; but if the merchant is compelled to become owner of a British built ship, the course of his transactions is deranged.—His capital could neither be employed to the same extent, nor with the same advantage.—He would be compelled to have a ship for the country trade, and a ship for the European trade, or what is more probable he would be obliged to renounce the European trade at least in the English channel. Now, Sir, what will be the consequence of excluding teak ships, looking at it as a public question? You lose all the advantage of the importation of the goods that would be brought to England ; you lose the advantage of the importation of cotton, and other raw materials ; you lose the advantage of rendering this country the entrepot for the supply of the rest of Europe ; I might admit that there is no scarcity of timber, I might admit the distress of the private yards, I might admit many of those things for which the other side contend, but what then? If the workmen suffer distress, their distress cannot be remedied by the parliamentary privilege of building for a trade which can never afford to employ them.—The ship-builders complain that we are taking something from them, which, most undoubtedly, we are not ; because the ship-builders in the Thames have never built for the private trade.—The private trade has always been carried on in the teak vessels, and but for them never would have existed to any extent worth mentioning.—I stated on Friday that the tonnage in the Company's service was 70,000 tons, but, properly speaking, it is only 58,000, because that part intended for the accommodation of the private trade ought not to be included. If, however, the gentlemen on the other side would be content with a portion of the good things which are to be derived from this branch of trade, they cer-

tainly may enjoy a considerable portion of the advantages which the private trade coming to this country brings with it ;—by seeking to monopolize the whole, they may secure what they deem their right, but they will sacrifice the practical benefit.—These ships, importing their own produce into this country, necessarily expend a vast deal in repairs, and a vast deal of money is disbursed here, and all this expenditure whatever it may be, is clear gain to the builders, [the rope-makers, and others on the river, who supply these vessels with whatever they may want. There are documents upon the table, (Minutes, page 622,) to shew that the expenditure of teak ships, consigned to three houses only, have in no very great number of years caused an expenditure of near 500,000*l.* all of which is divided among the classes here connected with shipping. Now all that source of employment would be cut off entirely if the private trade were destroyed, because it is proved, that the very nature of the trade requires a teak built ship, and without that facility the trade itself could not be brought to England.

But it has been said, that if ships are allowed to be built in India, for the trade to that country, the natives will arrive at such perfection in the arts connected with the equipment of ships, that they would supply themselves with sails and cordage, and other things which are, in whole or in part, derived from this country. But if the trade at large were to be promoted and extended, the country might be a gainer on the whole, notwithstanding a partial loss. Nay, even upon the supposition, which I cannot but consider as extravagant and improbable, that the whole building for the trade to India and China, were to be transferred to the other side of the water, the builders and others in the river would not be wholly without benefit from the trade. It appears that the *Thomas Grenville*, a ship built in India, belonging to the

Company themselves, cost, in the way of equipment in her three first voyages, in the port of London, no less than 60,000*l.*; and that, independent of the cost of the articles which went originally from this country, probably not much below 20,000*l.* Mr. Walker, in his evidence, told you that, independent of sheathing and copper bolts, the General Kyd had cost 14,000*l.* in articles of British manufacture, sent out by himself, for fitting her to sea. For manufactured iron, copper, and other things of that kind, India is not, and never can be our rival. All these articles must go from hence, and they have been exported of late in an increased quantity, (Minutes, page 97.) The whole, therefore, is not lost with the original building; on the contrary, there is an immense expenditure here, from which the port of London derives great benefit. But, I must confess, I should not be greatly alarmed at the supposed fact, that India had arrived at that *height of improvement, in the manufacture of sails, cordage, and other articles of that description which is represented.* I cannot think it fair, that such jealousy should be entertained of the advancement of any country subject to Great Britain. Such a feeling should be repressed, not encouraged. As to the articles enumerated, of cordages, sails, &c. we have the raw material chiefly from foreign countries; but is it a just matter of jealousy and alarm, that the people in India have, by the aid of the ingenuity and enterprize derived from this country, been able to produce the raw material in their own country, and to manufacture it for their own supply? I think it should rather be a subject of rejoicing, that they have succeeded in doing so, because, as far as it goes, it would tend to render us less dependent on those foreign countries, from whom we derive the means of naval equipment, and with whom we may be again at war. Besides, Sir, I apprehend, that the cheapness of all articles of outfit, is one of the circumstances which every country, aiming at extensive navi-

gation, should endeavour to promote. The freight is rendered cheaper upon produce of every kind, and its consumption is encouraged; more business will be done; navigation will be extended in proportion as you enable your countrymen to navigate cheaply, and in proportion as you reduce the price of shipping, you will encourage the growth of seamen, ready for your defence upon all public emergencies. By these means, more than by any other, you will increase the strength and prosperity of the empire. In fact, there is no species of discouragement which operates so extensively and universally, as keeping up the price of freight. The grower, the producer, the builder, the seaman, and every one else connected with the prosperity of shipping, is affected by the discouragement arising from expensive freight, which operates as an oppressive tax upon capital and industry. It is said also, *that if you encourage this measure, you will remove so great a part of the building establishments of this country, that it will be dangerous to the empire itself; and that our shipping interest would be sacrificed, and our great naval means would be transferred to the other side of the globe.* Now, is there any foundation for the apprehension of such alarming consequences, even from the fullest effect which the permission of teak ships can produce? Can any man say, that if the whole tonnage in the Company's service, as well as that in the private trade, were to be built in India, instead of England, there would be the slightest danger to any interest of Great Britain? The whole tonnage so employed is not a thirty-fifth part of the commercial tonnage of the empire; and upon such a portion of the whole, can it be gravely said that our naval strength at home depends? These are phantoms of danger, which are conjured up by the other side. I think they cannot be serious; though they hope—perhaps expect—to make some impression on those well-disposed weak minds, which are susceptible of alarm at any thing

which is represented as affecting the strength and prosperity of our favourite defence, the British Navy. No man, I should think, can imagine that the subtraction from the general ship-building of the country of that part which is employed in this one branch of trade, can materially affect the ship-building of England, or the interest of those who are concerned in the raw material, or in the manufactures connected with ship-building.

Something also has been said of the danger of removing to such a distance any part of our naval establishments, as if they might fall into the hands of rival powers. Such a danger seems to be distant, and unlikely to be realized. But with a view to the public strength and defence, is it not desirable that we should have building establishments in India? Is it not probable that we may have other wars? and if we are ever to be at war again, I should think India as likely as any other to be the place in which that war would break out. Then is it of no importance to our military establishments, and to the solidity of the connexion between the two countries, is it nothing to be provided in India with arsenals, and a command of shipping capable of being employed as the means of repelling any danger that might arise? Those who come to assail you will have no such advantages as yourselves; so that, whether it is for defence, or whether it is for offensive warfare, as you have experienced warfare in times that are past, there is nothing so beneficial, nothing so politic for this country, as to arm itself in India, and to have the means of stripping your enemy there of the means of hostility in the first instance. By means of India shipping, you have in India an offensive weapon, that would enable you to disarm every antagonist: India would furnish you the means of attacking your rivals, without waiting for an expedition from Europe. In the last war you have on most important

occasions, experienced the utility of the India shipping, (*Minutes*, p. 664) and you cannot have it unless you give it all the encouragement both of the country trade and the European trade. In the last war you enjoyed the benefit of it in military operations: but if, from a different state of things in Europe, the pressure of any future contest should be in our distant possessions, the advantages of a naval force, or of naval resources, in India, would almost ensure to this country a decided superiority over every opponent.

How such establishments should tend as has been suggested also, to a separation of the two countries, by setting up rival interests, I profess I am at a loss to comprehend. If you keep the British merchant in his natural and favourite connexion with the commerce of his native country, you give him an additional interest in the connexion with this country; but if you drive the private merchant of India into the connexion of foreigners, you are giving him so far an undue interest in the success of other countries. I think, therefore, there is no mode so certain of making it the strongest interest of the British residents in India, to confirm and maintain the British ascendancy there, as to preserve his commercial dealings in the British channel. On the other hand, by driving them into foreign connexions, you lay the foundation of a very considerable source of indirect and improper influence in their minds, not so favourable as it ought to be to the connexion between the two countries. In this view, therefore, it is no longer a question between one set of ship builders in India, and another set of ship builders in England; but it is a question which involves the interests of the country at large; the interests of all those who have occasion to transport goods from India to Great Britain. If those who have funds to send home, and they must come in the shape of goods, cannot send them to England at all, or without loss, there will always be a temptation to employ the

channel of foreigners. It may be unlawful, it may be wrong to do so; but the legislature must consider the tendency to the act, not merely its impropriety, and must endeavour to remove the temptation when it cannot prevent the offence. If, therefore, the whole case was conceded to, my learned friends on the other side, so far as they represent their ship building establishments likely to be affected, still there are considerations of policy and of justice, that would outweigh any case of private injury, and call upon you to decide that the teak built ships shall not be excluded from the trade between India and Great Britain. Seeing the interest which India has in this question, the attempt to exclude our subjects there from bringing their own produce in their own ships to this country, is so repugnant to justice, to the principle on which the other dependencies of the empire are treated, that really appears astonishing. It is the trade of India, and shall the inhabitants of India not participate in the shipping through which it is to be carried on?—It is a most extravagant proposition to exclude them from that trade, their own trade, from which you derive so great a share of benefit. A more invidious usurpation on the commercial rights of others, I believe, never was attempted, founded in mere private interest, with hardly a colour of public advantage. Such a monopoly as this would be, has no parallel in the history of any commercial country, and I trust it will find no justification in the example of this.

I have now gone over, in a cursory way, but still I fear at too great length, most of the points which have been brought into discussion during the present enquiry, and I shall do nothing more than briefly remind you of the propositions we have endeavoured to establish. We have proved, I think, in the most satisfactory manner, that the introduction of teak ships has not occasioned that distress in the private yards in the river Thames, of which the petitioners on the other side

complain. We have shewn that however respectable, or however useful the establishments in the Thames may be, they cannot be considered of national importance, and that however deserving of equal and just protection with every other branch of industry in the country, they are by no means essential to the public naval establishments in the degree contended for, which would, in fact, exclude all consideration of the claims of other parts of the empire. We have shewn, both from presumptions of the most convincing weight, and by direct proof, that in the course of a long war, and of a war too in which the shipping of Great Britain has been extended in an unparalleled degree, the ship building timber has been consumed to an extent which our native means cannot sustain, and caused a scarcity, and a price which might be dangerous to the interests of shipping and navigation, and to the carrying trade of the country. Can the carrying trade sustain any advance in building, from 12*l.* or 14*l.* to 27*l.* and 28*l.* per ton, for ordinary shipping? We have been for a long course of years importing from foreign countries, timber to a prodigious amount. It appears, from documents in the possession of the Committee, that during the last ten years the importation for Government has been, per annum, above 18,000 loads of foreign oak, besides 11,000 loads of fir, making 29,000 loads, not to mention importation for private purposes. If there is that great plenty of timber which has been stated by these gentlemen, in order to excite the landed interest in their favour, that timber will have a market though you withdraw the ship building from the India trade, provided ship builders are not depressed by exorbitant price. But that there is such a quantity of timber as these gentlemen represent, appears disproved by the whole evidence. Timber is not brought into existence like corn, in the course of a year. Time must elapse before the waste of excessive consumption can be repaired. An attempt is

made to alarm the fears of the country gentlemen as to the market for their timber if this bill should pass into a law. But surely the interests of the country gentlemen, in this view, have been sacrificed by the importation of timber from foreign countries? and if that importation can be rendered unnecessary by the use of teak ships, the interest of the country gentlemen is not at all affected. If, however, ship building timber has become scarce, you have the means of economizing it, and after a long war, which has so rapidly consumed our native oak, it seems necessary to allow some aid to those resources which have been anticipated by the pressure of the past demand.

Sir, upon the question of justice, I apprehend that if our view of this case be correct, no man can hesitate. On the one hand you have the claim of a certain class of ship-builders, who are, no doubt, very respectable. On the other you have the claims of India, and all the British subjects there seeking those privileges of navigation which never hitherto have been denied to the other parts of the empire, and which are essential to their welfare and prosperity. The justice of the case is with us, and so is also the policy: against us are the ship-builders in the river; in our favour are the prosperity, the extension of your trade, and the improvement of your revenue. You will not then impose shackles on the whole commerce of India for the advantage of any set of private individuals, however considerable.—If this were a question of compensation to the ship-builders in the Thames, I should not complain if they succeeded in their object, but I cannot consent that their private interests should be gratified at the risk of those great national objects which this question involves.—I flatter myself, however, that these alarms are exaggerated.—I am convinced that the shipping of the country will be sufficient to afford ample employment to the Thames

builders, and to all the capital and industry now engaged in that branch of employment. There may be a temporary slackness, but their yards, I have no doubt, will soon resume their wonted activity.—Alarms like that now raised are very familiar in this country.—Often have we seen men coming to parliament exclaiming against measures as ruinous, which ultimately prove highly beneficial to them; and I trust that this will, on this occasion, be referred in the case of the petitioners on the other side.—But even if the measure proposed were to prove more injurious to the ship-builders of the Thames than I think and believe it will be still, I humbly contend that we have made out a claim too powerful to be overcome by any case of private suffering which may admit of other compensation.—We appear seeking the privileges which all British subjects, in all parts of the world, enjoy.—*We seek only for permission to bring in the India built ships that merchandize, which forms so important an article in the system of your commerce, and with which you may be enabled to supply the wants of other countries.—We seek for no exclusive privileges, and we trust that no exclusive privileges will be established to our prejudice.*

Upon the whole, I am convinced that the Committee will be of opinion, that the employment of ships built in the British territories in India, in the trade with those countries and with China, is a measure highly conducive to the best interests of the empire.

FINIS.