

THE SUBSTANCE
OF THE
SPEECH
OF
ROBERT GRANT, Esq.
DELIVERED BEFORE
A SELECT COMMITTEE
OF THE
HOUSE OF COMMONS.
SIR ROBERT PEEL, BART. IN THE CHAIR.

On Wednesday the 1st, and Friday the 3d of June, 1814.

IN SUPPORT OF A BILL

"To make further Regulations for the Registry of Ships built in India."

With an Appendix.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY JAMES GILLET,
CROWN-COURT, FLEET-STREET.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

SELECT COMMITTEE

ON

EAST INDIA SHIPPING.

Wednesday, 1st June, 1814.

SIR ROBERT PEEL, BART. IN THE CHAIR.

MR. GRANT, *as council for the East India agents*, opened the case of the petitioners in support of the bill to the following effect :

SIR ROBERT PEEL,

If the learned person who opened the case on the other side * was deeply impressed with the magnitude of the question before the Committee, much more may I be allowed to feel a similar impression. I know not, indeed, that I ascribe to the subject precisely that disastrous species of consequence which it seems to have assumed in the eyes of my learned friend ; but I am fully aware of its importance and extensiveness ; and, placed as I am in a situation of professional responsibility to me new and painful, I find these doubly

* Mr. Harrison, counsel for the Thames ship-builders.

appalling. I shall rely, however, on the indulgence of the Committee in the remarks I am about to offer to them; and I will endeavour in some degree to entitle myself to that indulgence,—so far at least as I may do so by a sincere attempt to imitate the example of liberality which has been set by my learned friends,* both in their able addresses and in the general conduct of their cause. Whatever professional deference is due to them, whatever consideration to the parties whom they represent, whatever reverence to those whom I address, whatever feeling of respect and homage to the naval greatness and glory of this country, it is at least my wish that in none of these points I may be found wanting.

The nature of the question, and the ground on which I appear as advocate for the owners of East India built shipping, may be stated in a very few words. It is perfectly well known that, under the navigation acts of a prior date to the act of the 26th of the present reign, ships built in British India might freely have claimed all, and much more than all, the privileges that are held out to them by the bill now proposed. The principles of those acts, as applicable to the present subject, may be resolved into two; the first, that ships built in the colonies, plantations, or territories belonging to this country in Asia, Africa, or America, shall, equally with British built ships, be admissible into the general trade of the British empire; the second, that foreign ships may carry on a direct trade with this country, although not admissible into its general trade. For my present purpose it is sufficient to state these two principles generally, without noticing the minute exceptions to which they may be subject, or the successive modifications which they may have undergone. I will barely mention that, by the navigation act pro-

* Mr. Adolphus was the other counsel for the Thames ship builders.

perly so called, or that of the twelfth of Charles the Second, the privileges conferred on British shipping, or rather (as that act has it) on English and Irish shipping, are conferred not on English and Irish *built* shipping, but simply on English and Irish *owned* shipping—on ships, the property, not the manufacture, of those countries. It was not (I think) till the statute of the 7th and 8th of William the Third, that the privileges in question were confined to shipping built in this country as well as owned by its inhabitants.

Now, Sir, so far as these acts are concerned, there can be no doubt that the India ship owners are fairly entitled to at least the privileges which the proposed bill would confer upon them. Even were it possible to consider British India as a foreign country, she would have the right under those acts of conveying her own produce in her own ships to the ports of England. But she is not a foreign country; it is plain to reason, it has been clearly decided by our courts of law, and in fact it is fully admitted by my learned friend, that the possessions of Great Britain in the East are colonies within the meaning of the acts alluded to. So far, therefore, they have an indisputable claim to much more than this bill proposes to give them; they may claim what our other colonies actually enjoy, an admission for their own shipping into the general trade of the empire. From this privilege the shipping of British India has notwithstanding been generally excluded, by a clause in the Register Act of the 26th of the present reign. By that clause, vessels built in the colonies, islands, or territories belonging to the King, must obtain certificates of registry from the colonial governors or commanders in chief, and principal officers of the customs. In India, those departments being filled by persons serving, not immediately the king, but the East India company, it has hence been inferred that no certificate of registry can there be granted

agreeably to the forms prescribed by the act. Thus the act has had the effect of excluding the ships of India from that sort of formal authentication which would entitle them to partake in the general trade of the empire; and this effect, be it observed, the act has produced, not directly or professedly, or conformably to its general principle; on the contrary, it expressly allows the privileges of British built shipping to ships built in the colonies, plantations, islands, or territories, belonging to his Majesty in Asia, Africa or America; but incidentally, collaterally, and, if I may so say, technically. My learned friend has, however, so completely conceded the point of law, that I will not take up the time of the Committee by dwelling on this subject. I will only add, that the ships of India have after all been permitted to come to this country under partial and temporary acts, and that some few of them have afterwards obtained a regular certificate of registry as British built ships.

Such, Sir, is the state of things to which the bill under consideration applies, and which it is designed to regulate. The bill provides that India built ships shall be freely admissible into the direct trade between England and this country. So far, therefore, as it gives to those ships permanently and systematically a privilege which they have hitherto enjoyed only in a partial and interrupted manner, it undoubtedly secures to them an important part of their rights under the navigation acts. So far, on the other hand, as it debars them from the general trade of the empire, it as undoubtedly abridges those rights. Acting, Sir, in behalf of those whom I have the honour to represent, I certainly cannot admit that, by the principles of the navigation acts, we are not intitled to much higher and larger benefits than any which this bill accords; at the same time, in a spirit of compromise and conciliation, these parties are content to accept the bill. In what spirit

they have been met on the other side, it may, perhaps, better befit the Committee to judge than me to say. To do our opponents however no more than justice, whatever may be their spirit, they do not conceal their object; they avow a determined hostility, not merely against this bill, but against every admission of the ships of India, in every degree, and under every modification; and their learned advocate has not hesitated to avow, in that character, his wish "that the clauses in the Navigation Acts should be altered to the absolute exclusion of all India-built ships and vessels from any participation in the privileges of British registry."

This is the nature of the question, and these the respective objects of the parties concerned. In further addressing the Committee on behalf of the India Ship Owners, I will venture first to state the general grounds on which I would rest the title of my clients to the privileges conferred by this bill, and most of those grounds it will only be necessary to state very shortly, because they do not appear disputable; I will then proceed to examine, at somewhat greater length, the objections that have been urged against the policy of conferring the privileges in question; and, on this part of the subject, I shall be induced to take some notice of the case, I will not say *made out*, but *proffered*, in evidence by the parties on the other side.

With respect, Sir, to the general principles on which, as I conceive, the Shipping of India is entitled to at least the privileges intended for them by the proposed bill, they are principles, some of policy and some of justice, some involving obligations universal and perpetual, and some which, deriving their force from circumstances in the present state of things, may be considered only as occasional.

Now, as to the permanent grounds of policy on which we stand before Parliament in the discussion of this question, my only difficulty in arguing arises from this, that most of them are in a manner self-evident. They belong to the number of those simple, elemental rules on which all policy proceeds, and the negation of which implies an absurdity; and the difficulty is to find still ulterior principles, principles still simpler and more obvious, into which such rules may be resolved. The burden of proof, in such cases, lies on those who object to the application of the rules; on those who demand an exception. The general principle must hold, unless the propriety of the deviation can be shewn.

The first of these grounds is, Sir, that, if we possess a colony, or a distant dependency like British India (for certainly this in strictness is not a colony,) it is always rational and wise to avail ourselves of the resources which such a colony or dependency affords. I can produce no proof of so simple a proposition as this; but it does not, therefore, seem the less indisputable; because, if the question were raised *why* we should avail ourselves of the colonies we possess; the next question, and a question not easily answerable, might be, why we should possess those colonies at all. If we are to incur the expense of maintaining territories so distant as those which belong to us in the East, it must surely be desirable that we reap the fruits of our expenditure; that we obtain some reward for our labour; and what more valuable return can those countries afford us, than by ministering to the supply of that Shipping, which is at once the great instrument of our commerce, and a main arm of our power?

If this is the first general remark applicable to the subject,

a second is, that it becomes doubly expedient to avail ourselves of the supply which a colony affords us of any valuable article, when that supply is not only advantageous from the consideration of increased quantity, but also excellent in point of quality; when it makes an accession to our stock of resources, no less desirable in respect of value than of extent.

With regard, Sir, to the advantages possessed by the ships built in India, as conveyances for the trade between that country and this, I need say the less; because all those advantages, whatever they are,—the durability of the wood employed in the construction of those vessels,—its total want of all occasion for repairs,—the abundance with which it may be supplied,—the cheapness with which it is applied to ship-building purposes,—and the aptitude of the vessels which it builds to the purposes of commerce,—all these circumstances, I say, appear to have made on the minds of our opponents an impression even frightfully strong. I cannot, however, help pointing out the ungracious nature of the inference which they are content to draw from these exaggerated premises. Setting in array before our eyes these mighty resources thrown into our lap by the hand of Providence,—this mine of wealth,—this arsenal of strength,—this treasury invaluable and inexhaustible,—the practical conclusion at which they arrive is,—not that we should employ these noble means for the support and the extension of our national greatness,—but that we should wilfully forfeit all those benefits;—that we should set a seal on that mine for ever;—that we should bury those treasures deep in the earth;—that we should barricade, in the closest manner, that arsenal of strength, not against our enemies, but against ourselves. Yes! all these benefits are to sleep in their places, sacred and unused, until, by some future change of fate or disaster of war, they shall fall into the hands of some

less calculating, and (give me leave to say) more rational enemy.

Sir, as to the real nature and extent of the advantages which are thought so formidable, I believe the truth to be somewhere below the highly-coloured statements of our adversaries. The great saving in point of expense I take to be less in the building of the ship, than in the smallness of the subsequent repairs.—Undoubtedly, however, considered as an entire concern, the shipping of India is of a cheaper description than that afforded by this country. It is at the same time built of a stronger wood.—It is, I say, both cheaper and stronger; and in the same proportion it is more advantageous: more advantageous to the ship-builder who constructs it; more advantageous to the merchant who freights it; more advantageous to the consumer at home who buys a part of its import cargo; more advantageous to the manufacturer at home, who requires a cheap import of the raw materials for his fabrics; more advantageous to the continental merchant who purchases those fabrics for export; more advantageous to the revenue by means of the increased duties both on that import and that export; in one word, more advantageous to the naval, commercial, and manufacturing interests of the whole empire.

As the circumstances of quantity and quality of supply form two powerful reasons for turning to the best account the resources of our distant possessions, to these may be added a third motive not less strong, when there is any peculiar advantage in drawing a part of the supply from the colony or other dependency rather than from any other quarter; when there is an advantage, if I may so describe it, in the very *locality* of the supply. But there is such an advantage in the present case. Without reference to any other consideration, it is expedient that a proportion of shipping should be built in

the ports of India rather than elsewhere, to be employed in the trade between India and this country. It will be perceived that I allude to a circumstance at which I have as yet scarcely glanced; the circumstance that, in the trade of India with Europe, India, chiefly, is the exporting country. It must be the chief exporting country, while the demand for Indian produce in Europe greatly exceeds, as probably will long be the case, the demand for European produce in India. It must be the chief exporting country, while a constant remittance of wealth takes place from India to Europe,—of wealth, I mean, acquired by Europeans in that country; for in what form can that remittance so conveniently be realized as in the shape of exportable produce useful to the manufacturer in Europe? But, on these grounds, nothing can be more expedient than that the ports of India should be provided with shipping of their own, applicable to the trade with Europe.—A trade of export must always begin with the exporting country.—That must be the commencing point of each adventure, the outset of commercial circulation; and, if the exporting merchant is not allowed every facility for carrying on the speculation which he originates, if he cannot command shipping exactly at his pleasure, if he may not precisely suit the time and mode of his shipments to his own convenience, he is liable to the most serious difficulty, interruption, and discouragement.

On this point, Sir, I need not enlarge more than on the last, because this also seems effectually conceded by the opposing party.—They have told you in the strongest terms, that a ship built in India, and engaged by the India Company for a given number of voyages to commence in England, goes far to clear herself before she begins the series, by the cargo she brings in her first passage home. They have given even exaggerated statements of the superiority which, in this

respect, such a ship possesses over a ship launched in this country.—What is this but to admit all I wish; both the fact for which I contend, and the explanation of that fact; both the advantage of carrying on the trade in India-built vessels, and the reason of that advantage founded in the very nature of an export trade? Had these points indeed been disputed, there is one particular view in which I should have been greatly tempted to enlarge on them, I mean, as connecting them with the change recently introduced into our commercial relations with India.—By the new Charter, private shipping is admissible to the trade with that country.—But if so, if there are reasons for resorting to this alteration of system, it follows, with the certainty of destiny, that the alteration should be resorted to under the most favourable auspices possible. Those reasons, if they prescribe the use of private shipping, must surely prescribe the use of the cheapest and most convenient private shipping; a shipping without which the export trade from India cannot in the same form exist; and which, therefore, is not to be deemed a substitute for other shipping, but together with the trade which it carries on, an entirely new creation. In one word, if the experiment is worth trying at all, let it be tried fairly, wisely, and completely.

Sir, these surely are strong reasons for availing ourselves of the marine resources of India; and to these I would add a fourth, strongly confirmatory of the rest, which is, that the advantages of which I have spoken, by not being used, would be worse than lost. It is something to gain these benefits: it is more to gain them, when the alternative is, a transfer of a considerable part of them at least into the hands of rival nations. The evidence adduced on the other side has distinctly established the fact, that ships may be built at far less expence in the ports of foreign Europe than in those of this country. If then the export trade of India has no other

vent, it will centre in the ships and the ports of foreign Europe, rather than in the ships and ports of Great Britain. Duties and restraints and penalties will not prevent this course of things; there is no alternative; none at least, but the employment of India-built shipping; there, certainly, we have a resource. India-built ships, taking into our account their being on the spot, their durability, the natural connection between British-India and this country, and the great demand which this country may be expected to furnish for the rude produce of India,—viewing all these circumstances, I say, India-built shipping, owned by British subjects, will have a clear advantage in the remittance trade over the shipping of foreigners. They will, I doubt not, be the successive competitors of foreigners; at all events they will be their only competitors. Indeed, I believe that India-built ships, if excluded from the trade with this country, will actually enter into the trade with foreign Europe. They will be sold into that trade; perhaps really, perhaps only colourably; and the exports of India will go with them. Such things have in a degree taken place as is well known, and as we shall prove; and they will undoubtedly take place again. I shall not, sir, be understood, I hope, as meaning to vindicate the illicit and clandestine practices to which I have alluded. I will never stand up to be the champion of such practices. But I am bound to remark the legislature must undertake all policy with a calculation of consequences; and, surely, the opportunities which a measure may afford for malversation or misconduct—the liability to abuse—must enter as one important element into the grounds of judgment. It matters not what *should* be, but what *will* be the effect. Nor am I sure that, under such circumstances as I am supposing, it is either just, or prudent, or generous in a state to reprobate the offence which its own mistaken policy has occasioned;—to drive

the subject into the toils, and then to condemn him for over-leaping the barrier.

I may next mention a fifth reason for this measure, not necessarily connected with those I have already enumerated, although in part flowing out of them. The provision of a trade with Europe in India-built vessels, or rather, I may call it, the concession of an European trade to the inhabitants of India, will facilitate and enlarge the coasting trade of that country. It will afford general encouragement to production, the effects of which encouragement must partly issue in a quicker commercial intercourse throughout the Indian seas; and farther, there will be created an increased quantity of shipping applicable to any casual purpose. The general advantages of a large coasting trade must be too familiarly known to require specification; but I cannot help mentioning one important consideration closely connected with this view of the subject, and at the same time peculiar to the case of India. Like other rice countries, India is subject to sudden and heavy visitations of famine,—visitations, attended with the destruction of thousands, and sometimes with the depopulation of whole districts. Under the pressure of this calamity, a maritime transportation of grain is of the last consequence, and it is of equal moment that the conveyance should be prompt and rapid; a slight delay, the change of the monsoon before the rice ship sails, may be fatal to the inhabitants of an entire village. I am now urging this topic not at all on the ground of humanity, but on that of pure policy. The destruction of a multitude of the natives of British India must be our loss; for it must inevitably be followed by a proportionate defalcation in the revenue and the trade of the country. The more shipping, however, is afloat in those seas, the readier will be the re-

source afforded in the cases supposed; the greater the average of the whole tonnage employed in India, the greater will be the average of the surplus tonnage applicable to any given exigency.

The last permanent or standing advantage, Sir, of this measure, in point of policy, which I shall mention, is this; that the encouragement of the ship-building establishments of India will more and better enable those establishments to assist our naval achievements, and supply our naval demands, in the Indian seas. Sir, the opposite parties cannot deny the reality of this advantage; for to show that the navy of a country depends on its mercantile ship-building establishments, is the whole of their case. I know I may have occasion to prove that their allegations on this head are grievously exaggerated; I know that they over-state the matter beyond all common bounds: but no wish to confute that part of their case shall blind me to the truth, that the ship-building establishments of a country must necessarily, in a greater or less degree, conduce to its naval strength and glory. It is for this reason that the British Legislature has encouraged and promoted the ship-building interests of this country; not, indeed, in the Navigation Act, properly so called, but in the subsequent and subsidiary acts. All we ask is, that, while the general ship-building of the empire at large contributes to the general naval defence, the ship-building of British India may be allowed to contribute to the defence of its own particular wing. We shall, indeed, shew that the shipping of India has materially concurred in producing those events which have signalized the naval means and prowess of Great Britain in the Eastern ocean. The conveyance of the Indian army to Egypt, the reduction of the Mauritius and of Java, these and many other exploits of less individual consequence, but not less collective use, have fully illustrated the

efficiency of India-built ships, and the naval importance of the establishments by which they are supplied.

These, Sir, are the more general grounds of policy on which I would rest the vindication of the measure in question: but I have not yet adverted to another view of the subject, which were I totally to omit, the recollection would, I confess, press on me heavily. My learned friend, in opening the case on the other side, was pleased to conjecture that the dispute between us would at length be reduced to this simple issue; which of the two parties, the British ship-builders on the one hand, or the Indian ship-builders on the other, was the best entitled to the protection of the British state? Have I so considered the question? Have I thrown out a single hint of any claim on the part of the shipping interest of India, builder or owner? Have I not confined myself to the question of policy, as if no such thing as justice existed even in name? Have I, except incidentally, even breathed a whisper respecting my clients? Above all, have I said one word about the people of India? Have I not been as profoundly silent with regard to that people, as my learned friends themselves? Could any casual hearer have guessed, from one syllable that has been uttered by them or by me, that such a people existed on the face of the earth; that they possessed the most distant, the most dubious, the most litigated claim on the parental protection and indulgence of the British state, or the faintest, the most fanciful, most imaginary connexion with the question in dispute? I will, however, no longer be a party to that silence. In them it may be prudent, in me it would be criminal. And, first, with respect to the persons for whom I more immediately appear, I think I might complain of some mis-statement on the part of my learned friend, when he is pleased to represent the question as one of alternative

protection between the ship-building interests of India and of England; whereas the real question appears, from the whole course of his own arguing, to be, not whether it is better to protect the English than the Indian ship-builder, but whether it is better to protect the English ship-builder in a monopoly, than the Indian ship-builder in a competition. Competition! says my learned friend; deliver me from such competition!—it will be our ruin: the natural end of such competition will be, that we shall be beat from the field, and the cheapest will carry off the market. Why, Sir, that is the natural and the proper end of all competition. It is the natural end, I say, of all competition; and well is it for the consumer that it is so. And, surely, if the Indian builder is content to wave all that advantage of competition, to which, under the Navigation Acts, he has a most undoubted title—competition in building for the general trade of the empire—you cannot charge him with any great arrogance, with any heinous presumption, when he begs that he may be allowed to build for that quarter of the empire with which he is connected: above all, when he begs he may build for a trade, with respect to which he can in no fair sense be considered as robbing any man else; since it is demonstrable, and indeed is virtually admitted, that the far greater part of the trade for which he would build, if it does not exist in his shipping, will never have any existence at all.

But my learned friend says—“Produce your claims on the gratitude of the state; recount the public services you have performed!—on us the glory of England depends: we have been to her a nursery of ships and shipwrights—we have served our country;—But who are you?”

I do not mean, Sir, to dispute the services which the ship-builders of the Thames may have rendered to their country: it is no part of my case to do so. Long be those services, whatever they are, remembered, and may they never be undervalued or decried. But, when my learned friend alleges the want of such services, on the part of my clients, as a ground for the perpetual exclusion of their shipping from this country, all I can say, is, that this language may be well in the mouth of an advocate; but, should it be adopted by the state—should it be addressed to these parties by the Legislature—a graver, a broader, a more determined piece of state-bantering I cannot possibly conceive. For only observe how, in that case, you treat these persons: you exclude them from ministering to your marine strength at home: it is your act, and not theirs; you exclude them, or admit them only partially; and then, when they come tendering to you a fuller service, wishing to be employed in this department, (and they are at least as disinterested in making such offers as their opponents), you turn round short on them and say, “You have not served us hitherto, for we would not let you, and we will not let you now, because you have not served us hitherto. We will punish you for having been partially excluded in time past, by condemning you to a complete exclusion in time to come.” That is the language which my learned friend places in the mouth of the Legislature. But, Sir, is it really true, that my clients have conferred no benefits at all on the state? That they have been useless to the naval and military glory of their country? Was their assistance nothing in the instances I have mentioned? Was it nothing that they contributed to the reduction of the Mauritius; to the conquest of Java; to the transport of troops to Egypt? Was all this nothing? Nothing! it was, at least, all that you permitted them to perform.

There is, however, another ground on which I must beg leave to present to the committee the clients for whom I have the honour to plead. My learned friend, at the opening of his case, feelingly, (and if I may presume to say so) very properly declared, that he considered himself as virtually an advocate for other interests than merely those which he was specifically retained to defend; in fact, for the interests in general of those who contemplate injury from the present bill. I certainly have not the presumption to place myself on the still higher pedestal of advocate for the people of India. But this I may say, that the parties for whom I plead are fairly entitled to be considered as the representatives of that people at the bar of the imperial parliament. In this question they are identified with that people: they and that people are one: it is the trade of THAT people in which the shipping of my clients is intended to be employed; it is the surplus produce of THEIR land and labour which this shipping is intended to convey to market: it is THEIR coast which this shipping is intended to relieve, under the pressure of famine. THEIR interests are, in fact, at stake, and I ask whether those interests are trifling or insignificant objects in the eyes of the house of commons.

They are indeed trifling and insignificant objects, if the house of commons take the same measure of their importance which has been taken by some of the persons hostile to this bill. In one of the publications, Sir, which have, with such industry, been circulated on this occasion, on behalf of the Thames ship-building, I was much struck with a curious comparison between the interests respectively at issue. On the side of the Thames building, it is astonishing what an army of trades is collected together. The changes are rung on all the minutest subdivisions of employment which the demands of a state of refinement and the exquisite improvement

of mechanical skill have created in this country. Not only the shipwright, and the joiner, and the caulker, and the sawyer, and the other artisans immediately connected with ship-building, but the time-glass maker, and broom maker, and brush maker, and colour maker; all these, and more, come flocking. And what, on the other side, is opposed to this mighty host? On the other side, they tell us, there are only "*a few interested individuals.*" So accurate, Sir, is the arithmetic of selfishness!—A few interested individuals? Sixty millions of persons; with forests fit for ship-building, which you will not permit them to hew down: with harbours fit for ship-building, which, in effect, you choak up: with industry and ingenuity (at least among some classes of them) adapted to ship-building, which you prohibit them from exercising: with exportable produce, which you deny them the means of exporting: with a demand for tonnage, which you tell them shall not be gratified, unless they will come to London to purchase the magnificent shipping built on the banks of the Thames: with a coasting commerce, to which you refuse to grant the natural and proper encouragement of a commerce with Europe. All these advantages they must lose, or must be content to seek them through the unnatural, ungenial, invidious, and, after all, most unsatisfactory channel of an intercourse, perhaps a clandestine intercourse, with strangers. Why, Sir, if Great Britain were really so to speak and act, well would it be for her fame if she could prove these interested persons to be as insignificant as is pretended. And yet this is the language which my learned friend would put into the mouth of the state: but I never can believe that parliament will adopt either the language itself or the principles which it conveys.

I am afraid, on such a topic as this, of being led to transgress the bounds of the professional character in which I

appear. I will therefore only take the liberty of adding one observation further, and it shall be comprized in two sentences. It is this; Since the grant of the recent charter to the Company, this is the first occasion on which the British legislature has been called to exercise with an immediate and visible arm (if I may so phrase it) the paramount sovereignty it undoubtedly possesses over the people in India: let this first act be one of grace, not of exclusion.

Sir, the considerations which I have hitherto ventured to suggest to the Committee, as motives for granting to my clients at least that measure of privilege which this bill would afford, are founded on circumstances immediately connected with India, and either of a fixed nature, or at all events not likely to change for an indefinite period. They may, therefore, be regarded as supplying motives of fixed and constant obligation. But there may be auxiliary and occasional inducements of great strength for the adoption of the bill;—and here it will be guessed that I allude to a topic on which so much has already been heard as to fatigue the Committee, I fear, not a little; I mean the alleged scarcity of large oak timber in this country, and the alleged expediency, on that ground, of resorting to India built vessels as a partial saving for the consumption of oak. In commenting on this subject, however, I beg to have it distinctly understood, that I accept the argument derived from it only as an auxiliary consideration, and not as by any means constituting the essence of our case. I will never, so far as I am concerned, let down the question from that broad ground of general policy and justice on which I have attempted, however feebly, to place it. Nor do I hesitate to affirm that, if there were even a superabundance of oak in this country; if our plains were covered with forests adapted to naval building, and as it were imploring for the axe; I should still, and with exactly the same confidence in my cause, ask these privi-

leges for my clients, on the grounds of natural policy, justice, and generosity. But, though I scruple not to say this, I do not say it from any distrust of the point on which I am about entering. On the contrary, I avow that I shall be content with no common victory over the case presented by my learned friends with respect to timber: if I cannot rend that case to atoms, I shall be disappointed indeed. I have no doubt that the argument drawn from the growing dearth of large timber is strong enough to bear the whole weight of our cause. The cause would be good if that argument were entirely out of consideration; it would be good if that were the only argument in consideration.

On this head, Sir, it must be very obvious, and it must have frequently been felt by the Committee in the course of this discussion, that, no accurate and general survey having been made of the exact quantity of standing timber fit for the purposes of ship building, it is necessary for both sides to have recourse to argumentative enquiries, to resort to general principles of judgment, and to found their conclusions on these general principles, taken in connection with such facts as can be satisfactorily ascertained. It is my wish to confine myself as strictly within the boundary of mere facts, as the case permits: I will however state those general grounds on which the scarcity of large timber in this country might fairly be calculated upon as a natural event. It becomes indeed the more necessary for me to do so, because my learned friend who summed up the evidence on the other side argued broadly, (I understood him so at least, and I am sure some of the publications of his clients do so argue,) that, under the immense and constant demand which this country has furnished for ship-building timber, the whole notion of a scarcity of such timber is nugatory and absurd; that the demand will always create the supply; and that the alarms which are admitted to have prevailed on this subject, have been propagated only

by the industrious selfishness or malice of government-agents and contractors.

To those, Sir, who recollect that this country once abounded with oak forests, forests many of which have left no memorial but magnificent names attached to spots where scarcely a shrub is now discernible, it surely cannot seem an extraordinary proposition that oak timber may, in the natural course of things, become scarcer with the progressive advancement of civilization. There was indeed an early period in the English history, during which our woods were studiously preserved, but it was with other views than to secure the supply of an article of use. The policy of the feudal times was to preserve those woods in a state, not of unimpaired utility, but of inviolate desolation. It was the forest, not the timber, that was the object of care. The forest supplied both a convenient obscurity for those lawless and desultory enterprises which suited the spirit of the times, and a convenient refuge under the reverses to which such enterprises were liable. The love of the chace furnished another motive; oftener, perhaps, it only furnished a pretext under which the men in authority practised the most cruel oppressions on the subject. This was the first great cause of the decline of timber forests in England: it became necessary for the peace of society to get rid of these inconvenient, and often criminal shades; and hence the forest charters were as studiously contended for by the champions of liberty as the Great Charter itself. The gradual improvement of manners and arts concurred in producing the same effect. Timber became necessary for the construction of habitations more convenient than had before been in use. An attention to the pursuits of pasturage was equally destructive to the forests, from the injury which is always done by cattle to the young trees. Agriculture proved more hostile, not only by its demand of wood for the implements of

tillage, but from its being, as I think Dr. Adam Smith observes, the direct enemy of forests; The soil on which oak flourishes is generally, though not universally, the best soil for wheat; and hedge-row timber is peculiarly injurious to the growing corn by the dripping in wet weather, and by excluding the sun and wind. But, perhaps, the greatest enemy to the oak of England has been her commerce: partly, by its demand of wood for the construction of machinery; partly, by its demand of fuel for manufactories; partly, by the spirit of gain which it has propagated, inducing the land-owner to employ his land in the most profitable manner; partly, by inclining the land-owner, without reference to the actual amount of profit, to seek for the quickest possible returns of his capital; partly, by the increased facility of alienation which it has produced, and the consequent interchange of property from hand to hand,—a sort of circulation which a timber estate is seldom found to undergo with impunity; but, above all, by the vast and almost incredible consumption of timber which it has occasioned for the purposes of the commercial, and, eventually, of the military shipping of the country.

These, Sir, are probable general views of the subject; and it is, I contend, not unreasonable to argue,—it requires not the clamour raised by a contractor to make us argue,—that from the circumstances I have cursorily mentioned, our large timber has declined. Liberty, police, manners, pasturage, agriculture, commerce, have all combined in what I may, perhaps, venture to call, by a somewhat new application of the term, the grand work of disafforesting. In point of fact, the great forests of the country have gradually receded from the shores of the sea, from the borders of navigable rivers, and from the neighbourhood of great towns, into more inland or solitary situations, where they have successively been reached

by the consumer, in proportion as the progress of improvement has multiplied the means of interior communication.

These causes might almost be expected to produce, and perhaps, under some circumstances, they would have produced, a total disappearance of our great timber. There have been some obstacles to that effect, however; and I will mention two or three that have been brought into notice, either by the observations of my learned friend, or by the course which the examination before the committee has taken.

The first of these is one on which great stress has been laid, the increased price of timber. It is maintained, as a theoretical truth, that price must necessarily encourage growth; that demand cannot fail to produce supply; you admit the demand; they argue, and therefore you cannot, without absurdity, deny the supply.

Now price or demand may operate in two ways; it may promote the planting of timber, and it may promote the preservation of growing timber. With respect to its operation on planting, since the motive of price is by the very supposition to act on the spirit of commerce or gain, it must be perfectly manifest that, if you can shew a much more gainful and profitable use of land than by planting it with timber, it will be so used by that commercial sort of person of whom we are speaking. But it stands in the clearest way on the evidence already adduced, that the whole value of an oak tree is not sufficient to pay for the appropriation of the good soil which it requires to the purpose of growing it; the reason is, the extreme slowness of its growth, particularly in the early stages. Thus the demand for oak timber, though great, is overborne by the demand for corn, or for some other article to which the same land, or the same capital may more

profitably be applied. With respect, however, to this consideration of demand, it may be proper to make another distinction. When we say that demand creates supply, we mean, not merely that the demand of the market creates the supply of the market, but that the supply is immediately followed by a further production of the article with a view to an expected future market. The demand operates not only in drawing commodities, already existing, into consumption, but in promoting the production of other commodities of the same kind. In most of the great variety of articles useful for the purposes of common life, these two effects are almost simultaneous; they act so nearly together, that we confound them. In the case of corn, the reproduction follows the demand in a year; in the case of cattle, in a few years; in the case of many manufactures, in much less than a year,—in a month,—in a week. So that, in ordinary speech, when we say that demand creates supply, no man stops to consider whether by supply he means the conveyance of the ready-made article to market, or the production of the yet non-existing article. All this, however, clearly arises from the readiness with which the article can be provided; but, if you interpose a hundred years between the outlay of your money on the production of the article and the actual production, it is most obvious that, in proportion as you have increased the interval you have weakened the stimulus of the expected demand. The stimulus acts at a greater distance, and, therefore, not only more faintly but more uncertainly; for some degree of uncertainty must always mingle with human prospects of the future. On the whole, then, it is not at all incredible, but, on the contrary, highly credible, that a possessor of land, acting with a view to price,—and that is the very supposition on which we are now arguing,—should be slow to engage in the plantation of oak trees.

Another way in which the inducement of price or demand may be supposed to act is by occasioning the preservation of trees already growing.—Most unfortunately, however, a circumstance has appeared in the course of the evidence on the other side, which shews that, however the inducement of price may operate to preserve oak timber in general, it cannot be relied upon for so operating as to produce large naval timber. This circumstance is, that there is a certain period, no matter what, in the age of a growing oak tree, at which it is more profitable, as a money speculation, to cut the tree down than to let it stand for naval timber. The Bishop of Llandaff, I think calculates that, in a view of profit, the grower should generally cut his oak down when it becomes worth thirty shillings: I am not sufficiently conversant in the subject to know whether he has here fixed the period correctly; but that there is such a period can hardly be doubted. For, first, a tree grows more rapidly during the middle period of its growth than afterwards: the contrary has indeed been said by one witness, but the rest have established the fact. Now, while it grows fastest, its size, and therefore its value, may increase at compound interest. The reason appears from this simple mathematical principle, that the area of an expanding circle increases as the square of its diameter, and, therefore, taking the height of the tree, for the sake of greater simplicity, to remain the same, then, while its diameter and girth increase in arithmetical progression, its contents will increase in geometrical progression. This, however, is only on the supposition, that the diameter increases equally in equal times; and at one period of the trees growth, I rather believe it does more; but not so in the latter stages. The rate of increase falls off, and the motive for preserving the tree falls off in the same proportion. Another circumstance which makes the middle-sized timber more valuable than the large is, its applicability to so many purposes besides ship-building;

as well as the greater value of the bark ; and the larger demand for the tree in consequence. On the whole, so far as the stimulus of price is concerned, the grower will not let his oaks stand till they become sufficiently large for navy timber ; he will rather give them up to be felled, and lay out the price he receives for them in some more lucrative manner. Add now a circumstance, already mentioned, that the soil on which oak timber grows, is that best adapted for the production of corn, and then observe the strong inducement operating on the grower, not only to cut down his woods, but to clear his wood land and convert it into tillage. The process, as we learn from Mr. Alexander, (not a peculiarly willing witness, I presume, to such a point) is easy and attended with little expense. At a time, then, when the demand for corn is so great, that, in order to sow it, we are blowing up rocks and breaking the most barren soils, it is surely too much to assume that the possessor of wood-land will always resist the double incentive of a proportionably higher price for his tree, and a more advantageous employment for his ground.

With respect, Sir, to the consideration of price, I trust I have now amply shown that navy timber is not likely to be produced in adequate quantities for the national consumption. There is another, and a very different, motive on which some may, perhaps, be disposed to place greater reliance. I mean the taste for ornamental timber ; understanding by that term, not merely the timber immediately sheltering or adorning a mansion house, nor even that which ornamentally belongs to a park or pleasure ground, but that which a great landed proprietor loves to see overshadowing his domains in all directions. The taste for such timber naturally advances with the general advancement of society. Let it not be thought an unreasonable refinement, if I add that it is a species of taste

which implies the article to be scarce rather than otherwise. Ornamental timber is a luxury, and nothing becomes a luxury till it becomes in some degree a rarity. Waving this remark however, let us see how the prevalence of such a taste will operate with respect, first to the planting, and next to the preserving of oak timber.

And first, it will undoubtedly induce planting ; but not, in the same degree, the planting of oak. The oak is indeed one of the most picturesque of trees, and perhaps is the only tree picturesque in every stage of its growth ; yet there is something severe in an unbroken mass of oak ; and, what is of more consequence, the first growth of the tree is remarkably slow. We must all feel that it will be the natural wish of a great possessor, planning the future beauty of his domain, to have his designs realized during his own life,—to see the visions of his taste reduced into actual existence ; he will therefore generally plant wood of other descriptions, and of a speedier growth. He will prefer such wood for another reason, that supposing the consideration of profit to mingle at all in his design, he will rather use that species of wood which may thrive on the more rude and barren places of his property ; places, at the same time, not perhaps less susceptible of picturesque beauty for their rudeness, but the contrary.

In this manner, the taste for ornamental timber does not greatly promote the plantation of oak : the preservation, on the other hand, of the standing tree, it unquestionably promotes, and promotes but too well. It appears in evidence, what certainly can require no evidence to make it appear, that ornamental woods are naturally preserved for an indefinite period after they have attained their full growth. How long oak timber may continue to be ornamental and useless, sufficiently appears from the common opinion re-

specting the duration of an oak, which, I apprehend, I am not far wrong in collecting from the couplet in Dryden I quoted on a former day :

" Three centuries he grows, and three he stays

" Supreme in state, and in three more decays."

The tree may, in fact, stand for ages, most ornamental to the estate, without being in the smallest degree conducive to the public service. In the meantime, no young trees grow under it; for, though nature will reproduce the decayed plant, she will not anticipate and provide against its decay. The worst is, however, that, for the great part, perhaps the greater part, of this time, the tree is too old to be adapted to ship-building; and were the proprietor even disposed to cut it down in that view, his labour would be of as little avail as if he were to demolish a magnificent ruin for the purpose of selling the rubbish.

Sir, the two inducements which I have mentioned,—the motives of gain and of taste, of œconomy and of luxury, seem plainly inadequate to produce the effect desired: there is a third motive, which has, on occasion, proved more operative; that of public spirit,—a zeal for the naval glory of the nation. Of this feeling, and of its efficiency, there is a most memorable instance, which has been mentioned in almost every publication drawn forth by the present question; I allude to the impression produced by the *Sylva* of Evelyn, a work intended, at a period of much real and much apprehended scarcity of naval timber, to excite the nobility and gentry of England to plant oak, and which so remarkably succeeded in its intention, that the late Lord Melville seems justly to have ascribed much of the powerful naval means employed by England during the late war, to the patriotic spirit roused by that single writer. This was indeed a

noble instance of patriotism on the part of our land owners, and I have no doubt that the present generation is fully capable of rivaling it; but the splendour of the example should not blind our eyes to the real state of the case. An exhortation to the land owner that he would plant oak timber from public spirit, is merely a call on him to undergo a voluntary tax for the sake of the national glory; and then a rule prevails here, the force of which will scarcely be denied, that no permanent system of policy can be erected on a basis of voluntary taxation. On the contrary, this very remark leads me to the conclusion, that there cannot be any proper safeguard for a due supply of naval timber, unless the public take the concern of providing it into their own hands. This policy we have at length adopted, and I doubt not that the royal forests, under the efficient system of regulation and management recently established, will gradually become an ample magazine of navy timber, applicable to every emergency.

I have now stated the presumptive grounds for believing that large oak timber is scarce in this country. One of my learned friends, however, was pleased to describe the apprehensions that have existed on this point, as purely the effect of the interested clamour of contractors. I should be glad to know whether we must ascribe to the interested clamour of contractors, all those legislative or public admissions or proofs of the growing scarcity of timber which may be seen in any well digested history of the subject. So early as the twenty-second year of Edward the IVth, the legislature interfered to protect the growth of timber, as an article of utility. The enactments of Henry the VIIIth, and Elizabeth, to prevent or retard the consumption of the same article, are well known. In the reigns of Charles the IIId, and his successor, the strongest apprehensions were entertained on the subject: hence the patriotic writings of Evelyn:

hence, as we may learn from Mr. Derrick's Memoirs of the Navy, the extensive use, during these reigns, of foreign timber. In 1771, a committee of the house of commons sat on this subject, and, although they did not report to the house any opinion, (and it is not difficult to guess the cause of this delicacy,) they reported evidence, and that evidence is so pregnant with proofs of a scarcity, that I should have thought the matter, for that time, beyond all doubt. Then came the eleventh report of the commissioners of land revenue in 1792; a document which not only asserts the fact of an existing scarcity, but supports that assertion by an accumulated and most valuable mass of information and argument. To the same effect is the first report made in June, 1812, of the present commissioners of woods, forests, and land revenues, who unequivocally affirm (page 24) "the increasing scarcity" of large timber, and pronounce it to be "extremely probable" that little or no oak will be suffered to remain on private estates till they attain the size of large timber."

Another report was made, I believe, in the same year, expressly on the provision of naval timber, by the commissioners for the civil affairs of the navy. That report was demanded in parliament, but was refused, and is not accessible. I am not at liberty to conjecture its contents, but this I may say, that it has never been exhibited to confute the allegation of the scarcity of timber.

Now, Sir, when all these alarms were thus authoritatively propagated respecting the decay of our native materials for ship-building, where, I would ask, were the parties who are now so loud on the contrary side? Where were the timber-merchants and the ship-builders? Why did not these persons then attempt to meet the clamour of scarcity, by what they have now shewn themselves so competent to raise,—a counter

clamour of abundance? Where were they, did I say? Why, Sir, at the head-quarters of their enemies. They were the very people that asserted the scarcity of timber; they were, themselves, the alarmists. I will not go back to the predecessors of these parties, in the year 1686, though then, as may be seen in Mr. Derrick, (page 104) the scarcity of timber was jointly asserted by the commissioners of the navy, and several of the most eminent private ship-builders. It will be enough for me to refer to the year 1771. Look at the evidence reported by the Committee of the House of Commons in that year. See there thirty timber-dealers, all, without an exception, deposing to the decrease of oak timber, and generally in the strongest and most terrifying terms. What is much more, see there ship-builders, builders in the Thames, builders for the India Company, nay, the heads of these very yards, which are now before the Committee: Mr. Wells, Mr. Parry, Mr. Dudman, Mr. Barnard: see these, and others of the same profession, positively affirming a grievous and growing scarcity, and giving, especially Mr. Wells, long and well reasoned opinions on the subject. Next look at the report of 1792, mark there the Thames builders again,—Mr. Wells and Mr. Barnard,—once more appearing and giving the same testimony; and the commissioners, on their authority, among others, decisively pronouncing the fact of a scarcity. Then observe how the very same parties, or their immediate successors, now come forward and say, that all this must go for nothing,—that there neither is, nor was, nor can be a scarcity of timber: that nobody ever asserted a scarcity but contractors, and nobody ever believed them but their dupes.

Such, Sir, are the general views and prepossessions with which, as I conceive, we may fairly proceed on the investigation of this subject; with no disposition, certainly, to prejudge the matter of fact on the side of scarcity, and to

believe that a scarcity of navy timber must at all events exist; but, certainly, with as little inclination to prejudge the fact in the opposite way, and to believe that the notion of a scarcity is at all events to be repelled and derided.

Now there is already before the Committee, evidence, both oral and documentary, on this subject, and it will be our part to adduce more. I will first, however, make some remarks respecting the evidence already on the minutes.

As to the documents—we cannot perhaps refer to any thing more striking than a passage which occurs in page 356 of the minutes.—It is a passage in a letter from the Navy-Office, dated the 31st January, 1805, stating a negotiation which had been entered into between Government and five different Ship Builders on the river, with respect to a contract for building eight seventy-four gun ships. I particularly request the attention of the Committee to the following extract:—“They (that is, the Ship Builders,) also represented, that the great provision we had made for furnishing the dock-yards with a large stock of timber, (in consequence of the exhausted state in which they had been of that article,) must operate most powerfully to encrease their difficulties in procuring their supplies, and consequently raise the price very considerably. At this part of the conference, one of the Builders begged we would inform them, if a report which had reached them was founded in truth, viz. “That we had agents “in the country, employed with government money, to the “amount of 40,000*l.* in purchasing timber of the next fall; “if so, it would be impossible for them, without ruin to “themselves, to undertake the contract which was now in “agitation.” Now, Sir, the evidence of most or all the witnesses already called, leads distinctly to the conclusion, that the stock of large timber standing in the home counties

must have been at least as great in 1805, as at the present moment. This being the case, and taking the price of large navy timber at the former period to have been 8*l.* per load, round measure, and I have been informed it was more, I calculate that, according to the testimony of Mr. Thomas Alexander and other witnesses, the quantity of large navy timber, standing in the nearer counties in 1805, could not have been worth less, probably was worth much more, than a million sterling. Minute accuracy is not required; but I have been careful to make this calculation, taking the data moderately; and I do not imagine the result will be disputed. Now I am safely within bounds, I believe, when I say that not one-seventh part of this quantity could be requisite for building eight seventy-fours. Thus, then, with a million value of timber, of the largest size, in the near counties alone, independently of the immense woods of which we hear further off; with a demand for only one-seventh of that quantity; and then with a supposed interference of Government, only to the extent of the still smaller and indeed far smaller fraction of one twenty-fifth of that quantity, these gentlemen positively allege that they cannot proceed on the required purchases without absolute ruin; and yet we are now told that all alarms about the scarcity of navy timber, even though an admitted decrease has taken place in the home counties since 1805, are foolish, and visionary, and raised by the interested contrivance of selfish men!

I would next entreat you, Sir, to look at page 392 of the evidence, where is an account, shewing the quantities of English and Foreign Timber expended in his Majesty's yards at Deptford, Woolwich, Chatham, Sheerness, Portsmouth, and Plymouth, from 1803 to 1812, both inclusive. By that account, the Committee will judge of the prodigious supplies of foreign timber to which the Navy has been driven. Referring to the large timber alone, exclusive of plank and thick-

stuff, it will be seen that the quantity of foreign timber expended in the yards spoken of in the year 1812, not only exceeded two-thirds of the English timber of the same kind expended there in the same year, but decidedly exceeded the whole quantity of English timber in the year before, and nearly equalled the whole quantity in the year still preceding. For the number of loads of foreign timber and knees in the years 1810, 1811, and 1812 respectively, was 27,014, 25,522, and 34,403. The same account shews that our consumption of foreign timber has immensely increased of late years. Compare the first five years of the series with the last five; and you will find that the average consumption of foreign timber for each year in the former five was 3901½ loads; the average annual consumption in the latter five, 15,135 loads, or nearly four times as large. So greatly do we rely on foreigners for the supply of this important material; but this is not all. The account I refer to does not distinguish the English thickstuff and plank from the Foreign. An account, however, will be produced before the Committee which will make this distinction;* we shall also prove that the foreign timber used for the Navy has been purchased at very high prices; and then the Committee will have a full view of the degree in which the building of our Navy immediately depends on Foreign supply. Now, Sir, can there be a stronger proof than all this furnishes, that our native timber has been able to keep no pace at all with the demand? And what becomes of all the tenderness which the petitioners against the bill affect for the British timber grower? Why, after all, it turns out that the real object of their concern is the growth of foreign, not of British timber.

I will not enlarge further on the documentary evidence; let us come to the oral. In commenting as shortly as possible on that of the witnesses who have been called, I

* See subsequent Minutes of Evidence, pages 498 and 638; also Abstract Z, in Appendix.

will first consider, not their direct allegations, whatever they are, as to the question of scarcity or no scarcity; but their assertions, or distinct admissions, of facts or principles consistent with our view of this subject, and affording ground for those general presumptions respecting it, on which I have already touched. Their testimony, as to the fact of scarcity, I will notice afterwards.

Their first admission, tending to make the opinion of scarcity at least highly probable, is that of an erroneous increase during late years, in the price of oak timber. To disembarass and simplify this matter as much as possible, we must direct our attention, not to the price of the load of timber delivered in the yard; for this includes the expences of felling, carriage, and other items; but to the price of the standing tree, as purchased by the timber dealer from the grower. The most particular account on this head is given by a witness not at all unfavourably disposed to the parties petitioning against the Bill; I mean Mr. James Alexander, who says (page 156) "Twenty years ago we could buy timber from 50s. to 3l. 10s. per load, on the stubb, top, bark, and every thing. I have been giving since four times that money, or at least from 12l. to 13l. upon the same farm, and for the same species of timber." Therefore timber should have arisen to between three and four times its former price; and the witness admitted very distinctly, though not very freely, that this encrease was to be ascribed to the great demand for the article. In fact, price is the proper criterion of the ratio between demand and supply; and the unnatural advancement of it proves that the supply is wholly unequal to the demand.

Our opponents, however, do not admit this truth without a qualification, on which they lay a great stress: they allege

that the price of timber, though it has risen prodigiously, has not increased faster than the prices of other commodities; it has risen only with the general scale of money value. Some of the witnesses said this, and one of my learned friends used the same argument: he told us, that within his own recollection, (and I do not blame him for referring to that, for on such points strict evidence is hardly to be expected,) wine and other articles for the table had undergone a similar increase of price with timber. He told us that he had known the quartern loaf at sixpence; that he had at another period known it at one shilling and eleven pence; that is, nearly four times as great in the one instance as in the other.

Now, Sir, it may not be easy to determine what is the best measure of the general increase in the price of commodities within a given period; or, which is the same thing, of the depreciation in the value of money. But it may not be so hard to find the *worst* measure; and that, as I cannot help thinking, is the very measure chosen by my learned friend, when he draws his example from the increased cost of wine, or other similar articles of luxurious consumption. Surely, a luxury, the price of which may vary from the caprice of the consumer—still more, a taxed luxury, the price of which must vary with every variation in the impost levied on it—and, above all, an imported luxury, the price of which may vary from a thousand extrinsic circumstances, reducible to no rule whatever—such a criterion of the value of money must be the most fallacious that can be adopted. I believe it to be possible that the general expense of living among the higher and middling classes may have increased in the proportion stated; I know not whether it has or not, but the thing is possible. I can never, however, accept that increase as furnishing an adequate test of the general fall in

the value of money. The only faithful test must be sought in the value of that commodity, whatever it is, which forms the staff of life to the labouring classes of society: in this country, that commodity is wheat. My learned friend, therefore, is much more fortunate in the second test to which he resorts, the price of the quartern loaf. In applying this test, however, he has not taken into his account another principle, of such importance, I humbly submit, that to overlook it is to nullify the test after all. The quartern loaf, he justly remarked, has occasionally varied to four times its value; but he will surely not deny that this variation marks the difference between a year of abundance and a year of extreme dearth. Sixpence was the price in a season of plenty, and it never, I believe, rose to one shilling and eleven pence, except in periods of excessive scarcity, like that in the year 1801. In applying, however, the market prices of any commodity, but especially of bread, as a criterion of the depreciation of money, we must take its *average*, not its *occasional* prices. The very same cause which makes the average price the best guide, makes the fluctuating or occasional price one of the worst. Bread is the essential article of food to the far larger part of the community, and by these it is purchased in exchange for their labour. It bears, therefore, on an average, a pretty fixed proportion to the labourer's average daily want of food, and to his average daily powers of labouring; both which may be considered as *given* quantities. But this is only true on an average; for the very circumstance of the article being so essential, and almost indispensable, makes the demand for it, in cases of a failure of crop, so violent, that the price rises beyond all proportion to the deficiency. A failure to the amount of half the ordinary crop of wheat is, I think, computed by Gregory King to raise the market price of the remainder no less than 450 per cent.; and smaller failures operate similarly, according to

their extent. Prices so unnaturally raised can evidently furnish no fair measure either of the depreciation of money, or of any thing else.

In seeking a fair conclusion on this point, the price of wheat may seem, for more than one reason, a better standard than that of the quartern loaf; and as, at least, it cannot be thought a worse, I will venture to adopt it in preference. For the most accurate accounts of the changes in the average value of wheat, I have been advised by a friend very conversant in these subjects, to consult a short work by Mr. Arthur Young, published in the *Annals of Agriculture* in 1812, and entitled an *Enquiry into the progressive Value of Money*. That author, designating the average price of wheat in 7 years, from 1804 to 1810, by the number 20, forms a scale of average prices during certain periods of years preceding; and the price of wheat in 23 years, from 1767 to 1789, is 11;—in 34 years, from 1767 to 1800, 12;—in 14 years, from 1790 to 1803, 13. Now the price of standing oak timber for the two periods last mentioned, I have no definite means of calculating; nor perhaps would the calculation be of much use in a case where the enquiry respects only the difference between the present price, as compared with the price 20 or 25 years ago. But let us take the first period. As the price of wheat in 23 years, from 1767 to 1789, is 11, and the addition of 12 years more only increases this to 12, I am surely authorized in assuming it to have been 11 at the close of the period of 23 years. Now we have it in evidence, that in 1793-4 standing timber was purchased at from 50 shillings to 70 shillings. It seems presumable, however, that the price had not much varied between the years 1756 and 1791; for during that period (as we learn from the report of the Commissioners in 1792,) the price of timber delivered in the yards by square measure remained

constant; but, from 1791 to 1795, the price of timber delivered in the yards undoubtedly increased: and it may be inferred that the price of standing timber did the same. I think myself therefore moderate in assuming, that the average price of oak timber, in the 23 years from 1767 to 1789, was about 50 shillings per load, round measure. Now what it was in the 7 years from 1804 to 1810, I do not precisely know: but, if the price in 1812 was between 12 and 13 pounds, I might surely fix the average price during those 7 years at 10 pounds. I have, indeed, no doubt that it was at least as much; yet to exclude all possibility of cavil, I will call it 8 pounds, or 160 shillings. Therefore, from the period of 23 years, ending with 1789, to the period of 7 years, ending with 1810, the price had increased from 50 shillings to 160 shillings; that is, while wheat rose as from 11 to 20, timber rose as from 6½ to 20; or if you please, as from 11 to 35½; an increase prodigiously greater.

Possibly, Sir, it may be said that Mr. Arthur Young, who certainly had, in the work referred to, the particular object of discrediting the report of the Bullion Committee in 1810, wrote under a strong bias of mind, and was therefore led to diminish as much as possible the advancement in the average price of wheat. I know not that this charge could be brought against Mr. Young with the slightest justice; but concede it to be true, and the objector will not be relieved from his difficulty. For Mr. Young admits into his graduated table of prices various commodities besides wheat, and most of them turn out to support his conclusion very fairly; but it is remarkable that, when he comes to timber, he finds the advance of price here to be so greatly beyond his general scale, that he is obliged to abandon the article altogether, and, as a reason, to throw himself, in express terms, on that very scarcity for which I contend. I

will give you his own words (page 107) "There is nothing surprising in the great rise that has taken place in the price of all sorts of timber; while the quantity for the supply, especially of oak, has lessened so considerably the demand has increased; therefore no rise, however great, can render this article an exception to the principle already adduced." This quotation I submit to be quite conclusive.

But, if I am not justified, Sir, in adopting the price of wheat as my criterion, I should have no great objection to take my stand with my learned friend on the quartern loaf. He will not deny that it was a period of dearth when the quartern loaf rose to nearly four times its former price.—But timber has risen to nearly four times its former price.—Then, if I am to admit that the cases of bread and of timber are parallel, and if the quadruple price should not prove the scarcity of timber? However, I do not rely on this observation, though the case seemed to me fairly to admit of it. My real dependance is on the calculations and deductions which I have before submitted to the Committee on the price of wheat.

Sir, this fact of the progressive advance in the price of timber I would beg leave to place in close connexion with another fact, which has been elaborately brought forward by the petitioners against this bill, as affording a death-blow to the notion of scarcity. It is this, that an increased facility of communication with the inland counties by means of canals has of late years drawn into the market large supplies of oak-timber, previously in a great degree inaccessible.—Now these extraordinary supplies, be it observed, have not had the effect of lowering the price; and the fact of a scarcity becomes doubly glaring when the demand thus appears not only to

have risen out of all proportion to the supply, but to have so far outgrown it that even the intervention of hitherto unused helps cannot restore matters to a level. I have here assumed, I confess, that some little remission latterly in the price of timber has not arisen from any addition to the ordinary supply. I have assumed this for two plain reasons:—first, because that slight fall of price was not contemporaneous with the opening of the greater part of the new sources of supply, nor followed it soon; secondly, because, however these witnesses we have heard may vaunt their new sources of supply, the clear bearing of their whole evidence is, that there has recently been some abatement in the demand for timber, and that it is to this circumstance solely, and not to the augmented stock of the article, that the slight reduction in its market value is to be ascribed.

On this head, Sir, I will add no more. There is a second assertion or admission on the part of the witnesses,—I should rather call it a set of admissions,—to which I would request the attention of the Committee:—

Mr. William Driver states (in page 165) that "an oak-tree will never pay for standing after it is seventy or eighty years old," (which is the very earliest age that it can enter into any metings of large timber) unless indeed there should be subsequently a very considerable increase in the price. The exception I will beg to notice presently; but, in the mean time, let it stand thus, that, in the view of profit, or with reference to the accumulation of money at compound interest, no grower of timber will *ceteris paribus* let an oak of forty feet (round measure) grow till it becomes sixty. The same statement is, in substance, made or admitted by seven witnessess besides Mr. W. Driver; by Mr. James Alexander (page 159,) by Mr. John Morice (page 172,) by Mr.

Kershaw (page 195,) by Mr. A. Driver (page 218,) by Mr. Richardson (pages 244, 247,) by Mr. Preston (page 254) and by Mr. Castledine (page 300.) All fix the increase of profit on the standing oak during the latter stages of its growth at a point below what is universally known to be the rate of increase at compound interest.—On this undeniable fact, Sir, I have before enlarged, and will not fatigue the Committee by a renewed statement of the inferences to which it obviously leads.

But then comes the exception foisted in by about four of the witnesses, namely, that the grower of timber may after all be a gainer by letting his oak stand from the content of 40 to 60 feet, provided the general price of timber rises sufficiently during the interval of that growth.—The advanced price, it seems, may more than compensate for what would otherwise be the natural loss on the standing tree. The argument seems not a little curious; because a grower, who should on this principle keep his tree standing, must expect one of two things,—either he must expect that the price of timber shall rise equally with the prices of commodities in general, or he must expect that it shall rise in a greater degree than those prices. If he expect that timber will only share in a gradual rise of the general level of price, it is plain that he cannot dream of deriving any advantage from letting his tree remain in the ground. In that case, the enhancement in price would be purely nominal and the advantage a mere sound, whereas, should he cut down his tree and employ the price which it yielded in planting a new one, or in sowing wheat, he would have a commodity which, to the full benefit of the apparent advantage, would superadd a real progressive increase of value.—But, on the other hand, if the grower expects a *real* rise in the price of timber, a *real* dearness of the article, he then is, in fact, expecting that very case which we maintain to be

already realized;—the case of a demand for timber outrunning the supply; and the parties who, on the strength of this principle, infer that the growers, have in fact spared their growing trees, and that they have been reasonably and naturally led to do so, those parties, I say, do virtually allow that, under the circumstances of the country, it has been reasonable and natural to expect a progressive dearth of great timber. Thus they establish in the course of their argument the very position which that argument is intended to discredit, and make good their premises only by destroying their conclusion.

Without reference, however, to the inconsistency of these parties, I do believe it possible (and I think my cause so strong that I am not aware of a single concealment respecting it of which I should be guilty;) I do believe it possible that the expectation of a still rising market has really tended to spare our growing timber rather than otherwise. Yet I do not at all think that the effect of such an expectation has been considerable; I have no idea that it *could* be considerable; but one decisive reason why I do not think it has, is the proved fact that there has been a prodigious drain on our growing and middle sized timber.—In proportion to its naturally greater quantity, the middle sized has suffered at least as great a stress of consumption as the large, and the future resource has been cut off as fast as the present. There can be no stronger proof of this than the testimony given by more than one of the witnesses, who state the late demand for the smaller sized timber to have been so great, that some failure in the supply of foreign wood of that description has actually caused the large oak of this country to be cut down for the purposes of common carpentry.

With the admission, Sir, on which I have commented as to the advantage of cutting down growing timber, I would beg leave to associate others, made by the same body of witnesses, and tending to establish the same conclusions. That the soil

adapted for the growing of wheat is also that on which a plantation of oak will thrive, and that a good soil will not pay for being appropriated to such a purpose, are propositions distinctly in evidence. "Oak land" (says Mr. W. Driver in page 164) "is generally wheat land." The same judgment is given (in page 157) by Mr. Alexander: (in page 170) by Mr. Morice: and, with some little qualification, (in page 224) by Mr. Abraham Driver. Again Mr. Abraham Driver informs us (in page 228) that "land of 20s. an acre is too good for planting;" and his opinion is confirmed by Mr. Harvey (in page 320) who says that he "would not plant land worth more than 14s. an acre." The result seems to be that it is scarcely worth while to plant an oak on the only soil on which it will grow.

These connected acknowledgments and admissions, Sir, appear adequately to establish those general principles and presumptions which I ventured to lay before you on this subject. They sufficiently shew what inducement the planter of trees has to plant oak, and what inducement the grower of oak has to preserve his plants till they shall be fully grown. I will now proceed to notice the more direct allegations of the witnesses as to the question of scarcity or no scarcity.

My learned friend who summed up the evidence on the other side completely gave up two of his witnesses; Mr. William Driver, and Mr. John Morice. He gave them up for a very good reason: they have contradicted his case instead of supporting it. But, Sir, he attempts to discredit these witnesses; and, in the first place, because their statements do not exactly agree; the one saying that there will be an adequate supply of oak-timber for twenty-five years, and then a scarcity; the other, that there will be a scarcity for twenty-five years, and then an adequate supply.

I do not wonder that such a difference of opinion between these two persons should be laid hold of by those who find the testimony of both somewhat inconvenient. Nor is it necessarily my province to reconcile the variance. Yet I would suggest that, in such a case as this, the great question is rather respecting the averments of these gentlemen as to the past and present state of things than respecting their opinions as to the future. Whether a witness thinks an immediate or an eventual scarcity to be apprehended, partly depends on this other point, whether he thinks the greatest strain of consumption has been on the large or the middle sized timber. —Now, when the question is thus stated, it is evident that two witnesses may differ in their views of it without any very grievous contradiction; for they may agree that both species of timber have sustained a greater or less drain; and they may agree in their general inference, that, one way or the other, scarcity is to be apprehended in future.

But the chief weight of my learned friend's hand has fallen on Mr. Morice. Mr. Morice, is, it seems, a contractor. He is in the habit of contracting to furnish government with supplies of timber; and it is therefore his interest to propagate a belief of the scarcity of timber, in order that he may procure better terms from government when he makes his new contract. It is somewhere implied, if I mistake not, in the evidence, that of Mr. Morice has also another interest on the same side. The private ship-builders on the Thames are his great competitors in the purchase of large timber, and he is therefore interested in driving them from the market by removing the ship-building which employs them to India. Thus he has two distinct interests impelling him in the same direction; the one, as bound by a subsisting contract; the other, as a candidate for a future contract. But surely it may be perceived that these two interests are in a

sense convertible, and that they in fact balance and destroy each other. As a candidate for a future contract, it may be the interest of Mr. Morice to proclaim a scarcity of timber, that he may obtain better terms from government; but, as bound by a subsisting contract, it is his interest to proclaim an abundance of timber, that he may obtain better terms from the timber grower or the middle man. As bound by a subsisting contract, it may be the interest of Mr. Morice to remove the competition of the Thames ship-builders from himself in the purchase of timber, in order that the market may not be at their mercy; but, as a candidate for a future contract, it is his interest to admit that to competition, not against himself but against government, in order that the market may not beat the mercy of government. Thus, during his present contract, these two interests are opposed, and, when that contract expires, they mutually change sides, and are opposed still. It follows that the witness might be perfectly impartial, and such, I submit, is the impression that would naturally result from a perusal of his evidence. It is fair, clear, and intelligent; and, in the statement of facts, equally free from an eager disclosure, and an attempted concealment.

If, in defence of Mr. Driver and Mr. Morice, I were disposed to retaliate on some of the other witnesses called by my learned friends, I might be surely justified in using a greater severity of remark than it is my wish to indulge. The least apparently interested persons among them, were the very few that gave evidence as stewards of the proprietors of timber estates: and even these might be naturally influenced by a wish to magnify the extent and the products of the estates with which they are connected. Of the rest, the ship-builders, (who, to do them justice, gave their evidence the most fairly) have a confessed interest, and, according to their own views of this question, an interest of the most powerful

nature. But the interest of the timber-dealers is scarcely less strong. As purchasers of timber, they are interested in beating down the notion of a scarcity. As sellers of timber, indeed, their interests might incline the other way; but then, being closely and essentially connected, for so the evidence distinctly shews them to be, with the ship-builders on the river, they are deeply interested in preserving the building of Indiamen to their customers. They are, in fact, one and the same party.

Any particular instances of a bias on the minds of these witnesses I forbear to quote. At the same time, I observed so much of it in some of them, that I deem myself justified in glancing at the circumstance thus transiently, and in leaving it to the recollection of the Committee to verify or to negative my censure. I charge nothing worse than bias and prejudice; but these I *do* charge. The Committee will recollect by what painful examination some of the most important parts of this case were extracted; by examination, I confess, more skilful than any that I myself could have applied. And if, Sir, after all, we find that these witnesses assert the most peremptory conclusions on the loosest grounds; if we find them frittering away in the detail what they have boldly advanced in the mass; if we find that, where particular observation is required, a witness has formed a positive opinion of the timber on an estate by merely riding along a pleasure-ground, or beside a park-paling, although it is evident that the timber in such situations will ever be the last to fall; if we find that, where an ample knowledge is required of the demand and the supply of the country in general, men who confidently affirm that the one will always meet the other, are instantly afterwards compelled to acknowledge themselves totally unacquainted with both; if we find that, where much local discrimination is required, witnesses who deny a scarcity after-

wards paraphrase this denial by asserting a growing scarcity in the only counties which they know, and great plenty in counties of which they admit that they know nothing ;—then, certainly, we become distinctly aware with what abatements we must read the testimony of these gentlemen, however plausible, and however well intentioned.

I will not rest here, Sir ; I will shew that six out of the twelve timber-dealers or surveyors, called by my learned friends, actually established that fact of scarcity which they were summoned to disprove.

Great reliance has been placed on their consenting testimony to the fact, that there is in reality no scarcity of timber. Most of them certainly were not slow to make that averment ; and, without any necessary disparagement of their credit, the averment was worth little when made. Used in such a vague, unexplained manner, there can be no term more fallacious than that of scarcity. It is, as my learned friend* who assists me, justly observed during the examination, a *relative* word. It is an argumentative, a hypothetical word ;—it must necessarily proceed on some assumed data respecting the supply and the demand ; and the question is, whether those assumptions are just,—whether the data implied are known or merely imaginary ? Ask them what they know of the general supply. Ask them what they know of the general demand. Enquire whether within, their sphere of observation, the stock of navy timber has declined or not. Extract from them the mental reservations, with which they speak of scarcity or no scarcity. Insist on hearing the actual though unexpressed conditions with which they accompany the propositions that there will be no failure of supply. In some way of this kind only can you reduce their loose

* Mr. Spankie.

general assertions to a tangible form. Now, Sir, on the general effect of their testimony when thus tried, I have already said something. But let us see what we can ascertain of their notions respecting scarcity. I will cite their very words.

Mr. Abraham Driver. Question.—“ Will timber of that age (from 40 to 50 years growth) come into use during the next ten years, in the same proportion as the same description of timber has been cut in the last ten years ?” Answer. “ I think in the last ten years there has been an extraordinary fall of timber, and I am not sure that it will.” Page 217.

Mr. Richardson, who speaks only of the home counties, says, (p. 244) “ there is now a great deal of young timber that, at a future period, will be fit for the supply.” Q. “ When will that young timber become large ?” A. “ In twenty or five and twenty years.” Q. “ And, during the interval before it comes into use, there will continue to be a decline of large timber in those counties ?” A. “ Of large timber certainly.” This, it will be perceived, is the very same opinion that has drawn on Mr. Morice the pointed, but surely, ineffectual severity of my learned friend.

Mr. Preston, who also speaks of the home counties, having no personal knowledge of the rest, and roundly asserts that there is no scarcity at all, existing or to be apprehended, is asked, “ Do you think the quantity which will come into use during the next twenty or five and twenty years will be adequate to supply the place of that which has been taken for the last fifteen years ?” A. “ Not in those counties, perhaps ; not so soon as five and twenty years.”

Mr. Read. Q. “ I understand you to be of opinion, then, that, in consequence of the great demand for large timber, the

quantity of large timber in those counties you have mentioned has diminished of late years?" A. "As it has in every other place; seventy-fours have been built in great numbers."

Q. Then, supposing the demand to continue for six years to come at the same rate that it has been for six years past, you conceive that the decline in the quantity of large timber would go on?" A. "I think if they were to continue building seventy-fours for the next six years as they have for the last six years, the large timber would decline." Page 308.

Now, Sir, add the four witnesses I have named to Mr. William Driver and Mr. Morice, whom my learned friend openly disavows, and then we actually have, as I said, six of these persons concerned in the supply or survey of timber, out of twelve, most fully, though not without great reluctance, admitting that the present supply of this country is not equal to that amount of consumption which it has of late years sustained.

But we are resolved on going further; and on meeting some of the assertions that have been made in evidence, with a positive and a complete contradiction. I will not now detail the particulars of the opposite evidence which we shall adduce on this subject; but it may be well to state, as a specimen of the sort of contradiction to which I allude, that, in the parishes of Bucklebury and Donnington, where Mr. Major Bull talks of from sixteen to eighteen thousand loads of ship-building timber, we shall prove the number, from an actual survey, to be barely fourteen hundred and eighteen loads.* In the same manner, the timber in Marlborough forest, which Mr. Bull stated at thirty or forty thousand loads, we shall most satisfactorily reduce to a quantity less than three thousand loads. Sir, it cannot be supposed that the parties whom I represent can have had

* See comparison of evidence of Mr. Major Bull opposed by that of Mr. Henry Fermor in P. Appendix.

the means of making any thing like a general survey of the whole timber in the kingdom; yet, what we shall establish from actual survey will, I trust, be considered as most decisive. It will not only completely overthrow the vague, conjectural estimates brought before the committee (I do not doubt, with great reliance on their truth) by Mr. Bull; but, by the shock it gives to the authority of this gentleman, who, it will be remembered, was one of the principal witnesses on the other side, and whose testimony was referred to with peculiar emphasis by Mr. Adolphus, will serve to illustrate the facility with which biassed minds may indulge in the most extravagant and fallacious conjectures, under the name of calculations; and the vast uncertainty of the grounds on which the case of the petitioners against this bill has been so confidently erected. Then, when you further take into the account all the general reasonings, or unwilling admissions, which, even unassisted by positive contradiction, seem thoroughly to impeach the evidence that has been adduced on the topic under consideration, you will have a complete view of one part of our case; and, I cannot doubt, will be satisfied that the alleged danger of an increasing scarcity of British oak timber is not founded in idle alarm or interested clamour.

Perhaps, before I wholly quit this head of observation, I ought to notice some ingenious calculations—so they have justly been styled—given to the committee by the younger Mr. Alexander. The apparent object of those calculations was to shew, that all other calculations, representing the planting and preservation of timber as a speculation of very doubtful advantage, are founded in utter fallacy. And thus far my learned friend appears to agree with his witness; for he designated all such computations of distant profit and loss as fopperies, amusing to boys, but incapable of practical application. After this, however, I was not a little surprised that my learned friend should enter on a vindication of this

same calculation of young Mr. Alexander. I say. I was much surprised, after hearing the calculations of Dr. Price ridiculed, as fopperies fit only for the entertainment of a school-boy, to hear the calculations of a youth of nineteen extolled for their accuracy and importance.

Mr. Adolphus. I did not state such calculations to be fopperies as calculations, but in their application to use.

Mr. Grant. I understood my learned friend in that sense; and have mis-stated both his meaning and my own, if I conveyed any other impression.

Mr. Adolphus. In referring to the problems of Dr. Price, I admitted the calculation of what a farthing would produce at compound interest to be true on paper, but asserted it to be false in life, because incapable of being acted upon.

Mr. Grant. This, however, was made a ground of argument with respect to the calculations on the profit or loss of planting or growing timber.

Mr. Adolphus. I was shewing the absurdity of reasoning purely from computations of the increase of money at compound interest, and referred to a strong illustration of it.

Mr. Grant. Sir, I am content to wave the point altogether; suffice it to observe, that one witness after another, called by the very same parties who called Mr. Alexander, and witnesses of far greater age and experience, have flatly negatived the results produced by the ingenious calculations of that young gentleman; and all that is said by books of the greatest authority, flatly negatives them also.

The question respecting timber, as applied to our present discussions, is two-fold—Is there a scarcity? Is this the remedy? That there is a scarcity, I have already attempted to shew; it now remains to be shewn both from the evidence on the minutes, and from that which will be adduced on our side, that the use of India built shipping will act as a valuable remedy:—The evil has been considered; we must now consider the proposed cure.

It appears to me, I confess, that an infinite deal of confusion has been introduced into the discussion of this subject, not here, but elsewhere, for want of a due understanding with regard to the nature of the remedy required. There seems to be a sort of oscillation of mind between the notions of diminishing the consumption of timber by using little, and encouraging the production of it by using much. Men appear not to have settled on which of these plans they would have us proceed, whether on that of husbanding the stock on hand, or of promoting the growth of a fresh stock. This sort of confused reference to two opposite remedies is not confined to the present subject. Instances of it seem frequently to occur; as in the act of the 27th, Eliz. C. 11. S. 4. which enjoins the observance of fast-days (or, as they are called, fish-days) for the utterance and expense of fish, and for the sparing of flesh; plainly meaning at one and the same time to encourage the one species of commodity by expending it, and the other by sparing it.

If, in the case before us, I might, without presumption, attempt to disentangle this perplexity, I should say, What is the nature of the evil complained of? One part of it is, that the full sized timber is expended too fast, and thus the immediate succession, the succession which would otherwise diffuse itself over the few years immediately to come, too rapidly dimi-

nished. Another member of the same evil is an excessive expenditure of the middle sized and growing timber, and a consequent diminution of the prospective succession,—of the succession following next after that which I have called the immediate. Then there is a third branch of the evil, that too little oak is planted, and thus the eventual succession materially endangered. Now, in applying a remedy to this complicated evil, the danger, I would submit, is, lest, in remedying one part of it, we foment another. Supposing, for example, we chuse to economize the use of large timber, so far, undoubtedly, we assist what I have called the immediate succession, by making the stock in hand go further, but, unluckily, we in the same degree strengthen the stimulus (already too powerful) which impels the grower to cut down his middle sized timber, and thus in effect we assist the immediate succession, at the expense of that which is in prospect. —Supposing again that we spare the use both of the large and middle sized timber, it is evident that, in the same ratio, we diminish the value of the oak through the whole of its life; consequently, the discouragements to planting are, if any thing, still further augmented, and the hopes of an ulterior or eventual succession of timber proportionably sacrificed.

I would beg to illustrate these observations, by referring to the remedies which, on the supposition of a real scarcity of timber, my learned friend Mr. Harrison recommends in preference to this bill. He suggests that the law should forbid timber, fit for naval purposes, from being used for any other purposes.—He also describes the substitution, which has taken place in many instances, of iron, or of wood of inferior sizes pieced together, for the large compass timber, as having already economized very advantageously the national stock of oak.—These expedients seem generally open to the objection that they save the large timber already on hand at

the expense of that which is next coming forward. Even so far as they simply spare the consumption of navy timber, they make the production of such timber less an object than before, and therefore supply the owner of a growing tree with a fresh incentive to cut it down before it attains its full size.—But, as far as they spare the large timber by a direct substitution of the smaller, they doubly produce the same effect; they increase the motives to fell the growing tree, not only relatively, but absolutely; there is not only less inducement to let it stand, but a new positive inducement to cut it down. In each way, therefore, they more or less favour the immediate succession of large timber by diminishing the future resource. If, indeed, the use of any of these substitutes should become permanent (though, employed as they have been from pure necessity, they can hardly be considered as improvements in themselves) then, no doubt, the demand for large and crooked timber would to a certain extent be permanently diminished; but in the same degree, the drain on our middle sized timber must be permanently increased, and the demand for large timber, though diminished, might thus be as hard to meet as before.

Hence we may perhaps infer, what must be the nature of the remedies most eligible in the present evil. I am indeed sensible that I perhaps state the matter a little too theoretically; but speculation, even when too theoretical, may not be useless in affording a general idea of the practice to be pursued. The evil, as I have said, is threefold; the waste of large timber, the waste of growing timber, and the want of planting. In strictness, the remedy should be threefold also; but, as to planting, I think we may leave that out of the question. In the first place, the inducement to plant is already so small, that some little further discouragement by abridging the general demand for timber, will hardly be felt. But in

the second place, our great reliance as to planting, must be placed, as I before ventured to say, on the royal forests, managed as they now are in an improved manner; and the only difficulty is to provide for the interval between the present time and the arrival of the new plantations to a size fit for naval use.

Our objects then must be, the immediate succession of timber, and a succession in prospect beyond. Whatever remedy we adopt must have this double aim. It must save the stock on hand, or that which must serve for the few next years, and it must save the stock which will next succeed; it must save both descriptions of timber, in a nearly equal degree; it must not protect the one at the expense of the other; it must leave the balance nearly where it is. I have said *nearly*, for, if any thing, an advantage should be given to the middle-sized timber. This should certainly be spared not less than the large, and perhaps, more. It should be spared as much, at any rate; and, then, the sparing of the large will tend, as I have shewn, to encrease the stress on this, so that there must be some additional saving, of this, in order to meet the increased stress, and to preserve the proportion of consumption still unimpaired.

In adopting, however, an efficient individual remedy, it is not, perhaps, necessary to adjust this balance to a nicety; because, if we can but apply a strong power to the whole of the evil—if we can get a grand *purchase* over it,—we can afterwards so dispose of our smaller weights and powers, as to direct the principal pressure of the machine wherever we wish. But it does appear to me that the introduction of India-built shipping will naturally meet the evil in the way that I have mentioned, and this I will endeavour to shew.

Suppose the whole building for the India trade of this country to be transferred to India. And let us see what species of our oak timber will be spared.

The average tonnage employed by the India Company, taking both the regular and the extra shipping, I reckon at 950 tons to each vessel. This is the result of several calculations, with the detail of which it cannot be necessary to trouble the Committee; but which any person may verify by calculating for himself. Now a vessel of 950 tons, I apprehend, exactly gives us the medium between the smaller and the larger scantling of ship-building timber. The removal of ship-building of this rate, will about equally spare our timber, both of the large and the middle size; both that which is fit for building ships of 1200 or 1400 tons, and that which is used in constructing 650, 750, and 800 ton vessels, and which would become navy timber in a few years, if it were permitted to stand.

I believe that I may go one step further, and say, that the introduction of India-built vessels will not only spare both the growing and the large timber, but will, on the whole, spare the growing *rather* than the large. And this it ought to do, in order to fulfil, individually and by itself, the conditions of a perfect remedy.

Sir, the reasons which induce me *so* to think, (and I shall have occasion to mention them hereafter,) are these:—

What arrangements the India Company may chuse to adopt, with regard to the building of their ships, in the event of this bill becoming a law, I am ignorant. But the matter is open to conjecture; and I, for one, cannot help conjecturing that, in the event supposed, the building of the Company's large ships would not entirely, perhaps not in any

very great degree, be transferred from the Thames to the ports of the East Indies. That conjecture rests on the following grounds: First, the very motives which the most strongly impel the Indo-British merchant, residing in India and trading to Europe, to build his ship in India, must rather lead the Company to build in England. The adventure of the Company commences on the Thames, and it is always natural to procure the ship at the commencing point of the trade. Such an arrangement is founded in commercial convenience, and in the connexion which almost of course takes place between the merchant and the ship-builder. These reasons, in some degree, I may assume, apply to the Company, and these would incline them, other things being equal, to take up a ship from a builder on the spot, rather than from a person who resides at such a distance scarcely to be on the surface of the same hemisphere.

I may mention, secondly, as an argument which, whether just or not, the parties opposite can scarcely resist, that the repairs of the Company's ships, even if those ships be India-built, will, by their present system, take place rather in England than in India. In England, in effect, the voyage not only commences, but terminates; and here, therefore, during the intervals which divide the different voyages of the ship, she undergoes her chief repairs. But some of the witnesses have told us that a ship-owner will always, if possible, have his ship repaired where she was built. If so, he will rather have her built where he means that she shall be repaired. Let it be remembered that I state this as an argument merely *ad hominem*; but, in that view, I have surely a right to contend that the convenience of repairing their ships in England will, in some degree, operate on the Company, as an additional inducement to take up a ship built in England, rather than in India.

Thirdly, one great advantage of the leak-built vessel—her cheapness—is partly lost on the Company. The ship, indeed, goes far to clear herself by her first passage from India to England; but it has appeared with tolerable distinctness in evidence, that this is an advantage, not so much to the Company as to the ship-owner in India. Then, as to her subsequent life, the advantage consists in her durability. But this advantage is little or none to the Company, while they persist in their present system of taking up their ships only for a given number of voyages, and such a body of men are scarcely likely to introduce a change into any material part of their commercial system.

On these grounds, but chiefly on the first, it seems to me a probable conjecture that, even in the event of the passing of this bill, the Company will build at least as much in England as in India; and that thus the bill will furnish a remedy for the scarcity of timber, exactly and immediately applicable to the disease, by sparing the growing timber still more than that of full growth.

Sir, what other remedies may be devised suitable to this evil, it is not my province to enquire. But I would submit it to the feeling and reason of every man, whether the system at present existing, can, on any possible ground, be justified, since that system meets the evil only by immense imports of timber from abroad. On the consistency with which such a system can be supported by the opposers of this bill, I may hereafter say more. But on no principle whatever can it be reckoned in itself an advantage, that our naval building should to so great a degree be placed at the mercy of foreign supplies. I certainly am not aware of any inconsistency, on my own part, when I say that: for I have yet to learn that British India is a foreign country. I here touch on this subject, however, in a somewhat different view.

The introduction of leak-built shipping, as proposed by this bill, has been resisted, on the plea that it would reduce our naval greatness to a dependence on foreign resources; and that the contraction of the market for our home-grown timber would discourage the production of that commodity. On the latter of these objections I have already said something; on the former I have hereafter to offer much: what I would here say is, that these objections, whatever is their force or their futility, may be totally, or in a great degree, obviated with respect to the present bill by substituting India-built shipping, not for ships built of British, but for those built (principally at least) of foreign timber. In that view, even allowing for argument's sake that there is something objectionable in this measure, yet it only takes the place of another measure still more liable to the same objections. The remedy, even if bad, is a substitute for a worse.*

I here close my observations respecting those positive grounds, whether of justice or policy, whether of occasional or perpetual obligation, on which I would mainly rest the cause of my clients. It is now incumbent on me to examine the objections by which that cause has been assailed, both here and elsewhere. Those objections I shall endeavour to obviate, partly by the help of the evidence already before you, and partly by anticipating that which will be adduced in the sequel.

The objections to which I refer may conveniently be classed under three different heads. First, that the proposed bill will effect the destruction of the ship-building establishments of this country; secondly, that it contravenes, though not of this country; yet the spirit, of the Navigation Acts; thirdly, that its operation will be most dangerous, in transferring a large portion of our maritime resources to a remote and, in

* Thus far was delivered on the 1st June; the subsequent part on the 3d June.

some views, a foreign country, subject to all the combined disadvantages of distance and unforeseen vicissitude.

In directing your attention, Sir, to the objection concerning our ship-building establishments, before I consider that which relates to the Navigation Acts, I may perhaps be thought to invert the natural order of discussion. It may be thought that the objection in point of *principle*, should have been made to precede that which is rather an objection as to the *practical effect* of the measure. I will therefore state why I have preferred the arrangement in question. My reason is simply this; that the ruin with which our ship-building establishments are said to be threatened by the measure under consideration, has not only been held up as itself constituting a substantive and leading ground of objection, but has been employed to aggravate and to shed a deeper shade (if I may so express it) over each of the other objections that I have mentioned. For example, it is possible that this bill might prove injurious to a part of the ship-building establishments of this country, without at all violating the spirit of the Navigation Acts, while, should it effect the absolute destruction of those establishments, it might more justly be open to that imputation. In the same manner, it is possible that the *partial* transfer of our maritime resources to a distant country shall be safe and expedient, while the total annihilation of those resources here, in order to revive them at a distance, may be open to much and serious exception. Hence, then, if I can in the first instance shew that the total ruin apprehended to our ship-building interests is perfectly visionary, I not only answer an objection of considerable effect in itself, but I take the sting out of all the other objections. I silence the one, and I disarm the others; and still there may be enough left in those others, to entitle them in their turn to a separate and individual hearing.

After treating of these three objections, I will presume to subjoin a few words respecting a fourth, the consideration of which perhaps scarcely belongs to the parties before the Committee—I allude to the allegation of the advantages which the revenues of this country derive in point of taxation from the building of ships at home; all which advantages, the objection implies, would be proportionably sacrificed by a transfer of that building entirely or in part to India. The learned Counsel who opened the case on the other side, fully admitting that this subject did not fall within our province, yet shortly commented on it; and I will attempt to touch it with equal brevity.

The first objection which I am to consider is, that the necessary consequence of this bill will be to subvert root and branch the ship building establishments, and the naval ship building itself, of this country. If I state the objection somewhat vaguely, it is because it has been vaguely stated to me. On what precise, definite, palpable, grounds it proceeds, I have in vain endeavoured to discover; I have never so perceived it that I could place it before me in a distinctly tangible, assailable form. I will, however, do my best to guess its meaning, with a view of giving it a clear refutation, or (if I may so speak,) will exert myself to compel this phantom to take some visible shape, that I may the more easily exercise and drive it away.

So far as I can conjecture, it is resolvable into these three parts.—The first is, that the loss of a regular market for our great timber will put a stop to the production of the article;—to the plantation of new trees, or, at least, to the preservation of those that are growing. The second is, that the building for the navy is materially and essentially dependent on the yards of the private ship-builders on the Thames, for assistance of various kinds, of all which it will be deprived by the

operation of this bill. The third is, that all this ruin will be followed by the emigration of our shipwrights, with the whole art and secret of which they are masters, to foreign shores, possibly to exert that art in eventual hostility against ourselves.

After the length at which I have already troubled the Committee on the subject of oak timber, they will, I am sure, give me credit for not intending to dilate on the first of the three heads of inquiry that I have named. It may suffice here to observe, that no man can seriously apprehend the evil denounced, who recollects that measures have been adopted, and are already in execution, for completely and finally delivering the public from a dependence on private supplies of navy timber. When those measures become fully mature and effective, it is evident that even a total disappearance of all the private timber in the country, however much to be lamented on other accounts, could form no feature in any question relating to our naval interests.

All that I shall further offer as to this first point, will consist in an appeal to the parties opposite on the consistency and harmony of reasoning, with which the objection in question is urged. They surely forget that, if the narrowing of the market for our large oak timber will discourage the planting and preserving of it, the importation of foreign timber, and especially such vast importations as have latterly taken place, by inevitably narrowing the market for domestic timber, must take a full share of the blame. And what, as I before asked, becomes of that pitying regard for the domestic timber-grower, when the witnesses, one after another, have told the Committee that we *do* rely on such foreign importation, that we *must* rely on it, and that the

more we encourage it the more we minister to the welfare of the ship building establishments of this country?

Sir Charles Monck.—Does it stand on the evidence that there has been a large importation of foreign oak timber?

Mr. Grant.—Certainly, Sir. There is not only a document (in page 392,) which fully establishes that fact; but there is oral evidence shewing that the navy is dependent on foreign importations to an extent far beyond the quantities immediately intended for naval purposes. For it appears from page 243 that any failure in the ordinary supply of foreign wood for the purposes of common carpentry, instantly occasions the conversion of large navy timber to those subordinate uses, and thus starves the navy of a part of its accustomed resource. Thus we doubly rely on foreign imports: we rely on them, first for preventing our naval timber from being exhausted in ship-building, and then for preventing it from being wasted on purposes far more ignoble.

In this view of the subject, Sir, it is curious to observe the latitude with which these persons appear to understand the term *Native Oak*.—Encourage, it is said, your native oak! Let all your policy center in nursing your native oak! What is this native oak that we are to encourage? Only read the evidence for an answer.—Memel fir! Riga fir! Dantzic fir! Dantzic deals! Memel deals! Narva deals! Christiana deals! Dantzic oak! Oak from Virginia! Oak from Dalmatia! Oak from Albania! Mahogany from the Brazils! To say nothing of the supplies from our own North American colonies.—It is really strange that men should be able gravely to amalgamate these facts with a strong deprecation of all reliance on foreign, or even distant,

aid, for the provision of our navy. Why, Sir, at the worst, might it not be better to draw the manufactured ship from a dependency of our own, than the raw material from twenty foreigners? But this is arguing with them, and in this place I do not intend to argue with them. I am only stopping to admire that consistent, that enlightened, that discriminating, patriotism, which, by *foreign* means *colonial*, and by *native* means *foreign*. I am stopping to admire that happy justness of reasoning and of feeling in whose apprehension every country under heaven appears to be British, except British India.

Sir, I will now proceed to that which is the more important part of this objection: I mean the effect which, as it is contended, this bill will produce on the building in the river Thames, and the consequent injury to the ship-building establishments for the public service. The argument has been stated, give me leave to say, with convenient indistinctness. So far as it is intelligible to me, it appears to branch itself into these three propositions: The well-being of the King's ship-building yards depends on the well-being of the private ship-building yards on the Thames: The well-being of the private yards on the Thames depends on their building for the trade with India: This bill will deprive those yards of the building for the trade with India. Thus, then, it is maintained, that the bill will remove that building to India; that the removal of that building will be the ruin of the private yards; and that the ruin of the private yards will draw after it the ruin of the King's yards, and, in effect, the annihilation of our naval means at home.

In examining these propositions, I will reverse their order, for the sake of avoiding repetition. I will first consider, whether there is really reason to believe that the yards of the

merchant-builders depend mainly, or indeed exclusively, on the building for the India trade; next I will consider, how far the probable effect of this bill will be to remove that building from the country; and lastly, how far the actual ruin of the merchant yards, supposing so calamitous an event to happen, would affect the royal establishments for ship-building and the general interests of our naval system.

Now, Sir, on the first point, I deny that the welfare of the private yards has so greatly depended on their building for the trade with India; and my first argument is, the other part of this very same proposition, namely, that the building for the King's service has mainly depended on the private yards. With respect to the past, certainly, this last statement is partly true. It is true that the private yards have built and repaired for the King's service. Such has been the system, whether a wise system or not: but, if so, it is impossible that those yards can have been mainly engaged in building for the India trade: they must have worked for the public, whom they pretend to have so greatly served. What was service on the one side must have been work and pay on the other. There must have been mutuality of advantage between the employers and the employed. In whatever degree the builders gave the public assistance, in that degree the public must have given them employment.

I intend not, Sir, to say, that these parties feel no interest in the building for the India trade, or that they would not regard the monopoly of that building as a valuable possession. That they would so consider it, I want no other proof than the zeal and earnestness with which they are maintaining their present cause; but that they regard that acquisition as important, is no proof that they do not greatly overrate and exaggerate its importance. Whether that is, in fact, the

case, it will be for the Committee to judge. I certainly assert it.

My second argument is derived from a document already before the House of Commons, and which I will briefly describe.

Something, Sir, has been said, respecting the effect of peace on the building in the River; and a witness was asked, whether, after the termination of the American war, the private yards exhibited such a scene of destitution and desolation as at present. If, indeed, the principal dependence of those yards has been on the India trade, they were not likely to exhibit such a picture of distress, on the pacification with America; for that pacification shortly succeeded the passing of the commutation-act, a measure which greatly increased the amount of the India Company's tonnage, and which was adopted at a time when they built almost exclusively on the Thames. If, indeed, we examine the return of the ships launched on the Thames for the India trade, (given in page 78 of the evidence) we shall perceive a sensible increase of building about the period to which I refer: particularly, let me direct you to the years 1786 and 1787, three and four years after the American peace. The number of Indiamen launched on the River, in those two years together, was 21, or considerably more than the average annual building, according to the parties opposite, even after every allowance for the increase of late years in the size of the ships. At the same time, the average size of these ships was greater than had before been employed: for during the ten years preceding, only one Indiaman had been launched, of so many as 900 tons, and she was only 919; whereas, in the two years I am speaking of, there were launched, one ship of 961 tons, one of 1021, and three of nearly 1200. Never, never, therefore, were the private yards

less likely to be destitute, than in those two years; provided always, it be true, that their chief dependence has been on the building of Indiamen.

If, then, Sir, I should produce evidence that, in the early part of the year 1787, and from the American peace down to that period, the private shipwrights were in a state of destitution not very different from their present state;—if that evidence should turn out to be, not matter of inference, or presumption, or loose hearsay, but a formal and solemn document, presented to one of the Houses of Parliament;—if that document should appear not to have been prepared and presented by third persons, but to contain the deliberate declarations of the very parties themselves, whose forlorn condition it describes;—surely, on these suppositions, I shall have made a very considerable way in negating, or, at least, reducing, the alleged dependence of the Thames yards on the building of Indiamen.

And yet, Sir, to such a document I would now beg to refer you. It is a petition presented to the House of Commons on the 23d April, 1787, and to be found on the Commons' Journal, vol. 42, p. 656. The petitioners were the shipwrights employed in the private yards of Great Britain; particularly those in and about the metropolis. They state, that, having been engaged in building for the navy during the war, they had been reduced to extreme difficulty since the privation of that branch of employment; that there seemed, at that time, to be almost a total stop put to ship-building; and that many hundreds of shipwrights, in and about the metropolis, were out of employment, and their families in great distress. This petition, it should be observed, proves my case, not only negatively, but positively. It tends to shew, that the chief reliance of the shipwrights was not on the India building, but

on the employment for the public service. It was the loss of this resource that occasioned their extreme wretchedness and that application for relief which their distresses provoked.

My third head of remarks, Sir, as to the alleged dependence of the private yards on the India building, shall be founded on the abstract account given in page 16 of the minutes of evidence,* a paper, of which much has been said in the course of this Enquiry; and on which, indeed, the greatest stress seems to be laid by our opponents, by whom it was produced.

That abstract professes to state the number of ships annually built in the yards on the Thames, first for the India trade, and then for other trades, during the twenty years from 1795 to 1814, both inclusive. It also divides these twenty years into two terms of ten each, and averages the annual building for the India trade, during the first term, and during the second. The view with which this paper is exhibited, I presume to be two-fold. First, it seems intended to shew, how large a proportion of the building on the river Thames has, in ordinary times, been for the trade with India: this is meant to be collected from the first ten years of the account, during which the building of Indiamen was brisk on the River. Secondly, it is apparently designed to shew the decrease which the average annual building of Indiamen on the Thames has undergone, since the introduction of Indian-built shipping into the trade between India and Europe. This is to be inferred from a comparison of the first period of ten years with the second. In the latter view, I have at present no concern with this account; my object, now, is only to consider how far it conveys a fair impression of the degree in which the building of the private yards has been for the India trade.

See Appendix, Abstract D.

And considering the account in this light, I object to it as giving an utterly fallacious idea of the whole subject. First, by totally omitting the building which may have taken place in the private yards for the king's service. If we resolve the building of those yards into three parts, the building for the India trade, for other trades, and for the king's service, it is manifest that no fair notion can be formed of the relative magnitude of any one of these branches, unless all the three be exhibited at the same time. By exhibiting only two, we may find the proportion which each of those two bears to the other, but certainly not that which either bears to the whole. For this reason, therefore, even if there were no other, I should hold that abstract to be nugatory.

But it must be still worse, if, not content with omitting all notice of one branch, it is so constructed as to afford a materially exaggerated view of another. Yet such, certainly, is the case. The average annual building of Indiamen in the Thames, during the first ten years, is undoubtedly given as furnishing a fair idea of what ought to have been the average annual building there at this moment, had it not been for India-built ships. Now there are several reasons for believing that the building of Indiamen during those first ten years was excessive; that is, that extraordinary circumstances, or circumstances not now existing, occasioned more building than would otherwise have taken place. Some of these reasons I shall take the liberty of stating.

I may be allowed, perhaps, to preface them with observing the uncertainty that must necessarily attend all conclusions drawn from averages of so few as ten years, in such a case as the present. Ten years do not amount to the length of a ship's natural life; and, when we consider that the whole number of ships to be kept up was only from 80 to 100, and

reflect on the variety and capricious nature of the casualties to which ships afloat are liable, we must surely see that the building for that number could not possibly find its level in so short a period. I mean to say, that an establishment of 100 ships might be kept up accurately for an indefinite time, and yet that, dividing that time into successive terms of ten years, the quantity of building from one term to another might vary immensely.

To shew how much uncertainty attends such averages, to shew how greatly a little variation of the premises may alter our conclusions, I will mention one or two calculations I have made out of the same sources as this extract, (namely, the account in page 78,) only changing the ten years taken. Suppose we choose the ten years ending with the year 1795. During those ten years, the building of Indiamen belonged almost exclusively to the Thames; and, therefore, if we are to believe the petitioners against the bill, the average building ought to have been seven ships a year. But, unfortunately, it happens that, during the whole of those ten years, only thirty-nine ships were built, which does not average quite four. Again, that there has latterly been a decrease of India building on the Thames, I admit; but, to shew how little reliance can be placed on that sort of graduated scale of declension which this abstract exhibits, suppose that, instead of stopping with the year 1814, or rather 1813, (for the current year, not being completed, ought never to have been included at all,) we take the ten years ending with the year 1811. During those ten years, forty ships were built, averaging *four* a year. And what now, if we were to compare these ten years ending at 1811, with the ten years I before took, ending at 1795? India ships were not admitted to registry during the term ending with 1795; they were so admitted during the term ending with 1811. Yet the number built in the former

term did not equal the number built in the latter, being as thirty-nine to forty. The quantity of tonnage was still more deficient; being as 29,585 to 37,713.

To illustrate further the uncertainty of such calculations, I may be permitted to mention, as part of my speech, (or, if necessary, I can, in some shape, enter it on the minutes,) a fact which I extract from an official paper, published by the Directors of the India Company.* Take the seven years from 1795 to 1801, both inclusive, and compare them with the seven years immediately contiguous, that is, from 1802 to 1808, and it appears that, in the former of these periods of seven years, the number of ships worn out in the company's service was 62, and their tonnage 50,823; while, in the latter period of seven years, the ships worn out were only 25, and their tonnage only 29,649. Of course, the necessity of building, other things being equal, must have been much greater in the former period than in the latter.

I do not state these averages, Sir, as meaning to rely on them. I neither rely on them, nor think they can be relied on. It is for that very reason I give them. I think them unfair, and it is therefore that I detail them; it is in order to prove (I might almost say *ex absurdo*) the fallacy of such averages in the present case; in order to shew that, by shuffling about these short periods, we may obtain the most varying results; and that though, by choosing our periods well, a fortunate exhibition of gradual decline may be made, yet nothing can be more loose or unsatisfactory than the inferences drawn from such premises.

I will now attempt to satisfy the Committee, that, the building of Indiamen during the first ten years in this abstract, was excessive; by which I mean, that either from ac-

* See the official paper already on the Minutes, page 80.

cidental or temporary causes, more ships were built in that time than could be considered as the *natural* number; more, therefore, than could justly be made a measure of *expectation* of employment, on the part of the Thames builders. If *other* causes afterwards arose to make the whole building for the India Company as great in the second period of ten years as in the first, (and I will decidedly prove in the sequel that they did not) or if causes should arise hereafter to increase the building for the Company, still those subsequent causes could not be calculated on in averaging the building of the first period; and, looking to that period alone, a few words will make it plain that the average building which then took place ought to have been regarded as too great to furnish a fair standard.

For, first, during a part of this former period, that is, till the year 1796, a shipping system prevailed at the India House, which was about that year abandoned. This is clearly stated in the evidence before the Committee. According to the old system, the ships of the Company were taken up only for *four* voyages; on the change of system, the number was altered to six: but, the fewer voyages each ship goes, the more ships will be required to carry on a given amount of trade. By the new system, two ships perform twelve voyages; whereas, the old system would have required three. Hence it is plain that, under the old system, the tonnage kept afloat by the Company, and consequently the building to maintain that tonnage, was greater than necessary.

That tonnage was too great for another reason; by the old system, the ship owners, who furnished the Company with shipping, had what was called a perpetuity of bottom; that is, when an Indiaman was lost or worn out, the owner was entitled to lay down the keel of a new Indiaman in her room.

Mr. Morice, clerk to the Company's Committee of shipping, was questioned as to this point. He distinctly described the practice, and admitted its tendency to swell the Company's tonnage unnecessarily; but, on his re-examination, he said that, though the owner of a lost or worn-out ship had the first refusal of building a new one on her bottom, the new one was not in fact built till the Company required it. I have no doubt that this was the case; but I am equally confident that, from the influence which, under such a system, the ship-owners could not fail to command at the India-House, they never applied for the necessary permission in vain; and, in order to set this matter beyond controversy, suffer me to refer the Committee to a document long since before the House of Commons: it is a written statement presented to the Committee of Secrecy on the state of the India Company in 1773, by Mr. Snodgrass, the able and intelligent surveyor of the Company's shipping. The statement in question makes No. 5 of the Appendix to the Fifth Report of that Committee. The passage to which I beg your attention, is one in which Mr. Snodgrass distinctly asserts, "First, that from the great number, opulence, and various interests, of the owners of shipping, due œconomy is prevented, and they, by those means, are not only enabled to obtain high freight, but are not subject to the necessary controul.—Second, *The admission and employment of many more ships in the service than are needful for the trade.*" And he proceeds to state, that, whereas the actual tonnage then in the Company's service was not less than 63,000 tons, the number really required was no more than 35,000.

Now this system lasted till within the first period taken in the abstract under consideration.—It could not fail to affect the building in that period.—When it was abolished, the building could not fail to undergo a reduction.—And the

Thames builders could not fail to know all this; in fact, they knew it well. It is, therefore, quite unfair now to quote the average building during the period in question, as a just measure of their expectations at the time, and their disappointment in the sequel.

I may add, as another circumstance which swells the quantity of building during the period taken, what Mr. Morice of the India House tells us, (in page 332;) that in the year 1796 the Company disposed of six or seven of their large ships to government: this alone would account for a year's building, according to the pretended annual average of seven ships.

So much only shall I now say on the abstract which has been brought forward with such confidence.—I shall again have to notice it on another subject.—At present, my argument is that, considered as affording a view of the quantity of reliance which the Thames builders might *naturally* and *reasonably* have placed during the last ten years on building for the India trade, it is most unfair and deceptive. The average building for that trade which this abstract exhibits, was greater than those persons had a right to calculate upon; and, even if it had not been so, the abstract does not enable us to judge what proportion the employment furnished them by the India building might be computed to bear to their whole employment, for it leaves out of sight the building for the navy. Totally omitting one main branch of their employment, and giving a greatly magnified view of another—it must be set aside as a guide of no authority whatever.

I now proceed, Sir, to a fourth head of observation

respecting the importance of the India building to the private yards on the Thames.

Accounts have been laid before the Committee, stating the number of workmen employed in the principal yards on the four pay-days in each year since 1804. It has, however, been objected that this document furnishes no accurate idea of the quantity of work done in those yards, because a number of men might have been employed and paid off *between* pay-days, in which case they would not appear on the face of the accounts; besides, the employment of repairing is in its nature desultory, and, so far therefore as the hands are employed in repairs, their numbers may vary prodigiously from month to month. Whatever justice there may be, Sir, in this objection, there surely can be no doubt that, averaged from year to year, the number of the men must give some rough notion of the quantity of employment, and this is in fact acknowledged by one of the witnesses in page 428.

Now, Sir, from these accounts, and from accounts that have been given in, stating the number of ships built and repaired in the principal yards respectively, we have prepared two abstracts, which we shall ask leave to enter on your minutes. By those abstracts it will appear that, taking the two yards which have confessedly built the most for the Indian trade, I mean Messrs. Wigram and Co. and Messrs. Brent and Co., the number of workmen employed by them does not at all vary with their building for the India trade. On the contrary, the average number of workmen in Messrs. Wigram's yard being 546, we find 738 employed in the year 1813, when they launched but one Indiaman. In the same way, the average number employed by Messrs. Brent and Co.

* See Minutes of Evidence, page 64—and Abstract W. in the Appendix.

being 392, we find in 1809 no fewer than 582; which not only greatly exceeds the average, but exceeds the number in any other year, and this though in 1809 they had not a single Indiaman building.

In connexion with this remark, I would offer another on the same subject, the number of workmen.—The average number of Indiamen built annually in former times, is pretended to have been seven.—Now it stands on evidence that the number of shipwrights on the river, mainly dependent as this body of men is represented to be on the building of Indiamen, is about 4,000 or 4,500.—Again it stands on evidence that the number of shipwrights employed in building a 1,200 ton ship is about thirty. Therefore, if we suppose that all the seven ships built in a year are of that size, and further that each costs a year in building, we shall have 210 shipwrights perpetually employed in building Indiamen.—That is; out of 4,000 persons *said* to be dependent on the India building, only 210 are actually employed in that occupation.

Sir, this is the result of a rough calculation; but I have ascertained it, by a much more minute process, to be a very near approximation to the truth.—It is founded, however, on this false assumption, that the building of Indiamen on the river ought to average seven a year.

If we take 20 years from 1785 to 1804, both inclusive, we shall find the annual average is only 6.—And if we reckon, which was in fact the case, the whole number built to have been 123, and the tons 121,755, and, in order to build this number, if we allow 14 months to the completion of a 1,200 ton vessel, it will appear by a calculation, exact, I believe, but which I should despair of rendering intelligible through the medium of an oral statement, that 178 ship-

wrights would be constantly kept employed.* The assertions, sir, which I am opposing, really become ludicrous—178 is the utmost number.—That is, of 4,000 shipwrights on the river, not a twenty-second part are engaged in the building for the India trade, and then we are gravely assured that the building for the India trade is the grand resource of the whole 4,000.

With regard to the artificers, other than shipwrights, employed in forwarding the construction and completion of the ship, it is scarcely necessary, in a national view of this subject, to say a single syllable.—It never can be pretended—I believe it never has been pretended, that these trades form any thing like a turning point as to the present question.—It never will be said that, whatever becomes of the India building, any number of these that may be wanted for the public service, will not always be procured at the shortest notice. It never will be dreamed that these persons must find a resource in the India building or must starve. However, if we are to compute these also, recollect that they do not exceed the number of regular shipwrights employed in building a ship, and consequently that these too amount but to 178.

Nothing then can be more preposterous than to pretend that the removal of the India building can occasion ruin among the shipwrights on the river.—I say of the *building*; as to the *repairing*, I know not that I am in strictness bound to speak.—The case on the other side stands mainly on the building, not on the repairs; the repairs have been introduced

*Twenty years is 240 months, which divided by 14 is $\frac{120}{7}$ or $17\frac{1}{7}$. Then 121,755 divided by $17\frac{1}{7}$ gives for the average quantity of tons constantly building 7,103 nearly; which, at the rate of 30 shipwrights to 1,200 tons, makes the number of shipwrights in constant employ about 178.

only cursorily. My learned friend said nothing of them;—the *abstract* which has entered so much into consideration, says nothing of them;—the argument which that abstract implies, and which my learned friends enforced, refers to the building, and to the building exclusively.—The whole case on the other side is, that the *building* of large Indiamen is necessary to the maintenance of the establishments on the Thames,—and, in meeting that case, the main pillar of which is the building, we surely contend against it most decisively, when we shew that, from this building, the trade have derived a comparatively trifling proportion of their employment.

I am disposed, however, to say as much on this subject as the information before us will allow.—Sir, there has not been given to the Committee, nor have we been able to extract, in cross-examination, any thing like a complete and satisfactory account of the proportion, between repairing and building, in point of employment.

Sir Charles Monck.—I think it stands on the minutes.

Mr. Smith.—Some of the witnesses have spoken to the point.

Mr. Grant.—Some of the witnesses have spoken to it, certainly.

Sir Charles Monck.—I understood you to say, that it neither appeared in the examination in chief, nor had you been able to extract it in cross-examination.

Mr. Grant.—I was going to explain that, though it had been mentioned in some of the examinations, yet there had been given nothing like such a definite, complete, general ac-

count of the quantity of repairing on the river, and especially during the ten years which the parties opposite have chosen for their standard, as to make it possible to strike a general average of the proportion between the building and the repairing. One witness (in page 374) states that, in a particular yard, the amount of the repairing has been much greater than that of the building; but he confines that statement to the last few years. Two others (in pages 363 and 249) speak doubtfully; but only one even of these, it will be observed, (Mr. Jordan, in page 429) speaks of the repairing of Indiamen in particular: so far as could be judged, from his evidence, the repairs, on a given establishment of Indiamen, would be about equal to the building, or rather more.—That they would be decidedly or considerably more, there is, I am confident, nothing in the evidence to make us believe; and, if there were, I know not that the question would be materially affected, for, so far as the India Company are concerned, even should the Thames ships be superseded by India-built ships, it is probable that *some* quantity of repairs will always take place on the river. It is true that the India-built vessel wants few repairs, but she cannot do absolutely without them; and, if she belongs to the Company, I have before shewn it to be likely that she will undergo her repairs in this country.

However, Sir, I will assume, for the sake of argument, that the whole of the building and repairing on the river, for the India trade, will be annihilated by this bill: supposing, then, the repairing to employ, on an average, an equal number of hands with the building, the whole number of shipwrights thrown out of employ would only amount to 356 out of 4000—let us call them, to avoid cavil, 400; and still you have only one-tenth part of them affected by a bill, which (it is pretended) will occasion the destruction of them all.

The argument would scarcely be weaker to any practical purpose, if, instead of taking the four thousand men employed in the river generally, we were to select the average number employed in the seven yards in which the Indiamen have usually been built. Leave out the present year, and the two preceding years, as years of comparatively slack work, and take the five years before; during those five years, as may be collected from the evidence (page 399), the shipwrights employed in the seven yards average at 1145 per annum, which is more than three times as great as 356, the whole number that could be employed in the work of building and repairing Indiamen.

So much, Sir, for the argument drawn from the number of hands. As a fifth head of remark on this subject, I will direct you to an abstract we shall lay on the table of the Committee, made up from several accounts already on the minutes, and stating the number of ships and tons built on the Thames, from 1794 to 1813, both inclusive, for the East India Company, and for Government respectively, by Messrs. Wigram, Barnard, Brent, Pitcher, and Dudman.*

I should first mention, Sir, that, out of exactly ninety-eight ships launched on the Thames for the Company since 1794, the gentlemen whom I have named have built no fewer than ninety-five. We have no account stating by whom the remaining three were built; though, from the oral evidence, they appear to have been built by Mr. Mestaer. Those three we should have included in this comparative abstract, had the documents enabled us to do so. But the omission of three can make no sensible difference.

The first remark resulting from this statement is, that, of

* See Minutes of Evidence, page 639, and Abstract V, in Appendix.

all the persons who are deprecating before this Committee the loss of the building of Indiamen, (page 343,) but a small minority have had any concern in that building at all. No fewer than *twenty-two* yards are here complaining of the decline of the Thames building, in consequence of the admission of India-built ships; and it now appears that *sixteen* out of the twenty-two have no connexion with the question whatsoever.

But next observe, that even the few who alone have built Indiamen, have built much more for Government. The abstract which we shall submit to the Committee will shew that, during these twenty years, there were built in the five yards it comprizes,

For the Company, 95 ships, measuring 97,789 tons.

For Government, 167 ships, measuring 119,415 tons.

Or, take the yards of Messrs. Wigram and Co. which have built nearly as much for the Company as all the other yards put together; and even of these we shall find that they built, within the time under consideration,

For the Company, 42 ships and 44,018 tons.

For Government, 55 ships and 45,644 tons.

Surely, Sir, in a question where the *building* for the trade with India has been held up as the main, and almost the only point—where it is avowedly contended, that nothing but that building will answer the purpose of the parties complaining—and where the decrease of that building has been brought forward as itself a most serious independent evil, quite clear of all notion of repairs—it must be no mean argument on the other side to shew that, out of twenty-two yards, only six have been employed in building at all—that, even of these, only three or four have built to any extent—and that even those three or four have built a decidedly greater amount of tonnage for the King's service than for that of the Company.

But, having (as I trust) completely got rid of the subject of building, I, perhaps, should do well to say something of repairing; and here, as I have before said, the information is so loose and imperfect that nothing like a satisfactory conclusion can be drawn.

I certainly believe that these yards have repaired more for the Company than for the navy; and, let it be remembered, a part of the repairing for the Company will at all events remain: but I am not able to form a precise comparison between the two. There is, indeed, a document on your minutes, on which if any reliance is to be placed, the repairs of ships of war in the private yards must have been very considerable. I allude to the account given in page 257 of the evidence of the expense incurred for repairing ships of war in the private yards on the Thames in 1805; and the aggregate amounts to the enormous sum of 446,893*l.* 15*s.* 8*d.* Now, Sir, with whatever view that account was presented to the Committee, I have a right to use it in this manner. If it be meant to illustrate the assistance rendered by the private yards to Government, I say, as I did before, that, as serviceable as they have been to Government, so serviceable must Government have been to them; and then the document helps to prove the importance of the Government employment to these parties, who are nearly silent respecting the Government employment, and profess to rely almost solely on the trade with India. I certainly do these parties no very great injustice, Sir, when I assume that, in taking the year 1805, they have selected such a year as may afford a fair view of the assistance which they have *ordinarily* given to the public service. If they have acted thus fairly, then the inference is good, that the public service does employ them to a very great extent in the way of repairs. If they have not so acted, then it is fitting that the views, whatever they

were, with which the account was exhibited, should be disappointed.

These, Sir, are generally the grounds on which I venture to contend that the degree in which the merchants' yards have been accustomed to rely on the employment of the India Company has been greatly exaggerated. I have spoken chiefly of building, because it is that of which they have spoken almost solely;—because I understand them to declare, that it is the building, not the repairing, which has kept up the establishments. (See Minutes, pages 367, 377.) But I have said enough, I trust, of repairing, to shew that, even including this, the exaggeration has been monstrous. I know it has been argued that, whatever other employment these yards may have had, the building of Indiamen has been their only stated, steady employment. All the rest has been fluctuating, capricious, and liable to interruption. To those who glance at the list of Indiamen launched on the Thames, who perceive a year in which not one was launched, followed by two years in which, taken together, but three were launched, and instantly after these a year in which the number launched was *seventeen*, it may not seem very comprehensible how such an employment can be considered as steady or uniform. But I care not if it has been steady or not. I deny that, on an average, it has been sufficiently large to have the importance assigned to it. I deny that any steadiness of employment given to 178 shipwrights, out of three or four thousand that work on the river, can be, in a national view, of the slightest possible moment. And I submit, that there can be no validity in any inferences built on premises so exaggerated.

I do not mean to affirm, Sir, that in time of peace the building for the India trade may not be of greater value to the private yards than in time of war. But, even then, it never

can bear any proportion to that quantity of employment which, according to the representations of the parties themselves, is necessary to maintain their establishments. They say, "We must have this quantity of building, or we cannot preserve our efficiency." I answer, "If we give you all the building for the India Company's trade, still, according to the present size of your establishments, it will not keep you in a state of efficiency." With respect to the argument of humanity, I will venture, hereafter, to say something. We are now contesting the ground of national advantage.

I must add, Sir, in further abatement of this argument respecting peace, indifferent as it is, that, other things being equal, the India Company are, on the whole, likely to build rather less in time of peace than in time of war. The building for many trades is abridged in war. The trades themselves are abridged by the capture of ships, or by exclusion from countries, before friendly, but now hostile; and, besides this, the introduction of prize-ships into the commerce of the country, operates to diminish the building of trading vessels. It is otherwise with the Company. There are, indeed, in their employ two ships captured from the Dutch, but these bear no proportion to the whole of their shipping. Then, as to the quantity of their shipping, it is not less in war than in peace, and thus far the building maintains its level. But, in addition to this, though their trade is the same, that is no reason why their ships are not subject to capture; and, if captured, their place is probably supplied by new building. Thus, the accidents inseparable from a state of war, instead of discouraging this trade, and reducing the amount of the building designed for it, rather tend to encrease that amount. To all which we must add, that the ships of the Company are, in time of war, liable to unusual delays, from their being martially equipped, waiting for convoy, and sailing in large fleets. Hence, a greater amount of

tonnage must be requisite to drive a given amount of trade; and still more, if, as has sometimes been the case, their ships are diverted to services directly military, or are disposed of to Government for ships of war. For all these reasons, it appears that the quantity of building for the Company is likely to be rather greater during war than during peace; and the repairing must, therefore, be greater also; and so far the argument that the builders rely on the India employment to maintain their establishments in time of peace is materially abated and weakened.

Here, then, Sir, I close that part of my subject which relates to the alleged dependence of the private yards on the building and (perhaps I may add) the repairing of Indiamen. I trust I have shewn that the nature and degree of that dependence have been magnified far beyond the truth.

I proceed to consider a proposition which forms another branch of the same argument. That proposition is, that the admission of India-built shipping into our trade with India will have the effect of destroying the system of building Indiamen on the Thames.

In this view, I must once more request the attention of the committee to the abstract marked D,* in the sixteenth page of the Minutes. That paper, as I before observed, was partly produced to shew that the employment of the Thames yards has already declined in proportion as India-built ships have been admitted to this country; and to found on this representation an inference, that, in proportion as such ships are admitted in future, the employment on the Thames will progressively sink into utter annihilation. In order that the

* See also Appendix.

abstract might shew all this, it was placed by my learned friend, Mr. Harrison, in connection and contrast with other accounts, given in pages 13 and 14 of the Minutes, and stating the number of India-built ships admitted to British registry since 1793, and of some others admitted to entry but not to registry. Now it appears that the quantity of tonnage by which the Indiamen built on the Thames during the last ten years fall short of those built during the ten years preceding is about or nearly equal to the quantity of India-built tonnage admitted to this country during the twenty years ending with 1803. Hence my learned friend argues that the Thames building has been displaced in proportion as the India-built shipping has been admitted; that there has been an actual transfer of building in that degree; that the loss on this side of the water has kept exact pace with the gain on the other.

My argument, on the contrary, is, that, whatever inference may in this manner be deduced from a comparative survey of the decrease on the one hand and admission on the other, is perfectly futile, and can form no ground of decision whatever in the breast of the committee.

The first point of view in which I would present the matter is this: If the reasoning of my learned friend is correct, it would be natural to suppose that, at those periods when there was the greatest admission of India shipping, there would be the smallest quantity of Thames building; and conversely: that, as the one class of ships came in, the other (if I may say so) would go out. Now it happens, as if for the very purpose of overthrowing and confuting the argument of my learned friend, that, at those precise times when the largest number of India ships has been admitted to registry, the greatest quantity of building has taken place on the Thames. This was in the years 1796 and 1802; in 1796,

seventeen ships were built on the Thames, being ten beyond their own average, and in the same year *fourteen* India built ships were admitted to registry*—in 1802, *sixteen* ships were built on the Thames, and *ten* India-built ships were admitted to registry. In no year but these two have more than *seven* India ships been admitted to registry, and that only once.—On the other hand, in 1795, when only one Indiman was built, no India ship appears.

Sir Charles Monck. To what does the time at which the ships built on the Thames are entered refer?—to the time when the order for building was given?—or the time of its completion?

Mr. Grant. To the time of launching, Sir; and this rather strengthens my argument than otherwise—for we may conceive that the order sent out by the Company to India, to take up that quantity of India-built shipping, must have been issued about the same time with the orders for building so many other ships on the Thames. At all events, the coincidence of few or none in some instances, and many in others, (which occurs repeatedly,) affords us a conclusive proof that there has been no systematic use of India-built ships in such a manner as to supersede the building on the Thames. The truth is, as I have stated before, and shall more fully state presently, that the India-built ships have come in a distinct and appropriate character; not as substitutes for the shipping launched on the Thames.

Now, Sir, we purpose laying before the Committee an account which will set this matter at rest. Before I state its nature, however, I would, by way of preface, enter somewhat

* See Appendix. Abstracts B. and D.

further into the observation which I just now made. So far as the India-built ships which have hitherto visited this country have been sold into the general trade of the empire, or have performed only a single voyage, coming with gruff goods, and returning never more to be heard of, or have been adopted into the service of government as transports; so far, I say, as they have been employed in any of these modes, it is impossible that they should have affected the building of Indiamen on the Thames. The simple account of the matter is what I before had the honor of giving;—namely, that the trade which brings the India-built ship to England, is the export trade of India. It is not the Company's trade, it is an addition to the Company's trade; it is a new creation, not a substitution, nor occasioning a proportionate defalcation of some other branch of commerce.

I will not recapitulate the grounds, sir, for these observations; but I shall be tempted to substantiate my statement, in the fullest manner, by evidence both oral and documentary. Under the latter head, I may particularly mention some extracts which we shall venture to place on your minutes, from a paper printed, by order of the House of Commons, on the 30th April, 1813. It is a report made on the 24th September, 1800, by Mr. Brown, the reporter of external commerce in Bengal. In that paper, Mr. Brown takes two contiguous periods, the year 1797-8, and the year 1798-9; in the latter of which, British merchants in Calcutta were permitted to load their own ships, or to make their own engagements for freight to London; in the former, no such facilities were afforded. The consequences were, that, whereas in the former season there was a considerable export of gruff goods on private account from the port of Calcutta to the continent of Europe, and a very small quantity brought home to England; in the latter, no shipments took place to the con-

continent, and a considerable quantity of gruff goods came to England. This fact clearly shews that the trade of which we are speaking does not occupy a space which otherwise would be filled by the Company, but is a trade separate and distinct, and which, if not afforded the use of the cheapest and most convenient shipping, will find its way to foreign ports.

If then such has been the case with those India-built ships that have come home merely on private account, and without systematically entering into the trade between this country and India, the question is, how many have done so? Of the India-built ships which have been admitted to British Registry, and which have been pompously exhibited as affording a complete solution of the late deficiency of building on the Thames, how many are of the description that I have mentioned? or how many are such as could interfere with the building on the Thames?

It is in answer to these questions, Sir, that we shall submit to the Committee the account I before alluded to. It is an account, drawn from the most authentic sources, containing a full and exact list of all the India-built ships admitted to British registry since the beginning of the year 1794, and stating particularly in what manner each of those ships individually has been employed or disposed of. From that account it will appear that 94 India-built ships have been admitted to registry in this country.—That of these 32 have been lost, burnt, or captured; of which, 31 were lost, burnt, or captured within the first of the two periods of ten years taken in the well known *Abstract* given us by the other side, and most of them far within that first period; consequently they could by no possibility affect the building on the Thames in the second period.—That, of the rest, 10 have been taken into the service of Government as store ships or transports; 1 has been sold to the Portuguese; 7 have entered into the East India trade. Of 5 of small tonnage, it is not known how they are employed; 25 have occasionally come to England, merely on private account, and have not at all interfered in the regular trade between this country and India; while only 14 have been introduced into the service of the India Company, either as regular ships, or as regular extras. And, Sir, were

I precluded from saying one word more to the Committee, I conceive that this last fact alone would destroy, root and branch, all the calculations by which the opposite party have attempted to connect the decline of the Thames ship building with the admission of India-built ships. What does that fact shew? Reckoned on the 10 years which compose the 2d period in the *Abstract*, the whole number of India-built ships, introduced into the regular trade with India, averages but at 1 ship and 2-5ths of a ship a year. Why, Sir, according to their representations, 7 Indiamen ought on an average to be built on the Thames annually; but, within the ten years, only two have been built annually; therefore 5 remain to be accounted for; and they account for these 5, by talking of India-built ships. But we now shew, that the India-built ships actually introduced so as to interfere with the Thames building, have amounted but to 1-2-5ths annually; so that the whole number in each year has averaged at only three and a fraction; and then what becomes of the other 4?

This shews not only that their inference is unfounded, but that abstracts made up on such principles do not afford any rational conclusion. All but these 14 ships have come home, not in any regular trade between this country and India, but in that desultory manner in which alone the private export-trade from India has hitherto been allowed to exist: many of these ships have not been here for several years, and others have made only one voyage.

Corresponding with this account, we beg leave to place on the table of the Committee, another of almost equal value. I have before stated that there might be reasons why the India Company should have built more ships in the former half of the last twenty years than in the latter. The account I have now mentioned, will shew *why* there was so little in the latter. When we have established that there has been no such introduction of India-built vessels as could sensibly affect the yards on the Thames, and consequently that there has been positively less building for the Company in the last ten years than in the ten years preceding, we have perhaps done enough; but this account will go further: for it will explain the circumstance. It will do so by stating accurately the number and tonnage of the ships at the present

moment in the service of the Company; the time when they were taken into that service; the number of voyages for which they were originally engaged; in what cases they have been afterwards engaged to be continued, and for what time; and what is their present state or employment. From all these details, Sir, the result will stand as follows: that, of 84 ships,* now in the Company's service, there are 40 whose engagements expire with their present voyages, some of which have gone 4 and 6, but the larger number 8 voyages; the number of voyages having been increased by engagements subsequent to the original contract: there are 6 others which have only one more voyage to perform, and these 46 ships, thus speedily about to terminate their contracts, are exclusive of about a dozen others which have been discharged the Company's service in the last year. Sir, it appears also by this account, that the whole of the Company's shipping will be reduced next year to 38 vessels, including 4 lately built in India, which have not yet entered on their contracts. This alone shews the utter futility of the argument derived from the decrease of the Thames building. Because, only conceive that, if these ships had all fallen in, which they might have done, considering how near they approach the termination of their service, which most of them must have done in the ordinary course of things, for their time of service has been prolonged by subsequent engagements—and then, within the second period of ten years, there would probably have been nearly sixty new ships to have been built for the Company somewhere or other, and it is presumeable that many of them might have been laid down in the Thames. That, I say, is presumeable, for any thing that appears in the accounts which shew the decrease of building. If you resort to other arguments to shew that these ships, though required for the Company, would probably not have been built on the Thames, those arguments must be considered afterwards; but, so far as respects the accounts, taken in themselves, there is no ground for such an argument, the presumptions which might be supposed to arise from the past decrease of building being entirely removed.

Sir, for what reason the Company should have thought proper so to contrive it, that all these ships should about this time be nearly falling

* See Minutes of Evidence, page 594—and Abstract in Appendix.

in, and yet should not have fallen in, the Committee will not be slow to guess, when they advert to the recent renewal of the Company's charter. It might very naturally be a point of prudence with the Company, in contemplating the political contest which awaited them on that occasion, and of which the result could not be foreseen, to prepare against the worst, and rather to keep on their old stock of shipping, than to encumber themselves with building afresh; such caution, I say, might be highly laudable and wise. There was, however, a concurrent reason of a different kind for their conduct. I am not indeed prepared with documents to establish its existence; but I believe that such a document will be produceable, and I know my statement to be correct. That reason was a conviction on the part of the Company, that there was a prevalent scarcity of oak timber; and this was avowed in the India House at the time. Here indeed I may advert to the fact, which will be verified before you by proper evidence, that, in 1802, Lord St. Vincent, then at the head of the Admiralty, had officially recommended it to the Directors of the Company to avoid building large ships in this country, on account of the deficiency of large navy timber, and that the Directors in consequence adopted some resolutions to that effect, which will be produced. The Company therefore, might very naturally act on the presumed scarcity of timber in continuing their ships for a certain number of additional voyages.

From what I have stated, the Committee will, I trust, clearly perceive, that there is an end of all that comparative statement of the gradual decline of ship building on the Thames, correspondent with the progressive admission of the shipping of India. And there is an end also of all inferences drawn from that statement—of all these prophecies with respect to the future, professedly derived from the past. True, you may, if you think good, argue from other circumstances, that the Company will rather build in England;—and the arguments you may use demand consideration;—but, I repeat it, so far as this deduction from the past is concerned, your reasoning is without any adequate basis;—your conclusion is wholly unsatisfactory, because unsupported by the premises.

The next question then, is, what are those other circumstances on

which our opponents must proceed, in drawing the same conclusion?

And first, they proceed on the state of destitution in which the Thames ship-building is now placed. At the present moment, not a single ship is building for the Company on the Thames. Therefore they infer that the Company will build no more on the Thames. The short answer seems to be, that, excepting in a very trifling degree for government, there are now no ships at all building on the Thames. Why, would that be any reason for inferring that no more ships will ever be built there? "But the Company have lately taken up ships built in India?"—Yes; but, from the mere circumstance of their having taken up three or four ships in India, will any man pretend to conclude that all the sixty ships which have fulfilled or are now just fulfilling their term of service with the Company, will be replaced by ships built in India? Where will you find in India the capabilities of furnishing so immense a supply? Or what proportion do four ships built in India bear to sixty ships which must speedily be built somewhere or other?

From what causes, Sir, the ship-building in the river has sunk to its present state of depression, it forms no necessary part of my case to explain. There would seem to be a concurrence of causes; and it is a curious circumstance, that the predominance which the building for government has always held in the river, it seems to maintain even at this moment; the little employment in the way of building, which is left, being wholly confined to the building of vessels of war. With this trivial exception, the decay is general; every sort of building on which the yards have depended, seems at a stand; and possibly the cause in each case is the same. The charges of building are high on the Thames, and possibly this may be one reason, why both the Company, and Government, and the general trade of the empire, have rather employed ships built elsewhere.

And hence, Sir, I am led to notice another argument used by our opponents in support of their alarms respecting India-built vessels—an argument on which it is most material to dwell, because it is in fact a

strong argument on our side of the question. On the supposition that this Bill passes, it is argued that the superior cheapness of ship-building in India will attract the Company to that quarter. Now, Sir, our case is, that the Bill will not necessarily drive away the building from the Thames; and I will shew, that in one view, the argument which I have just noticed, proves it. It appears in evidence, that the building is cheaper at the out ports than on the Thames; that it may be as good, will not, I apprehend, be questioned—if this should be questioned, it may, I doubt not, easily be proved. Then, if cheapness drives the Company to India, exclude them from India, and cheapness will drive them to the outports. If economy is the motive by which they are actuated, that motive will in its degree operate at home; even arguing therefore on the very grounds taken by our adversaries, it is not this Bill which will deprive the Thames yards of the building, that is, it is nothing peculiar to this bill, but it is a circumstance which may equally prevail, though this bill is rejected; a circumstance which would produce its effect in one way under this bill, and in another manner if this bill did not exist, but which would produce in each case the same effect; which would still transfer the construction of Indiamen, from the Thames, to some quarter where Indiamen could be constructed at a smaller expense.

Sir, to this argument of dearness, an answer is offered which is curious, "True, (it is said) the cost of ship-building is heavier here than at the outports, but the additional expense is unavoidable; all the articles of living are cheaper at the outports than about the metropolis; therefore, though, we acknowledge our charges to be higher, we do not admit them to be extravagant." Now, Sir, were we really accusing them of extravagance—were it a moral charge which we are urging against them, this reply might be well. But when, from the expensiveness of their manufacture, we argue simply that a cheaper workman is likely to be preferred, it is a curious answer to say, that this is an evil which cannot be got rid of, because inherent in the system. In fact, such an answer only confirms our case, by shewing that our argument is not merely good now, but will remain good; and should one of the parties address a person wishing to employ him by saying, "It is absolutely necessary for me to charge high," might not,

the other very fairly retort, "It is absolutely necessary for me to be charged low; and, therefore, I take my leave of you."

With regard to what will in fact be the probable consequences of this bill, on the building for the Company, I have before ventured to state, (though it was not perhaps absolutely incumbent on me) my sentiments. There seems to me nothing before the Committee either in evidence or in argument, which should establish it as a certain conclusion, that the Company will to any great extent have their ships built in India. I think it likely that, when peace has somewhat reduced the rates of building at home, they will rather build here; I think that it will be their tendency to build here, when no powerful motive overrules them to the contrary. That they will always have a proportion of their shipping built in India, I hope for the sake of the establishments in that quarter, but I am not inclined to believe that there will be a complete transfer of the building of their large ships from England to India.

Then, Sir, in depreciating the transfer of the *building*, our opponents forget the *repairs* which, while the commercial and nautical arrangements of the company subsist in their present stock, may be expected generally to take place in the river. The repairs, however, (it is said) of a Teak ship are nothing; but is there nothing besides the repairs? There now lies on your table, Sir, an authentic statement of the first cost, outfit, and expenses of repair of the *Thomas Grenville*, a ship built by the Company for themselves at Calcutta. The sums disbursed on account of this ship in the River Thames, previously to the commencement of her first voyage outwards, amounted to upwards of £21,000, which was not greatly less than the whole cost, in Calcutta, of her hull, including iron work exported from England. I may add that her expenses of outfit on her second voyage amounting to nearly £20,000, and those on the third to nearly £19,000. Surely, Sir, we have here an irresistible proof that these Indian-built vessels are by no means so unprofitable to the builders on the river as is pretended. Something like this disbursement may be expected on every ship which comes here on account of the company. The private ships may perhaps be less liberal; but even these will expend something; and their

contribution may seem of the more account, when it is considered that they will constitute a class of commercial shipping, which but for the facilities afforded by this bill could scarcely have any existence at all. Whatever they bring to the builders on the Thames, will, so far as it extends, be a clear substantive addition.

I believe, Sir, I have now embraced most of the arguments that respect the degree in which this bill may be expected to injure the ship-building establishments on the Thames. I have now to add a few words on the result deduced from all the complaints on this subject.

The well being of the navy, it is maintained, is in some way or other so deeply and essentially implicated in the efficiency of the private ship-building establishments on the Thames, that the ruin of those establishments cannot take place without inflicting a severe blow on the naval interests of the nation.

I flatter myself, Sir, that I have stated with tolerable accuracy an argument which I do not profess altogether to comprehend. I can in no manner state it so as to make it appear in my eyes other than an argument of the most extraordinary and monstrous nature. When I recollect the prodigious amount of commercial shipping built in this country or in her colonies at this moment afloat in the seas, an amount of not less than two million five hundred thousand tons; when I recollect that, of this immense quantity, the kingdom of England alone has built no less than two millions, a sum so vast, that, were the whole shipping of the India company, great and magnificent as it is, to be swept from the ocean, no sensible chasm would be produced in the result; when I survey the incalculable number and collective magnitude of the private ship-building establishments with which our coasts are lined, and add to these the vast capabilities of building possessed by our royal yards; when I reflect on the power, the resources, the population, and the commerce of this mighty country, and call to mind all those old and established principles which teach us that a nation so furnished can never want a navy; I own I am at a loss to express the astonishment with which I hear it gravely announced that our naval greatness and

glory are totally at the mercy of four or five private individuals on the banks of the Thames. My difficulty in meeting the argument arises, as I said before, from not finding it in a tangible shape; from the impossibility of resolving it into precise assailable propositions. I will make the attempt, though far from confident that I can really lay hold of the elements out of which so monstrous a notion has been formed.

First, it seems to be held that the king's yards derive a prodigious advantage from the merchants yards on the Thames, in receiving from them a supply of shipwrights on the breaking out of a war, who return to the private yards on the commencement of a peace. Thus those merchants' yards it seems are nurseries of shipwrights for the king's yards; now trifling as this advantage is at the best, and indeed perfectly insignificant when put into the balance against the great national interests at stake, I do not believe that it has any existence whatsoever; none at least so far as the building of Indiamen is in question. My first reason for disbelieving it is, because the building of Indiamen, as I have before shewn, is certainly not diminished, probably rather increased by war. Should any number of artisans, therefore, on the determination of a war, resort from the royal to the private yards, with a view of being employed on the building of Indiamen; so far from finding there a demand for spare hands, they would be likely to find a glut of workmen arising from the reduced scale of that very employment in which they had hoped to engage. My second reason is, because, from the petition on which I have already commented of the shipwrights in 1787, I learn that on the pacification with America, the workmen previously employed on the building of men of war in the private yards, were reduced to a scale of absolute destitution and wretchedness. And this, at a time when the building of Indiamen on the Thames was proceeding on a scale unusually extensive. If the shipwrights of the private yards found at that period no resource in the India building of the very establishments with which they were connected, what attraction could that building hold out to a fresh set of workmen pouring out of the royal yards? My third reason for disbelieving the proportion in question is, that it has received a negative, or what is plainly tantamount to a negative from the evidence adduced to support it. Mr. James Hughes is asked (in page 20) whether it has been usual, on occasion of peace,

for a considerable number of shipwrights to quit the royal yards for those of the merchants? His answer, though it evades the question, implies a negative; "It has not been the habit of late years to discharge the people from the king's yards; Again he is asked in cross-examination (in page 24), whether, on the breaking out of war, it is usual for shipwrights to quit the private yards for those of the king, and he answers "Yes, a few; not a great quantity."—The answer cannot be misunderstood.

I will not dwell longer, Sir, on this argument.—Another seems to be, that while the merchant yards are in their present state of efficiency, a convenient interchange of workmen takes place between them and the public yards, according as there is a stress of work in the one or in the other. Granting all this, Sir, the building and repairing of Indiamen can make very little difference in the case. I have already shewn how small is the number of shipwrights whom that building can occupy;—call it 500, which is far too many, and still there are left, exclusive of these, 3,500 in all the ship-building yards in the river.—Now, with such a number at hand, is it possible that all the occasional surplus, which accidents can raise on so few as 500 men, should be an advantage worth purchasing by the sacrifice of any great public object?

Then, Sir, there is on your table a document to which I might refer, as shewing that the King's yards can never be without an adequate supply of workmen in any emergency. I allude to an account (in page 229) of the number of shipwrights at present employed in his Majesty's yards, distinguishing those who have served their apprenticeships in the private yards from those in the King's yards. It there appears, that in the port of Plymouth, which is the farthest from London, and which of consequence must be supposed to derive the fewest hands from the building on the Thames, a considerably greater proportion of shipwrights has been drawn from private yards, than the average number at the public establishments near at hand. The proportion of the number in Plymouth to that average number is as 647 to 520. The same thing is true of Portsmouth, though in a less degree. One of these two things plainly follows:—if these shipwrights served

their apprenticeship at the outports, it follows that the outports may always be relied on as a nursery of shipwrights to the public yards. If, on the contrary, these persons served their apprenticeship in the private yards on the Thames, and afterwards resorted to those remote parts, it follows that the temptation of employment in the royal yards is such as to draw workmen from any distance; and, consequently, that the King's yards on the Thames can, in no event, be dependent on the private yards immediately contiguous for supplies of hands, but will command the resources of the kingdom in general.

Sir, I can conceive only one other argument for this pretended dependence of our naval greatness on the private yards of the Thames, and on that I do not think it necessary to enlarge. It may be said, that it is highly expedient for the public service to build men-of-war in the private yards. This subject has of late attracted some notice, and certain allegations have been brought forward, in anonymous publications, charging the private builders on the Thames with so badly constructing the men-of-war turned out from their yards, as materially to have injured rather than promoted the public interests. Those allegations, Sir, have had the effect of loading the table of the committee with evidence in favour of the private builders. Into that enquiry I shall not enter: it is no part of my case to support the allegations I have alluded to: whether they be bitter truths, or unfounded calumnies, is no concern of mine: I desire to preserve respecting them, not only a profound silence, but a sincere neutrality. But this I have a right to maintain, that on no account, or pretence, can it be made out, that the public service is really reduced to a slavish reliance on some four or five private yards for the maintenance of the navy. The notion is perfectly monstrous. It is impossible that this great country can be reduced to such dependence. Why, Sir, at the worst, what can be the objection to enlarging the public yards in such a manner that they shall be equal to every exigency? The only possible objection can be that of expense. But if expense be the objection, then only refer to the speech of the late Lord Melville, which has been cited by the learned advocate on the other side. It has been cited, indeed, as if it contained a formal approval of the system of building men-of-war in the private yards; as an approval of this system in point of principle; whereas,

Lord Melville rather vindicates the measure as one of sad necessity, to which the Admiralty had been compelled, in a moment of exigency, by the existing state of the public yards. But only read, I say, in that speech, the statement of the frightfully enormous expenses at which the measure had been carried into effect, and then defend it on the ground of expense, if possible. The truth is, as my learned friend who assists me in this cause has suggested to me, that, by this system, Government do nothing more than nurse up a competition in the private yards against themselves—a competition which may, on occasion, be ruinous. Then, in order to maintain a system thus pernicious, (for pernicious, in this view, it may certainly be called,) you tax, not the inhabitants of this country, whom you might have some pretence for loading with such a burden, but you choose to tax the people of India—you tax them, by denying a market to the surplus produce of their land and labour, by excluding their shipping, and with their shipping their trade: you tax them, therefore, far more heavily than you would tax this country for the same object—far more heavily than the object requires; and you crown all, by saying this system is to be adopted on the score of economy!

In the view of humanity, Sir, I am not slow to feel for the shipwrights of the Thames; I lament the destitution of employment to which numbers of them are reduced. My learned friend, Mr. Adolphus, however, in alluding to the fact, that many of them had recently been received into the King's yards, observed, that this might only be charity under another form; a charity dispensed by the overseer of the dock-yards, instead of the overseer of the poor. I would beg, Sir, to remark, that a system which should support superfluous establishments of ship-building merely for the sake of employing the workmen attached to them—a system which should confer on those establishments a monopoly of the India building, on the ground of humanity to the shipwrights—would, indeed, be charity under another form, and under a very questionable form. Did these unfortunate persons prefer a claim for compensation, it would not be within my province to interfere with their wishes; but when the effect of their propositions would be this, that you would not only support these yards for the sake of supporting the workmen, but would create a standing race of workmen in all

future times, for the sake of being supported, it is worth while to consider, that this would be only making work for charity; it would be merely creating a necessity for the continuance of that humanity, whose claims would otherwise, on the passing away of the present generation, be sealed for ever.

I have now considered how far there is reason to expect injury to our naval interests from the effect of this bill, either on the growth of our native timber, or with respect to the private ship-building yards on the Thames. There is yet a third view, in which I have to consider the same question, but which I will be content with touching very shortly. It is urged, that the shipwrights thrown out of employment will emigrate to some foreign country, carrying with them the whole art, craft, and mystery, of ship building, which may be employed in rearing navies, destined at some future period to be the scourge of Great Britain.

It fills me, I own, with equal regret and astonishment to hear an argument of this description used in the heart of civilized Europe, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. That any person for a moment should be able to conceive, that in the present state of diffused knowledge, and enlarged intelligence, any secret, or trick of trade, in ship-building, or in any thing else, can be kept hidden and safe in this country from the inhabitants of the Continent, be they friends, or be they enemies! No, Sir. We must rely on other helps than these. There is now an end of all this mystery and legerdemain and cabalism. The path to glory must be luminous; there is no creeping up the heights of greatness in the dark; they must be scaled in open day: in the face of hostile observation, and in defiance of hostile resistance.

These truths are so plain, that I am surprised, indeed, at the argument having been used. But what if such concealments as the argument supposes were really possible? The Continent does not require to be taught ship-building by us. I believe that, at this moment, those who were lately our enemies, and who may by possibility again become such, (though I trust that event is far distant,) have attained to as high a pitch of perfection in the art of building ships as ourselves. It is

notorious, that some of the best vessels in our naval service have been obtained by capture from our enemies. It is, I say, a matter of public notoriety; and, whatever we may think of this subject, I do not believe that the French entertain any doubt respecting it. France, Sir, has long since understood how this case stands; she has detected your secret; she knows that your real strength consists, not in your shipwrights, but in your seamen; she may sail from you, but she cannot stand against you, broadside to broadside; and so thoroughly is she aware of this distinction, that I doubt not she had rather have a single cargo of your seamen, than all the shipwrights of the country put together.

Here then, Sir, is an end of the question respecting the emigration of our shipwrights; and, I do submit, an end of the whole argument and alarm as to the destruction with which this Bill is supposed to threaten the naval interest and fame of Great Britain.

And this the Committee will do me the favour to remember was the first objection which I proposed to discuss. I will now proceed to the second head of enquiry, which I shall dispatch with greater brevity. That enquiry is, how far the principle of this Bill is agreeable, not to the letter, for that seems conceded to us, but to the spirit of the Navigation Acts.

Sir, so much has been said on this topic, with reference to the registry of India-built shipping, that I should deem myself scarcely justifiable if I passed it in silence. Hardly a pamphlet has been published on the other side of the question which is not pregnant with arguments, professing to be founded on the Navigation Acts; and the learned advocate for the petitioners against the Bill, though he seemed to argue that the literal provisions of the Navigation Acts must be altered before the principle of excluding India-built shipping from British registry could be effectually established, yet distinctly maintained that the spirit of those acts would best be consulted by such a principle. By the Navigation Acts, I would beg to observe, I mean, of course, not the act of the 26th of the King, at least not that clause in it which has, as I before explained, the technical and incidental effect of excluding

India-built ships from British registry. The policy of that clause is the very thing in dispute, and, indeed, its meaning and object are almost as disputable as its policy; but I mean primarily the Navigation Act of Charles the Second, modelled as it is was on a prior act passed by the parliament of Cromwell, and next the subsidiary acts relating to the same subject passed in the reigns of Charles, James, and William: these are the Navigation Acts by which the Bill before the Committee must be tried.

Now, Sir, I have already stated explicitly that, were the present Bill really to effect the destruction of the ship-building establishments of this country, it would so far contravene the spirit of the Navigation Acts. What I have now to consider is, whether, within that point, and very far within it, the interference of the ships of India with British-built shipping can be considered as liable to the same charge. And before I refer to the specific provisions of the Navigation Acts, I will venture to submit to the Committee this broad proposition, that in the view of those acts, the principle of building ships in this country does by no means assume that prominent importance which is assigned to it by the petitioners against the Bill. I ground that proposition, Sir, on the following simple undeniable facts:—That in the Navigation Acts, properly so called, by English ships, are meant not English-built ships, but English-owned ships; not the property, but the manufacture of English subjects; that this holds without any exception in the act of Cromwell, and in that of Charles, with only one exception, where, I think, it is provided that the commodities of Turkey shall be brought in English-built shipping; that, even by the act of Charles, however, those commodities may be brought in the ships of the country by which they are produced; and that, consequently, as the excellent historian of the Law of Shipping and Navigation observes, there is no one branch of commerce which this country can pursue, in which the use of her own shipping is absolutely enjoined by the Navigation Act.

I believe, Sir, that I might go further: the learned advocate for the Thames ship-builders, Mr. Harrison, stated that it was no principle within the navigation acts that we should purchase our ships wherever we can obtain them cheapest. I should not be far wrong, I be-

lieve, in asserting, that within the navigation acts, properly so called, it is a principle that we should purchase ships wherever they can be found cheapest. I do not desire you, Sir, to confide in any assertion on the subject: take that of the learned and valuable author just now mentioned; “from all this,” says Mr. Reeves, in page 305, of the edition of 1792 “it is clear that the object the parliament immediately proposed to itself was to encrease the number of seamen, and encourage the PURCHASING of ships by merchants: the building of ships in England was rather looked to as a consequence to follow from the operation of these and other causes.” Sir, I presume I am not very extravagant in assuming that, if the act wished ships to be purchased, it wished them to be purchased on the most advantageous terms. But what do I infer from all this? That the ship-building establishments of this country, establishments which so greatly conduce to the public benefit are of no use? That they are to be trifled with? That they are not to receive every reasonable encouragement? Far from it: on the contrary, I have no objection to the conjecture of Mr. Reeves, that the framers of the act in question contemplated the promotion of ship building in this country as the probable and desirable effect of their policy. But I do mean to argue that those establishments have not, in the eye of our navigation laws, that cardinal importance which some persons are desirous of attributing to them; that our navigation laws are not to be construed into ship-building laws, and that when we so construe them, we confound that which is the essence and soul of the system with that which, though a very valuable, is by no means an essential constituent.

The capital objects, Sir, of the navigation acts were, to encrease the quantity of British trade: to encrease the amount of shipping in British employment: and above all, and, perhaps, as the ultimate end of all, to encrease the number and skill of British seamen: these were the ends aimed at by those acts. But I have shewn you that the bill before you will encrease the quantity of British trade both directly and indirectly; directly, by bringing a new trade in raw materials to your ports; indirectly, by encouraging the re-export of those raw materials in the shape of manufactures. I have shewn you that this bill will augment the quantity of shipping in British employ; partly by introducing into

that employ a new class of ships; partly by encouraging your general trade. And as to the number and skill of British seamen, so long as your general trade flourishes, so long as your coasting trade, proverbially considered the grand nursery of your seamen, flourishes; so long you will require no further security for the attainment of that object; or if you should require a further security, you will find what may be thought even a superfluous security in one of the provisions of this bill, by which it is enjoined that, excepting in extraordinary cases, (and these have always been allowed for,) every India built ship, whether clearing outwards or homewards, shall be furnished with the due proportion of British seamen.

But supposing I should wave all concern with this general principle, and advance to the specific provisions of the navigation acts, supposing I should consent to read British-built for British-owned, in the act of Charles, the strength of my case would not be at all impaired. What are the two great rules in the navigation acts which principally apply to the present question? I before took the liberty of stating them to the committee; they are these; the first, that the general trade of the empire shall be open only to British-built and colonial built shipping; the second, that foreign shipping shall, notwithstanding, be admissible to a direct trade with the empire. Now, in the first place, I want to know why British India is not sufficiently a colony to be within the benefit of the first rule. It is confessedly a colony in law; why is it not one in policy? I know that a country so circumstanced is not a colony properly so called; but is it not sufficiently within colonial boundaries to be considered as a colony under the acts in question? Sir, it is a point of familiar and daily discussion whether British India will eventually become a colony or not. The very terms of the enquiry plainly demonstrate, that when we say of that region it is not a colony, we mean that it is *not yet* a colony, that it is nearer to us than a colony, that it is united to us by relations closer than colonial, that it is, as I before expressed it, within colonial boundaries; then if it is within colonial boundaries, I want to know why it is not within colonial privileges.

What objection indeed, Sir, under the navigation acts, what object-

tion (I mean) in point of principle, can be offered to conferring the privilege of British registry on India, which does not apply to colonies properly so called? Is this your objection, that the Indian world is separated from us by a vast distance; that an immense waste of winds and waters intervenes? Count, Sir, by how many minutes of longitude the continent of America is nearer to us than the coast of Bengal. Is it your objection that the shipping of India, if admitted to a share in British registry, is likely to interfere with your native shipping? Lord Sheffield tells you that the shipping of your American colonies did actually so interfere, and makes it an express subject of complaint against the navigation laws that they sanctioned this species of competition? Is it your objection that a great part of the population of your Indian territories, is not a British, but an Asiatic population? look at your colonies in the West, and behold there a vast African population: a population barbarously imported, I grant, and possessing therefore the strongest claims on your kindness, but not therefore the more closely identified with you, not so closely identified with you, surely, as those who were themselves born, and whose fathers lived and died, under your government. Is it your objection that British India may in the course of future years become a colony and rebel? Look at your late colonies in the other hemisphere, the very colonies intended by the navigation acts; see the resources of America in two successive wars, marshalled in an unnatural contest against the nation which gave her birth. Or is it rather your objection that India may possibly fall into the hands of some foreign and adverse power, and the sources which you will there have nursed up, become hostile to you, through the medium, not of rebellion, but of conquest? then look at your *present* American colonies—colonies whose shipping is at this moment admitted to all the general trade of the empire;—See Canada grasped at by a fierce enemy, himself a rebel colonist, an enemy who has sworn that it shall one day be his prize: see it rescued from the fangs of that enemy almost during the pending of the present bill, by prodigies of valour. The question now, Sir, is not, whether all this is right? but is it or is it not the navigation act? If these objections apply, and most of them with ten-fold force, to colonies, properly so called, to the territories expressly within the scope of that act, then with what face can you urge those objections as exclusively applying to the provinces of British India! Then

how can you not only venture to exclude British India from the privilege of British shipping, in direct violation of the navigation laws; but how can you dare to found that exclusion on the authority of the very laws you are violating?

I am tempted, Sir, here to anticipate an objection which may be urged against the line of reasoning that I am pursuing. It may be said that we must read the navigation laws, like all other laws, by the light of subsequent experience; the framers of those laws, it may be said, were not aware that colonies might revolt, and array themselves in arms against their parent country; they did not foresee the history of America; if they had, they would have done what a noble writer on these subjects says they ought to have done, they would have deliberately excluded from the benefit of British-shipping all colonies, plantations, and distant dependencies whatsoever.

Now, Sir, though such an objection would give up the ground of the navigation act, (and I should be content with that cession,) I will wave this advantage, and meet the objection on its own ground. And here I should not, I think, be very unreasonable in requiring some proof, that the contingency of a revolted colony could really be so much beyond the conception of the sagacious and enlightened, though unprincipled, men, by whom the navigation act was first framed. I should not, I think, be very unreasonable in maintaining that, to men so circumstanced, and who lived at such a period; men themselves the creatures of rebellion; men only less inured to scenes of blood and change than we who dwell in these last days; men doubtless familiar with all those forms and presages of coming mischief, those pre existencies of evil, that are ever flitting through the darkened and stormy atmosphere of a revolutionary government; that to men, I say, so situated, the phenomenon of a colony armed against its parent, could not possibly be either unimaginable, or unexpected, or strange. But all this, it may be said, is vague surmise; produce a fact! I will give the objector a fact; I will remind him that at the very time when the navigation act first passed, four of our American colonies, then the majority, as I believe, in importance, were in a state of open revolt and rebellion against the power by which that act was framed. It is observable, Sir, that exactly 12 months before the navigation act passed the parliament of Cromwell, that parliament had denounced the colonies of Barbadoes, Antigua,

Virginia, and Bermuda, as enemies, rebels, and traitors, for having espoused the cause of the royalists in preference to that of the commonwealth: and it is also an observable fact, that in the very week in which the act in question passed, a parliamentary armament appeared off Barbadoes with the design of reducing that island by force; a design which was accordingly effected. It was with their eyes open, therefore, that those able statesmen first framed the navigation act, and afterwards persevered in its policy. They well knew that colonial and distant possessions, like all other human possessions, must be held by a precarious tenure; but they knew also—what we cannot persuade these people to understand, what they will not perceive—that the proper deduction to be made from this circumstance, in the eyes both of wisdom and of common sense, both of the highest and most vulgar reason is, not that we should lock up the advantages bestowed on us, not that we should bury the talent consigned to us in the earth—but that we should avail ourselves of the advantages while we may, that we should turn the talent to account while we possess it, and that nothing can be more foolish than this mean jealousy of colonies, which, permit me to say, if they are not worth the using are not worth the having.

Were it proper Sir, to expatiate further on this topic, I might shew that even in the navigation laws previous to that of Cromwell, for it is well known that anticipations of that act had taken place at various periods of the English history, the same liberal policy was pursued. Edward the Third admitted the shipping of his subjects in Gascony to equal privileges with that of his subjects in England: Henry the Seventh conferred the privileges of the English shipping on the inhabitants of Calais and its marches; and at a period when the signs of the times must clearly have warned that provident prince, that Calais and its marches were speedily to be torn from the English crown. Thus it is that this liberal policy comes recommended to us, not only by the sanction of the stern demagogues who embodied in the navigation act, but also by the glorious authority of Tudors and Plantagenets.

If I have been at all successful in what I have now urged, I entreat the committee to observe, that, arguing on the ground of the navigation acts, and that is now the question, my clients must be admissible not

only to the benefits held out by the bill, to a free participation for their shipping in the general trade of the empire. My learned friend, Mr. Harrison, indeed, appeared to argue as if our acquiescence in this bill amounted to a virtual surrender of the principle of the navigation act. If parliament, he observed, has a right to restrict the privilege, parliament has a right to abrogate it. Sir, the right of parliament either to restrict or to abrogate the privileges which the navigation laws intended to bestow on us, we have never disputed; but I have yet to learn, that to restrict these privileges is *therefore* to abrogate them. I have yet to learn, that if a modification of these privileges is introduced, the principle on which these privileges stands is necessarily done away. And let our opponents allow me to remind them, that if parliament, superintending, in a combined view, the general interests of the empire, chooses to limit the benefit, which we might hope under the navigation act, whoever else has a title to complain, they at least have none;—and, if we from a disposition to compromise and accommodation, acquiesce in such a restraint, to whom ever else the charge of selfish and interested motives may apply, *we* at least are exempt from it.

But, Sir, suppose it possible that all these views of the subject should be thought radically unsound;—suppose it possible that British India is not entitled to share in the advantages of colonial-built shipping. Is our claim therefore gone? Is nothing left for us? Is there not another principle in the navigation laws, on which this bill may stand? Is there not a principle in those laws which says that foreign vessels may convey to England the produce of the countries to which they respectively belong? Does not that maxim form a capital part of the navigation act? Does it not form so prominent a part of it, that it constituted the whole title of the act of Cromwell, “Goods from foreign parts, by whom to be brought?” Grant, then, that you succeed him, excluding India from the benefit of the first maxim as a colony, at least you cannot exclude her from the benefit of the second as a foreigner. Are our fellow-subjects in the East to be considered as worse than foreigners?—worse than those foreigners against whom we know the navigation act to have been originally formed, and who yet were left in the possession of this privilege? Had British India committed that crime which some persons seem so fond of anticipat-

ing;—had she broken the yoke of this country from off her neck;—even then you could not have refused her a privilege, from which no foreigner at peace with you is debarred. You know you granted that privilege to America, under the same circumstances. The independence of America was no sooner signed, than, though signed in the blood of this country, it drew after it all the benefits of shipping which we had conceded to other foreigners, and even more. The principle surely was just: for if our navigation laws be really of that important and fundamental nature which we suppose they must be, like the laws of nature, perpetual and universal. Introduce a new nation into the general commonwealth, or to continue the metaphor, launch a new planet into the system, and the orbit which that body describes, however eccentric and strange, must follow the same laws with the rest;—must be governed by the same attractions, and disturbed by the same disturbances. Then, sir, that privilege which you could not refuse to India, even though stained by successful treason, on what pretence can you withhold from her while innocent and unoffending?

Sir, here then I shall take my leave of the navigation acts, merely stating to the committee, respectfully, in conclusion, the two highly-serious and important questions which those acts suggest, as applied to the present subject: questions to which I am persuaded, that human ingenuity may hunt for a thousand years, and not find an answer. The first question is, Why, when, under the navigation acts, colonies are admitted to a certain advantage of shipping, British India, which is bound to us by ties closer than colonial, should be denied, not only the whole of that advantage, but even every shred and particle of it? This is the first question:—and were it possible to imagine that this could fail, there would arise a second of a still graver and (I might almost say) more portentous nature. That question is, Why, when under the navigation acts, foreigners are admitted to a certain advantage?—India, a member of ourselves, is to be totally excluded from that advantage also of shipping! Why that pittance of commercial benefit, to which our malignant rivals and enemies (as they were then deemed) of Holland were condemned as an infliction, our fellow-subjects, our brethren in India should in vain implore from us as a privilege!—These are the questions, and I defy an answer.

Sir, I have yet another head of objection to comment upon; in so doing, I will be as concise as I can—I will not say as I wish. The ground of objection is, that it is a most unwise and hazardous policy, to place our naval resources in a strange and distant land, by transferring the employment of building large ships from England to India.

I have already admitted in substance, that should this bill really have the effect of transferring the whole or great part of the ship-building England to India, it would be seriously objectionable. I have shewn also, what is sufficiently obvious, that under this bill no such event can possibly come to pass. But the question may still arise whether *in proportion* as the supposed transfer takes place, the alleged hazard will not exist. It is this question which I would beg leave to consider.

It can scarcely be necessary for me, Sir, once more to ask with what consistency the parties who are so anxious in deprecating a dependence on strange countries, can consent to a system of things which sacrifices the whole export trade of India to foreigners, and which reduces our navy to an abject reliance on importations of foreign timber. To all this *present*, this *actual* dependence on foreigners, my learned friends have no objection; but they profess to contemplate with anxious alarm, a dependence on the resources of a country subject to ourselves, because that country may, by some disastrous occurrences, become the prey of foreigners fifty years hence. So much for the consistency with this argument is urged; I would next remark a radical fallacy which pervades the whole of it, and which equally pervades it in whatever way it is supposed that our territories in India will one day become hostile to ourselves; whether by a successful revolt of the British residents,—by a successful revolt of the natives,—or by the successful invasion of some of foreign powers in the West.

The argument is always stated as if the question were, whether in the event of that country falling into hostile hands, it will be well for the enemy who possesses himself of it, to possess in it great marine resources. Surely, sir, *that* is not the question. The maritime resources of British India, such a supposed enemy must have, for they go

with British India itself. Recollect, that by opposing the present bill you are not annihilating the maritime resources of British India,—you are not choking up her deep channels,—you are not diverting the ocean from her shores,—you are not destroying her deep forests:—on the contrary, you refuse to diminish then, even by a twig. What then are you doing? You are merely sparing those resources,—you are preserving them with jealous care, in order that they may be delivered whole and unbroken, unto the hands of the enemy whom your imagination anticipates, and may by him be developed exactly when it is his pleasure; and be assured, it *will* be his pleasure, if he finds it to be his interest. Sir, what time it might cost an active and powerful enemy, (and such an enemy is the only one to be dreaded,) to develop these resources, and to call them into a state of complete action, I cannot exactly conjecture; but that time (I must take leave to observe) will be short indeed, if I am to believe the representations of our adversaries, on another part of their case. If it be true that the mere passing of this bill will produce the consequence of deluging our coasts with India-built shipping,—if the marine resources of our Eastern territories, are in a state of such power and maturity, that the mere fiat of parliament can at once make them start into a course of gigantic exertion, why, then, what after all do you gain by interjecting a little paltry miserable delay, between the first transfer of those resources into the hands of an enemy, and the full development of them by that enemy? Nothing, absolutely nothing; and then it comes to this,—that we are to shut out all use of these means and capabilities placed in our hands, to bury these resources in the bosom of the earth for half a century or a century together, in order that in a certain possible event we may obtain a short reprieve from the adverse use of them by an enemy. We are, I say, to forfeit their certain advantage and assistance for fifty years together, in order to purchase an exemption from their possible hostility for five years longer: and this is the sort of bargain recommended to us, as the consummation of political wisdom!

Then, sir, is there nothing to be said on the degree of the chance there may be for the coming to pass of these prognosticated evils? And first, if you talk of a foreign and hostile power, European or American, and represent it as a probable disaster, that such a power

may snatch from us our Asiatic empire, before you are swayed by the apprehension of that disaster, would it not be well to calculate the value of that probability?

I will not, myself, undertake to resolve that inquiry. Perhaps the most complete answer to it might be found in a review of the resources of this mighty and favored nation now, after a contest which has unseated so many thrones, and convulsed so many empires, still exhibiting the same unbroken appearance of strength, efficiency, and durability. But well as I am aware, that even in the rudest hands such a subject could scarcely fail of exciting some interest, and glad as I should undoubtedly be to indulge in the contemplation of a spectacle so glorious, and of such promise,—a spectacle now doubly delightful, because, brightened by the rich day-break of peace, yet I feel that it will better become me, in the situation which I here occupy, to confine myself altogether to the ground of dry precedent, and rigid argument. Adhering to that ground, however, I should not despair of finding a test by which we may satisfactorily ascertain which of the western powers is the most likely to be the future arbitress of India.—And I should say, without hesitation, the *greatest naval power*. This rule, long since laid down by Lord Bacon, is verified by history.—Three centuries have elapsed since European ambition first affected dominion in India, and it has still been found that the power which was navally superior in the west, has been territorially ascendant in the east: this was the case with Portugal in the first place; this was the case with Holland in the next; this was the case with England; even France has partially exemplified the rule. It is a matter of history that France, when she embarked in the war of 1756, was in a higher state of marine equipment than she had ever before attained; and that, be it remembered, was the precise period at which took place the grand struggle between France and England, for territory and influence in the east. The conflict terminated in favour of England. France having recruited in time of peace the strength which she had exhausted as a belligerent, appeared again on the occasion of the American war, as a candidate for the double palm of naval and Indian sovereignty; and again she was discomfited in both schemes. Last came the revolutionary contest just terminated, a contest which furnishes a remarkable confirmation of the

doctrine I am maintaining. At the commencement of that contest more than one European nation had a considerable navy on the sea, and a respectable degree of territory in the east; and the course of that contest left England alone on the theatre of the east, and alone on the surface of the ocean.

Now, Sir, if we are to reason on the ground of these facts, surely we can be at no loss in valuing the chance, that some other western nation than the British will hereafter sway the destinies of India. Here, at least, we must be all agreed. We can have here no difference of opinion, nor will any of us despair of the fortunes of this country. Because, were we even to admit the somewhat romantic predictions made on the other side, were we to admit that the consequence of this bill will be an entire ruin of our ship-building establishments at home, and that we shall hereafter have to rely exclusively on a navy of Indian manufacture, still that navy would, by the very supposition, begin with being ours; and so beginning, and commanded by British officers, and manned with British mariners, it must be won by an enemy before it can be worn by him; nor can you assume that it shall fall into hostile hands, without begging what is precisely the whole question in dispute. But there is no ground at all for these suppositions, and then the whole of the argument we are considering amounts to this; that we must for ever deprive ourselves of the advantages conferred on us; that we must refuse to avail ourselves of our own happiness; merely from the apprehension, lest these advantages should become an acquisition to some foreign power, no man can say who,—at some period, nobody can guess when,—by some contingency which no man believes possible,—and even then, an acquisition most limited and most precarious: most limited, for it would only give such an enemy a few years sooner what he must have at any rate, and most precarious, at least in the opinion of the party opposite, for they think it so precarious, that even now, when we virtually have it in our own hands, they gravely pronounce it to be not worth the using.

Sir, I will not enlarge at equal length, I can assure the Committee, on the points which I am yet to consider, with regard to the chance that British India will one day become a colony, and a revolted colony. I will certainly say that this double chance does not to me appear great. What

are the peculiar obstacles which prevent that country from becoming a colony, I do not feel it requisite that I should minutely describe; it is well known that they are many, and that hitherto they have upon the whole prevailed. You debar Europeans from entering the country without a licence; you debar them from pervading the interior without a licence; you debar them even from residing on the coast, except within ten miles of a principal settlement; you will not permit them to acquire any property in the soil; you encourage and fortify, by every means, the connexion between the British resident and his native land. Yet you have long allowed partial relaxations of these rules: Europeans do in fact reside in India unlicensed, they obtain licences to travel through the interior; they possess large indigo works in the heart of the country, thus indirectly acquiring a sort of interest in the soil; I believe that land has been directly granted to a British subject for the cultivation of sugar; twenty European regiments have for years been cantoned in the interior of the country.—All this you have allowed; and still it is said that even all this will not lead to colonization on a great scale; then how empty an alarm, to tell us that colonization will follow from the permission of a few ship-building establishments; establishments by their very nature excluded from the interior of the country, confined to certain definite points on the coast, unconnected with the property of the soil, and directly adapted to multiply the ties of connexion between the British resident and his native land!

The proposition, Sir, that such establishments tend to produce colonization, is either nugatory or false. If it merely means in that sense in which it may be said that every European ship touching the coast, every European cargo landed, tends to produce colonization, (that is, it would more easily happen with these means than without them) it is perfectly nugatory; if it means something beyond this, it is totally unfounded.

But the argument sometimes takes another form; supposing, (it is said) that from any *other* cause our Indian possessions should become colonies; may we not find this encouragement of India-built shipping most unsafe? My first answer is, how long will it be before that supposition is realized? how long before the obstacles I have enumerated shall be completely surmounted? how long before those countries exhibit, I do not say appear-

ances and beginnings of colonization,—that can be of no consequence in our present enquiry,—but the form and substance of a definite, powerful colony?

My next answer is, even granting that this event should happen, that a definite powerful colony should grow up in British India, why, Sir, is there any objection to a powerful colony being provided with shipping of its own? I know of none—and I am sure the navigation acts know of none—nay, these favorite register acts know of none: then what is the objection? Oh, (it is said,) be warned by the revolt of America! learn, from the precedent of America, to distrust the allegiance of a colony! possibly much, Sir, might be learned from the precedent of America, and, without imputing any mismanagement to the conduct of Great Britain in that unhappy quarrel beyond what was inseparable from the novelty of the case, it is obvious to observe that the first lesson might, perhaps, be to *preserve* the allegiance of a colony. But, not to enter at all on that question, there seem to be reasons for which the precedent of America does not apply in the present instance. The cases differ widely; and among several points of difference *this is one; that, situated as our countrymen are, and must long be in India, they cannot but feel that, in some sense, (I trust never in the most obnoxious sense) they are in an enemy's country. They are surrounded, not like our American colonists, by the desultory and unconnected hostility of separate tribes of hunters, but by the jealousy, the ambition, the revenge of organized and armed nations. Strong as a dependency, strong as a colony—as an independent state they would be comparatively weak. Disjoined from Europe, they would lose not only a great part of their strength, but a great part also of that other pillar of their stability, the opinion of strength; that respect and awe which they inspire amongst the native states, on account of their union with a country, removed alike from Indian hostility and observation. It was observed by one of the most vigorous and enlightened ruffians that ever unsheathed a sabre in that country, "I dread the Europeans, not from what I see of them, but from what I see not." It was their connexion with Europe, to which he himself had no access, that alarmed that intrepid robber; it was their command of resources which he felt that he had no means of measuring. He revered a strength whose secret he*

could not discover. He feared to trust himself on so dark and unfathomed an abyss of power.

For these and other reasons, Sir, I do not think it probable that British India would, under any circumstances, lightly abandon her connexion with Europe. But now grant that she should do so; grant all the possibilities, the contingency on contingency, which the supposition implies, to take effect; and what, after all, will the party opposite gain by the concession, or rather, what would the supposed rebellious colony gain by the operation of the present bill? Not, as I before said, marine resources, for these they must have at any rate; not those resources in a state of action, for they are now in a state of action; but simply, the difference between those resources in a state of partial action, and the same resources in a more matured, and proportionably a more exhausted state. This is absolutely all, and for this it is that we are exhorted to sacrifice the whole use and benefit of those resources, exactly so long as we shall possess the smallest right, or title, or power to enjoy it.

Sir, the expediency of every rational guard against colonization, or the effects of colonization, I do not dispute—speaking individually, (if I may presume to do so) I am inclined to deprecate colonization in India, because I am afraid that it would prove pregnant with oppression to the natives. But whether this opinion be just or not, if every Indian measure we take is to be adopted under a vexatious feverish impression, that India will one day become a colony, and, from being a colony, will become a rebel; then what a miserable, mistaken, insane policy have we hitherto pursued with respect to that country!—I say a miserable, mistaken, insane policy.

Who does not see, that the magnificent system of establishments we have bestowed on the inhabitants of British India, may all, by some future possibility, be converted into so many intrenchments against ourselves. We have given them a form of government, which may only enable them to organize rebellion; we have given them a system of revenue, by which they may only the more easily call up into that unnatural warfare, all their resources; we have given them strong fortresses, and gallant armies, which may only defy and repel our resentment;—all these we have given

them: yet surely we have done well. We have acted, and acted boldly on the principle, that though unseen mischief might possibly be involved in the gift, the certain advantage a million times outweighed the contingent evil; and that the maxim is not less false and ruinous in policy, than it is base and detestable in private life, which says, “always treat a friend as if you knew he was to become your enemy.”—These are the grounds, Sir, on which we have acted;—these are the grounds, on which I would support the case before the Committee.

I will not now go on to discuss the improbable danger, that the native population of India should repossess themselves of their country. Still less shall I think of trifling with the Committee, by formally examining whether, on the supposition of such an event, that people would be likely to become a great maritime and naval power, on the European scale. The idea of any such revolution, within the fair scope of prospective policy, is surely too preposterous; I will, therefore, dismiss the subject, with observing, that, until a very material change takes place in the habits of the people of India, the immediate business of trade and ship-building, will be confined but to a small proportion and to peculiar classes of their very singular community. Deeply as the mass of that people are interested in the present question, their great stake in it, is not in the character of traders, or shipwrights, but in that of producers.

I have now, Sir, but one remaining topic to notice before I relieve the committee from the severe demand which I am making on their attention. I refer to the argument so frequently reiterated by the witnesses, and, I may add, by the pamphlets, on the other side of the question, that, while the articles which enter into the construction of a ship, in this country, yield a very valuable revenue to the state, ship-building in India, is wholly untaxed, and, in a fiscal point of view, unprofitable. In direct refutation, Sir, of the assertions that have been so ignorantly, and rashly, hazarded on this subject, we shall satisfy the Committee, by distinct evidence, not only that the articles of outfit, which are mostly exported from Europe, pay considerable duties to the local Government, in India, but that the very timber, employed for Indian ship-building, is largely taxed, and, beyond this, that most of the timber in the Malabar forests, being, in fact, the company's property, and by them disposed of to individuals, the price of the article is itself a clear addition to the public revenues.

So long, however, as we choose to maintain our Indian possessions, so long, it cannot be doubted, any acquisition of resources to the Indian government is, in truth, an acquisition to this country: it must either increase the surplus revenue of India, or diminish its local expenditure; it either augments the profit, or abates the charge of our Indian dependencies to the ruling state.

There is, indeed, a point of enquiry, intimately connected with this subject, which ought not to be wholly omitted. It is said, that, although, at present, the Indian builders furnish themselves, in a considerable degree, with articles of European manufacture, that system must gradually decline; the manufacture of the articles in question, will, by degrees, improve in India, and proportionably supersede the use of exports from Europe; in the same proportion the revenue will be lost on those exported articles, and the persons who are concerned in manufacturing them be reduced to the same destitution with the shipwrights on the Thames.

It is already in evidence before the committee, and it will be confirmed by further proof, that, at present, the far greater proportion of the articles of equipment, used by the Indian builders, are European,—copper, iron, the standing rigging, large nails, spars, blocks, ship-chandlery,—almost every thing, in short, but the timber, and the running rigging, go from Europe. With regard to some of the articles, as, particularly, copper and iron, they will probably continue to be supplied from Europe, for an indefinite period. Of the rest, it is possible, that the manufacture may gradually improve in the East, and should it, at length, so greatly improve, as, for the most part, to supersede the exports from Europe, I do not apprehend, that the public would have any reason to regret the loss of the revenue on those exports. The public would be much more than indemnified for that loss, by the duties on the raw materials, exported in India-built ships, from India; by the duties on those raw materials, when imported into England; by the duties on the re-export of those imports, in the form of manufactures, to the continent.

With regard to the pressure which the manufacturers of the articles of outfit, exported from England to India, must sustain, from a cessation of the demand for those articles, I do not think it material to say much: in reckoning up the number of the men employed

in the preparation of those articles, as, for example, block-makers, sail-makers, and others of a like description,—although, from some of the publications on this subject, we might be induced to imagine, that they amounted to some thousands, I cannot, from the evidence on your minutes, bring them quite up to a hundred. On the employment of that number of *men*, or of a much greater number, it would, in a national view, be absurd to dwell for a moment. With regard to the *capital* employed, exaggerate it as much as possible, and still, when it is recollected, that the transfer of the manufacture to India, supposing it to take place, will take place gradually, and progressively, no man can doubt, that such capital will be withdrawn without any shock, and gradually be directed to the supply of other markets, or vest itself in other branches of employment. In this great commercial country, shiftings of capital to ten times the utmost amount that can be supposed in the present case, are daily brought about by the course of commerce, without confusion or injury.

Against these alleged losses,—losses, in a national view, inexpressibly slight at the most, must be set the great advantages to be derived from the use of India built shipping, in the export trade from India to this country. Those advantages, Sir, I have not, from the hope of quieting jealousy, disguised. Exaggerated, as, in some respects, they have been (I allude to the excellent quality of teak-built vessels,) they are most important; and we shall fearlessly disclose them, in all their extent, in order that the public may know what it is which they are required to sacrifice out of regard for individual interests. I am well aware, that individual interests are ever to be treated with respect. I would pay to them every degree of respect, and of homage, which should not compromise a higher object,—the interests of the nation. It is in that view I would take up the present question. If I have done the slightest justice to my own conception, I have, from first to last, upheld it as a public question. It is in that light I have considered it; and I should disdain to place it in any other. So far as I am authorized, from the situation which I unworthily fill, it is in that light that I would recommend it to the attention of the Committee, of Parliament, and of the Nation.

With much gratitude to the Committee, for their kindness in listening to so long and fatiguing a detail, I shall, in conclusion, shortly remind

them of the leading points, which I have ventured to submit to their consideration.

I have, in the first place, stated the positive reasons in favor of the admission of India built vessels into the trade between India and this country;—reasons, first of policy, and then of justice.—Reasons of policy, and these either of a lasting nature, or arising from occasional circumstances: the former are such as grow out of the wants, means, resources, and situation, of British India: to the latter head may be referred, the expediency of husbanding our native stock of timber, exhausted, as it has been, in a peculiar degree, by the demands of a state of unexampled warfare.—Reasons of justice,—the consideration due to the commercial and political interests of the inhabitants of British India, to the obligations of our national honor, and the support of our national fame.

I have next commented on the objections principally urged against this measure; and first, and chiefly, I have adverted to the alarms which have been propagated respecting its probable effects on our naval interests. I have endeavoured to shew, that nothing can be more fallacious than the notion, that the private ship-building establishments of this country, depend, almost exclusively, on the building and repairing of East Indiamen;—that nothing can be more fallacious than the notion, that the present bill will deprive the yards on the Thames of every particle of that employment, whatever be its value;—that nothing, I say, can be more fallacious than these two notions, excepting a third supposition, according to which the safety and welfare of a few private yards, on the Thames, absolutely, and essentially, involves the safety and welfare of the public navy. I have shewn further, that the evil consequences forboded, from the loss of a market for our native timber, and from an emigration of our native shipwrights to foreign countries, can have no existence, but in imagination.

I have then proceeded to consider, more diffusely than I could have wished, but, perhaps, more briefly than the nature of the case might have warranted, the objections which have been adduced against the bill, first, on the alleged authority of the British navigation acts, and then on the ground of the injury to be apprehended from the establishment of a part of the naval resources, and strength of the nation, in her Asiatic de-

pendencies, subject as such establishments are represented to be to the combined disadvantages of a situation, at once distant and precarious; and I have failed of my purpose if I have not proved those objections to be groundless.

With the consideration of these topics, I have interwoven that of some others, which scarcely require particular recapitulation.

Whatever, in this exposition, has been deficient, I have no doubt, that my learned friend, Mr. Spankie, when it falls on him to address the Committee, will fully supply. In the mean time, I have the firmest belief, that the goodness of the cause, which I have supported, will compensate for the weakness of the advocate, and while I throw myself on the mercy of the Committee, I very securely confide my clients to their justice.

FINIS.

APPENDIX.

ABSTRACTS A. B. and D. given in on the part of the Thames Ship Builders.

ABSTRACTS U, W, X, Y, and Z. added in support of the Bill.

The additional Abstracts which follow are made from the Minutes of Evidence, according to the respective references.

ABSTRACT (A.) Minute of Evidence, page 13.

An Account of the Number of Ships built in India, and admitted to Registry, from 1794 to 1813; and of some others admitted to entry, but not registered.

Ships admitted to registry	-	-	-	76	—	Tons. 47,475
Of Ships admitted to entry, and not registered	8	—	—	—	—	9,003

Total ships	-	-	-	84	—	56,478
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ABSTRACT (B.) Minutes of Evidence, page 14.

ABSTRACT of the Account of the Number of India-built Ships admitted to Registry since 1793.

Years.	Ships.	Tonnage.
1794	1	654
1795	—	—
1796	14	8,187
1797	7	4,190
1798	2	1,061
1799	6	4,782 ¹² / ₉₄
1800	6	3,229 ³⁹ / ₉₄
1801	3	2,162 ⁵¹ / ₉₄
1802	10	6,434 ⁷⁴ / ₉₄
1803	—	—
1804	3	1,455 ⁶¹ / ₉₄
1805	1	119 ⁶⁸ / ₉₄
1806	3	1,340 ¹⁰ / ₉₄
1807	—	—
1808	1	477 ⁴⁰ / ₉₄
1809	—	—
1810	5	3,894 ⁴³ / ₉₄
1811	3	1,854 ⁶⁰ / ₉₄
1812	7	4,712 ⁵⁸ / ₉₄
1813	4	2,924 ⁷⁵ / ₉₄
Total	76	47,475 ⁵⁸ / ₉₄

ABSTRACT (D.) Minutes of Evidence, page 16.

ABSTRACT of part of the two Accounts printed by Order of the House of Commons, of the 15th day of March and the first day of June, 1813, of the Ships built in the River Thames, from 1795 to 1813, both inclusive, for the East India Company's Service, and for the merchants' service; distinguishing each.

SHIPS built in the river Thames, for the East India Company's Service.			SHIPS, VESSELS, and River CRAFT built in the River Thames, not for the East India Company.		
YEARS.	SHIPS.	Amount of their Tonnage	SHIPS.	TONNAGE.	
				TOTAL.	Average of each Ship of this class.
1795 . .	1	1,439	20	1,706	85
1796 . .	17	19,918	27	1,536	53
1797 . .	4	5,239	36	2,812	78
1798 . .	6	4,788	34	1,971	58
1799 . .	10	8,201	44	4,700	107
1800 . .	5	5,385	48	5,329	111
1801 . .	8	8,066	46	2,960	64
1802 . .	16	14,682	38	2,670	70
1803 . .	4	3,721	45	2,172	48
1804 . .	6	4,698	26	1,388	53
1805 . .	2	1,638	26	1,401	54
1806 . .	1	1,273	22	1,324	60
1807 . .	3	3,097	24	989	41
1808 . .	1	820	18	867	48
1809 . .	1	955	15	808	54
1810 . .	6	6,829	30	4,877	162
1811 . .	6	6,711	24	2,755	115
1812 . .	1	1,257	19	1,280	67
1813 . .	—	—	—	—	—
1814 . .	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL .	98	98,717	542	41,552	76

Average building per annum, during these 10 years, seven ships.

Ditto--- during these 10 years, two ships.

FURTHER ABSTRACT, ADDUCED BY THAMES SHIP-BUILDERS, PAGE 16, OF MINUTES.

98 Ships built in 19 years in the river Thames, for the East India company's service } Average 1,007 tons each.

542 Ships, vessels and river craft, built there in the like period, not for the East India company's service } Average 76 tons each.

Built in the port of London, for the East India company, from 1795 to 1804 } Ships 77. Tons 76,127

Ditto . . . from 1805 to 1814 } Ships 21. Tons 22,590.

Decrease of building of East Indiamen in the Thames since 1804. } Ships 56. Tons 53,537.

ABSTRACT (U.) Page 639 in Minutes.

ABSTRACT of several Accounts of the Ships built in the River Thames, from 1794 to 1813, both inclusive, for the service of the East India Company, and for Government; distinguishing the Number and Tonnage of each; built by the five principal Builders by whom those Accounts have been rendered to the Committee, as per pages of Minutes here specified.

	Built for the India Company.		Built for Government.		Page of Minutes.
	N ^o of Ships.	Tonnage.	N ^o of Ships.	Tonnage.	
Messrs. Wigram & Co. }	42	44,018	55	45,644	434
- - Wells & Co. }	16	16,422	23	19,529	& 439
Messrs. Barnard & Co. -	17	16,379	32	21,831	431
Messrs. Brent & Co. - -	14	16,022	32	21,485	357
Messrs. Pitcher & Co. -	6	4,948	25	10,926	& 358
Messrs. Dudman & Co. -	95	97,789	167	119,415	378
					426

It appears by Mr. Truefit's evidence, page 372, that three other ships were, in the last 11 years, built by Mr. Mestaer, for the service of the East India Company, making the whole number 98, as per Abstract (D.) page 16 of Minutes.

ABSTRACT (W.)—Minutes, page 640.

ABSTRACT from two Accounts in the Minutes, pages 400 and 434; shewing the Number of Workmen employed by Messrs. WIGRAM and Co.; and of the Indiamen built by them in each year; from 1804 to 1813, inclusive.

Years.	Workmen employed by Messrs. Wigram & Co.	Indiamen built.
1804.	498.	None.
1805.	604.	None.
1806.	598.	One.
1807.	505.	None.
1808.	496.	Two.
1809.	462.	None.
1810.	554.	One.
1811.	616.	Three.
1812.	392.	One.
1813.	738.	One.

Abstract from Two Accounts in the Minutes, pages 400 and 357; showing the Number of Workmen employed by Messrs. Brent and Co.; and of the Indiamen built by them in each year; from 1804 to 1813, inclusive.

Years.	Workmen employed by Messrs. Brent & Co.	Indiamen built.
1804.	401.	None.
1805.	418.	None.
1806.	364.	None.
1807.	289.	None.
1808.	403.	None.
1809.	528.	None.
1810.	452.	One.
1811.	483.	Two.
1812.	452.	None.
1813.	134.	

ABSTRACT (X.)

“ According to the return of East India-built ships which have obtained British registers since 1793, presented to the House of Commons on the 11th of May 1813, per House of Commons, printed Paper 245, and Abstract (B,) Minutes of Evidence page 14. The same amounted to

76 Ships	-	tonnage without fractions	47,449
11 Ships	-	added per Return 23d of April 1814, Minutes of Evidence, page 87	tonnage 9,443
6 Ships	-	added per Return 24th of May 1814, Minutes of Evidence, page 468	tonnage 2,726
1 Ship	-	The Inglis, not included in any of the said Returns, but being one of the eight ships referred to in Abstract (A,) printed minutes, page 13	tonnage 1,321

94 Ships Total Tonnage - - 60,939

To be accounted for, and accounted for by Abstract (Y.)

In the above statement are not included two other ships in Abstract (A.) viz. the Honourable Company's own ships, the Sir Edward Hughes and Britannia, which were in the service before 1793, and have been some time out of it; nor four out of the five other ships referred to in that Abstract (A,) such four ships not having arrived in England.

ABSTRACT (Y.) MINUTES OF EVIDENCE, Page 636.

Containing a List of all the Ships and Vessels built in Asia, which have been admitted to Registry in Great Britain, from 1st January, 1794, according to Abstract X., with the Name and Tonnage of each Ship and Vessel, distinguishing the Countries and Places where built, when admitted to British Registry, and how employed or disposed of.

Number of Ships.	How employed, or disposed of.	Tonnage.
8	Employed in the East India Company's regular service	9,254
6	Employed in the Company's extra service	4,228
15	Employed in the private trade between this country and India	9,938
10	Employed in the private trade between this country and India, on their first voyage home	6,381
7	Employed in the West India trade	2,486
5	Employed in the transport service, and sold to Government	2,803
3	Employed as store-ships, and sold to Government	2,623
2	Employed carrying convicts to Botany Bay	1,609
1	Sold to the Portuguese	560
32	Lost, burnt, or taken	19,769
5	Uncertain how employed	1,288
Total 94		Tot. 60,939

ABSTRACT (Z.) Page 638, in Minutes.

ABSTRACT from Two Statements delivered by the Navy Office, 19th of May and 3d June, 1814. Minutes of Evidence, pages 292 and 498; shewing the Quantities of English Oak Timber, Knees, Thickstuff, and Plank, expended in His Majesty's several Dock Yards, compared to the Expenditure of Foreign Oak Timber, Knees, Thickstuff, and Plank, in the following Years.

DESCRIPTION.	1803.	1804.	1805.	1806.	1807.	1808.	1809.	1810.	1811.	1812.
	LOADS.	LOADS.	LOADS.	LOADS.	LOADS.	LOADS.	LOADS.	LOADS.	LOADS.	LOADS.
English Oak Timber and Knees } in Rough Contents . . . }	21,427	30,728	25,556	37,813	23,903	26,674	32,694	27,014	25,522	34,403
English Thickstuff and Plank .	7,823	12,105	6,266	9,048	10,330	7,365	11,664	10,283	5,405	9,866
TOTAL . .	29,250	42,833	31,822	46,861	34,233	34,039	44,358	37,297	30,927	44,269
Foreign Oak Timber and Knees	5,937	2,709	1,295	4,202	5,365	16,355	13,157	7,517	13,013	25,633
Foreign Thickstuff and Plank .	4,847	5,852	8,389	8,169	6,232	10,492	6,960	2,979	4,259	4,444
TOTAL . .	10,784	8,561	9,684	12,371	11,597	26,847	20,117	10,496	17,252	30,077

No. 1.

ABSTRACT from an Account of Ships, both Regular and Extra, in the Employ of the East India Company, on the 15th of June, 1814; specifying the Number whose Engagements expire with their present Voyages; the Number having One Voyage only to perform, and the Number having Two or more Voyages. See Minutes of Evidence, page 694.

Regular	-	24	} Total, 40 Ships, Engagements expire with their present Voyage.
Extra	-	16	
Regular	-	6	- - 6 Ships, Having one Voyage only to perform.
Regular	-	31	} - - 37 Ships, Have two or more Voyages to perform.
Extra	-	6	
Company's own Ship	-	1	
Total	-	84	

This List is independent of a Number of Ships whose Contracts have terminated during the last 12 months.

ABSTRACT of the number of Loads of Timber said to be standing on the undermentioned places.

	According to the statements of Mr. Major Bull, Minutes of Evidence, pages 301, 302, and 305, exclusive of ornamental timber.		According to the actual survey of Mr. Fernor, including ornamental timber. Paper of Minutes, pages 582, 3, 4.	
	from 10	to	Loads.	Feet.
In the parishes of Highblerc and Burghclerc	—	—	2661	42
In the parishes of Sedmonton, Kingsclerc, and Echenswell	7	—	1756	10
In the parishes of Wasing and Aldermerston	—	—	1595	45
In the parishes of Inglefield Benham, and Bradfield	4	—	1323	11
Bucklebury and Donnington	15	—	1417	25
Crookham and Brimpton	1	—	359	20
Laudleford, Woodspeen, and Ham	2	—	1334	38
In Ewhurst, and adjacent parishes	5	—	2732	25
At Hampstead and Woodhay	3	—	1002	
Marlborough Forest, at a rough calculation, valued by Mr. Major Bull at £600,000	—	30	2693	25
Other estates of Lord Aylesbury, adjoining	—	—	2190	25
	82,000	to	19,007	16
			103,000	