

SPEECH
OF
JOSEPH MARRYAT, ESQ.,
IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,
ON
MONDAY, JUNE 5, 1820,
UPON THE
Petition of the Ship Owners
OF THE PORT OF LONDON,
AGAINST ANY ALTERATION IN THE DUTIES
ON TIMBER.

PUBLISHED BY THE COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIETY
OF SHIP OWNERS.


SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

1820.

S P E E C H,

&c. &c.



MR. SPEAKER,

I FEEL it my duty to bear my testimony to the truth of the allegations contained in the petition now in the hands of my honorable friend, the Member for the City of London; and to give my best support to the prayer of the petitioners.

They state that they are laboring under great and serious difficulties, as well from the depression of commerce, as from the competition of foreign ship owners: and the facts of the case unfortunately bear them out too well in the assertion; for no description of property has, I believe, been depreciated to such an extent as that of the British ship owners. I admit, that on the breaking out of the late war, the value of shipping rose, the rate of freight advanced, and that the ship owners, in common with the landholders, the manufacturers, and all other classes of the community, enjoyed for a time a considerable share of prosperity. Ships, however, are but of limited duration; they last from fifteen to twenty years, according to the goodness of the materials of which they are built. The war continued more than twenty years; and therefore almost every merchant vessel now in use, has been built at the high rate of war charges. The war gave us a monopoly of the carrying trade of almost all the world, and ships were built to meet the demand; but at the peace we restored most of the colonies we had conquered, to their former owners, and each nation resumed that share of commerce which she had formerly enjoyed.

To add to the distress of the ship owners, near a thousand sail of vessels which had been engaged in the transport service, were at that very time discharged. The surplus of tonnage then became so great, that it was impossible to procure employment for vessels, even at freights which would pay the expenses of navigating them; and the consequence was, a great depreciation in their value. In proof of this, I will state to the House, that about the year 1810, I built one ship and purchased another, of rather more than four hundred tons burden. Each of these ships cost me 14,000*l.* The depreciation in their value, arising from age, may be estimated at 5,000*l.*; but such has been the fall in the price of ships, that these vessels are only valued, in the policies of insurance effected upon them for the voyages on which they are now engaged, at 3,800*l.* each.

It would be unfair not to admit, that the return of peace did fortunately open some new channels of trade, which provided employment for part of our surplus shipping. The private trade to India, which was opened on the renewal of the Company's charter, was one of this description; and according to the statement of a noble Lord in another place, 61,000 tons of British shipping were employed in it last year. The losses, however, in this branch of trade, have been so great, that many of the ships at first engaged in it have quitted it for the timber trade to the British Colonies in North America, and others are daily following their example. Peace also restored a free communication between the powers in the Mediterranean, and for some time we enjoyed almost a monopoly of their carrying trade. It is well known that the British flag was the only European flag respected by the Barbary powers. Our ships therefore, navigated the Mediterranean in perfect security, and were insured at peace premiums; while those of other nations were exposed to capture, and consequently were obliged to pay war premiums. Indeed, they had not only to insure their ships and cargoes, but their crews also; for such policies were frequently effected at Lloyd's. The masters were usually valued at 100*l.*, the mates at 80*l.*, and the seamen at 50*l.* each; which sums, in case of capture, were appropriated to the redemption of the parties. This state of things gave us so decided a superiority in the carrying trade of the Mediterranean, that not less than five hundred sail of British ships were employed in the corn trade, between the Black Sea and the different ports of Italy, exclusive of the trade from one part of the Mediterranean to another. But, Sir, in one of those fits of magnanimity to which we became subject, in consequence of being hailed as the deliverers of Europe, we thought proper to equip an armament against the Dey of Algiers, (the only ally who remained faithful to us during the whole war,) in order

to put an end to the predatory practices of the Barbary powers : and we certainly did achieve the liberation of about five hundred Sardinians, Neapolitans, and other foreigners, at the expense of the limbs and lives of a far greater number of British seamen ; of more (as I understand) than a million of money ; and the farther expense, of throwing about eight hundred British ships and ten thousand British seamen out of employment : for the result of this enterprise was, that all other European powers could navigate the Mediterranean with the same security as ourselves, and being able to sail at less expense than we can do, they immediately supplanted us in this carrying trade, which does not, I believe, give employment to one single British ship at the present moment. The other branch of trade which opened on the return of peace, and by far the most extensive and important of the whole, is the timber trade with the British Colonies in North America, which last year employed no less than one thousand five hundred and twenty sail of vessels, of three hundred and forty thousand tons burden, and navigated by seventeen thousand six hundred British seamen. As I before observed, the private trade to India is on the decline, and the carrying trade in the Mediterranean is totally lost ; this trade therefore, is the sheet anchor, the last remaining hope of the ship owners, and the House cannot wonder at the alarm they express in their petition, at an attempt to deprive them of this their only resource.

So far from the interests of the ship owners being in an improving state, the depreciation in their property is increasing more rapidly than ever, as I shall prove, by quoting actual sales of ships, which have taken place within these few months, owing to the insolvency of their owners. The *Sesostris*, of four hundred and eighty-seven tons burden, was launched in 1818, and cost 12,175*l*. She was sold in 1820, after having made one voyage, for 6,300*l*. The *Midas*, of four hundred and twenty tons, was valued in 1818, at 6,300*l*. ; was repaired and coppered that year at Liverpool, at an expense of 3,500*l*. ; and in 1820, was sold for 3,200*l*. The *Hebe*, of four hundred and seventeen tons, was valued in 1818, at 6,000*l*. ; and sold in 1820, for 3,250*l*. The *St. Patrick* cost, in repairs and fitting, in 1818, independent of the then value of the ship, 7,100*l*. ; and was sold in 1820, for 3,000*l*. The *Lady Raffles*, of six hundred and forty-six tons, was built in 1817, and cost 23,000*l*. ; after making one voyage only, she was sold in 1820, for between 12 and 13,000*l*. These facts show the utter inability of the ship owners to bear any farther disadvantage, and that the loss of the timber trade with the British Colonies in North America, must complete their ruin.

If it is supposed that the ships and seamen now employed in bringing timber from the British Colonies, might be engaged in the same trade to the north of Europe, the answer is, that two circum-

stances render this impossible. In the first place, the voyage to the Baltic is so much shorter than that to North America, that the same trade would not occupy half the number of ships, or men. In the next place, all the trade between Great Britain and her colonies must be carried on in British ships only ; but that with the Baltic would be carried on chiefly in foreign ships. I have moved for returns which will lay the present state of this trade fully before the House ; but, in the mean time, I am enabled to state, from official documents, that of 101,117 tons of shipping, employed last year, in the trade between this country and Norway and Sweden, only eighteen thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven tons were British, and eighty-one thousand seven hundred and forty tons were foreign. This must be so in the nature of things ; for timber, iron, hemp, flax, provisions of all sorts, and seamen's wages, are much lower in the north of Europe than in Great Britain. The heavy taxation to which we are necessarily subject, in order to provide for the interest of our national debt, raises the price of labor, and of every thing that is produced by labor ; and therefore, to expect that a country burdened with taxation, as this is, can compete with other countries where taxation is comparatively light, is to suppose that a horse staggering under a heavy load, is likely to win a race against one that carries only feather weight. If the present protecting duties, in favor of timber from the British Colonies only are reduced, and the trade transferred to the Baltic, the inevitable consequence will be, that the tonnage employed in it will be diminished one half, and that of that half four-fifths will be foreign ; so that twelve or thirteen hundred sail of British shipping must either remain without employment, or be thrown on the other already overloaded branches of British commerce, to the incalculable injury of ship owners.

The alteration in these protecting duties was first recommended to the House by the Honorable Member for Taunton, on presenting a petition from certain merchants of the City of London, praying for the abolition of all duties merely protective from foreign competition. The Right Honorable Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, who expressed strong objections to taking up the doctrines contained in that petition, as general rules of practice, nevertheless coincided with him in the expediency of his suggestion as to the protecting duties on foreign timber, and announced his intention of bringing forward some proposition of that sort, in the course of the present session of Parliament. I really heard that declaration both with surprise and concern ; with surprise, as I had ever been accustomed to hear him support measures founded on true principles of commercial policy ; and with concern, as I am conscientiously persuaded, that of all the wild and extravagant

projects that would follow the unqualified adoption of the principles so broadly laid down in that petition, (but which the Honorable Member who presented it most judiciously qualified in his speech,) none could be imagined more pregnant with mischief, not only to the interests of the ship owners, but to the best interests of the country at large, than the very measure which the President of the Board of Trade thought proper to stamp with the seal of his approbation.

Before I point out the mischiefs to which I have alluded, I shall make a few observations upon the specious arguments by which the measure in contemplation has been supported.

In the first place, it has been argued as if it was a question between parties who have equal claims to our preference; whereas, in point of fact, it is a question between our own fellow-subjects and foreigners. We have been told that we ought to consider all the world as members of one great family. Now, Sir, I cannot carry my notions of consanguinity quite so far. I am ready to consider all the inhabitants of my own country as one great family; but I must consider the inhabitants of all other countries as so many other great families; and when I am called upon to injure my own countrymen in order to benefit them, I look upon the application in the same light as if I were desired to starve my own children, in order to provide for the children of strangers, and reject it accordingly.

Then, Sir, we are told that the protection we give to the timber trade with our own Colonies, is dictated by a spirit of hostility towards the northern powers of Europe, and has excited great dissatisfaction against us throughout the Continent. The system of imposing protecting duties, in favor of the produce of their colonies, has uniformly been acted upon for centuries past, and continues to be acted upon to the present moment, by every power in Europe; and therefore no umbrage can reasonably be taken against us, for adhering to the universal practice. But the complaint, that this branch of trade with our Colonies originated in a spirit of hostility towards the northern powers, comes with a very bad grace from them, as the truth is, that it originated not only in their hostility, but in their perfidy and ill-faith towards us. These powers, notwithstanding the Berlin and Milan decrees of Buonaparte, continued an intercourse with this country, which was carried on by means of licenses, till the year 1811, when, at the command of their great master and our enemy, by a sudden and simultaneous movement, they confiscated every vessel in their ports that came from this country, together with their cargoes, to the value of not less than seven millions of money. They probably fancied that we were dependent upon

them for our supply of timber, hemp, and other naval stores ; and that by cutting off all communication with us, they would oblige us to make peace on such terms as they might think proper to impose. But Great Britain, excluded from the old world, found out a new one in her own Colonies ; and discovered resources in them, which enabled her not only to maintain the contest, but to bring it at length to a successful and glorious termination. She then explored the forests of Canada, and drew from them those supplies of timber which she had formerly procured from the Baltic ; and now, that this trade has grown up to its present height, and is carried on with equal advantage to ourselves and to our colonies, we must surely be dotards and idiots to sacrifice our mutual prosperity, at the request and for the benefit of those who wish to regain that which they lost by their own ill-faith and injustice.

Great stress is laid on the advantage we should derive from what is called a more liberal system towards foreign powers ; and we are told, that if we take more from them they will take more from us. These cargoes of timber, if imported from our own Colonies, are and must be paid for in goods from this country, as they are allowed no commercial intercourse with any other ; but if imported from the Baltic, they will be drawn for in bills of exchange, and the proceeds be invested wherever they can be employed to the best advantage. That foreigners can undersell us, is not only matter of just inference, from the weight of taxation under which we labor, and from which they are exempt, but is also a plain matter of fact, admitting of demonstration. The Havannah is a free port, into which the goods of all nations are admitted on equal terms : the number of vessels that entered there last year from Great Britain, was less than one in ten of those that entered from the other countries of Europe ; a plain proof that nine-tenths of the articles required for the consumption of the inhabitants of Cuba are procured cheaper from other countries than from Great Britain. This fact is confirmed by another, of equal notoriety, that the vessels engaged in the timber trade from the Baltic, instead of taking goods from this country in return for their cargoes, were so generally in the habit of going home in ballast, that in order to encourage them to take some small portion of British manufactures, an Order in Council was issued, permitting the masters and crews to ship private ventures for their own account, without subjecting the vessels to any extra expense in clearing at the Custom-house, No great extension of the sale of our manufactures in Europe appears practicable, because every manufacturing nation has adopted a system similar to our own, and endeavours to secure the supply of its home consumption, for the encouragement of

the industry of its own subjects. The only marts for our manufactures which we can hope to improve, are our Colonies, and those distant nations who do not manufacture for themselves. Our home consumption, and our Colonies and Dependencies, take off seven-eighths of all our manufactures; and to throw this trade open, as the opposers of all restrictions advise, in order to have a chance of extending the other one-eighth, would be acting with the desperation of a gamester, who would play with the odds seven to one against himself, rather than not play at all.

Another argument used in favor of procuring this timber from the Baltic is, the very inferior quality of that which is brought from North America. It cannot be denied, that all new concerns are conducted with less expertness than those which have been long established. The American logs of timber are not so neatly squared as those from the Baltic, and measure to great disadvantage: but I understand that this defect is gradually decreasing, and that the difference between the one and the other, in this respect, will soon be imperceptible. Much of the prejudice entertained against American timber, arose from its being applied to purposes for which it was unfit: some particular descriptions of it, which will last under cover, instead of being used for inside work, were exposed to the weather, and consequently soon decayed: but as the quality of it became better understood, this objection to it was removed. With respect to its general inferiority, the demand for it, such as it is, and the repute in which it is held, are proved beyond the reach of controversy, by the increase of the trade, from eighty thousand tons of shipping that were employed to bring it in 1811, to three hundred and forty thousand tons in the year 1819.

Other advocates for the Baltic timber assert, that the quantity of tonnage employed in bringing timber from the British Colonies last year, was the effect of over-trading; and that the wood lies on hand and cannot be sold. The increase in the tonnage has not been sudden, but gradual and progressive, and therefore does not wear the appearance of over-trading; but if it really is so losing a trade, it must soon die a natural death, and therefore to put an end to it by new legislative enactments is altogether unnecessary.

An Honorable Baronet has told the House, that this timber is not the produce of Canada, but of the United States of America. Admitting this, for the sake of argument, I should say, that whether we procure our timber from one neutral power or from another, is a matter of indifference; but that the securing the freight of it to British ships is a matter of great importance; and that this object, which is effected by importing it from the British

Colonies, would be lost by importing it from the Baltic. I readily concede to the honorable Baronet, that at the commencement of this trade, when we were suddenly excluded from the Baltic, the demand for timber was so great, the price so high, and our own establishments for procuring it so inadequate, that the greater part of what was shipped from Canada came from the United States; but I understand that at present our establishments are competent to the object; that our own population would be jealous of any interference with the employment on which they depend for subsistence, and that the price of the timber is so low, that it would not bear the charges of a double transport. I therefore believe the whole of the actual import to be the produce of our own Colonies.

We are reproached with folly, for bringing timber from such a distance, when we might procure it so much nearer home; and it is wittily observed, that it would be an improvement of the present system, to pass a law obliging all the vessels engaged in this trade with the British Colonies, to return by the way of the Cape of Good Hope; or to enact, that the colliers from Newcastle, instead of coming direct to London, should go north-about; as these measures would give still greater employment to seamen, at the expense of the consumers of the different cargoes. It is easy to place any subject in a ridiculous point of view by exaggeration. In this manner, a likeness is converted into a caricature. The disadvantage to the consumers of timber, in consequence of its being brought from the British Colonies in North America, is highly exaggerated. If brought from the Baltic, more money is paid for the timber and less for the freight; if from our own Colonies in North America, less is paid for the timber and more for the freight; but the price to the consumer is not materially enhanced. If, however, this were the case, Great Britain would be acting on that system of policy which has governed her conduct in various similar instances. It has ever been her paramount object to keep up a numerous and hardy race of seamen, whose services she may command in time of war; and this she can only accomplish by so extending her carrying trade as to find them employment in time of peace. With this view, she gives encouragement to the Ship Owners, not for their own sakes, but as the only instruments with which she can act, in pursuing her great object, the support of her naval power. With this view she gives bounties upon her fisheries, which this House has thought it wise to renew this present session of Parliament. With this view she prohibits the supply of this metropolis with coals from the nearest mines, by means of canals; but obliges the inhabitants, by law, to import them coastwise,

from a greater distance and at a heavier expense. With the same view she formerly gave bounties also on the importation of masts, timber, deals, and staves, from the British Colonies in North America, which were only discontinued in the year 1781; and, in the same spirit, she now encourages that trade in British ships, by the protecting duties on timber imported from the Baltic in foreign ships. All these measures are considered, by our modern political economists, as great practical errors, as violations of their rule, to buy every thing where it can be bought cheapest. They would permit our fish, our coals, our timber, our colonial produce, and all other commodities, to be imported by foreigners. By this system they might, perhaps, make some saving in the freight of these articles, but it would be at the expense of that pearl of high price, our naval supremacy; for if we had no carrying trade we could have no seamen, if we had no seamen we could have no navy, if we had no navy we could have no security for maintaining our independence, but must run the risk of sinking into the situation of tributaries to some foreign power; and then we should find these cheap articles dear indeed. If the British lion, like the lion in the fable, will suffer his teeth to be drawn and his claws to be pared, he must expect, like him, to have his brains knocked out for his folly. There is a false economy in public, as well as in private life. More considerations than the mere prime cost, enter into the question of, whether articles are really cheap or dear; and unless we value pounds, shillings, and pence, more than either our safety or our glory, we shall never adopt the estimates of these advisers.

Having thus noticed the different arguments that have been urged, in favor of the transfer of the timber trade from our own Colonies to the northern powers of Europe, I shall now point out the mischiefs that would attend this measure.

Official documents show, that this trade actually furnishes employment for one thousand five hundred and twenty-five sail of British vessels, manned with seventeen thousand six hundred and thirty-four seamen, being one seventh part of the whole carrying trade of Great Britain. The loss of such a trade would produce the most serious effects at any time, but more particularly in the present state of this country. It would occasion such a farther depreciation, in the already dreadfully depreciated property of the British Ship Owners, as must involve them, and all those numerous bodies of men whose interests are intermingled with theirs, in absolute ruin. The consequences of the loss of our carrying trade in the Mediterranean, after the expedition against Algiers, showed themselves in the number of distressed seamen who wandered, without food or shelter, about our streets. Their pitiable state excited general commiseration, and

temporary relief was afforded them, by a liberal and patriotic subscription, till they were provided for in the following spring, by this very timber trade to the British Colonies. The loss of this trade would again plunge them into aggravated distress, and leave them without resource. They must either find employment abroad, and add to the naval force of foreign powers what they deducted from that of Great Britain, or be maintained by their respective parishes, and thus increase the weight of our already enormous poor rates. Our exports to the British Colonies, which have kept pace with the increase of this trade, must dwindle into insignificance; and the manufacturers and artisans who now find occupation, and the means of subsistence for themselves and their families, in preparing goods for that market, will, like the seamen, be thrown out of employment, and must be maintained at the public expense.

The British landholders also have a strong interest in this question. The present duties on foreign timber are not only a protection to colonial timber, but to British timber also, the price of which would fall, in proportion to the extent of the reduction on those duties. I have lately purchased British fir, at from 3*l.* 5*s.* to 3*l.* 15*s.* per load, which is certainly not more than a remunerating price to the grower; and any farther reduction would discourage gentlemen from extending those plantations, which contribute to the present embellishment, and may be essential to the future defence of the country. The British landholder is as much entitled to protection against foreign timber as against foreign corn: and though the advocates for the system of buying every thing where they can buy it cheapest, wave the application of their principle to the Corn Laws for the present, yet, if they carry their point as to timber, they will establish a precedent against the landholder, of which they will avail themselves hereafter. *Obsta principiis* is a good maxim in politics as well as in medicine; and if the landholders are wise, they will resist, in the first instance, any interference with that protection which they derive under the existing laws.

Another mischief would attend the proposed transfer of this trade, which ought not to escape notice. Our commerce with our own Colonies is under our own control, and independent of the decrees of any Emperor, or the non-intercourse act of any foreign power; but that with other nations, depends only upon the will and pleasure of their respective governments, and by any change of policy on their part may be shut against us in a moment. In proportion as we extend the former we become independent; but in proportion as we extend the latter we become dependent; and (as the experience of the last war has taught us) expose

ourselves to sudden revulsions, which may not only interrupt our national prosperity, but endanger our domestic tranquillity.

An evil of great magnitude, that would arise from the loss of the trade with the British Colonies, is the discouragement of emigration. Nothing can be of more importance to a country having a redundant population, without adequate means of employment at home, than to send her surplus numbers abroad, to situations where their labors will still contribute to her advantage. With this view, we voted, last session of Parliament, 50,000*l.* to assist individuals emigrating to the Cape of Good Hope; and this sum, I understand, has not only been expended, but exceeded, without providing means of conveyance for more than a small proportion of those who wished to embark for that destination. Within these few years, not less than fifty thousand individuals are said to have emigrated to Canada, at their own expense, and more are constantly embarking. On this point I speak from actual knowledge; several families having gone, some time ago, from the place which I have the honor to represent, and from my having been employed within these few weeks to engage a passage for others, who have been induced by their representations to follow their example. I understand, too, that the tide of population, which ever follows encouragement, has set in very strongly to our Colonies, from the frontiers of the United States, since the establishment of this timber trade; and I firmly believe that, whether we shall establish in Canada a numerous, flourishing, and well-affected population, able and willing to serve as an effectual barrier against the future ambition of the government of the United States; or whether we shall have a thin, distressed, and disaffected population, ready to submit to the first invader, depends upon the decision we shall come to on the present subject.

The House ought to know, that the existing duties on timber, so far from depriving the northern powers of Europe of a fair participation in this trade, and operating as prohibitory duties, actually give them a greater share of it than is enjoyed by our own Colonies. I have moved for papers which will give full information on this head; but, in the mean time, I am enabled to state the comparative imports into the port of London, for the last year, which were as follows:

Pieces of timber from our American Colonies	52,412
Ditto from the Baltic and Norway.....	58,994
Deals from the former.....	812,699
Ditto from the latter.....	1,622,440
Staves from our American Colonies.....	1,236,095
Ditto from foreign powers.....	1,897,902

From this comparison, the House may judge of the probable import into the other ports of the United Kingdom; and the conclusion to which it leads is, that nothing can be more unreasonable than the complaints of foreign powers, of those existing duties, which place them at least on an equal footing with our own Colonies. The complaint would come with more justice from the other parties, that we do not give them that full protection in our home market which, according to our colonial system, is the return to which they are entitled, for that double monopoly we impose upon them, of taking every thing from, and sending every thing to, the mother country, in British ships; thus making them marts for the consumption of her manufactures and the foundation of her naval power. Even the most strenuous advocates for free trade have applauded this system. Dr. Adam Smith, speaking of our navigation law, says, "It is not impossible that some of the regulations of this famous act may have proceeded from national animosity; they are as wise, however, as if they had all been dictated by the most deliberate wisdom." In a subsequent passage he observes, "the act of navigation is not favorable to foreign commerce, or to the growth of that opulence that can arise from it;" and, after explaining this point, he concludes thus: "As defence, however, is of much more importance than opulence, the act of navigation is, perhaps, the wisest of all the commercial regulations of England." This testimony is the more valuable, as coming from the mouth of an unwilling witness, one of the greatest opposers of all commercial restrictions; who, however, acknowledges, that every other consideration ought to give way to the paramount object of maintaining our naval supremacy.

Some foreign writers, of considerable eminence, have urged the same system that is now contended for by many of our own countrymen; the taking off all commercial restrictions, and throwing trade entirely open. One of them, a man whose views of commercial and colonial policy are equally acute and profound, I mean the Abbé de Pradt, avows his object to be, not to increase but to diminish our national prosperity, and to apportion it more equally among the other powers of Europe. He declares, that our colonial and commercial monopoly is so predominant, that it calls for a coalition of all other nations to put it down, as much as such a coalition was called for to put down the military despotism of Buonaparte. (1) He says, that our Colonies form a chain of fortresses that engirt the globe, and command the entrance of every sea; that we confine all the other nations of the world captives in their respective positions, of which we, their gaoler, hold the key: (2) that our maritime superiority is so absolute, that unless the independence of the Colonies, and a free trade with them can be

obtained, all Europe ought to burn their ships at once, as they are reserved for no other fate than to be carried in triumph into the Thames. (3) He lays down principles of colonial policy, shows that by conforming to them we have succeeded; that other nations by deviating from them have failed; and ascribes our prosperity to the superior wisdom of our political institutions. (4) Here, indeed, he differs widely from our friends at home, who would persuade us that they are founded in folly, and that the sooner we get rid of them the better: but, if the tree is to be known by its fruit, (as we are taught by High Authority to believe,) we must admit the Abbé de Pradt to have taken the more correct view of this subject. The Abbé, too, tells us, that we ought to consider all the world as one large family; and to throw all the commercial riches of the world into one common stock, into which every individual might put his hand, and take out just what he wanted for his own use. (5) But, Sir, we are the parties who must contribute almost the whole of this common stock; and should recollect, that if so many hands are put into it, very little will come to our share. This proposal reminds me of one that was lately made by a certain set of gentlemen here, called Spencean Philosophers; who, having a great taste for agriculture, but no land of their own to try their experiments upon, modestly requested that all the land in the kingdom might be thrown into a common stock, and equally divided among all the inhabitants. The motto of the standard under which we fight, Sir, is *Dieu et mon droit*. We must defend our rights and properties against all innovators, whether foreign or domestic; and I trust his Majesty's Ministers will never be induced, either by solicitations on the one hand, or menaces on the other, (for the United States of America are at this moment trying to coerce us into the surrender of our carrying trade to our West India Colonies) to give up the great foundations of our wealth and power.

The exertions of the mercantile petitioners to whom I have so often alluded, may be most usefully directed to the removal of those restrictions, by which British commerce is at present cramped and confined, and to the giving it all possible scope and expansion; but let them not interfere with those wise and salutary restrictions upon foreigners, to which we owe the high rank we at present hold among the nations of Europe.

I shall conclude, Sir, by recommending the following words of that enlightened statesman, Lord Clarendon, to the serious consideration of his Majesty's Ministers.

“They that shall be so honest and so wise as duly to maintain the laws, thriftily and providently to administer the public treasure, and to preserve the sovereignty of the seas—that ancient, true, and best defence of these realms—that body, whomsoever it may be

composed of, shall have the weight of England on its side ; and if there can be any of any other frame, they must, in the end, prove miserable, rotten reeds."

I have only to apologise to the House for having occupied so much of their time, and to thank them for the indulgence with which I have been heard.

NOTES.

As the writings of the Abbé de Pradt are not in general circulation in this country, the passages quoted from his work, entitled *Des Colonies*, printed at Paris in 1817, are given from the original.

1.

Depuis 25 ans on s'est beaucoup élevé contre la suprématie de la France, contre le joug imposé par Napoléon ; c'était la mode du temps. Il était dur ce joug, il faut le reconnaître, et plus mortifiant encore que dur ; mais celui de l'Angleterre, revêtu d'apparences moins repoussantes il est vrai, est-il moins réel, est-il moins dur, est-il plus facile à secouer, touche-t-il à moins d'intérêts ? Assurément non.—*Tom. ii. p. 70.*

2.

Si l'Europe sentait déjà le poids d'un Gibraltar, ne sera-t-elle pas écrasée par une chaîne de Gibraltar tendue autour du monde, qui en rende tous les habitants captifs dans une enceinte, dont un seul géolier tient la clé ?—*Tom. ii. p. 77.*

3.

Disons-le, sans balancer ; sans l'indépendance des Colonies, l'Europe n'a rien de mieux à faire, qu'à brûler tous ses vaisseaux, car il n'y en a pas un seul, qui ne soit destiné à être traîné en triomphe à Londres.—*Tom. ii. p. 257.*

4.

Quatre principes constituent l'ordre et la puissance coloniale.

1. Proportionner les colonies aux métropoles, soit pour l'étendue, soit pour la population.

2. Proportionner la marine aux possessions coloniales, et à celles des autres peuples maritimes et coloniaux.

3. Proportionner l'industrie et les capitaux, dont le travail est la source, aux besoins des colonies, de manière à ce qu'elles ne soient pas attirées trop fortement vers les communications avec les étrangers.

4. Donner aux colonies une administration intérieure, qui diminuera pour elles le besoin de recourir à la métropole. *Tom. i. p. 323.*

The application of these principles to the conduct of the different European powers, occupies two long chapters, and concludes thus :

Les peuples qui ont co-ordonné leur conduite aux principes de l'ordre colonial, ont conservé leurs colonies ; ceux qui s'en sont écartés, les ont perdues. Les effets ont correspondu exactement aux causes ; et, comme il est juste, chacun a fini par recueillir ce qu'il avait semé.—*Tom. ii. p. 65.*

5.

Présenter toutes les richesses du monde, comme un fonds commun, créé par le ciel, pour que chaque membre de la grande famille du genre humain y puise suivant les degrés de son travail et de son industrie.—*Préface, p. xvii.*

