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### LONDON, MARCH 4. HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 3. ORDERS IN COUNCIL.

DEBATE CONTINUED FROM OUR LAST.

Mr. BARING said we had interrupted the commerce of America, in the hope of rivalling her, and the effect of our measures was to give that commerce to an enemy which we denied to a neutral. We had injured ourselves by raising a spirit of hostility against us where we had friends before, and thus that futile ambition which grasped at every thing, had been in this instance (as in most others it was, and indeed ought to be,) disappointed. Our change of system would be permanently injurious to this country, as it had forced the Americans to become their own manufacturers. The Right Hon. Gentleman had spoken much of the advantages resulting from the Orders in Council, as having diminished the French customs, but if with the customs he could compare the confiscations, he believed he would find the amount of the latter greatly exceeded whatever the former had been at any time in France. In every point of view, he thought it was necessary to repeal our Orders in Council. He could see nothing so arrogant or so overbearing in the conduct of America as to render it necessary to refuse to do so, in order to vindicate our honor as some Gentlemen seemed to imagine. There was no reason for apprehension on account of our maritime rights, of which so much had been said, and he thought the Committee ought to be appointed, if it were only to take into consideration the licence trade, and to endeavour to suggest some better regulations than had yet been adopted.

Mr. STEPHEN was averse to a discussion on subjects connected with the pending negotiations between this country and America, and was therefore sorry the last speaker had touched on the subject. The Motion before the House "For the appointment of a Select Committee to enquire into the State of our Trade, especially that part of it which had a reference to the Orders in Council, &c." was very indefinite.—The Orders in Council had run now to such a length, that to make such a motion as that before the House was as if a Committee should be moved for to enquire into the State of Trade of this Country, or of that part of it which referred to the existing acts of Parliament. He did not know whether his Honorable Friend meant the Orders of April 1809, or of January 1807. He strongly objected to the appointment of a Committee to go over ground so often controverted in the discussions of a measure of such commercial and political importance. Not only had the Orders in Council been harmless, but our trade had risen to a state of unparalleled prosperity since they were issued. The returns on this subject had been rejected, when unfavourable to the views of Gentlemen opposite, though they had been received as authentic when they would suit their purpose. The Hon. and Learned Gentleman then took a comprehensive view of what had been the state of our trade, and what the effect of the Orders in Council upon it. In August, September, and October, 1807, a very great depression was felt. So great was this depression, that application was made to the Custom-house for permission for 60 or 70 vessels to land their cargoes again, as all the ports of the Continent were shut against them. The stagnation of trade in that and the following year was so great that exports of both amounted to but twenty-nine millions and a half. In the following years, after our retaliative measures were in force they amounted to £54,414,000. Thus it would be seen, there was an increase of £22,000,000 in those two years, and this was the result of that dangerous experiment, as our attempt to retaliate was called. The state of the imports, and the effect of the Orders on them were much the same. In 1807 and 1808, they amounted together to £26,300,000 and in the two following years their amount was £47,900,000 presenting here an increase of twenty-one millions and a half. He was astonished to hear the outcry raised against the Orders in Council, when it was thus proved that under them, our trade had flourished more than it had ever done before. With respect to what had been said of our losing all the great benefits of a trade to America, which we had previously enjoyed, he could prove, that taking into consideration our trade not merely with the United States, but with the whole of America, the result was equally favourable in those two years. He could prove an increase in our trade across the Atlantic in those two years, amounting to more than £9,000,000. It was easy to get rid of these facts by throwing discredit on the returns presented by the Inspector General; but he should be glad to know from what better source the proposed Committee could obtain information on the subject.—With respect to the apparent distress under which the country at present labours, the Honorable Gentleman seemed to forget that similar distress pervaded the ma-

nufacturing districts previous to 1807, in Manchester and other places. Though the very high tide of prosperity which followed in 1810, had materially relieved the pressure. The subsequent distresses had arisen from a variety of causes not to be attributed to any defect in the Government, but to adverse winds and loss of convoy. The Honorable Gentleman contended, that the Commercial system had originated all the measures complained of. The system of licences on which frauds and perjuries were charged did not contribute to the distress; for if the whole trade were to be given up to the Continent, the same causes would arise. The licences were given to the merchants as a protection against that system in our Prize Courts. If America, he contended, was permitted to export to France all the produce of her possessions to the exclusion of ours, and Germany had also licence to introduce her manufactures, this country would stand no chance of competition in the market. The repeal of the Orders in Council would not settle the differences with America, because she insisted upon the withdrawing of the Blockading system as much as the repeal. If then the demands in that respect were acceded to, the whole of our European trade would be given up. He therefore must oppose the motion, convinced that we could not carry on the war against the common enemy if we consented (as we should do in case we repealed the Orders in Council and the Blockading System) to give up our maritime rights.

Mr. CANNING regretted that he was compelled to state dry matter of fact, after the speech of the Hon. and Learned Gentleman, so conversant with the subject; but he had expected to hear from the Hon. and Learned Gentleman, the development of those principles on which Government had proceeded with respect to the Orders in Council; the more so, as the Right Hon. President of the Board of Trade had misrepresented them. If he (Mr. C.) understood the question, he was convinced, that by referring it to a Committee, it would be properly understood, and the public would see that the Government were justified in adopting them, and that they were necessary for the safety of the country. He most cheerfully, therefore, would take his share of responsibility, for having been one of the advisers. The Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Rose) had said that they were not measures of retaliation but of defence—why were they so, but because they were retaliatory. The Right Hon. Gentleman discussed the propriety of their adoption, in consequence of the French Government having declared the British Islands in a state of blockade, and the same principle was expressed in the Orders of January, 1807, and the subsequent ones with a view to repress the violence of the enemy, and to make that violence recoil on himself.—It was thought advisable afterwards to mitigate that measure as far as it affected neutrals. It was to be lamented that they should suffer wrongs and inconvenience, but it could not be avoided, from the state of things. As to what had been stated respecting the distress of the manufacturers, that distress, he was free to confess, was great enough; but if they expected to find relief in a repeal of the Orders, they were mistaken. An idea had gone abroad to that effect, and it was necessary a Committee should be appointed to remove the illusion. It was a falling of human nature to attribute the misery under which it suffered, whether real or imaginary, to tangible causes, rather than believe that it did not exist. The Hon. Mover had described the frauds and perjuries under the licences to have existence and connection with the Orders in Council. Most certainly he regarded that charge with a jealous eye, and he must deny that there was any filiation between them. The Honorable and Learned Gentleman (Mr. Stephen) had looked at the appointment of a Committee with alarm. He (Mr. Canning) confessed he saw nothing alarming in it. On the contrary, they would come out of the Committee in a beneficial point of view, and consequently that Government was justified in adopting the measures they had chosen.—The licences were given to the mercantile interest to remove objections and doubts, and to erect an uniform principle on which they might safely act. As to the system of blockade, he was convinced that it was highly desirable; and he regretted that an unmitigated system of blockade had not been enforced against the ports of Russia. If such a system had been adopted, the politics of that government would have then taken a different course. The Right Hon. Gentleman was not disposed to sacrifice the rights of commerce, but if the object which was attained by the adoption of the Orders could be secured by a relaxation of them, he had no objection for one, but that would be best ascertained in a Committee.

Mr. MARRYATT defended the Orders in Council, but was of opinion that the Trade Licences had been very injurious; not more in counteracting the effect which

the Orders were calculated to have on the enemy, but in depressing our colonies to the advantage of those of our Allies. As an instance of the last assertion, he mentioned that the Island of Cuba, which, at the commencement of the war, exported only 70,000 hogheads of sugar in the year, now exported 220,000. He would not vote for the Committee, because he thought it unnecessary; but he advised a strict adherence to the Orders in Council without any relaxation whatever.

Mr. G. JOHNSTONE, on the contrary, defended the licences as indispensable, but would vote for enquiry. Sir CHARLES PRICE opposed the motion.

Mr. WILBERFORCE said, he was one of those who were of opinion, that the Orders in Council afforded the only means of restoring our trade, at the time it was totally suspended; but the difference of opinion that existed now on the subject was in itself a call for investigation.

The CHANCELLOR of the Exchequer said, that his opposition to the motion did not arise from any apprehension of inquiry; but he could not agree in the argument of his Hon. Friend, that inquiry should be entered into, not for any effective purpose, but in order to shew that there was no ground for inquiry at all.—He rejoiced that no person had argued to night against the Orders in Council upon the grounds of injustice, that it was narrowed to a question of policy, and he regretted that the same course was not always adopted. He had ever thought it unfortunate that those who had acted one way in office should have deemed it necessary to turn round upon those very orders when out of office, and oppose what they had formerly espoused.—With respect to the Law of Nations, it perfectly justified the principle upon which they were founded; the principle of retaliation. For his part, he knew of no sanction to that law but that which retaliation afforded; and if France had broken down the common system, and said she would carry on war in another way, and according to other principles, how were we to act towards her except by retaliation? As to the idea that we were only at liberty to break the law in the same way in which our enemy had broken it, nothing could be more absurd; for what could be more foolish than to require, that if she attacked us where we were most vulnerable, we should attack her in return, where we were incapable of hurting her. He contended that the purpose, and the avowed purpose of the Order in Council of November, was to protect our trade by neutrals, and that the regulation with respect to bark was itself a proof of it, as by that it was determined, that France should obtain none unless accompanied with other articles. In 1809 an alteration had certainly taken place, in the hope, among other reasons, it would have had a tendency to conciliate America; but it did not amount to any thing like an abandonment of the principle.—He felt himself justified in stating that the documents before the House could shew that the distresses did not proceed from the Orders in Council. He should think that if we had so far effectually rescued ourselves from the ruin with which we were threatened as to place ourselves in the same situation in which we stood in 1803 (a period of which he had heard no complaint,) by means of those Orders, he did not see upon what ground we could impute our present difficulties to their existence. After two such years as 1809, and 1810, in which the exports of the country were doubled, it was natural to expect a temporary stagnation. Certainly in 1810, several seizures had been made, as was stated, and great loss sustained by the country; but did not that, and the consequent reluctance of embarking in speculation, account for the depression of trade, and the multiplication of bankruptcies, rather than any thing connected with the Orders in Council? The fact was that during the period between the year 1807 and the year 1810, there was a great increase in the number of British seamen employed. To diminish the number of foreign seamen, and the amount of foreign shipping, would be to diminish the trade of the country. Adverting to the objections which had been so forcibly made by the Honorable Mover to the clause in the licences, stating that notwithstanding all other documents on board the vessel to which the licence was granted, she was bound to the port named in the licence, he observed that this clause was found cut and dried by the present Administration, and read a minute from the Treasury of the occasion on which it was framed, signed by Lord Auckland, Lord Grenville, Lord H. Petty, Lord Temple, and Mr. Corry.—(Hear! hear!)—Nothing indeed could be clearer than that the licence excluded much of the perjury which, until the time of their being issued had existed. As to the Committee of Inquiry, to agree to it would be to say to the Manufacturers—"We are sensible of your distresses, we pity you, and to show our sympathy, we will put a total stop to the manufactures of the country." He trusted the House would not believe that the continu-