FROM THE NORFOLK BEACON.

BRITISH ORDER IN COUNCIL

CLOSING THEIR WEST-INDIA PORTS TO AMERICAN VESSELS.

This subject has excited no common degree of interest throughout our sea ports, and called forth remarks on it in almost all our public prints; while on no political subject could there have been a greater display of ignorance, and want of information of the actual laws and regulations on which it depends, than has appeared in the discussions about our trade with the British West-Indies.

In pointing out a few of these errors it will at once be observed that most of the editors who have fallen into them, have been misled by the report made by Mr. Lloyd from the Committee on Commerce to the Senate, and which they had taken for granted, gave a true statement of the actual regulations under which that trade was carried on—but unfortunately, the information on which that report was founded, appers to have been erroneous throughout; and to those errors may in a great measure be attributed, the ruin and destruction with which our trade is threatened.

The *First* objection started to the report, as a want of reciprocity on the part of the British regulations, is that the duties on our vessels (tonage) and their cargoes are required to be paid in *Cash* in the W. Indies, while a credit of 6 and 9 months is given on duties payable on British vessels and their cargoes, arriving in the United States from the Colonies. This is not a fact as regards the credit given in this Country, as the duties on British Vessels tonage are always required to be paid *in cash on entry*, and the British subject coming here with his cargo is not allowed the liberty of bonding it, unless he consigns it to a resident* by whom it may be entered and bonded; but the charges of commission for this privilege exceed the benefit derived from the credit on the duties from which he is thus virtually excluded.—The want, therefore of reciprocity is on our part, and not on that of the British.

While I leave this point I must not be understood as admitting the truth of the argument, if the facts were even as stated in the report; for while the British require the duties on their own vessels and their cargoes to be paid in cash, it is surely ridiculous in us to object to their doing the same on ours.

The *Second* objection is that Bonds are required in the Islands, for landing the return cargoes of our vessels in a specified port of the U. States. This is entirely a mistake, as American vessels are allowed to load in the British West-Indies with whatever they please, and to proceed with it whithersoever they please, except to another British port, as they, like ourselves, refuse to foreigners the right of their domestic and coasting trade.

The *Third* objection is, that an export duty of 2 per cent is charged on the return cargo. In this there is some mistake also: much as I have traded to the British Islands I never had to pay it; Barbadoes and one or two of the other smaller Islands, at a very early period of their history granted 4 per cent of their produce annually to the King for the repair of forts and other military uses; this is payable in kind, and as the planter takes care generally to send a few of his worst sugars to pay the duty, the purchaser can, if he pleases, obtain sugar. &c. already cleared from this tax, which falls entirely on the planter and not at all on the purchaser.

The *Fourth* objection is that vessels arriving at a British Island, to a bad market, are not allowed to seek a better, unless by the payment of double duties; while British vessels from the W. Indies seeking a favourabe market, many run along the whole coast from New Orleans to Eastport. Here the facts are nearly the reverse of what are stated.

Our vessels are allowed to call at any or all of the British Islands, to try the market, and if it does not suit them they can leave it free of expense. If they came to an entry they must pay the duty on their cargo, but should they wish to carry any of it away to another port, they can obtain a drawback at the first; while British vessels arriving in the U. States from the West-Indies, cannot, after having been boarded from any of our revenue cutters, or by a custom-house officer, and reported to them the port to which they are bound, proceed to any other, but there must land their cargo, though it should not even pay the duties and charges.—Here the want of reciprocity, is on our part also.

The *Fifth* objection is, that onerous and heavy duties and colonial fees are exacted, amounting in some instances to the value of the cargo; while the fact is, there are hardly any fees charged in the British Islands; in most of them none, and where they are still continued they are very moderate, and the same on British as American vessels; and the duties charged in them, on our leading exports are so far from being heavy, that they are, on an average, hardly on tenth per centage of what we charge on the articles they have to send us in return; and on our domestic cottons and other manufactures, the duty in the British Islands is about one third what we charge on similar articles from Great Britain. But to take one of the articles of greatest export to the Islands, and subject to nearly as heavy a duty in them as any other, Flour:—it pays about 1 doller per barrel (exclusive of the discriminating duty, which is only continued in the British islands until we remove it from their vessels, and was only laid to countervail that imposed by our government,) and the cost of flour being 5 dollars per bbl. it consequently pays 30 per cent duty on its cost, while rum costing 25 cents per gallon, pays a duty of 42 cents for 3d proof: or equal to 170 per cent on its cost; salt costing 10 cents per bushel, pays 20 cents per 56 lbs. or about 275 per cent on its cost; sugar costing 4 dollers per 100 lbs, pays 3 dollars duty, equal to 75 per cent on its cost, and in proportion as the duties on their produce are heavy and onerous, so do the discriminating duties fall more heavily on British than American commerce.

The *Sixth* and last objection, that flour and lumber, the produce of Canada and the other British possessions, are allowed to pass from one British port to another free of duty, is true, but I must leave the discussian of this point to wiser heads than mine; for were our right to interfere in their domestic trade granted, they might claim a similar privilege with regard to the intercourse between the States, some of which are situated as remotely from each other, as are the British North American Colonies from their West India possessions.

Having given the objections which were made in the report to the Senate, to the want of a just reciprocity in our trade with the British West-India Islands, it may be here proper to state the restrictions to which British vessels are liable in their intercourse with us, and which have called forth the order in Council closing their ports. On arriving from the Colonies they are subject to a charge of 1 dollar per ton, and their cargoes to a descriminating duty of 10 per cent, on the amount of duties payable on the same articles by American vessels—And the duties charged by us on their produce being so much heavier than what they charge on ours, the discriminating duty charged by us is consequently a much greater per centage on the cost of the cargoes of their vessels, than their discriminating duty is on the cost of the cargo of ours; so much so as to exceed the freight commonly paid from the West-Indies: and a West-India merchant sending his vessel here for a cargo, finds it cheaper to let her come in ballast, and charter an American vessel to bring here the rum and sugar to pay for his cargo, than to ship it by his own vessel, though in it there would be no freight, for the additional duty he would have to pay here on his rum and sugar by his British vessel, would considerably *exceed* the freight by an American one.

The second disadvantage under which British Colonial vessels labour, is a charge of 25 per cent. additional Pilotage over what our vessels pay.

But a still greater restriction to which they are subjected is, that British vessels are not allowed to come from Europe and load for the Colonies: nor when they come from the colonies, to load for any other port except a Colony, and heavy bonds are required that they land their cargoes at some specified port. They have thus been nearly excluded from the trade which they could not carry on under so many disadvantages, and have closed their ports to us who had virtually excluded them from ours. How long the contest may last I cannot tell; bur, a few months of it will be enough to bring ruin on our merchants and cause much distress among our farmers. We are told by Mr. Lloyd's report, that the trade to the British Islands, has not been of an extent equal to the expectations that had been formed respecting it; and by others that we have the neutral Islands left, and through them our produce will still reach the British Islands.

From 1818 till 1822, the years of our restrictive system, our trade *fell off* annually, but since our renewed intercourse with the British Islands, it has gone on gradually improving, till our exports have got to be *four times* what they were in 1822. Those who think lumber can be transmitted through the neutral Islands to the British Colonies, know but little of the Geography of the West-Indies, where the currents and trade winds render such an intercourse impracticable; for the vessels required to carry it on must be sharp and quite unfit for lumber. It will not however be necessary for them to resort to this, while the North of Europe is sending out large supplies which in the cheapness and goodness of quality are already rivalling us, even while we have the ports open; and although with an open intercourse, we can pay the moderate duties charged on our lumber, and undersell the Canadian, yet that will be impossible if we have double freights and the expense of transhipment at a neutral Island to pay.

Our restrictions from 1818 to 1822, taught the planters in the British Islands a lesson which they have not forgot; previous to this we used to send them very large supplies of corn and coarse bread stuffs, to feed their negroes; but we closed our ports against them and threw them on their own resources.

They made less sugar and raised their own corn, and soon found this more profitable than the old system of making all the sugar they could, and buying their corn from us. Thus it is the trade is not to the extent expected; for while we compelled sugar planters to raise corn, we also taught the Canadians to make staves to an extent they had never thought of by giving them up for four years the market we used to supply, and have thus raised permanent competitors. In the same way we have, by continuing restrictions on British shipping, brought about closed ports to us in the British Islands, which are now open to the North of Europe, and from those countries an extensive trade will at once be forced into existence, and should the markets in the Islands be afterwards opened to us, we need expect no benefit from having left them for a time entirely to our rivals.

Viewing the prosperity that has, since the renewed intercourse with the British Islands, existed throughout this district, in which all the small towns had again resumed the appearance of flourishing industry and active business, we cannot but feel our heart sicken at the thoughts of the change with which we are threatened. Among our merchants we may expect events such as followed the closing of the ports in 1818; the country store keepers will again see the stocks of lumber they have collected to meet the expected demand of this winter rot on their hands: but to the farmers the change will be even more cruel, and particularly to the poorer classes of them who depend on a sale of their produce and the lumber they have been cutting, for the means of obtaining the necessaries and little luxuries within their reach, to render them comfortable during the approaching inclement season. I will not pursue the picture further, but will close this, already too great a tax on your patience, by an inquiry of the cause for which we are thus to suffer?

The British shut their ports, because we refused to admit their vessels on the same terms, and with the same privileges of carrying their return cargoes where they please, that they admit our vessels into their ports.

Again, *why have we refused this?*

The report to the Senate so often referred to, gives six causes, five of which I have shown to be groundless, as founded in error, and want of information, on the part of those making the report, and the *sixth what is it?* That Great Britain does not admit our produce free into her West-India possessions, as she allows the same articles to pass free from one British port to another! This is the grand point at issue, and the people must judge whether we have been reasonable or not in the demand; my duty is to leave it with them.

THE GENIUS OF NORFOLK.

CONSECRATION OF THE WEST-MINSTER JEWISH SYNAGOGUE.

The grand celebration of the Jewish Synagogue took place the day before yesterday. At three o'clock the doors were thrown open. The building is in the form of an oblong parallol gram; the ark is supported on each side by two pillars and four pilasters of Scagliola marble with composite pillars, and with white marble between, and surmounted by two vases at each side. Before the ark was drawn a splendid vail of twelve feet by six, made of rich crimson silk inlaid with gold; on the centre of the vail was inscribed in gold characters a verse from the Old Testament, "With this Aaron shall enter the holy place—anno mundi 5586;" and a compliment to Mr. Aaron Aarons who presented the vail to the synagogue. Over this inscription is placed the crown of the law. A silver ewer and basin were placed on the altar on either side of the ark, and on the right side there was a tripod branch with nine wax lights, in commemoration of the Maccabees. The altar was inclosed with a metal railing of curious workmanship, with two tripod candlesticks highly burnished, on each side of the altar.

---

* 'No bonds for duties on goods, wares, or merchandise, imported into the U. States, shall be accepted by any collector of the Revenue, unless the principal be a resident of the U. States, and the surety or sureties citizens thereof.'