

[1st CONGRESS.]

No. 2.

[1st SESSION.]

MANUFACTURES.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, APRIL 18, 1789.

To the Honorable the Congress of the United States of America, the petition of the mechanics and manufacturers of the city of New York, humbly sheweth:

That, on the fortunate issue of the late Revolution, your petitioners relied for the enjoyment of that prosperity which attends the establishment of political and civil freedom. They contemplated this event as the point at which a happy era was to commence, and as the source whence a new system of blessings should spring. They entertained a hope, that the independence which they had sought and acquired, would have been not merely a nominal, but substantial acquisition and independence, not only seen in speculation, but felt and realized in practice. Your petitioners were early led to fear, that those prospects were visionary, and that their country, having gained the form of liberty, had left in the hands of their enemies the instruments of oppression, and the spirit to exercise it. They soon perceived, with the deepest regret, that their prospects of improving wealth were blasted by a system of commercial usurpation, originating in prejudices, and fostered by a feeble government. They saw the trade of these States laboring under foreign impositions, and loaded with fetters, forged, in every quarter, to discourage enterprise and defeat industry. In this situation, they have been prevented from applying to those abundant resources with which nature has blessed this country. Agriculture has lost its capital stimulus, and manufacture, the sister, of commerce, has participated in all its distresses, and has languished, notwithstanding the spirit of individuals and societies exerted for its support. Thus, in lamenting the misfortunes of a foreign intercourse, your petitioners do but recite their own peculiar complaints: for in its prosperity or decay, they feel themselves deeply interested.

Your petitioners conceive that their countrymen have been deluded by an appearance of plenty; by the profusion of foreign articles which has deluged the country; and thus have mistaken excessive importation for a flourishing trade. To this deception they impute the continuance of that immoderate prepossession in favor of foreign commodities, which has been the principal cause of their distresses; and the subject of their complaint.

Wearied by their fruitless exertions, your petitioners have long looked forward with anxiety for the establishment of a government which would have power to check the growing evil, and extend a protecting hand to the interests of commerce and the arts. Such a government is now established. On the promulgation of the constitution just now commencing its operations, your petitioners discovered in its principles the remedy which they had so long and so earnestly desired. They embraced it with ardor, and have supported it with persevering attachment. They view, with the highest satisfaction, the prospects now opening and adorning this auspicious period. To your honorable body, the mechanics and manufacturers of New York look up with confidence, convinced that, as the united voice of America has furnished you with the means, so your knowledge of our common wants has given you the spirit, to unbind our fetters, and rescue our country from disgrace and ruin.

Your petitioners have subjoined a list of such articles as can be manufactured in this State, and they are encouraged to commend them to your attention, by this reflection, that the countenance of your honorable body to the useful arts, so far from injuring other parts of the great political system, must eventually operate to the general benefit of the community.

In your wisdom, your justice, and patriotism, we rest with an assurance only equalled by our profound respect.

Anthony Post,
Francis Childs,
John Campbell,
Henry Pope,
James Bramble,
John Goodeve,

Jacob Morton;
White Matlack,
George Lindsay,
William J. Elsworth,
John Swine.

In behalf of the Mechanics and Manufacturers of New York.

[1st CONGRESS.]

No. 3.

[1st SESSION.]

SHIP-BUILDING.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MAY 25, 1789.

To the Honorable the Representatives of the Freemen of the United States of America, in General Congress assembled, the memorial and petition of the subscribers, master ship-wrights, in the port of Philadelphia, most respectfully sheweth:

That, before the late Revolution, the shipwrights of the port of Philadelphia had acquired the reputation of building ships, of a moderate size, as well and as faithfully as in any part of the world; by means whereof they obtained constant employment for themselves, their journeymen, and apprentices, by building ships to the amount of four thousand five hundred tons annually, besides the repairs of old ships. That the Revolution, in its consequences and effects, has borne harder upon your petitioners than upon any other class of mechanics (or, perhaps, citizens at large) whatever, in depriving them of two-thirds of their former employment; as it appears, from an average for three years past, that they have built only to the amount of fifteen hundred tons annually. That the British navigation act totally prevents them from building ships for that nation; but their merchants, generally, repair their vessels in America, as far as the act allows, and often run the risk of a forfeiture, by exceeding the limitation. That, although the arrest of France, of December, 1787, grants that "vessels built in the United States, and sold in France, or purchased by Frenchmen, shall be exempted from all duties, on proof that they were built in the United States," yet your petitioners build few vessels for that nation. That an edict of Spain, of January, 1786, lays a heavy duty on American-built ships, purchased by their subjects; and, also, prohibits them from trading to their colonies, although the duty is paid, and they are owned by the subjects of Spain; nevertheless, the Spaniards have purchased more vessels from your petitioners than any other nation. That, under these discouraging circumstances, they have waited, with anxious expectation, for the sitting of the honorable Congress under the new constitution of the United States, firmly relying that every exertion would be used to reinstate so necessary and useful a branch of business, as nearly as

possible, upon its former flourishing establishment. To effect which, your petitioners, with great deference, beg leave to suggest the following hints to your consideration:

1st. That a tonnage duty should be laid upon all shipping built and owned by foreigners, sufficient to give a decided preference to the shipping built in the United States; but, at the same time, so moderate, as not to prevent the resort of foreign shipping to these States, until, by a gradual increase, they shall be, in a condition to carry for themselves: nevertheless, some preference ought to be given the French, for their preference to American-built vessels.

2d. That, to encourage the increase of American shipping, there be no tonnage duty on shipping built in the United States, owned in part, or in the whole, by citizens of these States, except for the support of buoys and light houses.

3d. That American-built ships, purchased by foreigners, ought to be nearly on the same footing as if owned by American merchants.

4th. That foreign-built ships, purchased by American merchants, after the passing of this act, ought to pay the same duty, and under the same restrictions, as foreign-built vessels owned by foreigners.

5th. That there be a difference in the duties payable on the importation of foreign goods, between those imported in American-built shipping, owned as aforesaid, and those imported in foreign-built ships.

6th. That there be also a difference in the duties payable on the importation of foreign goods, from ports or places where they are not originally produced or manufactured, and the same goods imported directly from the place of their growth or manufacture; and that this duty should be greater when the importation is from the second port in foreign bottoms, than in American-built ships.

7th. That many possible advantages may arise from negotiations with the Courts of Madrid and London, on principles of reciprocity, respecting American-built ships.

8th. That high duties laid on materials necessary for fitting ships, augment their price, and retard the progress of ship-building.

9th. That many inconveniences have arisen from the different modes of tonnageing ships in the different States of America; that your petitioners had foreseen the inconveniences, and endeavored to remedy the evil, by adopting the enclosed nearly average mode of measurement, which has not yet been carried into effect, waiting for your honorable body to establish one general system for the measurement of all ships built in America.

Your petitioners humbly conceive that negotiations and regulations, somewhat similar to the foregoing, would tend to the rapid increase of American shipping, and, before long, enable the United States to become carriers by sea, of all the produce of this extensive continent, to foreign markets.

All which is respectfully submitted to the consideration of your honorable House.

John Norris,
John Wharton,
Jos. Marsh.
Joshua Humphrey, jr.
Stephen Beasley,
Benj. Hutton,
John Patterson,
Jas. Doughty,
Richard Dennis,
John Hutton,

Sam'l Brusstar,
Joseph Bowers,
Samuel Bowers,
Wm. Gard,
Morris Galt,
Jacob Miller,
John Rice,
Manuel Eyre,
Thos. Penrose.

For all plain galley-built ships, with two decks, allow three-fifths of the extreme breadth for the rake of the stem, beginning to measure twelve inches before the rabbit, at the middle wale, which shall determine the point of straight rabbit forward; from that point to the afterpart of the stern-post, (allowing one-twelfth of the extreme breadth of the vessel for its width, clear of the rabbit) shall determine the length of the keel, for tonnage. The breadth, for tonnage, shall be ascertained from the inside of one wale to the outside of the other, in the widest part of the vessel; the depth of hold, from the top of the ceiling next the keelson, (allowing the streak, next the keelson, of the same thickness as the running ceiling plank) to the top of the beams amidships, and the height between decks, from plank to plank, amidships. Then multiply the length of the keel by the extreme breadth, and that product by the depth of the hold, added to half the height between decks, which last product, divided by ninety-five, shall give the number of tons required. Single deck vessels, on the double deck plan, with about twelve inches waist, when the depth does not exceed half the extreme breadth, measure and multiply length and breadth, (as above) and that product by the depth; but when the depth exceeds half the extreme breadth, then add half that difference to half the extreme breadth, for the multiplier, for measurement, and divide as aforesaid. Single decked vessels, primed out on the wales; measure and multiply length, breadth, and depth, and divide as above. Frigate-built ships, with two flush decks, long quarter deck, and forecastle, with a tier of ports; multiply the length by the breadth, and that product by the height of the gun deck from the ceiling, as aforesaid, added to half the height of the waist amidships, which last product divide as above. Ships with three decks and a tier of ports, multiply the length of the keel by the extreme breadth, and that product by the height of the middle deck from the ceiling, as aforesaid, added to half the height between decks, as aforesaid, which last product divide as above. Single deck vessels, with a long quarter deck and forecastle, deep and tight waist, and tier of ports, multiply the length of the keel by the extreme breadth, and that product by the depth from the ceiling; as aforesaid, to the top of the beams amidships, added to half the height of the waist amidships, which last product divide by the common divisor, as above.

1st CONGRESS.]

No. 4.

[2d SESSION.

SHIP-BUILDING AND MANUFACTURES.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JUNE 5, 1789.

To the Honorable the Congress of the United States of America, the petition of the tradesmen and manufacturers of the town of Boston sheweth:

That the great decrease of American manufactures, and almost total stagnation of American ship-building, urge us to apply to the sovereign Legislature of these States for their assistance to promote these important branches, so essential to our national wealth and prosperity. It is with regret we observe the resources of this country exhausted for foreign luxuries, our wealth expended for various articles which could be manufactured among ourselves, and our navigation subject to the most severe restrictions in many foreign ports, whereby the extensive branch of American ship-building is essentially injured, and a numerous body of citizens, who were formerly employed in its various departments, deprived of their support and dependence. Your petitioners are farther induced to express their concern, that the subjects of those nations, who are endeavoring to annihilate our navigation, are permitted to send their vessels to any part of the United States, for bread, flour, tobacco, and every other produce, while American ships are totally excluded from many of their ports.