

## C H A P. IX.

*A Summary Explanation of the advantages which will result from an improved System of Legislation for the River Thames.—A General View of the various powers and provisions of the proposed Bill, under twelve different heads, with explanatory notes.—The advantages of the System (when aided by pecuniary energy) explained, in counteracting the designs of evil disposed persons, and preventing Depredations on the River, Quays, Warehouses, &c.—The security thus obtained will result from the Design having its foundation in an improved Legislative System of Police Economy, having Magistrates armed with apposite and proper powers:—The advantages of such powers to Land-Constables, River-Patroles, &c. in giving effect to their exertions for the purpose of protecting Property.—The security and œconomy which will attach to the discharging System by the operation of the proposed Law, and the benefits which will be derived from the exercise of the powers and functions of the Commercial Commissioners—In the general security of Property; the increase of the Revenue; the improvement of the morals of the people; and holding out an example to every Commercial Port in the Kingdom.—Concluding Observations.*

ALTHOUGH it must be evident from what has been already stated, that the completion of the System of Police for the River Thames, by placing it on the *firm basis of Legislative Authority*, must be productive of incalculable advantages to the Trade of the Port, yet it may be of importance, with a view to the further elucidation of this branch of the Subject, to give the following summary detail and explanation of the nature of these advantages, as resulting from the improvement of the Laws with respect to the River Police; and from the measures and arrangements which will be grounded on the Legislative and pecuniary energy, which will thus be created and rendered effective.

The leading objects of the THAMES POLICE BILL, which have been offered to the consideration of Government by the General Committee of Merchants, are these following:—

- I. To extend the provisions of the Act of the 32 Geo. III. Cap. 53. (commonly called the Police Act,) so far as relates to the appointment of Special Justices, to sit at a Public Office, at or near Wapping New-Stairs, and to conduct and superintend the System of the Thames Police; with power to the Judicial Clerks to receive the established legal Fees, and to pay the same, together with penalties and forfeitures, into the hands of a General Receiver, towards a Fund for the Judicial Department of the general System,—*called the Office Fund.*

II. To authorise the Special Justices, nominated by His Majesty, to appoint and dismiss *Office-Constables, River-Surveyors and their Watermen, Ship-Constables and Quay-Guards*; and also to empower the Lord Mayor of London, and the Master, Wardens, and Assistants of the Trinity Corporation, to dismiss any of these Officers on any well-grounded charge of Misbehaviour. Their authority to act as Constables, to be limited to the jurisdiction of the Special Justices, and in no case to extend to the City of London.

III. To give power to Commissioners, chosen by and representing twenty-eight different Trading Bodies in the Port of London, to lay a limited Assessment on Trade, to be denominated *The Thames Police Guard Fund*, to be raised by Tonnage duties, (*k*) the amount of which is at no time to exceed Ten Thousand Pounds a year; and which may be reduced at the discretion of the Commissioners, according to the exigencies of the case.—The Commissioners to fill up Vacancies in their own Body; to appoint a Collector, Treasurer, Cashier, and Auditors, &c.—To regulate the dresses of Lumpers, by prohibiting habiliments contrived (as at present) for secreting Plunder, and to make regulations for the government of Lumpers.—To appoint Ship Inspectors at the instance of Owners and Consignees, for saving Spillings, Sweepings, and Drainings, &c.—To appoint Wharf Inspectors with the power of Constables; also, Warehouse Inspectors at the instance of the Owners and Consignees.—To devise Tickets, without which Lighters navigating in the night may be stopped as suspicious; with General Powers to make regulations relative to the Shipping, Unlading, Landing, Warehousing, and Sampling Goods, for the prevention of Waste, Accident, and Depredation;

(*k*) See the Table of Tonnage Dues, &c. Chap. VIII. page 269. but

but with power to the King in Council at the instance of the Lord Mayor and Aldermen, the Treasury Board, or the Board of Customs, to annul such regulations.

IV. To give power, to the Thames-Police Commissioners, and the Special Justices, to grant an annual Licence at their discretion, as in the case of Ale-houses, to Master Lumpers, without which they cannot exercise their profession as Contractors, for Lading or Discharging Vessels in the River Thames: (1) Licence duty to be £.10 a year, and to make a part of the Office Fund.

#### V. To

(1) The proposed measure of allowing no person to lade or discharge Vessels, who has not been previously licensed and approved by the Commissioners and Magistrates, is a most useful regulation, which cannot fail to operate powerfully in reforming the criminal habits, both of the Master Lumpers and the men they employ. This important trust will be committed only to men of approved characters, who will feel a certain responsibility; and the fear of losing their Licence in consequence of complaints, on account of inattention or neglect, will render them infinitely more alert, cautious, and attentive, than they have heretofore been. Under this regulation the best men will be selected, who will subject themselves to certain rules beneficial to the Trade, and to the security of Ships' Stores and Cargoes against Plunder.—When the War is over, it will be a suitable provision for Masters, Mates, and other Officers, who have fought and bled in the service of their Country.—At present there are about

120	Master Lumpers in the West-India and other Trades,
10	do. in the East-India Trade.
7	do. in the East-Country Trade
25	called Undertakers, in the Coal Trade,

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Total . 162

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Of these, some are very exceptionable characters, and not a few of them are Publicans, who have little or no knowledge themselves

V. To empower Thames-Police Justices to require Working Lumpers to register their names at the Public Office, before they can be authorised to work under Master Lumpers, in lading or discharging Ships in the River Thames. The Fee of Register to be limited to 6d. each, and no more: and a small Penalty to be imposed on those who work without having first procured a Certificate. (*m*) Power also, to require the Names and Places of Abode of *Lumpers, Coopers, Watermen, and Lightermen*, employed in Ships under discharge. To station Ship Constables on certain Terms, at the instance of the Owners or Consignees, for the Protection of the Cargo.—To register the Contracts made with Master Lumpers and Working Lumpers, for the purpose of ascertaining the conditions of the Engagements, and thereby preventing Disputes.—To appoint any fit person recommended by a Ship's Husband, to be a Ship's Constable.—And those only to be charged for, who are sworn Officers.

VI. To empower Thames-Police Surveyors to visit Ships, to direct Ship Constables:—To inspect the conduct of Lum-

selves of Nautical Officers, and trust to men called *Foremen of Gangs*, who with some few exceptions, have been no less criminal than the Common Lumpers. The power of selecting and controlling this class of men therefore, becomes an object of the greatest importance in rendering the Preventive System complete.

(*m*) This Regulation is expected to be of the greatest use in controlling and overawing this turbulent and depraved Class of Men, and of course restraining them from committing acts of Pillage on the Cargo, Stores, or Materials of the Ships on which they are employed. It has already been seen, that they are extremely numerous, and that their Morals are exceedingly relaxed. Wherever Regulations can be devised, whereby they can be prevented from committing Crimes, a service is done to themselves and the Community, while it becomes a great act of humanity to their families,

pers, Coopers, &c.—To search Lighters navigating at unseasonable hours, and under suspicious circumstances.

VII. A Power to Thames-Police Constables (similar to what is given by the Bumboat Act, &c.) of Seizure and Arrest on view, in respect of Goods clandestinely taken from Ships, Boats, Landing-places, and Warehouses.

VIII. Ship-masters to keep fastened up all the avenues to the Hold of the Ship but one, and that too when Goods are not discharging:—Power to search Working Lumpers.

IX. Master Lumpers bound under a Penalty to search Working Lumpers, besides being responsible for specific losses.

X. Powers which may be exercised by the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London; the Special Justices of the Thames Police; and all other Justices having jurisdiction where the Offences may be committed, being within the limits of the River Thames, and the Cities and Counties adjacent thereto. Namely:—

To inflict slight Penalties by summary Procedure on circumstantial Evidence, aided by the Examination of the Delinquent, (as under the Bumboat Act, and stolen-metal act where, on regular Proof, it would be Felony;)—and to attach upon the Practice of Depredation, in such stages of its progress as are previous, or subsequent to the Felonious Act:—To grant Warrants to search, on Oath of Suspicion, at supposed Receivers, and in Default of regular Proof, the Offence punishable as a Misdemeanor:—To trace suspected Goods through any number of Hands:—The Penal Offences cognizable in a summary way are these following—

- 1st. Lumpers convicted of quitting Work unlawfully may be punished as other Labourers under the Act 6 Geo. III. cap. 25.
- 2d. Lumpers convicted of neglecting to register their Names.
- 3d. Master Lumpers convicted of neglecting to search Working Lumpers.
- 4th. Labourers

- 4th. Labourers and others convicted of wilfully injuring Packages, and letting out their Contents, for the purpose of profiting by the Waste.
- 5th. Persons convicted of having Jiggers, Bladders with nozles, &c. concealed for the purpose of drawing off Liquors.
- 6th. Persons convicted of throwing Goods overboard when pursued, for the purpose of preventing discovery.
- 7th. Persons convicted of fabricating false Bills of Parcels to cover suspected Goods.
- 8th. Persons convicted of not stopping suspected Goods and the Offenders, when offered for Sale.
- 9th. Persons convicted of having Goods in their possession, suspected to compose part of the Cargo or Materials of any Ship or Vessel in the River Thames, and not giving an account to the satisfaction of the Justice, how they were obtained.
- 10th. Persons convicted of carrying, or suffering to be carried, Coals from Ships, &c. otherwise than in the regular course of Trade.
- 11th. Persons convicted of refusing to assist Thames Police Constables, in the execution of their duty.
- 12th. Persons convicted of obstructing the execution of this Act.
- 13th. Persons convicted of suppressing Evidence, with a view to defeat Justice.
- 14th. Persons convicted of injuring, damaging, or destroying the Thames Police Guard-Boats.
- XI. The Act of the 2d Geo. III. cap. 28. (Bumboat Act) amended, with respect to the Procedure under Search Warrants, and the Power of tracing suspected Goods through any number of Hands.—Also with regard to Offences against that Act, punishable either as such, or as against this Act, according to the nature of the Case. Boats which are peremptorily ordered to be burned, may be either destroyed or sold.
- Misdemeanors

—Misdemeanors under the Bumboat Act, which are transportable Offences for Fourteen Years, to be deemed Felonies, that the Procedure may be prompt as in Felonies, instead of dilatory as in Misdemeanors.

XII. The Privileges of the City of London, secured by specific Clauses,

The advantage, resulting from a System of Legislation, so peculiarly adapted to the great object of renovating the morals of the Labouring Classes on the River Thames, aided by pecuniary energy, and by powers calculated, more to counteract the Designs of evil-disposed persons by embarrassing them at all points, than to punish, may be anticipated; and its effect will be the prevention of Depredations, not only on the River, Quays, and Warehouses, but in all situations where they were formerly committed.

Upon this basis will of course be erected an improved System of Police & Economy, in which will be combined every thing that can tend to give utility and effect to the Design.

In the Judicial Department, the best possible arrangements will of course be made, that Public Justice may be administered without interruption, and as heretofore, with purity, caution and regularity.

The Magistrates thus assisted by apposite Powers, will not only feel confident in the execution of the trust reposed in them, but will experience an additional degree of satisfaction, in prosecuting the labours which their duty imposes.

Placed



Placed by Legislative Authority on certain and permanent ground, the anxiety to accomplish the great objects which are in view, will operate upon pure and intelligent minds as a strong stimulus to exertion, in giving vigour and correctness to every Department in the System.

The Land Constables will of course be increased, so as to render them competent to guard every avenue to and from the River, to embarrass criminal People in the transit of stolen Property; and to render the trade of Pillage too hazardous and unprofitable to be followed.

The River Patroles will, in like manner, be so augmented as to render their Surveys effectual in every part of the River, from Westminster Bridge to Blackwall.

Constant and regular Police Guards, properly instructed and controlled by Superior Officers, will form a chain of Protection on both sides of the River, wherever Commercial Property is exposed to danger, either in Craft or upon the Quays and Wharfs, with the advantage of a relief every six hours.

The discharging Department will undergo many useful improvements, from the more effectual control of the Master and Working Lumpers, who will be completely restrained from those acts of Pillage, to which they have been so long accustomed, while by means of a fair competition, this necessary labour will be obtained at a moderate expence. The useful Functions of the Commissioners will contribute, in  
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an eminent degree, to the general benefits which cannot fail to result from the combined efforts of men of enlightened minds, having no object in view but the Public good. Under this Patriotic Influence, the Powers granted them to make Ordinances and Bye-laws must be employed for the most useful purposes.

In the *complete Formation* therefore, of this important Design, may be reasonably expected every benefit to the Individual and the Public, which can result from the Security of Commercial Property, the preservation of his Majesty's Stores, the increase of the Revenues of the Crown, and the general improvement in the morals of a vast Body of People: returning at least fifty fold, on the pecuniary sacrifice which is proposed:—while an important example is thus held out to every other great Commercial Port in the Kingdom, as well as to his Majesty's Dock-yards and other Repositories, exhibiting and demonstrating, by what means the same benefits may be extended generally, wherever Depredations, Embezzlements, or Frauds, have been found to prevail.

These elucidations of a most important subject, it is earnestly to be hoped, will produce the desired effect.

The Fabric being thus raised, and all difficulties removed, which depended on Labour, Investigation, and Legislative Arrangements, it remains now for his Majesty's Ministers and the Commercial Body to *lay the Key-stone of the Design.*

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In accomplishing this object, they will have the triumph and satisfaction of having contributed, in an eminent degree, to the Improvement of Morals, and the Prevention of Crimes, and they will deserve the Thanks of the Nation, and the Gratitude of Posterity,