

DEMERARA AND BERBICE.

P A P E R S

**Relating to Table of Fees of Customs for the Ports
of Demerara and Berbice.**

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
25 July 1820.

DEMERARA AND BERBICE

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P A P E R S

Relating to Table of Fees of Customs for the Ports of Demerara and Berbice.

— (1.) —

Copy of a Report of the Commissioners of Revenue Inquiry in the West Indies,
to the Commissioners of the Customs; dated 6th March 1812.

GENTLEMEN,

BEFORE entering into our Report upon the general state of this Port, we are most particularly anxious to submit for your immediate consideration and directions, a Table of Fees; which we have felt it our duty, under the very difficult and peculiar circumstances in which we found ourselves situated, strongly to recommend to the officers of this Port, for their immediate adoption, till the pleasure of His Majesty's government could be taken, with a view to a more efficient and permanent system.

We have not ventured to take so great a responsibility upon ourselves without the most scrupulous inquiries, and the maturest deliberations.

We have considered the Acts of the 5th Geo. III. c. 45. s. 27. and the 10th Geo. III. c. 37. s. 2. and have weighed the nature of our commission, as well as the strict letter of our instructions; and although we are fully aware that the main and leading object of our commission is to examine and inquire, and to propose such suggestions and regulations for the future improvement and amendment of the system of revenue, as from time to time may occur; yet as we have found the practice in regard to Fees so totally disorganized, their amount and repeated variations so universally complained of, disputes and misunderstandings the same had occasioned so long continued, to the great loss and detriment of the merchant, and the most serious impediments to the public service, we felt ourselves called upon to draw up and sanction a table of fees, in order to appease and allay the discontent so generally excited, and to embrace as near as possible the great objects pointed out in the Fifteenth Report of the Commissioners of Public Accounts, viz. ease and accommodation to commerce; a safe and equal source of revenue to the officer; and the prevention of all injurious tendency to the revenue.

It may be too early to enter into the question so very ably urged by the Commissioners of Public Accounts in their Fifteenth Report on the Customs, as to the total abolition of fees; there may be many and very important considerations which might be urged against their abolition in the colonies, which would not weigh in England. Should it be the opinion of His Majesty's government that fees should be continued in the colonies, the only alteration in principle that we should at present presume to recommend would be, that a fee fund should be established, and that at the end of each quarter regular accounts should be made up and transmitted home, of the gross amount of fees received in each quarter, and that the same should be distributed among the several officers employed in the service of the revenue, as might be settled by the scale at present in force, or by any one better adapted to the purpose.

We beg leave to subjoin in the Appendix, extracts from the examinations of most of the principal merchants in Barbadoes upon this subject, as well as extracts from the examinations of every officer of the customs.

[The Papers marked (A.) (A. 2.) and (A. 3.) are not subjoined.]

We have also subjoined (marked A.) the table of fees as established by Sir G. Beckwith, at Martinique, modified by Mr. Grant, the Collector of the Customs at St. Pierre, and at present in force in that island; also a docket of fees stated to have been established at Barbadoes in the time of Mr. Keeling, Collector at that Port, marked (A. 2.) and a docket drawn up by the present Collector, marked (A. 3.); and lastly, the table of fees marked (B.) which after painful and laborious inquiry and deliberation, we have ventured to draw up ourselves and sanction, and to which we beg urgently to solicit your very particular and early attention.

The principle upon which we have proceeded in drawing up the table of fees, thus submitted to your consideration, has been simplicity; and with that view, we have adopted the plan in the table marked (C.) from Martinique, of classifying vessels under the three different heads of Island, European, American or Neutral, and of proportioning the fees according to the rate of tonnage of each vessel.

We must admit, that according to the table we have thus ventured to sanction, the amount of fees is still very considerable; but we had difficulties presented to us on all sides; and, when we have stated the reasons which eventually determined us so far to exceed the strict limits of our instructions as to sanction the fees, as we have done, we trust we shall stand excused from arrogance or assumption of power, and satisfy you that we have only done that which we felt ourselves imperiously called upon to do, upon the exigency of the moment, and in the conscientious discharge of a very arduous and important public duty.

In the first place, no legal table of fees existed; nor could we obtain any direct evidence by which we could ascertain what were the fees actually taken before the year 1764, the period stated in the Act of the 5th Geo. 3, c. 45, s. 27; nor what were the fees usually, generally and accustomedly taken, according to the rule laid down by the Act 10th Geo. 3. c. 37, s. 2.

We next considered that Barbadoes was a principal Port, and repeatedly adverted to by several Acts of Parliament, as a guide to other ports in the Leeward Islands, particularly with regard to fees.

In fixing a table of fees for that Port, we had in contemplation to extend the same throughout the Colonies, and thereby establish one simple uniform system, which might become the known practice every where; and this was the more important, as we have good reason to believe, that in most of the Islands, the fees are still more exorbitant and irregular than at Barbadoes, and too often left to the mere will of the merchant on the one side, or the arbitrary exaction of the officer of the revenue on the other.

Thirdly, we had seen that the table of fees in force in the North American Provinces, a copy of which we transmitted home to you with our Report from Halifax, was signed by Mr. Ainslie, in the year 1768, who was acting Surveyor General for your Board; we are not apprized of his instructions or authority, but as his name was affixed to this table, we could not but consider the same as a sanction to it, and would therefore offer this, as a precedent for what we had taken upon ourselves to do here.

We have only to add, that had we left the table of fees drawn up by the present collector or any other, we felt that we should be still giving a qualified sanction to the same, and have thereby incurred all the responsibility, without effecting that practical good we hope to accomplish by the measures we have taken.

From the various and laborious duties we have had to discharge at this port, and from the difficulties we have had to contend with in forming a table of fees, from a want of longer experience, and more practical knowledge, we cannot presume to offer the present table as in every instance unexceptionable; we have endeavoured as near as possible to combine all the objects so forcibly laid down in the Fifteenth Report of the Commissioners of Public Accounts above alluded to, and submit the same to you, with the greatest deference and respect for your decision.

In forming this table, we have been most anxious to fix such a remuneration to the several officers of the revenue as might be judged reasonable; due regard being had to the capacity and industry required, the trust reposed, and responsibility incurred, the station in life of the person employed, and also the hazard of an
unhealthy

unhealthy climate. With these views, we endeavoured to lay down a certain scale to go by in apportioning the fees to the several officers. In so doing, we felt that the collector, while the present extent of business is transacted at this Port, should have an income of from 2,500*l.* to 3,000*l.* sterling per annum; the Comptroller from 1,400*l.* to 1,600*l.* the searchers from 500*l.* to 600*l.* and the landing-waiters from 300*l.* to 400*l.* Upon this principle we were very desirous to increase the fees of the Comptroller, from one-third to at least one-half of what the collector receives; and considering the responsibility and importance attached to that office, we would submit that the situation of Comptroller ought to be filled by a person of great respectability; and that the present rate by which his fees are regulated, is inadequate to give him that weight and independence he ought to have: but in looking attentively into the acts of parliament of the 5th and 10th Geo. III. we found ourselves so restricted by their operation in limiting the fees of Comptroller to one-third only of what the collector receives, that we could not venture to act in such direct opposition to their spirit and letter.

We can only, therefore, beg to recommend this measure to your consideration; and, as we propose sanctioning the Table of Fees thus submitted to you, throughout the different Colonies, we would again very respectfully entreat your early attention to this important subject, and that you will favour us with precise instructions for our future information and guidance in regard to the same.

St. Lucia, 6 March 1812.

(Signed) $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} R. B. Dean. \\ R. Thompson. \\ Geo. Wyke. \end{array} \right.$

To the honourable the Commissioners
of His Majesty's Customs.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|----|---|---|---|-----|---|---|-----|
| 8 | 0 | 11 | - | - | - | 100 | - | - | 100 |
| 10 | 0 | 12 | - | - | - | 100 | - | - | 100 |
| 12 | 0 | 13 | - | - | - | 100 | - | - | 100 |
| 14 | 0 | 14 | - | - | - | 100 | - | - | 100 |
| 16 | 0 | 15 | - | - | - | 100 | - | - | 100 |
| 18 | 0 | 16 | - | - | - | 100 | - | - | 100 |
| 20 | 0 | 17 | - | - | - | 100 | - | - | 100 |
| 22 | 0 | 18 | - | - | - | 100 | - | - | 100 |
| 24 | 0 | 19 | - | - | - | 100 | - | - | 100 |
| 26 | 0 | 20 | - | - | - | 100 | - | - | 100 |

(B.)—A Table of Fees for the Port of Bridgetown, in the Island of
15th day of

| | Collector. | Comp- troller. | Two Searchers. | Four Waiters. |
|---|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| | <i>Dollars.</i> | <i>Dollars.</i> | <i>Dollars.</i> | <i>Dollars.</i> |
| Island vessels entering in ballast, and clearing with cargo, or the reverse : | | | | |
| Under 20 tons - - - - - | 4 | | 2 | 4 |
| From 20 - to 35 - - - - - | 6 | | 3 | 4 |
| 35 - - 60 - - - - - | 9 | | 4 | 6 |
| 60 - - 80 - - - - - | 12 | | 5 | 8 |
| 80 - - 100 - - - - - | 15 | | 6 | 8 |
| 100 - - 150 - - - - - | 18 | | 7 | 10 |
| 150 - - 200 - - - - - | 21 | | 8 | 12 |
| On island vessels entering with cargoes, and clearing with cargoes : | | | | |
| Under 20 tons - - - - - | 9 | | 3 | 4 |
| From 20 - to 35 - - - - - | 9 | | 4 | 6 |
| 35 - - 60 - - - - - | 12 | | 6 | 8 |
| 60 - - 80 - - - - - | 15 | | 7 | 10 |
| 80 - - 100 - - - - - | 18 | | 8 | 12 |
| 100 - - 150 - - - - - | 21 | | 9 | 14 |
| 150 - - 200 and upwards - - - | 24 | | 10 | 16 |
| European vessels entering with or without cargoes, and clearing with cargoes : | | | | |
| Under 50 tons - - - - - | 12 | | 6 | 8 |
| From 50 - to 130 - - - - - | 18 | | 8 | 12 |
| 130 - - 200 - - - - - | 24 | | 12 | 16 |
| 200 - - 300 - - - - - | 27 | | 15 | 20 |
| 300 - - 400 - - - - - | 36 | | 18 | 24 |
| 400 - - and upwards - - - - - | 42 | | 20 | 28 |

The Comptroller's fee to be one-third of the Collector's fee.

European vessels entering with or without cargoes and clearing in ballast,
half of the above fees.

Barbadoes, by the Commissioners of Special Revenue Inquiry.
February 1812.

| | Collector. | Comptroller. | Two Searchers. | Four Waiters. | |
|---|------------|---|----------------|---------------|--|
| | Dollars. | Dollars. | Dollars. | Dollars. | |
| On American vessels entering and clearing with or without cargo : | | | | | |
| Under 50 tons - - - - - | 18 | The Comptroller's fee to be one-third of the Collector's fee. | 8 | 10 | |
| From 50 - to 130 - - - - - | 24 | | 10 | 14 | |
| 130 - - 200 - - - - - | 30 | | 14 | 18 | |
| 200 - - 300 - - - - - | 36 | | 16 | 24 | |
| 300 - - 400 - - - - - | 42 | | 18 | 26 | |
| 400 - - and upwards - - - - - | 48 | | 20 | 28 | |
| Fees on granting Registers on vessels : | | | | | |
| Under 40 tons - - - - - | 9 | | | | |
| From 40 - to 80 - - - - - | 12 | | | | |
| 80 - - 150 - - - - - | 15 | | | | |
| 150 - - 200 and upwards - - - - - | 18 | | | | |
| Endorsing register, new master, and taking bond | 3 | | | | |
| Drogher's Pass for six months - - - - - | 6 | | | | |
| Ditto - - - - - twelve months - - - - - | 9 | | | | |
| Non-objection note, or short clearance - - - - - | 3 | | | | |
| Permit for loading or landing a cargo - - - - - | 1 | | | | |
| Certificate accompanying the same, and bonds - - - - - | 1 | | | | |
| Post entry - - - - - | 3 | | | | |

(Signed) { R. B. Dean,
R. Thompson,
Geo. Wyke.

— (2.) —

Copy of an Order of the Lords of the Treasury establishing a Table or Docket of Fees for the Ports of Demerara and Berbice; dated 5 August 1819.

GENTLEMEN,

I HAVE laid before the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, the Tables of Fees to be taken by your officers at Demerara and Berbice, submitted in your Report of the 10th ultimo; and I am commanded to acquaint you that my
Lords

A Table of Fees to be received by the Officers in the

| | Collector. | Comptroller. | 3 Waiters and Searchers. |
|---|------------|---|--------------------------|
| | Dollars. | Dollars. | Dollars. |
| Island vessels, or from the British North American Colonies, entering in ballast, and clearing with a cargo, or the reverse : | | | |
| Under 20 tons - - - - - | 4 | | 3 |
| From 20 - to 35 - - - - - | 6 | | 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| 35 - - 60 - - - - - | 9 | | 6 |
| 60 - - 80 - - - - - | 12 | | 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| 80 - - 100 - - - - - | 15 | | 9 |
| 100 - - 150 - - - - - | 18 | | 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| 150 - - 200 and upwards - - - | 21 | | 12 |
| On Island vessels, or from the British North American Colonies, entering with cargoes, and clearing with cargoes : | | | |
| Under 20 tons - - - - - | 9 | | 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| From 20 - to 35 - - - - - | 9 | | 6 |
| 35 - - 60 - - - - - | 12 | | 9 |
| 60 - - 80 - - - - - | 15 | | 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| 80 - - 100 - - - - - | 18 | | 12 |
| 100 - - 150 - - - - - | 21 | | 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| 150 - - 200 and upwards - - - | 24 | | 15 |
| European vessels, namely British and Dutch, entering with or without cargoes, and clearing with cargoes : | | | |
| Under 50 tons - - - - - | 12 | | 9 |
| From 50 - to 130 - - - - - | 18 | | 12 |
| 130 - - 200 - - - - - | 24 | | 18 |
| 200 - - 300 - - - - - | 27 | | 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| 300 - - 400 - - - - - | 36 | | 27 |
| 400 - and upwards - - - - - | 42 | | 30 |
| | | The Comptroller's fee to be one-third of the Collector's fee. | |

European vessels, namely British and Dutch, entering with or without cargoes, and clearing in ballast, half of the above fees.

Dollars.

For a general certificate of the landing the cargo of each ship - - - 2.

For a certificate required by individuals to cancel bonds given in England, 1.

The above fees to be divided between the collector and comptroller in the same proportion as other fees.

This Table established by an order of the Lords of the Treasury, dated the 5th August 1819.

Lords approve of the same, with the exception of the package money to be paid to the water-side officers, which my Lords observe should be stated in Demerara currency, instead of four-pence sterling; and to desire that with these alterations, the tables of fees be transmitted to the respective colonies of Demerara and Berbice, and carried into effect.

Treasury Chambers, }
5 August 1819. }

I am, &c.
(Signed) S. R. Lushington.

Commissioners Customs.

Service of the Customs, in the British Colony of Demerara.

| | Collector. | Comp-troller. | 3 Waiters and Searchers. |
|--|------------|---|--------------------------|
| | Dollars. | Dollars. | Dollars. |
| On foreign vessels other than Dutch, should they hereafter be allowed to land or load goods at Demerara, entering and clearing with or without cargoes : | | | |
| Under 50 tons - - - - - | 18 | The Comptroller's fee to be one-third of the Collector's fee. | 12 |
| From 50 - to 130 - - - - - | 24 | | 15 |
| 130 - - 200 - - - - - | 30 | | 21 |
| 200 - - 300 - - - - - | 36 | | 24 |
| 300 - - 400 - - - - - | 42 | | 27 |
| 400 - and upwards - - - - - | 48 | | 30 |
| Fees on granting Registers on vessels : | | | |
| Under 40 tons - - - - - | 9 | | — |
| From 40 - to 80 - - - - - | 12 | | — |
| 80 - - 150 - - - - - | 15 | | — |
| 150 - - 200 and upwards - - - - - | 18 | | — |
| Endorsing register, new master, and taking bond - - - - - | 3 | | — |
| Drogher's Pass for six months - - - - - | 6 | | — |
| - - D ^o - - twelve months - - - - - | 9 | | — |
| Non-objection note, or short clearance - - - - - | 3 | | — |
| Permit for loading or landing a cargo - - - - - | 1 | | — |
| Certificates accompanying the same, and bonds - - - - - | 1 | | — |
| Post entry - - - - - | 3 | | — |

In all cases where a fee is allowed to be taken by a British officer of the Customs, and the attendance or signature of a Dutch officer is also required, the British officer to receive one-half, and the Dutch officer the other half of the stipulated fee.

Package money to the water-side officers on all produce of the Colony shipped, to be equally divided among those officers, viz.

- For every hogshead or puncheon - Three-pence sterling, or 3 stivers.
- Three tierces - - - - - ditto.
- Five barrels - - - - - ditto.
- Ten small cases or packages - - - - - ditto.
- Ten pieces fustic - - - - - ditto.
- Ten hides - - - - - ditto.
- Six bags of coffee - - - - - ditto.
- Three bales of cotton - - - - - ditto.

And also half a dollar for endorsing all permits.

A Table of Fees to be received by the Officers in the

| | Collector. | Comptroller. | 2 Waiters and Searchers. |
|--|------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| | Dollars. | Dollars. | Dollars. |
| Island vessels, or from the British North American Colonies, entering in ballast, and clearing with a cargo, or the reverse: | | | |
| Under 20 tons - - - - - | 4 | | 2 |
| From 20 - to 35 - - - - - | 6 | | 3 |
| 35 - - 60 - - - - - | 9 | | 4 |
| 60 - - 80 - - - - - | 12 | | 5 |
| 80 - - 100 - - - - - | 15 | | 6 |
| 100 - - 150 - - - - - | 18 | | 7 |
| 150 - - 200 and upwards - - - - - | 21 | | 8 |
| On island vessels, or from the British North American Colonies, entering with cargoes, and clearing with cargoes: | | | |
| Under 20 tons - - - - - | 9 | | 3 |
| From 20 - to 35 - - - - - | 9 | | 4 |
| 35 - - 60 - - - - - | 12 | | 6 |
| 60 - - 80 - - - - - | 15 | | 7 |
| 80 - - 100 - - - - - | 18 | | 8 |
| 100 - - 150 - - - - - | 21 | | 9 |
| 150 - - 200 and upwards - - - - - | 24 | | 10 |
| European vessels, namely British and Dutch, entering with or without cargoes, and clearing with cargoes: | | | |
| Under 50 tons - - - - - | 12 | | 6 |
| From 50 - to 130 - - - - - | 18 | | 8 |
| 130 - - 200 - - - - - | 24 | | 12 |
| 200 - - 300 - - - - - | 27 | | 15 |
| 300 - - 400 - - - - - | 36 | | 18 |
| 400 - - and upwards - - - - - | 42 | | 20 |

The Comptroller's fee to be one-third of the Collector's fee.

European vessels, namely British and Dutch, entering with or without cargoes, and clearing in ballast, half of the above fees.

For a general certificate of the landing the cargo of each ship - - - - - Dollars. 2.
For a certificate required by individuals to cancel bonds given in England, 1.

The above fees to be divided between the collector and comptroller, in the same proportion as other fees.

This Table established by an order of the Lords of the Treasury, dated the 5th August 1819.

Service of the Customs, in the British Colony of Berbice.

| | Collector. | Comptroller. | 2 Waiters and Searchers. |
|---|------------|---|--------------------------|
| | Dollars. | Dollars. | Dollars. |
| On foreign vessels other than Dutch, should they hereafter be allowed to land or load goods at Berbice, entering and clearing with or without cargoes : | | | |
| Under 50 tons - - - - - | 18 | | 8 |
| From 50 - to 130 - - - - - | 24 | The Comptroller's fee to be one-third of the Collector's fee. | 10 |
| 130 - - 200 - - - - - | 30 | | 14 |
| 200 - - 300 - - - - - | 36 | | 16 |
| 300 - - 400 - - - - - | 42 | | 18 |
| 400 - - and upwards - - - - - | 48 | | 20 |
| Fees on granting Registers on vessels : | | | |
| Under 40 tons - - - - - | 9 | | -- |
| From 40 - to 80 - - - - - | 12 | | -- |
| 80 - - 150 - - - - - | 15 | | -- |
| 150 - - 200 and upwards - - - - - | 18 | | -- |
| Endorsing register, new master, and taking bonds - - - - - | 3 | | -- |
| Drogher's Pass for six months - - - - - | 6 | | -- |
| Ditto - - - twelve ditto - - - - - | 9 | | -- |
| No-objection note, or short clearance - - - - - | 3 | | -- |
| Permit for loading or landing a cargo - - - - - | 1 | | -- |
| Certificates accompanying the same, and bonds - - - - - | 1 | | -- |
| Post entry - - - - - | 3 | | -- |

In all cases where a fee is allowed to be taken by a British officer of the Customs, and the attendance or signature of a Dutch officer is also required, the British officer to receive one half, and the Dutch officer the other half of the stipulated fee.

Package money to the waterside officers, on all produce of the Colony shipped, to be equally divided among those officers, viz.

| | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| For every hogshead or puncheon - - - - - | 3 pence sterling, or 3 stivers. |
| Three tierces - - - - - | ditto. |
| Five barrels - - - - - | ditto. |
| Ten small cases or packages - - - - - | ditto. |
| Ten pieces fustic - - - - - | ditto. |
| Ten hides - - - - - | ditto. |
| Six bags coffee - - - - - | ditto. |
| Three bales of cotton - - - - - | ditto. |

And also half a dollar for endorsing all permits.

— (3.) —

Copy of a Memorial of the Officers of His Majesty's Customs at Demerara ;
dated 20th October 1819.

Custom House, Demerara, October 20th, 1819.

Honourable Sirs,

WE have received your Honours letter of the 20th of August, No. 20, with the docket accompanying it, which we have caused to be published three times in the Gazette of this Colony, and which is now acted on in every department of the Custom-house. We beg to assure you that we shall pay the strictest attention to your directions on this head, and we shall take care that the inferior officers on the establishment do not deviate from the orders you have given.

If this change in the docket of fees had arisen from any representation which had been made to your Honours of our fees having been improperly increased, we trust you would have given us an opportunity of answering such a charge, as we could readily have proved that no increase whatever has taken place in the fees of this office since the capture of the Colony.

We have every reason to believe likewise that the merchants here were perfectly satisfied with the docket as it stood, as well as with the manner in which the business was carried on.

Your Honours have directed us to represent to you such circumstances on this subject as may be fit for your cognizance. We beg permission therefore to point out to you the inconvenience to which we must necessarily be subjected, in having taken from us, without the slightest notice, two-thirds of that income, on the certain receipt of which we had calculated our different establishments. It is right likewise that we should represent to your Honours, that if this docket is a suitable one for the West Indies generally, it cannot be so for this colony, inasmuch as the expense of living is three times greater here than in any island in the West Indies. It is a fact which will be verified to your Honours by any person who has ever been in this country, that house-rent, provisions, servants, and every other necessary, are dearer in proportion of three to one, or at least five to two, than they are in any other West India settlement. We must likewise bring to your Honours notice, the probable circumstance of the Comptroller's income falling something short of that of any one of the waiters and searchers. We infer this probability from the circumstance of its having very little exceeded it during the short period that this docket was formerly acted on; and as your Honours will recollect that at that time his fees were directed to be taken in a proportion equal to one half of those of the Collector, as recommended by your Committee of special inquiry, there is a strong presumption, as he is now allowed but one-third, that they will not amount to as much as those of one of the waterside officers.

This is a result which we apprehend was not in your Honours contemplation. The special report of your Commissioners of revenue inquiry, proposed to fix the income of the Comptroller, in consequence, as stated, of the responsibility and importance attached to the office, at about three times the amount of any inferior officer; but if, according to their recommendation, your Honours should be inclined to increase it to one half, it will exceed but in a very trifling degree the emoluments of one of those gentlemen.

We beg farther to inquire if it is your Honours intention to do away with those fees which are received under specific acts of parliament, and with those which have hitherto been taken on the importation and exportation of negroes. Of the former, the marine lists, and the affidavits, we are authorized to administer as magistrates, under the 5th Geo. II. and the 47th Geo. III. cap. 48. are instances; and as a considerable expense is often incurred by officers on the inspection of negroes, as they sometimes go for the convenience of the owner and negroes, 20, 30 or 40 miles for that purpose, we apprehend it would be your Honours wish that the fees for those duties should remain unaltered.

We have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed) { *Alex^r W^m Forbes, Act^s Coll^r.*
 { *P. Staple, Comptroller.*

The Honourable the Commissioners
of the Customs.

— (4.) —

Copy of a Memorial from the Officers of His Majesty's Customs at Demerara,
dated 1st March 1820.

Custom House, Demerara, 1 March 1820.

Honourable Sirs,

WE have read with very great regret, in the English papers, an extract from a Report of the Committee of Ship Owners at Liverpool, in which it is stated, that the Lords of His Majesty's Treasury had found it necessary to check the abuses practised by the officers of the customs in Demerara and Berbice, by limiting the fees to be taken by them, to an amount upon an average, little more than a third of what they were in the practice of exacting.

We should not ourselves have condescended to notice, and still less should we have troubled your Honours, with any reference to a common newspaper paragraph, but the above bears on the face of it an official character, and if we treated it with neglect, it might be inferred, that such a statement was not altogether unfounded; we know not if the late change in the docket of fees to be received at this Port, was directed by the Lords of the Treasury, in consequence of any representation of this nature. We should, indeed, have hoped that their Lordships would have given us an opportunity of answering any charge of abuse or extortion which had been preferred against us; but if any such representation has been made, we beg permission respectfully to state to their Lordships, through your honourable Board, that the same, as far as refers to us, is altogether unfounded. No fees have been received by us, but such as have been authorized by the Governor of the Colony, after a most mature deliberation and consultation with the principal merchants of the place, by whom those fees were regulated and approved. A docket so settled by the merchants themselves, was directed by his Excellency Major General Dalrymple, in the year 1809, to be published in all the papers, and has been, with his Excellency's signature attached to it, suspended in a conspicuous part of the Custom-house, from that period. We were not only authorized, but directed to govern ourselves by this docket; and we must presume, therefore, that no charge of abuse can be founded on our having done so. We beg farther to remark to your Honours, that this docket must be supposed to have been a reasonable one; it was formed by merchants who would have been themselves the sufferers, had they sanctioned any unreasonable charge, and who, from their local knowledge of the expense of living in this Colony, must have been the best judges as to what was a reasonable remuneration for officers residing here.

We beg leave to enclose your Honours a copy of the Order published with this docket, in the newspapers of the Colony; and we request permission at the same time, to refer your Honours to our letter to the Commissioners of Special Revenue Inquiry, dated the 15th May 1812.

We can prove, by the most unquestioned evidence, that no deviation whatever from the fees established by that docket, has taken place, as far as regards ourselves; and if any augmentation has ever been charged by the waiters and searchers, no complaint of a nature which we could notice, has ever been made to us. Many of our fee-bills are still in existence; and the clerks who made them out, and, as we believe, every merchant in the town, will be ready to testify to their perfect accordance with the docket we were directed to govern ourselves by.

We trust your Honours will be of opinion, that it is as essential to the good of the service, as it is to our own feelings and characters, to defend ourselves from aspersions which we really do not, and have not merited. If your Honours will condescend to direct an investigation to take place through the Governor of the Colony, or in any other way, and it should appear to you that we have, by misrepresentation, been deprived of the largest part of that revenue which was thought necessary for

us, by those who were most competent to form a judgment, we should look up with much confidence to your Honours justice to replace us in the situation in which we formerly stood.

We beg leave respectfully to solicit from your Honours, that you will endeavour to remove from the minds of the Lords of His Majesty's Treasury any unfavourable impression which they may entertain on this subject.

We have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed) { *Alex^r W^m Forbes, Act^s Coll^r.*
 { *P. Staple, Comptroller,*

The Honourable the Commissioners
of the Customs.

NOTICE.

WHEREAS the principal Officers of his Majesty's customs, and the Merchants of these Colonies, have mutually consented and agreed to establish the following Docket of Fees, to be received and paid at the Custom-house, in the Port of Demerara, and the same having been laid before his Excellency Major General Dalrymple, for his approbation, he has been pleased to approve thereof, and to direct that it shall be immediately adopted, in the room of the docket lately received from Barbadoes; and farther, that a copy, bearing his Excellency's signature, shall be posted up in the most conspicuous place in the Custom-house, for the information of all concerned, who are hereby ordered and directed to take notice of the same, and govern themselves accordingly.

Government House, Demerara,
the 20th day of April 1809.

By his Excellency's Command,
(Signed) *Geo. Eddington,*
Gov^r's Sec^y.
