

Besides, there were numerous exemptions for so-called gunners, and the officers do not seem to have been strictly called to account for their appearances. Some islands dispensed wholesale from their service assemblymen, councillors, judges, and other classes too.¹ Trelawny complained to the Jamaica legislature of the number of these exemptions, which obliged a few people to do duty for the whole. Robinson went a step farther at Barbados; he collected the fines appointed for absence from an alarm. He said this was the first time it had been done since the militia law was passed in 1697; he raised £5,700 at one stroke by this unexpected strictness, but it is not surprising that he was one of the most unpopular Governors the island ever had.² In the French colonies too the *noblesse* seem to have dispensed themselves and their negroes from regular service.³

It was therefore on the poorer whites that militia duty fell as a heavy burden, and the colonial politicians represented any sort of arduous or continued service as an especial hardship on the poor. Governor Mathew was so conscious of their discontent that he thought proper to deal with it in a speech to the Assembly of Antigua.

'I am told it has strangely prevailed among the poorer sort, that if in this cause or of any war, they are called upon, 'tis to defend the rich and wealthy only and at the expence of their lives, and therefore such a duty does not belong to them. But we ought all of us to cure them of this refractory error by letting them know, that the Articles of War, established by law, will certainly bring them to an ignominious punishment, or death, for avoiding an uncertain honourable one in the service of their country.'⁴

The militiamen were for the most part wretchedly trained. Some of the diatribes against their inefficiency may be discounted, for several Governors were professional soldiers from Europe accustomed to a superior, perhaps an unnecessary exactness in drill. Yet it does appear that the colonial forces were almost wholly unwarlike. At the beginning of the Seven Years

¹ For example, the Nevis Act of 1737 exempted the Councillors, the Chief Justice, and the Admiralty judge. That of 1741 added the Treasurer to this list. Both these Acts exempted the Assemblymen from the ordinary drill (C.O. 185/4).

² Nevis Assembly Minutes, April 11, 1748, C.O. 186/3; Trelawny's speech of March 18, 1739/40, *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica*, iii. 505; Robinson to Newcastle, April 23, 1745, C.O. 28/46.

³ Le Mercier de la Rivière's *mémoire* on the siege of Martinique, quoted above.

⁴ Antigua Council Minutes, July 31, 1739, C.O. 9/13. See the complaint of the Grand Jury of Barbados, *C.S.P. Col.* 1706-8, no. 697 (ii).

War, martial law was proclaimed and continued for some weeks in Jamaica for the sole purpose of drilling the militia, which presumably needed it. Indeed, the training could hardly have been any better than it was, for the officers were all amateurs appointed for political reasons, because they were men of property or friends of the Governor. Faction ran so high at Barbados in Queen Anne's reign that the Governors ruined the discipline of the militia by repeatedly turning out and replacing the officers. Nothing quite so bad happened in the next war, but in the conflict between the true blue Protestants and the pro-Catholics of Montserrat, the Protestant Assembly demanded the deprivation of most of the chief militia officers.¹

The French islands were little better off in these respects. Larnage lamented that the planters of St. Domingue were not the warriors they had been in the last century. Luxury and soft living had undone them; they were so used to lolling in chaises and coaches that they hardly knew the use of their legs.² Bory repeated the same complaints in 1762. The planters had altogether ceased to do guard duty, for which they hired mercenaries, so that they never got any military exercise except in great emergencies, for which they had to turn out quite unprepared. Bory could see no remedy for this state of affairs, but to embody the mulattos as a permanent professional militia; but Choiseul refused to sanction this reform.³

The military value of the population had fallen off everywhere in the West Indies for the same reasons, and thus the cultivation of sugar had lowered the quality and numbers of the militia at the same time. Martinique had a better reputation than most islands, but did not deserve it, if Le Mercier de la Rivière is to be believed. 'If the militia of France only left its labours once or twice in a year to stand in a sort of line and return home after being counted, without ever going through any exercises or learning how to handle its arms, the militiaman would always remain a boorish peasant.' But at least he would be fitted for military service by hard living, whereas the sugar-planter, equally untrained, was not even in the bodily

¹ *C.S.P. Col. 1708-9*, no. 179; Montserrat Assembly Minutes, *passim*, 1745, C.O. 177/4.

² Larnage to Maurepas, Dec. 28, 1739, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 50; Oct. 31, 1744, vol. 64.

³ Guichen to Berryer, July 24, 1761, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 110; Bory to Choiseul, June 12 and 22, July 17, 1762, vol. 111; Choiseul to Bory, July 31, *ibid.*

condition to undergo a war. La Rivière certainly experienced one of the worst periods of inefficiency at Martinique under Beauharnois's Governorship. He admitted that Le Vassor de la Touche had put a little discipline into the forces, and that they behaved pretty well in the battle of January 27, 1762; but they had not the experience necessary to an orderly retreat, and their rout before the English counter-attack was the chief cause of the conquest of the island.¹

So bad were the militia laws and so inefficient the militia that some Governors believed they could do nothing without martial law. Moore took off the martial law in 1760 at Jamaica when the back of the slaves' revolt was broken, but he found that he could not suppress the negroes entirely, because the militia shirked its duty, having nothing more to fear than a few paltry fines; so he had to proclaim martial law again at the request of the Assembly.² Martial law was sometimes represented as a hardship on the poor, but there were two opinions of that. Some welcomed and others detested it as a debtors' holiday. Factors made it an excuse for failing in their remittances.³ Planters declined to pay their island or parish taxes. The lawyers on the contrary were exasperated, for martial law suspended the sessions of the courts and brought all legal business to a standstill. Gradually the legislatures departed from the principle of protecting debtors from suit during martial law; for instance the Jamaica Act of 1745 ordained that prosecutions for debt and collection of taxes should not be interrupted. This Act should have dispensed the Governor from the ridiculous necessity of deferring martial law till quarter-day was over; but it must have lapsed, for that was the situation in which Moore found himself in 1756.⁴

The militia laws obliged the colonists to appear in arms not only at the stated meetings for exercise, but upon every 'alarm'. This meant, every time that a certain number of three-mast or topsail ships were seen from the coast. The first person who

¹ *Mémoire* on the siege of Martinique, quoted above; Monckton to Egremont, Jan. 9, 1762, C.O. 166/2.

² Moore to Board of Trade, Nov. 7, 1760, C.O. 137/32, BB 9.

³ Lascelles and Maxwell to Alexander Harvie, April 30, 1762, W. & G. ix.

⁴ Montserrat Assembly Minutes, April 23, 1745, C.O. 177/3; *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica*, iv. 668. The Barbados Acts of 1759 and 1761 for raising volunteers against Martinique permitted debtors for under £300 to be enlarged out of prison if they would serve against Martinique; to prison it seems they must return when it was all over.

sighted the ship was to fire a number of shots, and the signal was to be repeated through the island. There was no way of preventing the approach of our own fleets from causing false alarms. Sometimes the planters took the law into their own hands when they expected a convoy from England, and declined to turn out; but they might make a mistake here, as they did at Barbados when Bompar's squadron was sighted in 1759.¹ Penalties for deliberate false alarms were heavy, but the offence was hard to prove. The system was clumsy and harassing, especially when officious Governors like Robinson of Barbados multiplied the alarms by having them raised on the appearance of a smaller number of ships. Caylus found at Martinique that the inhabitants were pestered out of their lives by alarms, and tried to establish regular militia guards instead.²

This kind of guard duty was already exacted of the English militia, and very burdensome it was, especially to the smaller and more thinly populated islands. The legislature of Montserrat represented that a quarter of the militia would have to do guard duty every night if the regular troops were withdrawn; and although any West Indian body would exaggerate grossly in order to get favours from the Government, the statement is not incredible, for the militia of Montserrat only numbered 500. The object of this kind of service was not merely to give timely warning of an invasion—though both Antigua and Montserrat had been preserved from considerable French forces by the vigilance of the nightly guards in Queen Anne's reign—but also to prevent small incursions of privateers who came to pillage plantations on the coasts and to carry away negroes.

Such raids had been very common in earlier times, but about 1740 the authorities on both sides were beginning to dislike this form of warfare and wished to discourage it. Both Trelawny and Larnage would have been glad to enter into an arrangement for prohibiting it, but unfortunately that was impossible. Trelawny could barely have answered for the obedience of the Jamaica privateers, and had no claim whatever to bind or control those of the other colonies; therefore if Larnage had merely concluded an agreement with Jamaica, he would have tied the hands of the French subjects at St. Domingue, without affording

¹ Barbados Council Minutes, March 13, 1759, C.O. 31/30.

² Caylus's *Mémoire* on his government, A.N. Colonies C⁸ A 58. Something of the sort was done at Antigua; see the Act of Sept. 1, 1744, C.O. 8/9.

them any kind of security. At the end of the Seven Years War the question of prohibiting such descents was raised again. Admiral Holmes seems to have made a convention with Governor Bart of St. Domingue for discouraging them, by refusing to exchange any prisoners that might be taken from the raiders; but it cannot have had a permanent effect, for Governor de Bory was still asking for the same thing in November 1762. Le Vassor de la Touche fell into a quarrel with Commodore Douglas upon this subject. He said that he had not permitted the privateers of Martinique to pillage the sea-shore plantations of the English islands, but should very soon do so unless Douglas gave satisfaction for a descent which he had allowed one of his own warships to make.¹

Jamaica in particular complained of these raids, for its coastline was long and difficult for land or sea forces to guard. The legislature was very eager to have some small vessels of war allotted to this service, and the Lords of the Admiralty ordered Sir Chaloner Ogle and his successors in the command to provide for it. But the work does not seem to have been properly performed, for want of enough vessels of the right kind, until the time of Admiral Cotes in 1757–60. Cotes's successor Holmes was criticized for not looking after the coasts, but he threw the blame on the planters themselves, who either built no emplacements for defence at the landing-places most exposed, or, having built them, neglected to supply them with men and guns.²

¹ Larnage to Trelawny, Feb. 2, 1745, C.O. 137/57; Trelawny to Newcastle, Feb. 3, 1744/5, *ibid.*; Larnage to Maurepas, Jan. 29, 1745, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 66; Maurepas to Larnage, Dec. 15, 1745, B 81; Maurepas to Caylus, Nov. 15, 1745, *ibid.*; Holmes to Bart, Aug. 8, 1761, Adm. 1/236; Jamaica Council Minutes, Nov. 3, 1762, C.O. 140/42; Le Vassor de la Touche to Berryer, Nov. 20, 1761, A.N. Colonies C⁸ A 63. The Governor of Cap François complained in 1747 to Governor Tinker of the Bahamas against the petty depredations of the New Providence privateers upon the coasts. Tinker replied that Vaudreuil was welcome to hang any of them if he could find them ashore without their commissions, and that he was sorry that he had not authority to chastise them himself. Soon afterwards Vaudreuil caught some of them, and determined to send them home to France instead of exchanging them for English prisoners in America—an inconvenience which was regarded by the colonists on both sides as a very heavy punishment (Vaudreuil and Samson to Maurepas, Feb. 24, 1748, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 73. See the interesting directions for plundering Hispaniola, printed by J. F. Jameson, *Privateering and Piracy in the Colonial Period*, N.Y. 1923, p. 471).

² Bart and Laporte-Lalanne to Moras, Sept. 25, 1757, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 100; *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica*, iii. 557–8; Jamaica Council Minutes, May 18, 1743, C.O. 140/31; Council and Assembly to George II, May 8, 1747, C.O. 137/58; Holmes to Cleveland, March 18 and Oct. 27, 1761, Adm. 1/236; see the

Although the raids of privateers were so much complained of, they do not seem to have inflicted very great damage; there were very few demands for compensation. When a Bill was introduced into the legislature of St. Kitts for indemnifying sufferers by such pillage, there was only one case to be provided for—that of the Lieutenant-Governor, who was the real promoter of the law, and passed it by his casting vote. There were not more than half a dozen applications to the Assembly of Jamaica for compensation of this kind; it is impossible to say whether there were very few planters whose property had been damaged, or merely very few who had influence with the Assemblymen.

The inability of the militia to guard the coasts does not seem to have been a very serious trouble, though the burden was vexatious and was one of the principal reasons why the planters were so eager to have regular troops stationed in their islands. The difficulty of warding off a serious invasion with such small forces was a graver matter, and required some remedy. There were four principal ways in which the military strength of the sugar colonies could be supplemented—fortifications, armed negroes, regular troops, and above all a large naval force.

§ ii. *The Value of Fortifications*

The planters raised great sums for fortifying their islands. Unfortunately, the island legislatures not only paid for the work, but also directed it,¹ with such light as they could get, and were willing to take, from Governors who might or might not have had military experience. These Governors, especially if they had been professional soldiers, nearly always derided the work of their predecessors, and insisted upon altering it, only to have their own performances in their turn pronounced worthless and superseded by their successors.² Skilled workmen

French privateer's commission of 1746, printed by Marsden, *Law and Custom*, ii. 328.

¹ In Jamaica the fortifications in the out-ports were built and kept in repair at the charge not of the island but of the parishes concerned. It is therefore impossible to conjecture the whole expense, as very few of the parish records survive from this period.

² Knowles, for example, had an itch for fortifying, and ran down all the fortifications round Kingston except those which had been built under his own direction (Knowles's 'State of Jamaica', Dec. 13, 1755, C.O. 137/29 Y 106). Haldane, his successor, thought them still so weak that Fort Royal could not be defended half an hour without the help of the fleet, and asked for the services of a professional

were often lacking; when Peter Henry Bruce tried to put Fort Montagu in order at New Providence, he had to get masons from Philadelphia. Both in the English and French islands, there were many complaints of bad construction.¹ There were also popular prejudices and the interests of politicians to be considered. The planters would set an imaginary value upon some quite useless position, and insist on fortifying it to the neglect of everything else. Another cause of disturbance and delay was the danger that the legislatures might tack irrelevant clauses to the fortification bills, or raise the money in undesirable ways. In the Seven Years War the Assembly of St. Kitts tried to take advantage of the necessity of a powder duty in order to extend its constitutional privileges in financial matters. Governor Thomas had already rebuked this sort of trifling. 'Some of His Majesty's Colonys have been shifting off expences and disputing about little privileges, till the French have almost robbed them of the privilege of calling anything their own.'²

The result of all this was great confusion, inefficiency, and above all a prodigious waste, which would have been greater still if the Assemblies had not so much disliked raising taxes.³ They would never do anything except in a great emergency. When the enemy was announced, they would proceed with energy on the works which they ought to have finished long ago. As soon as the danger passed over, they would leave everything standing as it was, and refuse to keep it up. The Assembly of Montserrat, for example, declined to open entrenchments in 1739, as the danger from a Spanish war was not great enough to be worth the expense: they would leave it until there were

engineer—though he attributed the fault largely to the badness of the guns (Board of Trade to George II, May 12, 1758, C.O. 138/20, p. 403; Haldane to Board of Trade, July 20, 1759, C.O. 137/30 Z 60). See also Laporte-Lalanne's letter to Moras, July 15, 1758, A.N. Colonies C^o A 101; Bart to Moras, Sept. 20, 1757, vol. 100; Remonstrance of the *Conseil Supérieur* of Port-au-Prince, July 19, 1759, vol. 103; Instructions to Clugny, April 4, 1760, B 111; Clugny to Berryer, Dec. 25, 1760, C^o A 107; Bory to Choiseul, June 22, 1762, C^o A 111.

¹ *Memoirs of Peter Henry Bruce* (London, 1782), pp. 386-7; Nevis Assembly Minutes, Feb. 4, 1747/8, C.O. 186/3; Berryer to Bart and Elias, June 23, 1759, A.N. Colonies B 109; Clugny to Berryer, Dec. 18, 1760, C^o A 107.

² St. Kitts Council Minutes, April 7, 1755, Dec. 6, 1756, C.O. 241/7.

³ According to Trelawny, the legislature of Jamaica reasoned in 1749 'that it is better to run the risque of being destroy'd by the enemy, if not protected sufficiently by His Majesty's Ships and some soldiers from England, than absolutely and certainly to ruin themselves by an expence on their fortifications which they cannot bear' (Trelawny to the Board of Trade, June 8, 1749, C.O. 137/25).

signs of a French war. When the Governor warned them that a French war was in fact approaching, they set to with frenzied diligence. St. Kitts would do nothing to defend itself—not even pass a militia law—before the outbreak of the French war in 1744 (although its own agent, in company with the other representatives of the West India interest, had long been pressing the Admiralty to send out a large naval reinforcement on the assumption that a French war might break out at any moment). Then the legislature took all its measures in a desperate hurry. Beauharnois noticed the same thing at Martinique in 1758—everything had to be done at once.¹

These fortifications were built by negro labour. The system was much the same in both French and English islands, but that the French *corvées* seem to have been apportioned and commandeered by the Governors, while compulsion could only be exercised in the English colonies under an Act of the local legislature. Probably much less was done in the English than in the French West Indies. The Governors of the latter were sometimes forced to suspend the *corvées* because they could not get victuals to feed the negroes, or the planters would not continue to furnish them; but the interruptions can hardly have been so frequent as those caused in the English islands by the sudden evaporation of the Assemblies' good intentions. This negro labour was generally unpaid on both sides; sometimes, however, the English legislatures ordered payment to be made, and Beauharnois could only persuade the planters of Martinique to furnish their *corvées* by paying hire for their slaves.²

The *corvées* were unpopular, especially if they happened to be demanded in crop-time, or for works distant from the owners' plantations. Vaudreuil of Cap François believed that the planters were more willing to furnish them in war than in peace, because the labour of their negroes could not then be so profitably employed on the plantations; but this argument has

¹ Montserrat Assembly Minutes, Dec. 8, 1739, C.O. 177/3; Nov. 28, 1743, C.O. 177/4; Mathew's 'State of the Leeward Islands', Oct. 16, 1742, C.O. 152/24, Y 54; Mathew to Newcastle, July 20, 1744, C.O. 152/44; Beauharnois and Givry to Moras, June 24, 1758, A.N. Colonies C⁸ A 64. For similar instances of eleventh-hour diligence see *C.S.P. Col. 1706-8*, nos. 281, 1251.

² Longueville to Berryer, Feb. 22, 1760, A.N. Colonies C⁸ A 62; Le Vassor de la Touche to Berryer, July 24, 1761, C⁸ A 63; Larnage to Maurepas, Oct. 30, 1744, C⁹ A 64.

the air of an *a priori* deduction. The colonists had some perpetual reasons for disliking the *corvées* which forced their slaves into the company of those from other estates, and gave opportunities for mutual corruption of manners and even for plots. A money commutation was proposed several times, and the Government once or twice looked upon it with favour; but the planters objected to money taxes more than anything else, and were always monstrously behindhand with them, so the system of *corvées* had generally to be left as it was.¹

An attempt at commutation in St. Domingue led to a constitutional quarrel between the Government and the *Conseils Supérieurs* of the island. The colonists appear to have consented to a tax upon negroes in 1713, by way of purchasing exemption from the *corvées*. The Government pocketed the tax, and frustrated the exemption by distinguishing between ordinary and extraordinary *corvées*; the agreement only entitled the colonies to relief from the former, and the latter continued to be raised. The colonists acquiesced in this interpretation, and when the Government asked in 1750 for a special tax to put the fortifications in order, the *Conseils Supérieurs* granted it for five years. At the end of that time the Seven Years War was breaking out, and the King ordered the tax to be prolonged. The *Conseils* made a difficulty of registering the order, raised a dispute over their constitutional privileges, criticized the way the money was spent, and asked what the Government had done with the revenues of the island since 1713. Finally the registration was pushed through, but the same trouble recurred when it had to be repeated in 1759. Berryer tried to bribe the colonists with a new Chamber of Commerce, but this registration provoked complaints like the earlier one.²

What was the use of fortifications without artillery? The colonists did not always stop to ask themselves this question before they planned their defences; in consequence there were sometimes emplacements without guns, just as there were at

¹ Maurepas to Caylus and Ranché, July 8, 1745, A.N. Colonies B 81; Caylus and Ranché to Maurepas, Jan. 30, 1746, C⁸ A 57; Le Vassor de la Touche to Berryer, July 24, 1761, C⁸ A 63; Vaudreuil to Maurepas, April 1747, C⁹ A 71; see the correspondence between Chastenoye and Vaudreuil on this subject, C⁹ A 67.

² Vaudreuil and Laporte-Lalanne to Machault, Dec. 1, 1755, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 96; Remonstrance of the *Conseil Supérieur* of Port-au-Prince, July 19, 1759, C⁹ A 103; Berryer to Bart and Elias, July 28, B 109; Clugny to Berryer, Dec. 25, 1760, C⁹ A 107; Berryer to Clugny, May 31, 1761, B 111.

other times, for other reasons, guns without emplacements.¹ The islands expected the home Government to supply them at its own expense with ordnance stores, for which they petitioned extravagantly and often absurdly. The legislatures instructed their agents what to demand, very often without consulting the Governors; but even the Governors were sometimes at fault. Robinson of Barbados asked for heavier guns than the Ordnance had ever cast. No doubt he thought, as many people in the islands did, that the light cannon of the shore batteries were insufficient to reply to the fire of men-of-war; but he only betrayed his ignorance by asking for such artillery as had never existed. Another curious piece of waste and mismanagement happened in Montserrat about the same time. The legislature asked for a supply of 'buccaneer guns', a kind of muskets with exceptionally long muzzles, which carried farther than ordinary small-arms. The reason given for this demand does not seem a very good one—namely that whatever the real merits of buccaneer guns, the poorer classes, when armed with them, believed themselves to be invincible. As it was not their own money but the Home Government's that the Montserrat legislators proposed to spend, they could afford this psychological indulgence. The Board of Ordnance does not appear to have heard of buccaneer guns, so it sent a supply of rather similar weapons called wall-pieces, though it could not imagine what they could be wanted for, as Montserrat had no fortifications, and wall-pieces were too heavy to be discharged without walls to rest upon. Of course the wall-pieces were perfectly useless when they arrived, and the people hardly knew what to do with them.²

The Government drew a clear distinction between what it would supply gratis and what the colonists must buy with their own money. From 1735, it refused to provide without payment anything with which the colonists were bound by their own laws to supply themselves, such as small-arms or powder. After this the islands continued to apply for the stores which they could have gratis, and made no attempt to provide themselves with those for which they had to pay. This omission did not escape the Board of Ordnance, which very properly refused in

¹ Robinson to Newcastle, June 25, 1743, May 10, 1744, C.O. 28/46; Thomas to Board of Trade, April 26, 1758, C.O. 152/29, CC 32.

² Report of the Board of Ordnance, Feb. 25, 1745/6, *A.P.C. Col.* iii. 808; Montserrat Council Minutes, July 21, 1739, June 5, 1740, C.O. 177/3.

1740 to issue the one unless the colonists would buy the other. For example, it was utter waste to send out artillery to people who took no trouble to have any powder with which to fire it, so the Board began to insist that the powder duties should be put on a proper basis and really collected in kind, without which condition it would not send out the guns.¹ The legislatures and their agents thought this very hard, but of course it was the most reasonable precaution in the world.

The Board of Ordnance tried in vain to ensure that proper care should be taken of the stores after they were received. No power in the world could have procured that in the West Indies at that time. Many of the guns which had been so strenuously applied for, turned out to be unmounted at an emergency; they were lent to privateers, or embezzled, or allowed to decay.² The quality of the military stores shipped out to the colonies on public or private account was probably very low. Governor Haldane can hardly have been right when he said that most of the guns in the fortifications of Jamaica had been cast in the reign of Queen Elizabeth;³ but very likely the Ordnance took the opportunity to send out to the colonies the oldest and worst of everything it had. The small-arms which the islands bought for themselves were no better. At Guadeloupe, not long before the siege, the commandant bought some muskets for the militia from Dutch merchants of St. Eustatius; but three-quarters of them burst at the first review. They had not been made to be fired, but only to be bartered in the African slave trade.⁴

There were three kinds of fortifications: batteries along the coasts, regular forts commanding the principal towns, and

¹ *A.P.C. Col.* iii. 557-60, 650; Nevis Assembly Minutes, March 26, 1741, C.O. 186/3; Montserrat Assembly Minutes, March 2, 1744/5, C.O. 177/4.

² Vaudreuil and Laporte-Lalanne to Machault, June 10, 1755, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 96; Laporte-Lalanne to Machault, April 16, C⁹ A 97.

³ Haldane to Board of Trade, July 20, 1759, C.O. 137/30.

⁴ Nadau du Treil to Massiac, Dec. 25, 1758, A.N. Colonies C⁷ A 17. There was a curious dispute over the small-arms ordered by the legislature of Barbados in 1743. The business was done by Messrs. Lascelles and Maxwell; they had every qualification for it because one of their partners was a relation of the Surveyor-General of the Ordnance, who helped them to get the best of everything. One Wilson, a gunsmith in the Minories, heard of the order and bought up a number of old barrels in the hope that Lascelles and Maxwell would be obliged to deal with him. When they did not, he revenged himself by sending out a new musket to Barbados and pretending that he could have furnished arms of that quality for less than they had charged (Lascelles and Maxwell to Thomas Applewhaite, March 12, 1743/4, W. & G. ii).

places of refuge in the mountains. The first were beginning to be thought almost useless. They had been strong enough so long as the islands were unlikely to be attacked by more than a few ships; but they became powerless when the nations began to wage war in the West Indies on the same scale as in Europe. The conquests of Guadeloupe and Martinique proved this. Le Vassor de la Touche was blamed for letting the English land on Martinique in 1762; but how could he have prevented it when the batteries were so quickly silenced?¹ However, they still served small purposes well. They kept off small incursions of privateers, and prevented the enemy's cruisers from cutting merchant vessels out of roads. Sometimes the planters repulsed such attempts by musketry, but they disliked that kind of fighting, and threatened to give up trying to defend the shipping unless they were encouraged by the establishment of batteries.²

Nearly every island had some considerable fortress which it regarded as its main strength. Jamaica had Port Royal, which guarded Kingston Harbour and the open plains of St. Catharines. St. Kitts had the famous Brimstone Hill, which stood a great siege for several weeks in 1782. There was Monk's Hill at Antigua; Nevis and Montserrat had places of refuge up in the mountains, which they generally called 'Dosd'ânes' or 'Deodands'. Barbados had no such central stronghold, though Carlisle Bay was defended by several forts. Martinique had Fort Royal, besides entrenchments and refuges in the *mornes* or heights which commanded it. Guadeloupe had a fort at Basse-terre and a refuge in the mountains. St. Domingue had strong places at Petit-Goave, Cap François, and St. Louis.

Many of these strongholds were on the coasts, for each colony must have one place where the merchant shipping could lie safe; the convoy system would be almost useless without such security at the end of the journey. The Governors often had a great deal of difficulty to persuade the merchant captains to stay in these fortified harbours, especially in the French islands where the chief places of commerce did not grow up round the chief fortresses. There was a perpetual rivalry between Fort Royal, the military and civil capital of Martinique, and St.

¹ Mathew's 'State' of the Leeward Islands, 1734, C.O. 152/20, V 46; Mathew to Dottin, Oct. 31, 1740, in Barbados Council Minutes of Nov. 25, C.O. 31/21; Rouillé de Raucourt to Berryer, June 30, 1759, A.N. Colonies C⁸ A 62; Le Mercier de la Rivière, *Mémoire* on the siege of Martinique, vol. 64.

² Guyonneau to ? Caylus, Aug. 29, 1745, A.N. Colonies C⁷ A 17.

Pierre where the trade collected. The Governors sometimes ordered all the merchant ships to lie at Fort Royal for their safety. The trading interest complained of the inconvenience, and argued that however insecure the open road of St. Pierre might be, and however easily ships could be cut out of it, at least it could not be blockaded, as Fort Royal harbour could. Similar conflicts arose in St. Domingue. The merchants preferred Aux Cayes and Léogane to the fortified harbours of St. Louis and Petit-Goave, because their ships could not lie far from the barcadiers where they were to take in sugar, without consuming the time and health of their crews in long boat journeys. Therefore Larnage and Chastenoye ordered the masters in vain to repair to the strong places. When the capital was removed from Petit-Goave to Port-au-Prince, the sailors and civilians disagreed as to the kind of harbour to be fortified: Périer de Salvert thought it useless to strengthen the merchant ports, because the King's ships of war were the real security of the trade, and it was their cruising bases that must be made safe. This argument, however, was only sound if the colony was constantly defended by a sufficient force; that condition was wanting in these wars. There were no such controversies in the English islands, though Vernon lamented that the ships would go to the outports of Jamaica instead of congregating in Kingston Harbour where he could more easily have protected them.¹

Some of these fortresses were only indifferently strong. The great, the impregnable Fort Royal was so hard to defend in 1759 that Beauharnois was preparing to blow it up in a panic when a few hundred militia on Morne Tartenson repulsed the English attack, to their own and everybody's surprise, and drove the invaders from the island.² Basseterre Fort on Guadeloupe was tamely surrendered, and three years later Fort Royal had the same fate. On the other hand, the redoubt in the mountains of Guadeloupe was much better held; it is not certain whether it could have been taken at all if the inhabitants had

¹ Bompar to Machault, Oct. 20, 1755, A.N. Colonies C⁸ A 61; Givry to Machault, Oct. 28, *ibid.*; Letter from St. Pierre, May 12, 1756, Arch. Gir. C 4318, no. 58; Larnage to Maurepas, March 11, 1744, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 64; Maillart to Maurepas, Feb. 22, 1747, vol. 70; Instructions to Bart, Dec. 15, 1756, B 103; Périer de Salvert to Machault, June 10, 1756, A.N. Marine B⁴ 73; Vernon to New-castle, Oct. 31, 1739, S.P. 42/85, ff. 39-40.

² See the satirical rhymes and songs upon Beauharnois, quoted in Adrien Dessalles's *Histoire Générale des Antilles* (1847), v. 152-8.

not chosen to capitulate. Brimstone Hill and the Dosd'ane of Montserrat had held out in 1706 and 1712.¹ Port Royal at Jamaica was never put to the test; but Vernon and Lestock were reported to say that three 74-gun ships could take it, and that the real strength of Kingston Harbour consisted in the capital ships of the squadron, which could prevent an invasion by lying broadside across the narrows. Even there, they were commanded by several batteries which might be taken from the land side.² Perhaps nothing proved the weakness of forts against ships better than Knowles's capture of St. Louis; he got his cannon trained upon it and silenced it by a few hours' bombardment.³ Moore's reduction of the Guadeloupe forts pointed the same moral.

Even if the fortresses had been perfect, their value in West Indian warfare was doubtful. The most that could be expected of them was to delay the enemy for a few weeks until his troops began to fall down sick; if they could do so much, the climate would do the rest. Some of them were already far too large for the forces which were to man them. This complaint was made of Brimstone Hill. In 1756 the people of Jamaica discovered that they had built works which needed three thousand men to defend them—a much larger number than could possibly be available if the rest of the island was to be defended at all; they therefore petitioned the King for another regiment.⁴ Roche-more, the engineer sent out in 1760 to put the defences of Martinique in order, discovered that the entrenchments round Fort Royal were too long. The colonists had found fault for the same reason with Governor Parke's lines round St. Johns,

¹ Beauharnois's account of the siege of Martinique, Jan. 27, 1759, A.N. Colonies C⁸ A 62; there is another account of the siege, by an anonymous enemy of Beauharnois, *ibid.*; Le Mercier de la Rivière to Berryer, Jan. 10, 1760, *ibid.*; Gagnières to Berryer, Dec. 25, 1760, *ibid.* (but this is only hearsay). Barrington seems to imply that he could not have taken the Dosd'ane of Guadeloupe, for he said that if Beauharnois had come to the rescue a few hours earlier, the island need not have surrendered at all (Barrington to Pitt, May 9, 1759, C.O. 110/1). But Dubourg de Clainvilliers, one of those who made the capitulation, defended it as unavoidable, though he took care not to admit that to the English commanders (see his narrative enclosed in Beauharnois's letter to Berryer, July 12, 1759, A.N. Colonies C⁸ A 62).

² Knight, letter of Aug. 15, 1745, Add. MSS. 22677, f. 48. Vernon once said he would engage to take Port Royal with two 60-gun ships, but that must have been rhodomontade (Beckford to Knight, Oct. 11, 1740, Add. MSS. 12431, f. 116).

³ Heron to Machault, Dec. 30, 1755, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 97.

⁴ Thomas to Board of Trade, Nov. 12, 1755, C.O. 152/28, BB 72; Legislature of Jamaica to George II, Oct. 14, 1756, C.O. 137/29.

Antigua.¹ A fortress too large to be strongly manned was worse than no fortress at all, for instead of being defended by the colonists against the enemy, it might come to be held by the enemy against the colonists. This was generally considered to be the disadvantage of such posts as St. Louis, on the south coast of St. Domingue, where the militia were very few and scattered.²

Still greater were the arguments against fortifying the outlying headlands of Cape Tiburon and Cape Nicola. These posts were immensely important, for they commanded not only the traffic through the Windward Passage, but the coastwise communications between the several quarters of St. Domingue. The French warships at that colony were paralysed by their inability to pass freely and safely round these two capes. The Chamber of Commerce of La Rochelle suggested in 1744 that the Government should try to fortify them; Maurepas had indeed long considered it, but found it impossible because of their desolate and exposed situation. Few settlers lived near Cape Tiburon, and most of them relinquished their habitations on the approach of a war which would subject them to great danger. Nobody at all could live near Cape Nicola, for the land was incultivable. There was therefore no hope of strengthening such fortifications in an emergency with neighbouring militia, and even if a garrison of regular troops was installed, it could easily be cut off from all help and subsistence. In spite of these difficulties, the French Government succeeded at last in setting up a fortress at the Mole of Cape Nicola, with the help of a free port. But that was after the Seven Years War was over, though the scheme was devised in the middle of it.³

The difficulty of holding fortifications was not entirely overcome by placing them in populous districts surrounded by large numbers of colonists. The militia could hardly be persuaded to enter them. When Knowles made his attack on Fort Louis in 1748, the militia of the neighbouring quarters was marched up; but many of the men deserted by the way, on one excuse or

¹ Rochemore to Berryer, March 13, 1761, A.N. Colonies C⁸ A 63; *C.S.P. Col.* 1708-9, no. 443 (ii).

² Larnage and Maillart to Maurepas, March 12, 1741, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 54.

³ Maurepas to Larnage and Maillart, March 10, 1739, A.N. Colonies B 68; Larnage to Maurepas, Dec. 2, 1739, C⁹ A 50; Larnage and Maillart to Maurepas, March 12, 1740, vol. 52; Aug. 31, 1744, vol. 64; Berryer to Bart and Clugny, April 4, 1760, B 111. *V. infra*, p. 301.

another, and those that arrived refused to enter the town, let alone the fortress.¹ According to Beauharnois, the attacks on Martinique and Guadeloupe proved that it was useless to expect the militia to shut themselves up in fortresses. In the fort of Basseterre, Guadeloupe, they threw down their arms and departed. Apparently many of them had got drunk on the garrison's rum; but they excused themselves by saying that some bombs had fallen into the cistern, and made the water undrinkable. The same kind of thing happened a few weeks later at Fort Louis, on Grande Terre. The militia would not go into the fortress, for the noise of the cannon. When the powder-magazine blew up and Beaulés decided to evacuate the place, he had to beat the militiamen in order to make them approach the fort and remove what they could save of the stores.² Scenes even more disgraceful took place at Fort Royal on Martinique in 1762. Seeing that the place was about to be invested, the commandant sent to La Touche for help. La Touche could send none, for the whole militia had abandoned him after the defeat of January 27; so the commandant had to shut himself up with what men he had. They were so determined to leave the fort, that some of them climbed over the walls before his eyes, in spite of his orders to fire upon them.³

This was not mere cowardice, though the experience of a cannonade in an enclosed place was doubtless very terrible to the planters, who were unused to it and preferred a sniping guerrilla warfare to regular fighting. There was a valid reason for this passionate aversion to entering the fortresses. The property which the militiamen left at home was very valuable and very precarious. To destroy and plunder it was the work of a very short time; negroes were a most portable form of wealth, because they had legs to carry them where the conquerors bade them go. Knowing the nervousness of the French planters for their estates, the English commanders in 1759, and still more in 1762, wisely adopted a harassing, plundering form

¹ Buttet to Maurepas, March 26, 1748, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 74; Rancé to Maurepas, April 9, 1748, vol. 73; Larnage to Maurepas, Oct. 31, 1744, vol. 64.

² Hurault to Beauharnois, Feb. 28, 1759, A.N. Colonies C⁸ A 62; Beaulés to Beauharnois, Feb. 21, 1759, *ibid.*

³ Letter of des Ligneris, Feb. 11, 1762, C⁸ A 64. The court martial decided that des Ligneris could not have prolonged the defence of Fort Royal, but he was retired at his own request because the Marshal de Sennecterre advised Choiseul that he had acted feebly.

of warfare. It made the militia anxious to remain as near as possible to their own plantations, or even to desert the distant encampments in order to protect their families and belongings. At Guadeloupe this plan was not fully carried out until after Hopson's death, though a great deal of ravage had been done in the Basseterre quarter before that. When Barrington began to dart up and down the windward coast, destroying the plantations here and there, the desertions from the French redoubt became more and more frequent. The planter could not bear to think what might be happening to his property behind his back.¹ The commanders of 1762 had the wisdom to make feints about the coast of Martinique before they delivered their main attack. A Frenchman who described the siege thought this a stroke of genius. It gave time for the first enthusiasm of the militia to fade away, as it infallibly must after a few days' entrenching and a few nights in the open. It also obliged Le Vassor de la Touche to disperse the forces which he had carefully collected at Fort Royal. He knew very well that these descents were only diversions, and continued at first to give orders for the further concentration of the militia; but the cries of the planters forced him against his better judgement to scatter his troops again. He had to make detachments to the out-quarters in order to check the ravages of English privateers, who were pillaging the plantations with impunity. Here again, as at Guadeloupe, the desertion of the militia after the first defeat, and their insistence on a capitulation, were greatly due to their fears for their property.²

It was not only the enemy who might play havoc with the planters' estates while they were defending the fortresses. At the siege of Guadeloupe the privateers whom the Governor pressed into the service burnt and pillaged so freely that they were thought to have done more injury to the colony than the

¹ See Dubourg de Clainvilliers's narrative, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 62.

² Le Vassor de la Touche to Berryer, Nov. 20, 1761, A.N. Colonies C⁸ A 63; 'Journal of the Siege of Martinique', *ibid.*; La Touche to Choiseul, May 14, 1762, vol. 64; Le Mercier de la Rivière, *mémoire* on the siege, Aug. 5, *ibid.* Governor Dalrymple believed whole-heartedly that this form of warfare was the least troublesome and most effective; he thought it, in fact, the only way to reduce a small population in a mountainous island like Dominica, and also recommended it to be used in Martinique (Dalrymple to Pitt, May 5, 1761, C.O. 110/1; see also the plan for attacking Martinique attributed to him, G.D. 8/98). He may have had some influence, through his friendship with Commodore Douglas, on the plan of action pursued at Martinique.

English. Le Vassor de la Touche had to guard against such outrages at Martinique by denouncing beforehand the penalty of death against any Frenchman who should loot the planters' property or set houses on fire without orders.¹

The only kind of fortification to which the colonists ever retired with anything like a good grace was the inland *Dosd'ane*, which was meant to hold their families, their negroes, and even their stock. In fact the people of Guadeloupe prepared for the siege in 1759, some weeks before it began, by turning into money as much of their effects as they could sell, and securing what was portable in the redoubt, or in other strong places in the mountains.² Le Mercier de la Rivière thought that the existence of this kind of refuges had a good effect upon the planters' morale; they would be unwilling to fight if they did not know that such a place of safety existed for their families and property.³ But it is doubtful whether the presence of their relations, slaves, and movables really tended to improve their valour or endurance in the last resort.⁴

§ iii. *The Use of Negroes in War*

The planters were not only afraid of the damage which friends or enemies might do to their belongings; they distrusted the loyalty of their own slaves. When French St. Kitts was taken in King William's war, many of the French negroes escaped from both conquerors and conquered, and ranged the mountains for nearly a year. At Iberville's assault on Nevis, a thousand slaves defended themselves for some time against both sides.⁵ Jamaica had its tribes of Maroon negroes who waged war against the colony upon almost equal terms, and were not subdued for a hundred years.

Opinions differed how far it was right to encourage the enemy's slaves to rise against their masters in the hour of invasion. In his scheme of 1740 for attacking Jamaica, Larnage reckoned with the probability that the English would arm their slaves.

'But', he added, 'besides that soldiers of that kind are far from formidable, their effectiveness could be destroyed by proclaiming

¹ Le Vassor de la Touche to Berryer, Nov. 20, 1761, A.N. Colonies C⁸ A 63.

² Nadau du Treil to Berryer, Dec. 25, 1758, A.N. Colonies C⁷ A 17.

³ Le Mercier de la Rivière to Berryer, Jan. 20, 1760, C⁸ A 62.

⁴ *C.S.P. Col.* 1706-8, no. 281.

⁵ *Ibid.*, nos. 270, 357 (iv).

when we landed, that any slave found in arms should suffer the penalty of death, and on the contrary those who give up themselves and their arms should receive their liberty. I do not think that the laws of war and religion would permit us to offer a similar reward to slaves who should deliver the heads of their masters. The late M. de Fayet said he should do this if a war took place, but nobody liked it.'

About the same time, Larnage was under the impression that the Spaniards of Cuba had imported a number of muskets with which they meant to arm the negroes of Jamaica against their masters.

'I do not know', he wrote to Maurepas, 'if you regard this as a very Catholic way of destroying the English; and supposing that it succeeded, and that the negroes cut off the English altogether, surely an island occupied by more than a hundred thousand negroes would be a very disagreeable neighbour, because of our own slaves, for whom it would be a safe asylum from which we should never get them back.'

When a rebellion of the Jamaica negroes was reported, he observed that 'one ought not to wish for its success even against the enemy, for fear that the example might spread'.¹

The English commanders against Guadeloupe do not seem to have agreed upon the encouragement to be offered to deserters. Hopson would only promise to respect the status of all free negroes and mulattos who should surrender within twelve days; Moore unsuccessfully tried to add a clause offering freedom to such slaves as should desert and do some signal piece of service against the French.²

It was a more contested question whether negroes could safely or usefully be armed in defence of their own masters. Even the optimists who thought it would be prudent in particular cases, hardly recommended it as a general principle. While each nation might think it could rely on its own slaves, it was not at all afraid that the enemy would derive any benefit from arming his. Larnage thought little was to be feared from the armed slaves of Jamaica. Knight returned the compliment.

'It is true', he said of the planters of St. Domingue, 'that they can arm some negroes, but these have very little affection to their

¹ Larnage to Maurepas, Aug. 24, 1740, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 52; *mémoire* on attacking Jamaica, Oct. 17, 1740, vol. 53; Jan. 10, 1745, vol. 66.

² Proclamation of Hopson and Moore, Feb. 14, 1759, C.O. 110/1; draft proclamation by Moore, *ibid.*

masters, by reason of their severity and the hard labour they put them to, and therefore they can have no great dependance on them. The negroes in Jamaica have so terrible an idea of the French from some who were transported to Hispaniola, and sold there, and afterwards made their escape at a very great hazard of their lives upon the seas, that they think it the greatest punishment can be inflicted upon them to be transported and sold to the French.¹

In fact each side was reassured by the comfortable illusion that it treated its own negroes more humanely than the other.

Many colonists, however, extended this distrust to their own slaves, and with good reason. Jamaica had only just come to terms with the 'Maroons' of the north side before the war with Spain broke out, and had to suppress a dangerous revolt in the middle of the Seven Years War. Antigua had demanded a regular garrison in 1738, as a precaution against negro insurrections. The legislature of St. Kitts suspected a great plot among the slaves to desert in a body to the enemy in 1747, and professed a few years later to be afraid that unless the fortifications were garrisoned by regular troops, the negroes might rise and seize them. In view of this, it is not surprising that some colonists were not very willing to trust to their help in occasions of emergency.

When the legislature of Jamaica voted to raise 500 negroes for one of Vernon's expeditions, William Beckford thought it necessary to apologize for this decision to his correspondent Knight, who seems to have disapproved of the policy altogether. Only a third of these, Beckford hoped, would be 'shot negroes', the rest were merely to be 'pioneers' or general drudges of the camp; but he was afraid they might all be instructed in the use of arms before the expedition was over. A few months later he wrote again, acknowledging the folly of giving the negroes such an education, but still justifying the measure as a public proof of the excessive lengths to which the patriotism of Jamaica could go.² The slaves whom the islands raised for the expeditions against Guadeloupe, Martinique, and Havana were apparently meant for 'pioneers' only. The same kind of work was expected of slaves in cases of invasion. Governor Nadau, for instance, ordered each company of militia to furnish so many able negroes for distributing stores and the

¹ Knight to Newcastle, Oct. 21, 1740, Add. MSS. 32695, f. 309.

² Beckford to Knight, Aug. 19, 1741, Feb. 10, 1741/2, Add. MSS. 12431.

like; those of the religious houses were to be employed in such non-combatant services as that of the hospitals. The English colonies also appointed negroes to be furnished at alarms, and to be equipped with bills, presumably for cutting away brush-wood; they ordered others down to the rendezvous with carts, for moving stores, victuals, and public records.

Even if the negroes were trustworthy, were they of any real use as soldiers? Le Mercier de la Rivière thought them valueless. He said they were so lazy and cowardly, that although the promise of freedom if they behaved well inspired a few, most of them were unwilling to bear arms, or only did so out of vanity or the hope of escaping regular plantation work. To make things worse, the *noblesse*, copied by some other planters, assumed the privilege of refusing to let their slaves serve except under their own eyes, with the result that the negroes were only 'a great number of superfluous domestics, victualled at the expense of the King'.¹ Complaints were also made against the insolence which the negroes showed when they found themselves indispensable. Nadau lamented that he should have to arm some at Guadeloupe. 'Perceiving most of their masters in great fear and poverty, and their own services in great demand, they have assumed an impertinent and insubordinate air for which we have to punish them.' When Bart ordered the planters of St. Domingue to arm 5 per cent. of their slaves, the *Conseil Supérieur* of Port-au-Prince protested: the armed negroes were not only uppish, but sometimes refused to work with the other slaves. The *Conseil* advised the Governor to follow the example of Vaudreuil, who would not let anybody give arms to negroes, or of Larnage, who had privately invited the planters to arm the slaves of whom they were sure.²

In spite of all these dangers and inconveniences, the colonists often armed their slaves for their defence. There were some Governors who insisted upon it. Mathew and Thomas, of the Leeward Islands, were never tired of recommending the legislatures of their government to pass laws for this purpose; some of them disliked it, but generally had recourse to it when the danger was great. St. Kitts, for example, which had for some

¹ *Mémoire* on the siege of Martinique, already quoted.

² Nadau du Treil to Berryer, Dec. 25, 1758, A.N. Colonies C⁷ A 17; Remonstrance of the *Conseil Supérieur* of Port-au-Prince, July 19, 1759, C⁹ A 103; Berryer to Bart and Élias, June 23, B 109.

years paid no attention to Mathew's advice, suddenly complied with it in 1744. There was another great alarm there in 1757, in which Lieutenant-Governor Payne advised increasing the man-power of the colony with armed negroes.

'The negroes stood by their masters at Nevis in Queen Anne's war while our flag was flying, they are most of them (we see) good marksmen, they don't love the French, and tho' not brave in a close engagement they will be bold when out of danger, and in case of extremity we may arm three or four thousand of them who while their bodies are covered will do great execution. Your Honour knows whether there are arms for such a number but there are few planters that have not from five to fifteen spare arms.'¹

The planters of St. Domingue, according to Larnage, would be glad of a further supply of arms to put into the hands of the negroes whom they could trust. At Guadeloupe precautions were taken against their infidelity, by embodying them in the same companies as the white militia and refusing to let them form separate units of their own.²

The free negroes and mulattos were thought to be far more reliable, and were almost universally included in the militia. They formed a sixth of that of St. Domingue. Both Larnage and Bory esteemed them the most valuable part of it, but Le Mercier de la Rivière thought those of Martinique useless, unless they had seen service with privateers.³ Manumission seems to have been rarer in the English islands and the free coloured population smaller, but there were some coloured men in the militia. Governor Lyttelton was instructed to raise some free negroes in Jamaica for the expedition against Havana in 1762; but he had very little success. His enemies said he had not applied to the people who had influence with the free men of colour; but he ascribed his failure to their unwillingness to leave their comfortable livelihood and their families in Jamaica, and above all to their fear that if they were taken prisoners they would be sold as slaves instead of being exchanged. Lyttelton tried to

¹ St. Kitts Council Minutes, Feb. 25, 1757, C.O. 241/7; Council of War, June 16, 1757, *ibid.*

² Guadeloupe, note of measures to be taken in case of an invasion, A.N. Colonies C⁷ A 17.

³ Larnage to Maurepas, Dec. 28, 1739, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 50; Le Mercier de la Rivière's *mémoire* on the siege of Martinique, C⁸ A 64. Bory thought the coloured men were the only ones on the island who could be relied upon to do militia duty (*v. supra*, p. 236).

reassure them, promising in a circular letter to the colonels of militia that the Commander-in-Chief should insist on the exchange of the free negroes along with the other prisoners of war, and should detain a certain number of the enemy captives until it was done. But this would not have sufficed, for the Spanish authorities, who were past masters of evasion, would certainly have declared with the deepest regret that the prisoners had been sold and dispersed, and could by no means be traced.¹

It is very much to the credit of the French capitulants and the English commanders at Guadeloupe that the former should have stipulated, and the latter consented, that the free negroes and mulattos should be treated as prisoners of war, instead of being reduced to slavery. There was a great temptation to profit by the enslavement of such free negroes found in arms; the conquerors of Guadeloupe did not yield to it, but those of Martinique did so.²

§ iv. *The Regular Army in the West Indies*

Fortifications and the enlistment of negroes were not enough to make the colonists think themselves safe. There was no other measure they could take for themselves, except an artificial increase of the white population which would have been incompatible with the social system. They had therefore to look to the home Government for help.

They demanded both military and naval force. For some time, regular troops had been stationed in the principal West India islands, at any rate in time of war. Barbados, which had been protected by a regiment in King William's War, does not seem to have recovered this privilege during the next three—perhaps because its less exposed position and greater white population rendered such a force unnecessary. Jamaica and the Leeward Islands had a regiment each in Queen Anne's reign; they were withdrawn for a short time after the Peace of Utrecht, but had been restored before the outbreak of war in 1739.

It sounds a very simple matter to station a regiment in a colony; but in fact there was a number of difficulties. The English Government had already laid it down as a principle that the islands had no right to the protection of a regular mili-

¹ Lyttelton to Egremont, May 12, 1762, Jan. 11, 1763, C.O. 137/61; letter to colonels of militia, May 5, 1762, *ibid.*; Capitulation of Guadeloupe, Adm. 1/307.

² Compare the terms granted to Guadeloupe and Martinique, Adm. 1/307.

tary force unless they would pay something for it. The cost of living was much greater in the West Indies than in England, and the Government thought it only fair that the colonists should make up the difference, without which the soldiers could not live on their pay; the more so because the high price of provisions was chiefly due to the planters' preoccupation with the more lucrative cultivation of sugar. The islands tried to avoid this obligation. Governor Handasyd had to complain in Queen Anne's reign of the 'penurious' way in which the Jamaica Assembly treated the soldiers. It allowed them no barracks or quarters, so that many of them had no roof over their heads; or else it would only pass the quartering act with unacceptable provisions tacked to it. On one occasion it declared that it would pay an allowance to the soldiers but not to the officers, as it did not want the latter; this was presumably a stroke at Handasyd, who was the colonel.¹ The Cabinet discussed in 1739 a demand of Trelawny for a reinforcement against a foreign invasion, and decided to ask first what Jamaica would do for the troops, since the regiment sent there some time ago had received no support from the legislature. Then or very soon afterwards, the island undertook to pay the soldiers a regular 'additional subsistence' on quite a handsome scale; but the appropriations for this purpose were annual and the Assembly soon tired of the burden, though it hesitated at first to carry out the threat of throwing it off. A little later, in its quarrel with Governor Knowles, it could not resist the temptation to put pressure upon him by holding up this supply.² The politicians of Antigua had expressed their dislike of Governors Parke and Douglas in the same way, during Queen Anne's reign; and the peculiar nature of the Leeward Islands Government caused further troubles, on which it is worth while to dwell for a moment, as they exhibit a perfect miniature of corporate selfishness.

Antigua had applied for a regiment in 1738, and offered to build barracks, with a contribution from the King, and to furnish an additional subsistence, on condition that there should never be less than 400 effectives on the island. When Dalzell's

¹ *C.S.P. Col.* 1702-3, no. 885; 1704-5, nos. 557, 603 (i), 754.

² Cabinet Minute, Nov. 5, 1739, Add. MSS. 33004, f. 21; *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica*, iii. 585, 669; Board of Trade to George II, Oct. 15, 1754, C.O. 138/20, pp. 61-2.

regiment went out upon these terms, its establishment was raised to 700, so Governor Mathew was able to spare some companies to St. Kitts, Nevis, and Montserrat. But the West Indies were the grave of English soldiers, and the planters would not have the regiments recruited among their own servants, so the numbers began to fall.¹ The people of Antigua were determined to have their 400 men, to secure them against another insurrection of their negroes, or else they would not pay for any. They considered that the Government had broken its bargain with them by preparing to send the regiment on Cathcart's expedition (but this was countermanded at the last moment) and then by actually putting it on board Knowles's ships for the attack on La Guayra. They were also angry with Mathew for dispersing part of the force among the other islands under his government. They therefore seem to have discontinued the additional subsistence.²

This reached the ears of Dalzell, who was of course in England (for the colonels of these regiments stationed in the colonies did not often condescend to share the exile of their men). He too was very angry with Mathew for taking a step which had caused his soldiers to lose a part of their pay; he demanded that Mathew should concentrate the troops again in order to entitle them to the additional subsistence.³ Mathew was forced to make up the 400 men at Antigua by withdrawing the companies from Montserrat. The legislature of that island had done nothing for them—would not pay additional subsistence or even build barracks or guard-houses or hospitals, for want of which many lives had been lost. The politicians of Antigua were mollified by the return of these men, but not for very long. They soon demanded another sacrifice, and Mathew was very ready to give it, as the legislature of St. Kitts had annoyed him by refusing to follow his advice upon military matters. He

¹ Between 1739 and 1745 1,200 recruits were raised for Dalzell's regiment, of whom 960 were sent out; yet at the end of the period there were at most 492 effectives. If about 400 of the 960 can be accounted for by the raising of the establishment in 1739, that still leaves more than as many again who can only have died or disappeared in the West Indies, where in these years they only saw one short piece of active service, the expedition against La Guayra (Report of June 12, 1745, C.O. 152/44).

² *A.P.C. Col.* iii. 553-7; Antigua Council Minutes, Dec. 6, 1743, C.O. 9/15; Montserrat Council Minutes, Sept. 1, 1742, C.O. 177/3.

³ Antigua Council Minutes, Nov. 24, 1743, C.O. 9/15; St. Kitts Council Minutes, Dec. 2, 1742, C.O. 241/5.

therefore withdrew all the troops from St. Kitts too, but restored them in 1744, when the Assembly, in the absence of his personal enemy the Lieutenant-Governor, dutifully voted an additional subsistence and came into all his other measures.¹

Meanwhile an elaborate clamour had been rising from Montserrat. Elsewhere military arguments had not even been invoked in these transactions; but the Assembly of Montserrat glibly entered into considerations of strategy. It had already pointed out that without a powerful naval force the troops in one island were useless to another, because they could not be easily or safely transferred. Even if they could have been, the Assembly would rather have the soldiers on the spot, especially in a rocky island like Montserrat where it was easier to prevent a landing with twenty men than to drive the enemy away with a hundred. As for the danger of a negro insurrection, that was as great at Montserrat as at Antigua, and an island did not forfeit all claim to protection because it was poor. In fact, soldiers were more useful in Montserrat than in Antigua; the latter was well populated and protected by the constant presence of warships at English Harbour, therefore it was in no danger of small incursions, but only of an invasion. Montserrat, on the other hand, was nearer to the French islands and more accessible because farther to leeward than Antigua; the soldiers would do twice the service, because they would protect the island not only from great assaults but from small vexations.

The fact was, that the people of Montserrat wanted the troops to do nightly guard in order to save themselves the fatigue of keeping it up. (This was a common motive. In 1745 the Assembly of St. Kitts tried to deprive the soldiers of their additional subsistence for the period of the invasion scare, during which they had been stationed on Brimstone Hill, and had not been able to do nightly duty. This, it said, was their real business, in consideration of which the additional subsistence was granted.)

In 1744 the legislators of Montserrat adroitly changed their tune. Two years before, they had used the want of a naval superiority as an argument for cantoning out the troops among the islands where they might be needed. Now that we had a large force on the station they showed that neither Antigua nor any other island could be in danger of a great invasion, for if

¹ Mathew to Newcastle, July 20, 1744, C.O. 152/44.

any island was attacked, the soldiers could be hurried into it from the others; the moral was, that a company could safely be bestowed at Montserrat.¹

This dialectical agility did not meet with its due reward. Antigua kept the troops, making the most of the strategical advantage of concentration, and professing that if any other island should be threatened, the soldiers should go to its rescue. How far this was true might very well be doubted; if the other islands had any hope at all, it was because the legislature of Antigua did not technically command the regiment. The Board of Ordnance had not relied on the altruism of the colonies in other matters of the same sort. When it recommended the dispatch of some field-pieces to the Leeward Islands, it urged strongly that they should be allocated among the islands before they left London, instead of being left to be distributed on the spot in case of emergency, 'it being hard to imagine should any one of them be attacked whilst unprovided therewith, that those who have them in possession will part with them readily, and seasonably for the relief of their neighbours, while they are hourly in expectation of the same fate'.²

Montserrat soon had its revenge. Antigua asked for a contribution to the cost of maintaining the prisoners of war, and alleged various reasons of equity why Montserrat should share this burden; the legislature of Montserrat replied, with what it conceived to be pathetic dignity, that the island could not possibly afford anything for this object, so long as it was put to the expense of hiring regular guards for want of a company of soldiers. Towards the end of the war the company was restored, the additional subsistence voted, and some barracks built; but Mathew must have taken the soldiers away again, for at the beginning of the Seven Years War Montserrat began the same round of argument and complaint.³

Jamaica was once tempted to exploit the necessities of its regiment in the same way, in order to procure a concentration of the troops at the point where it was desired. Some

¹ Montserrat Assembly Minutes, Oct. 6 and 16, 1740, May 26, 1744, C.O. 177/4; July 24, 1742, C.O. 177/3; Council Minutes, Sept. 1, 1742, *ibid.*; St. Kitts Assembly Minutes, June 26, 1745, C.O. 241/5.

² *A.P.C. Col.* iii. 560.

³ Montserrat Assembly Minutes, June 6 and 16, Aug. 18, Sept. 1 and 26, 1744, March 18, 1744/5, C.O. 177/5; May 3, 1755, C.O. 177/8; Antigua Council Minutes, Sept. 29, 1755, C.O. 9/21.

companies were stationed for several years at Rattan and the Moskito Shore. The legislature disliked this, and finally in 1753 it refused to provide any longer for the subsistence of the soldiers then at the Moskito Shore, unless they were withdrawn to Jamaica.¹

The obligation to supplement the soldiers' pay was the only thing which prevented the sugar colonies from calling upon the Government for unlimited military support. In 1746 Antigua proposed to petition for a whole regiment to itself, and St. Kitts decided to follow its example. At the beginning of the Seven Years War Antigua asked again for another regiment or for a great augmentation of the existing one. After a struggle between the Board of Trade and the colony over the rate at which the additional subsistence was to be paid, the paper establishment of the regiment was increased.² So was that of Jamaica; but its Assembly, still unsatisfied, demanded and obtained another regiment in 1758. Some companies of this second regiment were left upon the coast of Africa, and the colonists insisted next year that they should be transferred to Jamaica. The Government sent five more companies, and still Jamaica asked for more. When the Secretary at War came to look in 1761 for possible reductions in the American forces, the only crying instances of superfluity he could find were at Antigua and Jamaica, where the paper establishments and therefore the officers had been augmented, but the privates had not increased, because of the difficulty of getting recruits to enlist for West India services.³

These troops were not very actively useful. No doubt they frightened the negroes into obedience, but there is little evidence that they deterred the French from attacking the islands. It was not the English soldiers that deterred Caylus and Conflans from attempting St. Kitts in 1745.⁴ These regulars served on some of the West India expeditions, where they did not always distinguish themselves. The companies were nearly always

¹ Jamaica Council Minutes, July 20, 1747, C.O. 140/32; Knowles to Holder-nesse, Oct. 13, 1753, C.O. 137/60.

² *A.P.C. Col.* iv. 264-70; Antigua Council Minutes, Sept. 29, 1755, C.O. 9/21; Board of Trade Report, Nov. 18, 1756, C.O. 153/18, pp. 84-91; *Journal of the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations, 1754-8*, p. 270.

³ *A.P.C. Col.* iv. 367-70; Legislature of Jamaica to George II, Dec. 17, 1760, C.O. 137/32, BB 19; Barrington to Newcastle, Oct. 2, 1760, Add. MSS. 32912, ff. 287-8.

⁴ Caylus to Maurepas, June 4, 1745, A.N. Colonies C⁸ A 56.

much under their full strength, because the poor fellows died faster than they were recruited. In Queen Anne's reign there had been great complaints of the equipment, clothing, and pay of the colonial soldiers, and of the absenteeism of the officers. They were repeated in a milder form once or twice during the next two wars, but were declared to be groundless.

The regular soldiers in the French colonies do not seem to have been worth much. Larnage complained that the recruits were mere children, and Buttet, who was indeed trying to exculpate himself for the scandalous surrender of St. Louis, said that they cried when ordered to remain under fire. Similar complaints were made at Martinique; and Longueville, commandant at St. Lucia, thought the officers lacked experience, since they came out to the colonies as young men and remained there all their lives without seeing any regular service or gaining a real knowledge of their profession.¹ St. Domingue was supposed to have 2,000 regular soldiers, French and Swiss, but the companies were reduced very low by fever and were seldom replenished.² The officers and men seem to have found it as difficult as the English to live on their pay, and had some strange ways of making ends meet. Vaudreuil wished there might be some workmen among the recruits whom Machault was to send out in 1756, because otherwise they would be

'useless to the colony and almost useless to His Majesty's service because most of them will starve to death in it. Workmen by their labour spread prosperity over the troop in which they are obliged to serve, and at the same time as they help their comrades to live, they prepare themselves to become useful colonists.'

This must surely mean that the soldiers were hired out as servants to the planters. The officers maintained themselves in a way which did equally little honour to their service. The Governor and Intendant urged Moras to increase their pay in 1757 because they could not live on it and no longer had the same supplementary resources as in peace. Then they could marry heiresses to plantations, or sponge upon the well-to-do

¹ Buttet to Maurepas, March 26, 1748, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 74; Longueville to Berryer, Aug. 5, 1759, C⁸ A 62; Bory to Choiseul, June 13, 1762, C⁹ A 111.

² Instructions to Bart, Dec. 15, 1756, A.N. Colonies B 103; Moras to Bart and Laporte-Lalanne, July 1, 1757, B 105; Bart and Laporte-Lalanne to Moras, Sept. 20, 1757, C⁹ A 100; Jan. 5, 1758, vol. 101; to Massiac, Nov. 1, 1758, *ibid.*; Bart to Choiseul, March 13, 1762, vol. 111.

planters, but in war-time that was impossible unless they had relations in the colony.¹

With all their fortresses, armed negroes, and regular troops, the sugar colonies still could not be considered safe. Their prime necessity was an adequate naval protection.

Governor Bart of St. Domingue illustrated the difficulties of defensive strategy in the West Indies very well when he wrote:

'We ought to rely on maintaining ourselves in sufficient force at the chief posts, so that the enemy cannot permanently establish himself there even if he obliges us to abandon them; by those means we ought always to be in a position to present ourselves on occasion in order to profit by the first reinforcement that arrives. In this condition he cannot reduce us, no matter what advantages he may have over us; in the nature of the ground and the help which our Spanish neighbours offer us, we have the means of keeping our hold on the country by harassing the enemy. But to preserve the country in this way is really to lose it, for nothing would really be preserved besides the King's troops and a show of possession; the enemy being master of the sea and the ports would really be master of the country. We can only recover it from him by a squadron capable of driving his ships away. . . . To insist on defending certain places in preference to others is to show the enemy where to make his attack, and to risk everything if he makes it in superior force, as he can. A wise retreat will protect the interior, but the trade and agriculture of the colony, which are its essence, will not be protected, and nothing but a fleet can really deliver them.'²

¹ Vaudreuil to Machault, May 30, 1756, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 99; Bart and Laporte-Lalanne to Moras, Sept. 25, 1757, vol. 100.

² Bart to Choiseul, March 13, 1762, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 111.

NAVAL STRATEGY IN THE FRENCH WARS

§ i. *The English and French Systems of Colonial Defence*

IN these wars of the middle eighteenth century the English Government devoted more of its naval strength to the West Indies than it had ever consistently done before. It had kept a striking force at Jamaica during Queen Anne's reign in the hope of intercepting the galleons, or even of starting a movement in favour of the Archduke Charles among the Spanish colonists. From that time the Jamaica squadron had been a permanent institution. Elsewhere, however, the system of colonial defence had been primitive: a warship or two were attached to each colony for the protection of its coasts and trade. The men-of-war would convoy out the merchant vessels, remain for a time on guard, and convoy the merchants home again. Sometimes all these operations took place in a single year; but when nearly every important colony came to have more than one guardship allowed to it, the captains were able to relieve each other in rotation and stay for two or three seasons each. This system lasted until the establishment of the Leeward Islands station in 1743 and the North America station in 1745.

The size of the English squadrons in the West Indies varied so much from time to time that any given number must be arbitrary. The agents of the islands, seconded by influential merchants and absentee planters, were always on the alert to demand more ships of war, and to prevent the Admiralty from allowing the enemy even a momentary superiority in West Indian waters. Jamaica had asked for ten or twelve ships in the reign of Queen Anne, but had seldom obtained them. The island was so placed, some distance within the ring of the Greater Antilles, that it was an excellent base for a campaign against any of the Spanish dominions on the Caribbean sea, given a superior force to execute it. Without such a force the trade of Jamaica with England might be throttled, and perhaps the island itself invaded unexpectedly.¹ The few months in 1740, during which Torres was stronger than Vernon, made the agents very anxious, especially as they made it their business to

¹ Knight to Bedford, Aug. 5, 1745, Add. MSS. 22677, f. 58.

foresee the worst that might happen, and therefore suspected that Fleury meant to send out his squadrons to the West Indies.¹ Even they could hardly be dissatisfied with the enormous fleet which Ogle finally took out for Vernon's reinforcement. For the rest of the war, after Vernon returned home, the Jamaica squadron commonly had ten to fourteen men-of-war of various sizes, including five to seven line-of-battle ships.

That of the Leeward Islands varied much more. Here, too, the agents often applied for an increase between 1740 and 1744; but as long as the Government fixed its eyes on the Jamaica station and the glorious conquests to be achieved there, it attended little to the other West Indies. After all, they were in no danger from the Spaniards. The Lords of the Admiralty pointed out that if they had to comply with the wishes of Barbados and the Leeward Islands, they must leave more important services unprovided for. Newcastle made the same answer to critics in Parliament. We could not keep squadrons everywhere—indeed the English trade in the Channel suffered far more than Barbados by the concentration at Jamaica.² The agents, however, returned to the charge. They were afraid that France would suddenly declare war and attack our sugar colonies by surprise. The Admiralty and the Ministers always replied that they would be careful to anticipate such a movement by sending a proper force at the first sign of it. The agents thought at least twelve ships, of which six or eight of the line, would be needed in a French war; but in fact the squadron was very seldom so large. In January 1744/5 Knowles was supposed to have five of the line, five frigates, and three sloops; but this force was much weakened by accidents and removals just when Caylus took out six ships to Martinique.

Even the West India interest had never set up so loud a shriek of terror as it did upon this alarm. First the Admiralty tried to pacify the agents by promising that two large ships should be sent at once under Commodore Lee. The West Indians were not content; and as they knew where to clamour to the best purpose they took their request to Newcastle. He as good as ordered the Admiralty to reconsider its decision. The Board was at its wits' end. Not another ship could be spared

¹ 'Extract from the paper of observations', transmitted by William Wood to Newcastle, Sept. 12, 1739, Add. MSS. 32692, f. 290; *v. supra*, pp. 165-70.

² Admiralty Minutes, Oct. 31, 1740, Adm. 3/44; *v. supra*, p. 168, note 4.

from England, for the Young Pretender's invasion was at hand. The Admiralty could only offer to recall some of the foulest ships from the Mediterranean, refit them, and send them out to the West Indies. The Mediterranean was not a favourite service with that Board; perhaps Bedford, the First Lord, was already coming to prefer the American to the European war; so this concession to the West India interest was not a great sacrifice. Still the agents were not satisfied. Back they came to represent that if the ships were to come home from Cadiz, to refit and go out to the West Indies, Caylus would have had time to destroy all the English islands before they could arrive; so Vice-Admiral Isaac Townsend was forced to hustle out to the Leeward Islands, in the hurricane season, a force consisting largely of foul ships from the Mediterranean. Meanwhile the islanders had been in consternation. Even Knowles was apprehensive. He had eight ships, but only three of the line; he sent two to Barbados with instructions to come away if the island was attacked and rejoin him at Antigua, where he had moored four others across the mouths of English Harbour and Falmouth Harbour.¹

Fortunately, though Caylus and Conflans had really been instructed to attempt some of the English islands, Conflans changed his mind and started difficulties, as the French commanders too often did.² He went home, and Townsend found upon his arrival that the command of the sea had passed by default to himself. He soon received orders to take off some of the ships to Louisbourg, and left Lee with no more than had been on the station before he brought out the reinforcement. The legislature of Antigua implored him not to go, or at least to leave several ships of the line behind, but he replied that he had only come out to counteract the French naval superiority; now that it no longer existed, there was no reason for his further stay, and if another French squadron should be sent out the Admiralty would take measures to deal with it.³

The next great alarm was in 1756. The squadrons on both

¹ Admiralty Minutes, Feb. 7 and 12, 1744/5, May 30, June 4 and 6, July 29, 1745, Adm. 3/49 to 51; Orders to Townsend, June 18, 1745, Adm. 2/64, p. 285; Knowles to Corbett, March 24, 1744/5, April 16, 1745, Adm. 1/2007.

² Caylus to Maurepas, June 4, 1745, A.N. Colonies C⁸ A 56.

³ Legislature of Antigua to Townsend, Jan. 13, 1745/6, Adm. 1/305; Townsend's reply, Jan. 13, *ibid.*; Mathew to Townsend, Jan. 28, 1745/6; Townsend's reply, Jan. 28, *ibid.*

stations had been very much reduced during the peace, so that Frankland, at the Leeward Islands, only had two of the line and two frigates. One of the former was taken by a small French squadron coming out to Martinique, and had it not been for the lucky arrival of the *Bristol*, which he detained though she was bound for Jamaica, Frankland must have shut himself up in port as Knowles had done. Once more the West India interest raised a cry of danger. Once more reinforcements were hurried out, and the strength of that squadron was never allowed to fall so low again.¹ At Jamaica in the same year the arrival of Périer de Salvert with four of the line and two frigates caused an alarm of the same kind. George Townshend, who commanded on the station, called in his capital ships and left only his frigates cruising for intelligence. This was commonly done at Jamaica when a superior French force appeared or was expected at St. Domingue. Townshend repeated it during the stay of Beauffremont in 1757, Cotes did it in 1759, and Forrest in 1762. In moments of extreme danger the large ships were even moored across the narrows of Kingston Harbour. The panic was only increased by this measure, which Townshend took quite unnecessarily in November 1756 and again with a little more reason in the following spring. However, Jamaica was never even threatened until the last year of the war, and the squadron was sufficient for all the ordinary purposes of attacking and protecting trade.² The Admiralty decided in May 1757 to keep eight of the line and eleven smaller vessels regularly stationed at Jamaica, eight of the line and eight smaller at the Leeward Islands; but it could not always fulfil this resolution.³

The existence of regular English squadrons in the West Indies, and the lack of them on the French side, affected the character of the war in those seas. The English and French systems were produced by different conditions; each of them had its advantages and disadvantages.

¹ Frankland to Cleveland, March 24, April 9, June 11, 1756, Adm. 1/306; Thomas to Frankland, April 5, 1756, *ibid.*; Admiralty Minutes, May 27, 1756, Adm. 3/64.

² Townshend to Cleveland, May 23, June 28, July 24, Nov. 17, 1756, March 24, 1757, Adm. 1/234; Moore to Board of Trade, Nov. 26, 1756, C.O. 137/29; April 27, May 21, 1757, C.O. 137/30, Z 3, 5; Admiralty Minutes, May 20, 1757, Adm. 3/65.

³ Admiralty Minutes, May 18, 1757, Adm. 3/65.

When the French Government wished to have a striking force, or even a body of ships sufficient to protect the trade of its colonies, it sent them out specially for that purpose from France. Particular emergencies might cause the dispatch of such squadrons at any season of the year, but the time most commonly appointed for their departure was the late autumn or early winter, in order to avoid the hurricane months in the West Indies, which were generally held to last from the end of July to about the middle of October. The ships would be gratuitously exposed to danger if they arrived before that season was out—as Torres's squadron knew to its cost in 1740. Moreover, it might be just possible to make the ships do double duty by sending them out at the right time. After service in Europe during the summer months they could go to the tropics in the winter, which was the best season for operations there and the worst for doing anything at home. This plan was hard to combine. The French naval ports seem to have been slow in fitting out large squadrons—especially in periods of English blockade, when stores were interrupted and delayed in their journey along the coast to the arsenals. Unless the preparations were made well beforehand in the summer the ships which were to have started in November did not get off till the middle of January. Thus Bompar was delayed two months in 1759, and came too late to prevent the attack on Guadeloupe. The same thing happened to Blénac in 1762, and he arrived in the West Indies after Martinique had fallen. Périer and Beauffremont were likewise late in 1756 and 1757. For this sort of reason the Minister Moras was forced to send a squadron from the Mediterranean to the West Indies in 1757; but that did not answer any better, for though the Toulon squadron had no duties to detain it into the late autumn, as those of the Atlantic ports had, yet the English blockade in the Mediterranean was extremely efficient, and the French reinforcement never reached the West Indies at all.¹

The campaign of these ships was generally limited to six or seven months by the quantity of victuals they could carry with them. Very few could take more on board without endangering their ability to manœuvre and to fight; frigates could not always

¹ Moras to Massiac, Aug. 7, 1757, A.N. Marine B² 357; see also the complaint of Laporte-Lalanne to Moras (Jan. 7, 1758, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 101) and the good resolutions of the Ministers (Machault to Vaudreuil, June 8, 1756, B 103; Moras to Bart and Laporte-Lalanne, July 1, 1757, B 105); *v. supra*, p. 184, note 3.

carry even so much.¹ The officers of the navy often frustrated the Minister's intentions in this matter. They had the deplorable habit of carrying out *pacotilles*—small ventures of European goods which they generally received on commission from the merchants of France and sold in the colony, laying out the proceeds in indigo or white sugar. The practice not only diverted the attention of the officers from their duties and annoyed the regular traders, whom they undersold; it also overburdened the ships. Some of the men-of-war who went in Conflans's squadron of 1746 to St. Domingue were said to be so heavily laden coming out of Fort Louis that they could not use their lowest batteries of guns. But the worst consequence was, that the full quantity of victuals could not always be embarked because the space was already taken up by the *pacotilles*; this happened to Bompar's squadron in 1759, and to the warship which carried Intendant de Clugny out to St. Domingue in 1760.² These malpractices reduced still further the time which the squadrons could spend in the colonies.

These may seem at first sight to be very trivial difficulties, but in fact they were not so. There were ways of adding to the provisions which the ships took with them, but none reliable. Additional supplies might be convoyed out in storeships under the escort of the men-of-war themselves. The English squadrons were very largely victualled in this way. Another method was to send out some ships of war *en flûte*—that is to say, with their lowest tiers of guns unworkable because the hold was stuffed with provisions. These were safer than the storeships, but the French navy could little afford the sacrifice of fighting power, for it was already weaker than the English.³ Sometimes

¹ Larnage to Maurepas, Oct. 28, 1744, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 64.

² Maillart to Maurepas, April 25, 1747, C⁹ A 71; Louis XV to Bompar, Dec. 20, 1758, A.N. Marine B² 359; Bompar's *Mémoire justificatif*, B⁴ 91; Clugny to Berryer, May 12, 1760, B⁴ 98.

³ The Ministers of Marine sometimes countenanced a practice equally fatal to the fighting qualities of the ships, that of loading on freight the most valuable and portable kinds of West India produce. No doubt this produced a certain revenue to the King, when he could prevent the officers from pocketing it for themselves. Those of Kersaint's squadron did so in 1757; their contracts had to be cancelled by a royal edict (Arch. Gir. C 4256, ff. 59, 61, Minutes of Feb. 9, April 6, 1758. See also the chapter in Garnault's *Le Commerce rochelais au xviii^e siècle*, iv. 192–216). It was also a convenience to the planters and officials who obtained in this way a safe conveyance for remittances, for though the King's ships charged a higher freight than the merchants the insurance was much lower. Yet this was too often monopolized by a few favourites, or by the Governors, Intendants, and Commo-

the unused guns could be carried out in the hold and mounted when the victuals were disembarked. The *Vaillant* and *Amétiste* went out in this condition with Bompar, but the men could not be found for completing their armament at Martinique.¹

Even if these methods were used, and the necessary provisions were brought out to the West Indies, they would not keep wholesome in the tropics for very long. Caumont, for example, who executed one of Machault's combined campaigns in Africa and America, had to be sent home before his victuals were out, because they rotted and made his crews fall ill.²

Why not find provisions in the colonies themselves? It was not so easy. The Intendants were often instructed to prolong the campaigns, if they could, by procuring supplements of victuals in the colonies. But the English blockade was so successful, and victuals so hard to be got in the French islands, that I cannot call to mind any instance of an additional supply for more than two months.³

These conditions obliged the French to limit their campaigns in the West Indies. There were other reasons beside. If the squadron commonly sailed from France about the New Year, the ordinary period of a campaign ran out in June or July when the hurricane season was coming on. Both the King's navy and the merchants were afraid of it, and anxious to be gone before it. Conflans, for instance, refused to attack St. Kitts in 1745

dores themselves, most of whom had plantations. Macnémara carried in his ship a great part of the produce of his own plantation, freight free, but Maurepas detected it and insisted on a proper payment (C 4254, f. 279, Minute of Feb. 16, 1747). Intendants Ranché and Maillart seem to have helped themselves in this way (see the scandalous letter of Lambert to his cousin, Nov. 15, 1758, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 102). The Chamber of Commerce of Nantes asked Maurepas to allow the warships which conducted the convoys to bring back some indigo on freight; perhaps Nantes was peculiarly interested in indigo because of its neighbourhood to some of the most important textile manufactures of France (Arch. Gir. C 4254, f. 226, Minute of May 20, 1745). But the habit was a bad one, and gave rise to abuses; it enabled the *pacotille* trade to be carried on under a lawful colour, and supplied an excuse for the overburdening of the King's warships. Accordingly the Ministers sometimes countermanded their orders for this purpose. See M. Tramond's article in the *Revue de l'histoire des colonies françaises*, vol. xv, pp. 176-7, 517-21.

¹ Private instructions to Bompar, Nov. 15, 1758, A.N. Marine B² 359; Bompar to Berryer, May 2, 1759, B⁴ 91; Bompar's *Mémoire justificatif*, *ibid.*

² Beauharnois to Moras, ? Oct. 1757, A.N. Colonies C⁸ A 61; Beauharnois and Givry to Moras, Oct. 13, *ibid.*

³ It was even more difficult to send out naval stores to the colonies. The trade from Canada to the islands could not be relied upon (Laporte-Lalanne to Machault, Aug. 11, 1756, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 99; Moras to Laporte-Lalanne, April 28, 1757, B 105; Fleury to Massiac, Dec. 23, 1758, C⁹ A 102).

because he should have to stay into the hurricane season, which he antedated so much that his reason looks like an excuse.¹ The crews as well as the commanders disliked a long stay in the West Indies. Latouche-Tréville, whom d'Aubigny left behind in the islands in 1756, had to conceal their destiny from his men till d'Aubigny was gone. Ruis reported in 1748 that his men were dying of chagrin at the prospect of a long stay. It would be hard to say whether this was rather an effect or a cause of the system of short campaigns.²

The English hardly ever undertook anything so important as an invasion in the West Indies after April or May.³ The French squadrons could therefore retire in the summer without exposing the islands to danger, so long as a new force was ready to come out at the beginning of the next season. When the French navy was reduced to great straits in the Seven Years War, Berryer had to trust to the known laws of the climate to defend Martinique during the summer, in default of the naval force which he could not spare.⁴

The French Ministers of Marine did not regularly send out a squadron every year, even for the campaigning season. During the war of 1744 Maurepas confined himself almost entirely to the protection of trade by convoys. Except the small forces which Caylus and L'Étanduère took out to the West Indies in 1745, there was nothing that deserved the name of an expedition; and in the intervals between the convoys the islands were left completely unguarded. It was not until the middle of 1747 that the Minister was induced, by the repeated complaints of Larnage, to station so much as two small cruisers to protect the trade of St. Domingue. In the Seven Years War, Machault and Moras meant to keep the colonies guarded by a constant relief of squadrons; for which purpose they lengthened the stay of the

¹ Caylus to Maurepas, June 4, 1745, A.N. Colonies C⁸ A 56.

² Ruis to Maurepas, Oct. 1, 1748, A.N. Marine B⁴ 62, f. 129; Latouche-Tréville to Machault, Jan. 16, 1757, vol. B⁴ 77.

³ The great exception is the conquest of Havana in 1762; but the Gulf of Mexico had a climate of its own, which dictated exceptions to the ordinary rules of West Indian strategy. Havana was not out of reach of hurricanes, but the north winds ruled out the best part of the campaigning season, from December to March. Therefore enterprises could not be undertaken there until near the beginning of the hurricane season. Besides, war was only declared against Spain in January, and the expedition could not have been got ready any faster. The invasion of Dominica in June 1761 is a much smaller exception, but this was a bagatelle, as Hardwicke said, and it needed no new force of ships from Europe.

⁴ Berryer's *Mémoires* of March 3 and 6, 1760, A.N. Colonies C⁸ B 10.

ships in the islands—La Clue was to have remained at St. Domingue for as much as twelve months in 1757–8. But their system was soon disorganized; the intervals between the squadrons became longer, and the English force at Jamaica became so strong that even Kersaint was not able to keep the sea against it in 1757. Kersaint's was the last regular squadron in the West Indies during the Seven Years War. After Osborne had intercepted La Clue on his way out in the spring of 1758 the French Government gave up trying to keep the colonies perpetually defended. It tried to send out La Clue again in 1759, but Boscawen caught him at Lagos. The only large squadrons which succeeded in reaching the West Indies after 1757 were those of Bompar in 1759 and Blénac in 1762; both these were sent out to deal with special emergencies, and returned to Europe after they were over.¹

Contrast with this the English system of stationing squadrons permanently in the West Indies. The victuals and naval stores necessary for their upkeep were abundantly provided, the most part from North America. The English navy was strong enough not only to throttle the trade which might have supplied these articles to the French squadrons, but to assure its own supplies. Naval stores were often convoyed from England or from Boston by ships belonging to the stations for which they were destined. There were occasions when the activity of the English commanders was hindered by shortage; for example, Cotes was once obliged to keep some of his ships in port, because he could only get enough bread to supply his crews from hand to mouth.² But this was an exception. In general the King's ships were subsisted without difficulty in the West Indies for as long a period as the Admiralty chose to keep them out. They were not obliged to go home to England to refit, for they had dockyards

¹ Larnage to Maurepas, June 30, 1744, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 64 (Larnage appears to recant his opinion of the possibility of stationing ships permanently in the West Indies, Oct. 28, 1744, *ibid.*); Maurepas to Larnage, Dec. 15, 1745, B 81; to Chastenoye and Maillart, March 20, 1747, B 85; Caylus to Maurepas, June 6, 1745, C⁸ A 56; Minutes of the Chamber of Commerce of Guienne, Sept. 2, 1756, Arch. Gir. C 4256, f. 19; Chamber to Machault, Sept. 2 and 18, 1756, C 4263, ff. 249, 252; Machault to Vaudreuil, May 20, 1756, A.N. Colonies B 103; Moras to Bart and Laporte-Lalanne, July 1, Sept. 2, and Oct. 19, 1757, B 105; Bart and Laporte-Lalanne to Moras, Sept. 20 and Dec. 2, 1757, C⁹ A 100. The Ministers paid much more attention to St. Domingue than to the Windward Islands because they wrongly thought it more likely to be attacked.

² Cotes to Cleveland, Aug. 7, 1757, Adm. 1/235.

in the islands, where almost any repairs could be done. On the Jamaica station there was Port Royal, with a much smaller base at Port Antonio on the north side; at the Leeward Islands, the chief arsenal was English Harbour on Antigua.

The equipment of these places left, no doubt, a great deal to be desired. Frankland complained that there was no proper staff at English Harbour, and that the common artificers were ignorant new negroes; there was not enough room for the stores, and the place was a festering unhealthy hole, especially in the hurricane season, when a great number of ships put in to refit at once and yellow fever ran through the crews. There were also too frequent opportunities of desertion during these stays in port; but of what dockyard could not that be said? Yet English Harbour had two still worse defects. It was very difficult to get in or out of, and too small and shallow to hold the largest ships without lightening—if, moreover, they were lightened at St. Johns they were incapable of turning up to windward to English Harbour.¹ Therefore Frankland, Moore, and Douglas all sent their biggest ships away for refitting—either to Jamaica, or to Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The ships on these stations were relieved successively. Every year one or two convoys came out to the West Indies and one or two went home. The fresh ships which brought the trade out usually stayed to attach themselves to the squadron, while those which had been out longest or were in the worst condition escorted the homeward convoys to England. Ships of war sometimes came out on other occasions, especially if reinforcements were needed to deal with a prospective or actual danger. Every two or three years a new Admiral or Commodore arrived, bringing with him a greater recruit of ships than usually came at other times.

The two West Indian stations had not much communication with each other. At moments of special emergency one Commander-in-Chief was authorized to call upon the other for such force as he could spare; but as these orders were only discretionary, they very seldom resulted in the detachment of large bodies

¹ Frankland to Cleveland, Oct. 8, 1755, April 28, 1757, Nov. 19, 1757, Adm. 1/306; Moore to Cleveland, Nov. 13, 1758, Adm. 1/307; Douglas to Cleveland, June 4, 1760, *ibid.*; Rodney to Cleveland, July 23, 1762, *ibid.* The legislature of Antigua was easily excited by criticism of English Harbour because it valued the protection of the warships which frequented the place (Antigua Council Minutes, June 27, 1755, Jan. 27, 1757, C.O. 9/21; Feb. 28, Dec. 14, 1758, C.O. 9/23).

of ships, for each was apt to believe himself short-handed already, or in almost as much danger as the other. A really considerable squadron only went once in these two wars from the Leeward Islands to Jamaica: Rodney sent down Douglas in 1762 on the news that Jamaica was thought in danger of an invasion. Apart from this, the pressing appeals for help which were sometimes carried from one station to another produced very small results.¹

The Leeward Islands station had some advantages over that of Jamaica. It lay on the accustomed route from England to Jamaica, so that ships could be detained on their way out there and impressed into the service of the Leeward Islands; both Townshend and Holmes complained strongly of such detentions which withheld from them a part of their destined force.² Moreover, a squadron battered in an equal or unsuccessful sea-fight in the Leeward Islands might still save itself from disaster by taking refuge at Jamaica. This was not an advantage which the commanders on the Leeward Islands station were anxious to use. They were greatly influenced by the fear of finding their ships so much disabled after an engagement that they could not get back to their base and would have to drift down to leeward. This would mean abandoning the colonies under their care to the enemy—or, if he too was forced down, to the chance of the first arrival from Europe. Thus in 1759 Bompar would not fight Moore, lest he should have to abandon the Leeward Islands to him; Moore would not seek out Bompar for the very same reason.³

As the Jamaica station was to leeward of the Leeward Islands⁴

¹ Townshend to Cleveland, March 24, 1757, Adm. 1/234.

² Townshend to Cleveland, June 28, 1756, Adm. 1/234; Cleveland to Holmes, July 22, 1760, Adm. 2/529, p. 120.

³ Perhaps they were both right. Bompar had more to gain and less to lose than Moore, but his was a much smaller force. Moore could probably have afforded to fight Bompar without fear of being driven disabled before the wind at the end of the battle; but he had nothing to gain by it, for as long as he lay with his whole squadron between Bompar and Guadeloupe, the conquest of the island could proceed without disturbance, or at least if Bompar tried to interrupt it Moore could come down on him before he could get away (Moore to Cleveland, July 25, 1759, Adm. 1/307; Bompar's *Mémoire justificatif*, A.N. Marine B⁴ 91).

⁴ The name Leeward Islands is a misleading one; they were so called because they were to leeward of Barbados, but they formed part of a group which was called, as a whole, the Windward Islands; for example, the French islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe were known as the *Isles du Vent*, or Windward Islands, to distinguish them from St. Domingue.

it could receive reinforcements much faster than it could send them. This might have made no difference; for a long time taken to send a message, added to a short time for returning with reinforcements, amounts to as much as a short time for the message and a long time for the reinforcements. However, a danger to Jamaica was likely to be known at the Leeward Islands before it happened, for the French ships were almost sure to pass through, and to be seen or heard of, on their way from Europe to St. Domingue. Therefore the rescuers could start before any message arrived; Jamaica could not in the same way anticipate a danger to the Leeward Islands. Rodney therefore considered Jamaica to be perfectly safe as long as there was a sufficient force at the Leeward Islands. He still maintained the same opinion in the War of the American Revolution, and justified his detention of some ships which had been designed for Sir Peter Parker at Jamaica. Parker wrote indignantly to the Secretary of the Admiralty, denying the truth of Rodney's proposition. He argued that Jamaica could be attacked before the Leeward Islands knew it, though he did not very clearly explain how.¹

The West India stations had also a traditional connexion with the Northern Colonies. In North America fighting was only possible in summer, because the ice froze up many of the great ports and rivers;² in the West Indies the summer was the only time when it was impossible, because of the fiery breezes and the hurricane season, which was also the sickly season in many places where there were no hurricanes.³ There was an obvious advantage in combining the two stations in order to obtain a full year's service from the ships. The Admiralty had made a rule in Queen Anne's reign, that many of the North America guardships should pass the winter in the West Indies, cruising or convoying the Salt Tortuga fleet. This arrangement

¹ Rodney to Cleveland, Dec. 11, 1762, Adm. 1/307; Parker to Stephens, Dec. 30, 1780, Adm. 1/242.

² There was even a doubt whether any ice-free port could be found in which the ships of war could pass the winter. Halifax, Nova Scotia (which was not founded until after 1748), satisfied this condition; but while the ships could lie there they could do no more. They could not be campaigning; and the importance of Halifax consisted only in this, that it enabled the English navy to be about in the mouth of the St. Lawrence early in the year, and helped to establish a perpetual blockade of Canada.

³ The Gulf of Mexico was an exception, as I have already remarked (*v. supra*, p. 272, note 3).

also furnished occasional convoys between the Northern Colonies and the islands.¹

Commodore Warren suggested in 1742 an elaborate scheme for sending nearly all the ships from North America to the West Indies, to cruise upon the Spanish main in the winter season. The Lords of the Admiralty did not approve Warren's plan in all its details, but they did combine the North America and Leeward Islands stations for a couple of years: Warren commanded in the tropics during the winter, and repaired to his proper duties at the Northern Colonies in the summer, leaving Knowles behind him to take charge of the islands.² In the winter of 1742/3 the presence of Warren's ships at the Leeward Islands also enabled Knowles to take off some of the ships of that station for the expedition to La Guayra. This amicable arrangement of Cox and Box ended in a violent quarrel at the beginning of 1745. There were only two ships of more than fifty guns on the Leeward Islands station; one of them was lost, and Warren insisted on taking away the other to the northward for the expedition against Louisbourg. Knowles egged on some of the island legislatures to protest, and to point out that a large force might appear from France; in any case the removal of the *Superbe* would make his favourite project against St. Lucia impossible. The prophecy of a French squadron was fulfilled, and the alarm over Caylus in 1745 made the deprivation of a capital ship a serious matter. Warren was already gone, having refused to listen to any arguments. He had married a wife from New York, and knew what Louisbourg meant to the people of the Northern Colonies. The Lords of the Admiralty vindicated him entirely.³ A few years later Knowles, then commanding at Jamaica, suggested that he could find good employment for the North America ships in the winter months. In order to prove

¹ *C.S.P. Col.* 1702, nos. 603, 650; 1702-3, nos. 77 (i), 950, 1150, 1208 (i), 1369, 1388, 1389 (ii). These convoys protected a trade which was very important to the New England fishery, because it was one of the chief supplies of salt. The salt-fleet generally collected at Barbados about April, and one of the station ships escorted it to Salt Tortuga where the salt was raked, and thence to a certain safe latitude to the northward. The liberty of raking this salt was granted by Spain in the Treaty of Utrecht; but according to French observers it afforded an opportunity of covering unlawful trade with the Spanish dominions, and ought to be suppressed.

² Warren to Corbett, March 19, 1741/2, Adm. 1/2653; Orders to Warren, Aug. 1742, Adm. 2/58, p. 439.

³ Warren to Corbett, March 10, 1744/5, Adm. 1/2654; Antigua Council Minutes, March 10, 1744/5, C.O. 9/17; Lords of the Admiralty to Lords Justices, May 27, 1745, S.P. 42/28, ff. 251-3.

his disinterestedness he made such an offer as was rare in those days: he would sacrifice his share of the prizes which those ships might take while they were under his direction.¹

Nevertheless, the two services were becoming more and more difficult to combine. The squadrons could not be out cruising for twelve months in the year; they must be cleaned and refitted, and although those operations did not need a whole summer or winter they could not be omitted altogether. If the ships were constantly passed to and fro between one active service and another there was a danger that their repairs would be scamped. Then there was the time consumed in the journeys between the stations. Sir William Gooch, Lieutenant-Governor of Virginia, denounced the whole system of combination for these two reasons—the ships did not return by the opening of the cruising season, and they were usually out of repair.² These considerations became much more important in the Seven Years War, when North America became for a time the centre of the most important operations, and everything depended on having a squadron outside Louisbourg and Quebec as early in the year as could be. Pitt seems to have believed at one time that a fleet could take Martinique on its way to or from Canada; but when Newcastle suggested it in 1760 he pooh-poohed it as impossible. Although Moore conquered Guadeloupe at the beginning of 1759 and Saunders took Quebec only at the end, Moore had not dispatched his business in time to send any help to Saunders. Some ships and troops came south in the summer of 1761 for the attempt on Dominica; but this was no true instance of the dovetailing of the two services, but rather a permanent transference of force from the theatre of war where the struggle was won, to that where it was still to be fought.³

Some instances of this combination are to be found in French strategy. The French commanders did not like to undertake it on their own initiative. Both Caylus and L'Étanduère thought of going from their commands in the West Indies to save Louis-

¹ Knowles to Corbett, March 13, 1747/8, Adm. 1/234.

² Dottin to the Lords of the Admiralty, July 16, 1741, Adm. 1/3817; Gooch to same, Dec. 1, 1744, *ibid.* In the same way, about that time, the notables of Barbados objected to Hawke's voyages to New England in the summer months. The Lords of the Admiralty promised that such removals should not happen again (Minutes, Oct. 31, 1740, Adm. 3/44).

³ Newcastle to Hardwicke, Oct. 11 and 18, 1760, Add. MSS. 32913, ff. 51, 186; Hardwicke to Newcastle, Oct. 19, ff. 209–10.

bourg from Warren in 1745, but neither of them went; they would indeed have arrived too late, but Maurepas would have approved their action.¹ In the next year Conflans was ordered from St. Domingue, whither he had taken out the convoy, to join d'Enville off North America.

At the beginning of the Seven Years War Machault invented an ingenious scheme of co-ordination in Africa, the West Indies, and North America. Beauffremont was to go out at the beginning of 1757 to St. Domingue, which the Minister quite wrongly believed to be in danger. If the security of that island, which was to be his first object, was not threatened before April, he was to go on to Louisbourg, having been joined by d'Aubigny from Martinique. Meanwhile Kersaint and Caumont were to have destroyed English commerce and prestige in two different parts of the West African coast; they were to join, if possible, before they crossed the Atlantic, and proceed to Martinique. Caumont was to stay there, taking the place of d'Aubigny, while Kersaint was to move on to St. Domingue and fill that of Beauffremont. Most of this scheme succeeded to perfection. D'Aubigny did not, in the end, go to Martinique; but without him Louisbourg was relieved, by Beauffremont's squadron among others. Jamaica was terrified by the prospect of an invasion, and Townshend shut himself up for some weeks, during which the French commerce was very little disturbed. Kersaint and Caumont took a number of prizes, drove the English trade down the African coast, and arrived safe at their stations in the West Indies.² Possibly Moras designed something of the same kind for the next year, for he ordered St. Aignan to go down from Martinique at the end of the season and join La Clue at St. Domingue, as d'Aubigny was to have joined Beauffremont. But it does not appear that La Clue was meant to go on to Louisbourg.³

§ ii. *The respective Advantages of the two Systems*

When the working of the English and French systems is examined, the advantage seems at first to be entirely on the side

¹ Larnage to Maurepas, Aug. 5, 1745, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 66; Maurepas to Caylus, Nov. 15, 1745, B 81.

² Instructions to Kersaint and Caumont, Nov. 5, 1756, A.N. Marine B⁴ 73; Caumont to Moras, June 1, 1757, B⁴ 77; Kersaint to Moras, May 5, June 7, *ibid.*; Jan. 15, 1758, B⁴ 81; Louis XV to Beauffremont, Dec. 21, 1756, B² 353; Machault to Beauffremont, Dec. 21, 1756, *ibid.*

³ *V. supra*, p. 184, note 3.

of the English. The misfortunes which pursued the French squadrons were largely to be attributed to the shortness of their stay. If their passage out was more than ordinarily long, they found, like d'Antin, that they had consumed a great part of the victuals for the campaign before they reached the West Indies. They were forced to execute their instructions at once or not at all, and could not wait on circumstances.¹ At their first arrival in the tropics the crews often fell sick, so that several squadrons—for instance, L'Étandière's and Conflans's in 1745—were almost paralysed. As soon as the epidemics began to subside, the victuals were running out and it was time to go home. The whole campaign, therefore, was consumed in coming and going, and in sickness, and it is no wonder that the ordinary French squadrons in the West Indies took hardly one offensive measure, even against the English trade, in the whole of these two wars.²

In some of these respects the English were better off. At least their crews were seasoned, though at the cost of a number of men who died in the early months of their campaigns and were not always replaced. They could afford to wait their time; therefore, when a superior French force appeared they could retire into port until it went home, and then emerge to carry on their normal business of attacking and defending trade.

It might also be expected that the permanent English squadrons could reduce the French warships to starvation by blockading them until their victuals ran out. This very nearly happened several times. Mitchell shut up Macnémara in Cap François for three or four months in 1746, just as he was on the point of sailing home. Kersaint was blockaded for such a long time in 1757 that he had to take a desperate resolution. If he stayed any longer in Cap François he would be unable to get home for want of provisions, and his crews, with those of the merchant ships which wished to accompany him, would increase the scarcity in the colony. He must leave; but he dared not take the merchants with him, because the English warships were attended by swarms of privateers, who would raid his fleet under their protection. He therefore determined to go out and

¹ For the effect of this circumstance on d'Antin's campaign, *v. supra*, pp. 174-5.

² Daubenton to Maurepas, Nov. 7, 1746, A.N. Marine B⁴ 59, f. 187; Du Chaffault to Maurepas, May 5, 1748, vol. 62, f. 103; Larnage to Maurepas, Oct. 28, 1744, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 64; Aug. 5, 1745, vol. 66; Laporte-Lalanne to Machault, April 30 and June 5, 1756, vol. 99.

offer battle to the blockaders. If he fought and won he would put back and take the trade under his convoy; if the battle was declined, or ended without a victory, he must proceed to France and leave the trade to take its chance. His plan succeeded, through the irresponsible zeal of Captain Forrest, who gave battle with an inferior force, was partly disabled, and had to raise the blockade. Kersaint returned to Cap François, made a few hasty repairs, and got away before Admiral Cotes could replace Forrest.¹

The French did not always contrive to break out of port like this. Macarty tried to do so in 1761 and lost nearly all his ships. Kerusoret tried to lure the blockaders away by a feint and leave the coast clear for the merchants to escape; but he failed. Yet in general the English were unable to keep up a permanent blockade. This was because the squadrons had too many duties for their size; they had many cruising-grounds to fill, besides occasional convoys, and could not afford to keep their main blockading forces constantly relieved. The Admiral at Jamaica would send up his great ships with six weeks' or two months' provisions to lie before Cap François, on the news that a French convoy was intended home. They would stay outside the port as long as they could, but sooner or later they must go back unrelieved, and the French, after much anxiety and scarcity, could slip out.

The English system suffered from certain other difficulties. The men might be healthier than the French, but the ships were generally in worse condition. The French ships came out fresh from the arsenals, but on the English side the equipment for keeping ships in repair was inadequate at Antigua and far from perfect at Jamaica, though better than anything in the French colonies. Consequently the French ships often out-sailed the English in West Indian waters, and the latter were sometimes so crazy after two or three years' service that the Commanders-in-Chief dared not send them home in winter.²

¹ Larnage to Maurepas, June 13, 1746, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 68; Kersaint to Moras, Nov. 11, 1757, A.N. Marine B⁴ 77; Jan. 15, 1758, B⁴ 81. Sir Julian Corbett (*England in the Seven Years' War*, i. 365-7), represents Forrest's behaviour as uncommonly gallant. Kersaint gives a very different impression, and makes out that Forrest turned tail; but his accounts of his actions always glisten with self-satisfaction. He does not seem to have recognized that he had destroyed Forrest's rigging even more completely than Forrest had destroyed his, so that we need not accept his explanation of the English retreat. See also Tramond, *op. cit.*, p. 526.

² Maillart to Maurepas, Jan. 29, 1746, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 69; Dubois de la

However, the English squadrons could afford better than the French to risk an engagement of doubtful issue. Shattered ships could return to the arsenals of Jamaica and Antigua, where all but the greatest repairs could be done. The French had no such conveniences. This is one of the reasons given by Beauharnois for Bompar's failure to relieve Guadeloupe in 1759; but Bompar himself did not state his difficulties in quite the same way.

The hurricanes raised another serious problem which the insufficiency of the colonial dockyards complicated. If the English squadrons were always out in the West Indies they could hardly expect to escape these visitations. In fact the Jamaica squadron was paralysed by the storm of 1744, and Frankland's little force at the Leeward Islands by that of 1756. The French were not so much exposed to this risk because they did not usually spend the summer in the West Indies.¹

The English had ways of avoiding it, especially on the Leeward Islands station, where the great ships were ordinarily sent for the hurricane months to the southward, to the Spanish main, or at least as far as Tobago. There they were supposed to be safe. In times of war with Spain this diversion might be a very profitable one to the commanders, for it afforded a chance of rich prizes. The people of Antigua objected to it. They had been at some expense to fortify English Harbour as a refuge for the squadron in the bad season, and they expected their reward from the presence of the warships at their island, which would help to defend them against invasion.² They claimed that the squadron, or at least the ships of the line, ought to spend the whole hurricane season in English Harbour and take the opportunity of refitting there. They made it an article of complaint against Lee, that he had sent most of his force to the southward for his private advantage—that is to say, the Commodore's

Motte seems to have outsailed Lee and perhaps Dent too (Dubois to Maurepas, April 8 and July 8, 1747, A.N. Marine B⁴ 61, ff. 282, 292).

¹ In fact there were two or three French ships at St. Domingue in 1744, but they were not damaged; those of d'Aubigny escaped the hurricane of 1756 by a month.

² It was doubtful whether English Harbour was impregnable or hurricane-proof, and it had other inconveniences. Champigny thought he could take it and destroy the ships with very little help. That may have been mere talk; Maurepas spoke of it as impossible. At any rate the Antiguans, like all the islanders, valued a man-of-war in times of alarm if only for the use that could be made of its cannon and crews on shore, and the impression it made on the slaves (Champigny to Maurepas, Oct. 5, 1744, A.N. Colonies C⁸ A 56; Frankland to Cleveland, July 20, 1757, Adm. 1/306; Antigua Council Minutes, Jan. 19 and 27, 1757, C.O. 9/21).

eighth share of prizes. Lee was undoubtedly impelled by this hope of gain, for he referred to it in his orders to his captains; but he was acting under instructions. This arrangement was sometimes followed when there was no Spanish war, therefore no hope of prizes; and the only Commander-in-Chief who really can be accused of cupidity is Rodney, who sent away Swanton to the main in April 1762, long before the hurricanes could possibly begin. We must not judge the English navy by Rodney, for he sacrificed strategy to prizes throughout his whole career. Nor should too much attention be paid to the interested complaints of the legislature of Antigua, which criticized every disposition which took the men-of-war away from English Harbour; just as they complained of Lee for sending his ships away from the station, they denounced Frankland for keeping his on a cruise within it so that they were unfortunately struck by the storm of 1756.¹

These drawbacks went some way to reduce the advantage of stationed forces over squadrons sent out for short periods from Europe. In the light of strategy the merits of the two systems were perhaps more disputable still. The French navy was annually concentrated and redistributed. At the beginning of every campaign France obliged England to do some painful and hazardous guesswork as to the destination of her fleets. Everybody in authority made it his business to suspect that the whole French force, or a formidable detachment of it, was aimed at the region under his charge. Each Governor and Admiral in the West Indies thought himself the most likely to be attacked, and the Ministers at home were afraid of an invasion. So well did the French statesmen know the disturbing effect of this uncertainty, that several of those whom Berryer consulted in 1760 proposed the creation of a fair-sized squadron at Brest, not to do anything—for it was far too weak—but to keep the English guessing and oblige them to detain a large part of their force at home.²

England kept France guessing too, but that was more natural because she could dispose of a larger navy. The benefit of her superiority was to some extent diminished by the rigidity of the

¹ Legislature of Antigua, Petition to George II, ? Aug. 1746, Adm. 1/305; Lee's reply of Aug. 26, 1746, *ibid.*; Lee's justification of Nov. 17, 1747, *ibid.*; Lee, orders to H.M.S. *Sutherland*, July 20, 1746, *ibid.*; orders to Lee, March 15, 1744/5, Adm. 2/63, p. 339.

² *Mémoire* of Belleisle, March 26, 1760, A.N. Colonies C⁸ B 10.

station system. There was always a certain number of the English force already, to all intents and purposes, accounted for; of the French force there was very little. It was not only because the Duke of Newcastle had 'minced the navy of England into cruisers and convoys'—though that was bad enough—that the Government sometimes found it so hard to collect a striking force in the European seas. It was partly because the station system imposed a permanent dispersion. In the summer of 1745 the Mediterranean service had to give way to a reinforcement of the West India stations; and that was only after the Channel fleet had been stripped of every ship it could afford.¹

On that occasion the Lords of the Admiralty asked the planters and merchants whether they did not think the ships which they demanded would be better employed in keeping command of the Channel? They answered no, for they took an extremely pedestrian view of strategy, as people always will who are afraid for their property.² Just as the islands quarrelled with each other for soldiers and warships, the West Indians as a body could not think themselves or their plantations safe unless they were defended by forces upon the spot. Other forms of protection they could not understand. They alone were unmoved by the invasion scares in England and Ireland; they expected the Government to call the enemy's bluff in Europe that it might have the pleasure of convoying their trade and surrounding their islands with warships.³

Yet it ought to have been obvious that the real defence of the West Indies was in the Channel and the Straits of Gibraltar.⁴ A Government which could not keep up a proper system of blockade in Europe was naturally forced to send fleets scurrying across the seas to relieve the colonies. When Caylus got out in 1745 somebody had to be sent after him; when d'Enville got past Martin the next summer and sailed away to North America, he too ought to have been followed, and it was only storms and scurvy that saved Louisbourg from recapture. On the other hand it was the better organization of the Channel

¹ Lords of the Admiralty to Lords Justices, June 4, 1745, S.P. 42/28, f. 355.

² Admiralty Minutes, May 30, 1745, Adm. 3/50.

³ See the letter of Messrs. Lascelles and Maxwell to Nicholas Wilcox, Jan. 15, 1745/6, W. & G. ii.

⁴ I say the real *defence*; the West Indies could not be conquered in the Channel except in so far as the blockade of colonial trade in the Channel weakened the colonies and might perhaps make them the readier to surrender.

squadron under Anson that prevented the relief of the French colonies in 1747. Fortunately for the West Indies it was chiefly to North America that the French squadrons so freely made their escape in 1755-7; the same forces might have done irreparable damage in the sugar colonies. When the blockade was once more established, most of the French squadrons which were destined for the islands were intercepted, or so delayed that they came too late to be of any use. La Clue was twice frustrated in his attempts to get out of the Mediterranean; in 1762 Blénac's departure was so long delayed by the interception of stores and victuals on their way to Brest that he sailed two months late, and d'Aubigny, who was to have joined him, never got out of Rochefort at all. Several small reinforcements had to be countermanded for want of ability to break the blockade. Others were driven into the ports of Galicia on their way to or from the colonies, and shut up there for three or four months on end. It is obvious that the command of the Channel and the Straits, and a right use of them, had a very great influence on the course of events in the West Indies.

Unfortunately the command of the Channel could never be infallible. Blockading fleets might be driven from before the enemy's ports while his men-of-war slipped out. It was partly as an insurance against this imperfection that the colonists valued the station system. But this insurance would only have been effective, if our strength at the threatened points had been great enough to resist a French striking force as soon as it arrived. That it was not; no Government could pretend to make it so. Therefore there were several occasions when, in spite of their elaborate and permanent system of naval defence, our West India islands were chiefly indebted for their safety to the timidity of French commanders, or the disinclination of the French Government for aggressive designs in that quarter of the world.

The Admiralty might try to cover up the danger of these emergencies by hurrying out reinforcements as soon as it heard of the necessity. That was by no means an infallible remedy. French ships might get out unseen from an unexpected quarter, as Caylus did in 1745. It was long before the Admiralty knew where he was gone, and if he had tried to take St. Kitts, the English reinforcement under Townsend would have been much too late to stop him. In the same way d'Antin could have done

a great deal of mischief in 1740 before Ogle could have joined Vernon. If Blénac had no chance of doing anything against Jamaica in 1762, it was partly because the English at Jamaica, instead of having to wait for help from England, were able to obtain it much sooner from the Leeward Islands. But it was lucky for them that Rodney had with him the very large squadron which had just been employed in the conquest of Martinique.

Permanent detachments for colonial defence could not, therefore, prevent an invasion of the islands had the French really designed one. The purpose of the system was defeated if the Government, after sending abroad such a high proportion of its fleet, had still to beat the French with their own weapons as well, by hurrying out ships to the colonies whenever the French did so. Still less could the station system dispense the English Government from sending out larger forces for its own expeditions of conquest. This, however, is no disparagement of the station system. It would have been insane to keep a striking force in such a climate when there was no intention to strike. Nevertheless the effect was unfortunate, for the necessity of fresh ships and fresh troops exposed the English enterprises over again to the danger of frustration by tropical disease, from which they were half emancipated by the station system and the seasoning of crews in the West Indies. It was a pity, but it could not be helped; and the English commanders no less than the French were forced to observe the rule laid down by Beckford: 'Whatever is attempted in that climate must be done *uno impetu*; a general must fight his men off directly, and not give them time to die by drink and disease; which has been the case in all our southern expeditions.'¹

The station system had therefore most of the defects of a compromise. The permanent detachments usually withdrew a considerable number of ships which would else have been available for other services; but they were not large enough to withstand any force that might be sent against them, or to undertake any offensive movement against the enemy colonies without reinforcement from home. Hence the alarms which the West India interest raised in 1745, 1756, and 1757; hence also the great expeditions which had to be sent out from England against the French islands in 1759 and 1762.

But though it could not deal with the major emergencies of

¹ Beckford to Pitt, Sept. 11, 1758, *Chatham Correspondence*, i. 353.

the war, the system was very useful in the ordinary routine of defending and interrupting trade. The English squadrons had, at least for some months in every year, a local command of the sea. It might be disturbed by the intrusion of a disproportionate force from France, but that did not happen often. The French Ministers of Marine never spared large squadrons to the colonies, except for some special purpose, so that the English often preserved this superiority, or at least an equality, for a year or two together.

Their commanders could not always make the most of this advantage. The dispersion of their forces among a number of different errands prevented them from collecting a striking force for an important enterprise, or for an encounter with a body of enemy ships. Even Vernon complained of this, and he had far more ships at his command than any of his successors. For the same reason, at the outbreak of war against France in 1744 Ogle could do no more than 'show himself' on the south side of St. Domingue and worry the trade.¹ If the station commanders could have brought their whole forces into action with the French convoys the result could never have been doubtful; but the detachments which actually met those convoys were seldom decisively superior to them. Admiral Richmond seems to think this happened because the English commanders credited the enemy with a more serious strategic purpose than he really had; but I do not follow his reasoning. If Davers, Knowles, and Lee thought that a 'true military use' was to be made of the French and Spanish ships in the West Indies, it was their business to concentrate their forces more than they did; but the trouble was, that they could not or did not concentrate them enough, because of the multitude of their other services, and that they could not keep them out all the time, having squadrons too small to be worked in shifts. As to the 'true military use' of these ships, if Admiral Richmond considers that there was no justification for sending out ships to the colonies except for offensive operations, he may be right; but were not the English worse offenders than the French in the War of 1744? We kept more ships in the colonies and did just as little with them until the last months of the war.² Nevertheless, although they did not

¹ Vernon to Newcastle, Nov. 3, 1741, S.P. 42/90, f. 388; Ogle to Corbett, June 3, 1744, Adm. 1/233.

² H. W. Richmond, *op. cit.* ii. 198. Caylus at least was enjoined to make a 'true

always succeed in catching the enemy's convoys, the stationed squadrons interrupted the trade of the enemy and protected our own more efficiently than they performed any other services.

§ iii. *The Attack and Defence of Trade*

The ordinary functions of the station squadrons were three: to attack the enemy's trade, to cruise for the defence of our own, and to give convoy. They were also to intercept and destroy any forces of the enemy which might come out to his colonies in the neighbourhood. In so far as the French sent their merchant shipping under the escort of such forces, this last function was bound up with the first.

What was the trade whose protection and destruction were so great a part of the navy's business in colonial waters? Most important of all were the ships from Europe, which brought out necessaries for the plantations and returned with loadings of sugar, coffee, indigo, cocoa, cotton, and other West India produce. The French islands relied far more than the English on provisions imported from the mother country. On the English side the trade from Cork was almost indispensable, as it furnished salt beef, butter, and candles; but with this exception, the arrival or interception of the ships from Europe had a greater effect on the plenty or scarcity of victuals in the French than in the English colonies.

For the English squadrons the worst complication in the whole problem of trade defence was caused by the North American shipping, which supplied so many articles of common consumption—especially flour and bread. The reason of the difficulty was the chaotic nature of the trade. A large number of small competitors, whose greatest object was to arrive alone at the most advantageous market, could not be induced to sail in regular convoys; they swarmed about the seas, scuttling imprudently from island to island in pursuit of the last half-penny of profit.¹ A few of these might wish to take a cargo of

military use' of his forces. He was instructed that the best way to destroy English commerce and protect the French colonies was to beat the English squadron; this he was to do, if he could, before he ever anchored at Martinique, by seeking out the several detachments in their known cruising-grounds and overpowering them one by one.

¹ A merchant of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, wrote to his correspondent at Philadelphia for insurance on a ship 'from Portsmouth to Jamaica, with liberty

salt at Turks Island or Salt Tortuga, but they bore no great proportion to those who sailed straight home with their cargoes of rum and molasses. There was some intercourse of the same kind between Canada and the French West Indies; but that trade was never fully developed, and was annihilated during the wars.

Lastly there were the ships which arrived with slaves from the west coast of Africa. They were not many, but they were exceptionally valuable. They did not return to Africa, but loaded produce and went back to England or France.

Besides these important branches of commerce which brought necessaries to the West Indies from outside, there was some intercourse on a smaller scale between the islands and about their coasts. Perhaps this coasting trade was greater and more important in the French West Indies than in the English, especially in the Windward Islands. In order to explain this, it is necessary to know something about the organization of the English and French sugar trade.

In the English colonies most of the trade with the mother country was carried on at the risk of the planter. He ordered supplies from his factors in London, and sent home sugar on his own account. There were merchants in the islands who imported and exported for themselves, buying the planter's sugars and selling him goods on the spot; but I think—though there are no figures to prove it—that they were the exception rather than the rule. In the French islands the system appears to have been quite different. The merchants of France sent out cargoes at their own risk, for sale by their captains or other supercargoes in the islands; and most of the sugars which returned home were their property as the proceeds of their outward loadings. This was not universally true, and it was less so at St. Domingue than at the Windward Islands; but I think it was the rule, not the exception.

to touch at Guadeloupe, Nevis, Montserrat and St. Christophers'. If this kind of voyage, which was very frequent, set a problem for the insurers, it set a yet harder one to the officers of the navy charged with protecting the trade (J. Sherburne to John Reynell, June 6 and July 6, 1760, Coates-Reynell Papers, Box XI, H.S.P.). Many of these captains were limited to stay no more than a certain time in any one island unless they found a market or a freight to their liking (Davey and Carson, Philadelphia, to John Jordin, Antigua, Dec. 13, 1745, Letter-book of Messrs. Davey and Carson, Library of Congress). Or they were yet more commonly limited as to the prices they might accept or pay; this drove them from one island to another.

The ships which arrived at the French Windward Islands had their choice of three markets—Martinique, Guadeloupe, and Grenada—of which the first was the largest but not overwhelmingly so. They seem to have got into the habit of going to Martinique and dealing with merchants there who undertook to do one of two things. Either they acted as factors for the planters of the smaller islands and the windward districts of Martinique, finding freight for their produce or buying goods for them on commission; or they dealt in both European commodities and West India produce on their own account. That the first of these functions was their original one is shown by their name of *commissionnaires*; but the second was beginning to be the more important. In either the one capacity or the other, they had got control of the trade, so that few ships came from France to any port in the Windward Islands but St. Pierre; especially in time of war, when captains were more than ever glad to sit down and sell in any port they could make. This centralization required a coasting trade for collecting produce and distributing plantation necessaries. Intendant Maillart lamented the want of such a coasting trade at St. Domingue; but he only meant that it was not an independent form of enterprise.¹ There was plenty of coastwise navigation at St. Domingue, for the ships' boats had to carry their loadings long distances to and from the planters' barcadiers; and when the English blockaders cut off this intercourse, especially on the north side of the island, the planters' complaints were loud enough to prove its importance in the scheme of things.

The trade of Jamaica seems to have been gradually decentralized, and the volume of coastwise shipping accordingly decreased. This process was a comparatively new thing. Vernon complained in 1739 that since Queen Anne's reign the trade of the island was dispersed all over the outports instead of being carried on from Kingston and Port Royal. The planters of a district agreed to load a ship, which sailed directly for the nearest small port to their estates. Such a trade did not require any communication with Kingston; the coasting vessels and their crews began to disappear, because they were no longer needed.² Vernon attributed this development partly to the

¹ Maillart to Maurepas, Feb. 22, 1747, A.N. Colonies, C⁹ A 70.

² Vernon to Newcastle, Oct. 31, 1739, S.P. 42/85, ff. 39-40; Jamaica Council Minutes, May 27, 1742, C.O. 140/30.

traders' desire to escape the press-gangs which were so active in the neighbourhood of the men-of-war at Port Royal. In order to diminish the force of this motive, he ordered the captains who convoyed the trade round the island to press men from the trading vessels in the outports.¹ No doubt he was wrong to assign so trifling a cause to an important economic development; it was rather due to the settlement of the north side of Jamaica. Perhaps he also exaggerated the development itself, for there was still a fair number of vessels coasting round the island. Most of the other English sugar colonies were so small that they could be served by a single port. In these islands the sugar-droguers—as the coasting craft were called—were almost as much needed between the plantations and the shipping as at Martinique and Guadeloupe. But they were not needed between the islands, because none of them depended commercially upon any other.

The dispositions of the warships for protecting the trade were governed by the movements of the merchant shipping, and the way in which it arrived in the West Indies. The art of finding the longitude had not yet been discovered, or was at least very imperfect. The islands were not very large, and with a strong wind a ship might pass through them in the night without knowing it. As the trade wind was always more or less easterly, it would be very hard to repair this mistake once made by beating back. It was also difficult, and in time of war dangerous, to pass up and down the chain of islands to north or south, if you should happen to strike it at the wrong point. There was only one way of avoiding these inconveniences—to fall in with the exact latitude of the destination as far to the eastward as possible, and allow the trade wind to carry you down to it. In that way you could hardly miss your island; the worst that could happen was finding yourself uncomfortably near to its coast in the night or at daybreak.

The trade of Barbados, not only from Europe but from North America, made the latitude of the island. This trade was more important than the size of Barbados would have warranted, because many North American vessels used to arrive there first as the windwardmost and the best starting-point in their quest for markets down the range of the islands. Shipping bound for the Leeward Islands and Jamaica generally made the

¹ Vernon to Brown, Feb. 22, 1739/40, S.P. 42/85.

latitude of Deseada or of the eastern point of Antigua; only the North American trade for St. Kitts and St. Eustatius approached from the north instead of the east. In consequence the most frequented tracks to the English sugar colonies lay for some hundred miles to the east of Barbados, Antigua, and Deseada. In the same way the French shipping made the latitude of the northern or southern point of Martinique. Thus privateers or warships in quest of outcoming trade had only to place themselves on a certain latitude.¹ They could be pretty certain of meeting with prizes, unless the enemy's merchant captains followed the example of certain naval commanders, and gingerly approached their destinations from unusual angles, in order to escape the blockaders who lay in the accustomed stations.²

For the same reason, the frigates appointed to protect the trade knew roughly where to cruise for that purpose. Exactly how broad or how long was the belt of sea which had to be guarded, is a matter on which different opinions were expressed. Commodore Warren complained that the English traders made the islands at such a number of different places that he could not possibly preserve them all from the enemy. He thought that if only they would be more exact in choosing their latitudes, they could be more efficiently protected. Captain Middleton on the other hand attributed the many losses of our shipping to the opposite cause—it all made the same latitudes, and therefore the French privateers had only to stand in the path and take. The length of the tract was also a matter of doubt. Middleton criticized the commanders-in-chief of his day because they did not send their cruisers nearly far enough to the eastward to protect the trade from the enemy's most enterprising privateers. Probably that was because, however far the cruisers went, the privateers found that they could still push out a little farther with some chance of catching merchant shipping which had got into the latitude a long way off. Middleton's own earliest estimate for Barbados was ten to twelve leagues, his

¹ Middleton to Pringle, Oct. 21 and Dec. 4, 1759, *Letters of Lord Barham* (Navy Record Society, 1906), i. 1, 9; Middleton to Douglas, 1760, p. 27. Charles Johnson gives a similar description in the introduction to his *General History of the Pirates*, and explains how the pirates took advantage of this practice of finding the latitude some way east of the islands.

² De Kearney to Machault, Dec. 7, 1755, A.N. Marine B⁴ 68; Le Vassor de la Touche to Moras, May 15, 1757, B⁴ 77; Du Guay Lambert to Berryer, Feb. 17, 1761, B⁴ 103.

latest for the Leeward Islands was a hundred or a hundred and fifty.¹

Whatever the exact definition of the danger-zone, it was obviously too large to be patrolled by the cruisers at the disposal of the English Commodores. One reason for this was the reluctance of the Admiralty to place enough small vessels on the station, and the strictness with which it scrutinized purchases of prize vessels in the colonies. There was hardly a commander-in-chief, whether on the Jamaica or Leeward Islands station, who did not constantly bewail the lack of small sloops and brigantines. Line-of-battle ships were almost useless for everyday cruising on these stations. The prevailing winds and currents were too strong and too constant, and the islands were set too close together, with too many little creeks and holes, and in some places too much shoal water to windward. The privateers escaped into refuges where their pursuers could not approach them. Even frigates were too unwieldy unless they sailed exceptionally well. Frankland and Moore complained, of course with some exaggeration, that their frigates chased French privateers four or five at a time, and never caught one. Périer de Salvert found the same difficulty at St. Domingue. Nothing would do but sloops, or, as Middleton would have it, brigantines; and of those, there were never enough. Moreover, the privateers were constantly changing their stations; if a Commodore broke up a nest of them in one place or made one of their cruising-grounds too hot to hold them, they cheerfully shifted to another. Thus when Moore cleaned up the latitude of Antigua in 1757, they swarmed in the seas to windward of Barbados.

The exchange of prisoners was another reason for the failure to deal with the enemy privateers. Few colonial privateers were large or heavily armed; their ships and equipment could be cheaply replaced. It was therefore the number of available men, not that of the ships, which limited the amount of privateering. The English navy could take the ships—Moore, for example, took fifty-seven, Douglas took forty; but as long as the crews were sent back to Martinique, they could reappear on different vessels and start their trade again.²

¹ Warren to Corbett, Feb. 7 and 9–25, 1744/5, Adm. 1/2654; Middleton's letters, quoted above.

² Moore to Cleveland, Dec. 20, 1759, Adm. 1/307; Douglas to Cleveland, June 4,

If the trade could not be sufficiently defended by sending ships of war to range up and down the tracts where it was in most danger, other methods had to be taken to extinguish the enemy's privateers. Of course the most perfect would be to conquer the islands to which they returned with their prizes. The English colonists came to desire this at last. When it was achieved in the Windward Islands in 1762, it had not all the effect that was expected. A great body of privateers got away from Martinique before the siege began, and cruised to leeward of St. Christophers. They continued their depredations, using the Danish island of St. Thomas as a base, and drew upon the Governor a severe animadversion from Rodney on the subject of the rights and duties of neutrality.¹ In fact, when the French flag no longer flew in the Leeward Islands, the French privateers were a greater nuisance than ever. Rodney and Monckton had only themselves to thank for this; they had refused to put a clause into the capitulation of Martinique, for allowing the privateers to return from the neutral islands on condition they made no more attacks on British property.²

Short of the complete conquest of their bases, other measures might be taken to suppress the French privateers. Governor Mathew asked Townsend in 1745 to 'sweep the roads' where they congregated, burning and bombarding their ships. This was not very effective, and brought the capital ships under the fire of the shore batteries for a purpose which was not important enough to justify the risk. Warships often seem to have got the worst of it in contests with those batteries, when they tried to cut out the shipping from the harbours. At least they wasted ammunition and incurred losses which were disproportionate to the object.³ Moore judged rightly in 1759 that the bombard-

1760, *ibid.*; Middleton to Pringle, Dec. 4, 1759, *Letters of Lord Barham*, p. 12. For a further treatment of this subject, *v. infra*, pp. 446-50.

¹ Rodney, orders to Captain Keith, May 21, 1762, G.D. 20/2, p. 229; Rodney to Cleveland, July 23, 1762, Adm. 1/307; see also the letter of the Governor of St. Thomas to Dalrymple, Oct. 26, 1762, C.O. 110/2.

² Rufane to Egremont, Dec. 1, 1762, C.O. 166/2; Rodney to Cleveland, July 23 and Nov. 3, 1762, Adm. 1/307; Capitulation of Martinique, *ibid.* Samuel Herrick writes to Timothy Orne & Co. on July 29, 1762, that he shall lodge some money in the hands of some merchants of Guadeloupe for a safe carriage by land to another part of the island, 'for the privateers are thick round this island, here is scarce a day but one or two are taken' (Essex Institute, Timothy Orne MSS., xii. 26).

³ Townsend to Corbett, Nov. 8, 1745, Adm. 1/305.

ment of St. Pierre would not be worth the damage to his ships, which ought not to be hazarded unless the fate of an island was at stake.¹

Perhaps the simplest and best way to check the enemy's privateers and rescue our own trade from them, was to station ships off the ports to which they were most likely to bring their prizes. The capital ships could be used for this purpose; in no other way could they be of much service for the protection of trade. Middleton criticized his commanders-in-chief severely for omitting to do this, and Douglas decided in 1760 that it was the only course to take.² But if this plan was brilliant and sound, it is hard to believe that it did not occur to anybody before. In fact it was not so easy as it looked. There were many ports to which the privateers could carry their prizes at a pinch. They might not be able to sell them so well as at the chief places of trade, but they would get something for them and save their own skins. If St. Pierre and Fort Royal were blocked up, there was La Trinité to windward; or if Martinique was out of the question altogether, there were still Guadeloupe (till 1759) and Grenada. The French laws, and no doubt the owners' instructions, enjoined the privateers to return to the ports from which they set out, but they did not prescribe it absolutely. Moreover St. Pierre, which was the greatest centre of privateering, was an open road and uncommonly hard to blockade. In the spring of 1748, when there was nothing stronger than a small corvette in the harbour and a large English force outside, the privateers were able to go out and return safely with their prizes, given a little help from the shore and boats.³ However, though recapture outside the French ports was not an infallible protection of the trade, it was recommended by all sorts of people, and in fact a certain proportion of the prizes was retaken.

The conditions were quite different on the Jamaica station. Here, too, the winds dictated certain methods of approaching the islands. The trade from England, having passed through the Leeward Islands, generally sailed down the southern coasts of Porto Rico and S. Domingo, where it was in danger from

¹ Moore to Hopson, Jan. 19, 1759, C.O. 110/1.

² Antigua Assembly Minutes, Aug. 6, 1747, C.O. 9/20; Douglas to Cleveland, June 4, 1760, Adm. 1/307.

³ Caylus to Maurepas, May 15, 1748, A.N. Colonies C⁸ A 58.

French and Spanish privateers.¹ Cruisers were therefore put out in this region to preserve the stragglers out of convoys and the 'runner' ships which came by themselves. They also served to intercept the shipping of the southern quarter of St. Domingue. The small vessels bound from North America for Jamaica sometimes made the Leeward Islands or joined this track from the Mona Passage, but more often came by the Windward Passage between St. Domingue and Cuba. Here they came under the protection of several English cruisers, for the stations in which the English warships annoyed the trade of the French colony were almost equally well placed for defending the track of English trade. The short stage from the Windward Passage to the east end of Jamaica was not so well policed, but it was not dangerous, for there was generally a ship or two cruising between Jamaica and Cuba to interrupt the trade to Louisiana and Vera Cruz. Commodore Forrest tried in 1762 to organize a chain of cruisers which would meet the trade at the confines of the station and hand it on to each other until it arrived at Jamaica. This elaborate system was never put to the trial, for it was thrown out of gear by the outbreak of the Spanish war and the invasion scare of 1762.² Special provision had to be made for the recapture of English ships from Spanish privateers; a frigate or two off Santiago de Cuba, and another from time to time off Baracoa, did something to prevent the Spaniards from bringing their prizes into port.

The coasting trade needed a separate system of protection, which the islands provided in part for themselves. Sometimes they fitted out small vessels, for which the commanders-in-chief furnished men and officers; sometimes they hired privateers to make special cruises off the coasts. The nuisances were not wanting here which attended every effort made by the colonists for their own defence—graft, constitutional obstructions, and efforts to throw the burden upon other islands. A quarrel between the Governor and Council of Barbados nearly prevented the equipment of a sloop in 1756, for the Council refused to pass a Bill for the purpose, in order to spite His Excellency,

¹ Héron to Machault, Dec. 30, 1755, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 97. But there was no necessity for this. The outward trade could easily run down a different latitude farther south and come up with the east end of Jamaica from the southward; Cotes's convoy did so in 1757, when a large French force was rumoured to be at St. Domingue (Cotes to Cleveland, May 24, 1757, Adm. 1/235).

² Forrest to Cleveland, Jan. 28, 1762, Adm. 1/1788.

so that the whole had to be done by private subscription among the merchants.¹ The legislature of Antigua would not have such a sloop at all, for the characteristic reason that it would be of some benefit to the trade of other colonies which made that latitude, and therefore Antigua should not bear the cost alone, especially as she had contributed to the security of all the other islands by her heavy expenditure on English Harbour.² Jamaica tried, and at last with success, to make the Crown undertake this service, so that in 1757 the country sloop was put out of commission. The expense had been heavy—about £13,000 a year—and had been increased, according to his political opponents, by the corrupt prodigality of Lieutenant-Governor Moore's nominees.³

The defence of trade was not the only task of the squadrons, nor the most congenial. The inevitable consequence of the prize and salvage system was that the cruising-grounds which yielded the greatest harvest of defenceless enemy trade were more profitable than those where there was nothing to be had but hard knocks from privateers, or a certain proportion of the value of English ships retaken. This difficulty would not have existed, if the enemy's merchant ships and our own could have been met with in the same places. They were so in most parts of the Jamaica station; but in the Leeward Islands, though the station was much smaller, the two regions were distinct. The right place for intercepting French trade was to windward of Martinique; that for favouring the entry of the English shipping was to windward of Antigua or Barbados. The difference was not great, but it was enough to cause difficulties on the station.⁴

Several commanders-in-chief fell into great disfavour with the colonists for preferring attack to defence in this respect. The islands sometimes felt, or at least complained of, a great scarcity of provisions. They attributed this to the loss of out-coming shipping, and that in turn to the improper cruises

¹ Pinfold to Halifax, May 31, 1757, Pinfold Letter-Book A, p. 42, Library of Congress.

² Antigua Council Minutes, Oct. 25, 1756, C.O. 9/21.

³ Moore, speech to the legislature, Sept. 27, 1757, C.O. 137/30, Z 12; *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica*, v. 49-51.

⁴ Middleton suggested that the cruisers should be appointed to the different parts of the station in rotation, so that each captain, having his fair chance of prizes, should be less tempted to stray, contrary to his orders, from the bad cruising-grounds to the good (Middleton to Pringle, Oct. 21, 1759, quoted above).

ordered by the Commodores and their neglect of the tracts to windward of the English islands. During the commands of Lee and Townsend, in 1745-7, over 170 vessels bound to the Leeward Islands were said to have been taken. The legislature of Antigua cried famine—with very little reason, as it would appear, for a North American supercargo reported at the height of the clamour that in spite of the captures, the markets were bad, 'there being such quantitys of provisions of all sorts here that there must unavoidably a great part of it perish'.¹ Lee was undoubtedly to blame for continually omitting to place cruisers in the situations where they could best protect this trade; the Admiralty did not acquit him of that, though it thought him guilty of no worse than an error of judgement.

Not only Lee but his predecessor Knowles had sometimes made the same mistake. But they had their reasons, of which the planters did not take enough account. Neither of them had a very large force, and neither could disperse it abroad with a sole view to promoting the convenience of the colonists. Every few months there was a French convoy, with a small body of warships, expected to arrive or to sail. It was not only the advantage but also the duty of the Commodore to intercept it. He had therefore to collect a great part of his squadron for this service, and as he had not always enough capital ships and frigates to be able to keep their duties absolutely distinct, he was forced to stint his striking force to keep up his cruisers, or vice versa. Lee's offences were indeed much aggravated by a succession of ridiculous failures to catch these French convoys. He was absurdly accused of cowardice, and of receiving 5 per cent. of their value to let them pass. He was known in the islands as 'Commodore Bottle' or 'the Bacchanalian Commodore', and the Council and Assembly of Antigua formed a special body of agents to procure his removal from the command. The entire Barbados and Leeward Islands interest was enlisted, and told the Lords of the Admiralty 'that their whole trade would be sacrificed if Mr. Lee was continued in the command'. In the reign of the Pelhams the West India merchants seldom clamoured in vain. Lee was suspended and tried; nothing but inefficiency was proved against him, and that was not enough, in those days, to prevent the restoration and even

¹ Edward Dowers to John Reynell, Aug. 27, 1746, Coates-Reynell Papers, Box IV, H.S.P.

promotion of an officer protected by the First Lord's father-in-law.¹

The most remarkable result of the controversy appears in the instructions to his successor Legge. The 'principal point of his care and attention' was to be the protection of the trade to and from the colonies; only 'in the next place' was he to annoy that of the enemy.² This shows how far the offensive activity of the West India squadrons was paralysed by the demands of the merchants. It is not surprising that the men-of-war were inhibited from attacking the French colonies, for they were hardly sufficient for it; but it is extraordinary that the defence of our own trade should be allowed to take precedence over a service which was by common consent so important as the blockade of the enemy colonies—a service which, according to the partisans of colonial warfare, constituted the chief and almost the only success of the War of 1744.

The merchants would have wished to have the whole war conducted on their principles, which would have left it to be won or lost on land, or resulted in a stalemate. That was the point of the Cruisers and Convoys Bill of 1742, and of the complaint which they made to the Admiralty in the spring of 1747 against the concentration of force in the Channel. They 'did believe while Mr. Anson was out with that great squadron a greater number of captures were made than in other months, and while such a great fleet was employed to the southward it could not be imagined they could any way protect the trade'.³ Yet within six months of this protest, the Admiralty had achieved, by ignoring it, the two most brilliant naval

¹ Legislature of Antigua, Petition to George II, Adm. 1/305; Lee's answer, Aug. 26, 1746, *ibid.*; Lee to Corbett, May 26, July 20, 1746, Jan. 17, 1746/7; Lee's justification of Nov. 17, 1747, *ibid.*; Instructions to Lee, June 23, 1746, Adm. 2/67, pp. 357-8; Antigua Assembly Minutes, May 16, July 10 and 18, Aug. 13, 1746, April 16, 1747, C.O. 9/17; *Barbados Gazette*, Oct. 4, 1746, April 23, 1747; Admiralty Minutes, May 30, 1745, Adm. 3/50; June 19, July 8, 1746, Adm. 3/54; Aug. 6, Adm. 3/55, Nov. 14 and 19, 1746, Adm. 3/56; Feb. 3, 1747/8, Adm. 3/58; Henshaw to Medley, Jan. 6, 1746/7, *H.M.C. Ducane MSS.*, p. 161. It appears from a letter of George Maxwell to Edward Lascelles that Lee was seriously reported to be killing himself, presumably with debauchery (W. & G. iii). Legge and Pocock, Lee's successors and both diligent officers, thought Lee had been the victim of an unjust persecution (Pocock to Anson, Oct. 14, 1747, Add. MSS. 15956, f. 308). So did Judge King of Antigua (see his letter to Corbett, Nov. 22, 1746, Adm. 1/3881).

² Instructions to Legge, Nov. 7, 1746, Adm. 2/68, p. 395. These instructions were repeated to Osborn in 1748.

³ Admiralty Minutes, April 14, 1747, Adm. 3/57.

victories of the war: Anson had taken La Jonquière and his convoy for Canada, and Hawke had beaten L'Étanduère and driven the French trade out to the West Indies without a single ship to defend it. If the merchants' advice had been followed, there would have been no such thing as strategy; only a number of cruisers, rigidly cantoned—perhaps by Act of Parliament—upon the stations which were most frequented by the trade.¹

The same attitude is shown in the complaints against Commodore Moore in 1759. He had to collect a large part of his force for the attempt on Martinique and Guadeloupe, and to concentrate it still further when Bompar appeared at Martinique. Of course he could not afford cruisers in all the usual places; the French privateers flourished, and an outcry soon went up against him in Barbados. Unfortunately Moore, like Lee, failed to achieve the object for which he had sacrificed the normal security of the trade. He did not prevent Bompar from carrying troops to Guadeloupe, though the failure was quite unimportant as Bompar's move was too late to make any difference to the result.² He too was therefore denounced for adding inefficiency to neglect; but as the merits of his case were very different from Lee's, so was his fate. Unlike Newcastle and Bedford, Pitt would not even appear to give up a deserving sailor to colonial faction.³

¹ Yet in the next war Anson incurred some criticism of an exactly opposite kind. Joseph Watkins, one of Newcastle's advisers in the City, complained in 1756 that 'our cruisers are treading on one another's heels in our Channel: the protection of the trade is a great object I will allow but the annoying of the enemy is no less so. . . . I am afraid L^d A. listens too much to some persons who may mean well but who direct his attention only to the protection of our own trade, but we shall never bring our enemies to reason but by destroying theirs and by hindering them from recruiting their forces in America' (Sept. 8, 1756—Add. MSS. 32867, f. 264).

² Barbados Assembly Minutes, Oct. 2, 1759, C.O. 31/29.

³ Both Lee and Moore accounted for their difficulties in a manner very little to the credit of the colonists. Lee ascribed his to the secret hostility of Governor Mathew, who was concerned in a Flag of Truce vessel (the *Valeur*, H.C.A. 42/48) which had been seized by a man-of-war and condemned for carrying on an illicit trade with the enemy. The facts alleged by Lee were certainly true, but there is no direct proof of any open hostility between him and Mathew; indeed, that old fox maintained an ostentatious neutrality. Still, colonial Governors have sacrificed the reputation of Admirals for less (see Lee's papers of Aug. 26, 1746, and Nov. 17, 1747, also his letter to Corbett, May 26, 1746, Adm. 1/305). Moore attributed his unpopularity in Barbados, where he was burnt in effigy, to his vigorous prosecution of some people who had been smuggling goods to and from Martinique by way of the Neutral Islands (Moore to Cleveland, Dec. 13, 1759, Feb. 26, 1760, Adm. 1/307). This account is borne out by Governor Pinfold. Holmes accounted in the

The commanders on the Jamaica station had a far easier task than those at the Leeward Islands. St. Domingue had few privateers, and the shape of its coast gave a peculiar advantage to a strong English force. Cape Nicola and Cape Tiburon jut out into the Windward Passage a long way from the body of the island. Their extremities were hardly inhabited at this period, so that the English warships could rendezvous there, and even lengthen their cruises by replenishing their wood and water, without any effective hindrance.¹ The French trade had to round these dangerous corners in its passage from one quarter of the colony to another. The roads were so bad and the country so difficult that the needs of one quarter could not be supplied from another by overland traffic. In fact, St. Domingue was for strategic purposes not one colony but three, almost as much separated from each other as Martinique and Guadeloupe, but forced to content themselves with a system of naval defence that would only have sufficed for one, and a single set of convoys. So completely did the English interrupt the navigation from one quarter to another, that some mortars which had been sent out to St. Domingue in 1745 were not yet moved round to their final destination at St. Louis by the end of 1747, and I doubt if they reached it before the end of the war; Larnage never found an opportunity which he could trust. If anything could add to the difficulty of securing the trade of the colony, the geography of the central, or western, quarter did so. The ports were situated on a broad and deep gulf called the Bight of Léogane; but the large island of Gonaïve, lying in the middle of it, obliged the trade to go through one of two passages, which could be watched without great difficulty. Most of the trade of the colony, however, was centred at Cap François, on the north side; there were several channels in and out, which could only be watched by a considerable number of warships. News—often unreliable—of the English movements off Cape Nicola was furnished by a service of look-outs.² Here the con-

same way for the criticisms of his strategy and efficiency on the Jamaica station (Holmes to Pitt, Oct. 27, 1761, Adm. 1/236).

¹ Larnage to Maurepas, Aug. 3, 1744, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 64; Shirley to Halifax, July 20, 1764, C.O. 23/16.

² In order to escape the look-outs, the English ships kept out of sight of land so far as possible. The look-outs seldom made the mistake of underestimating the English forces; Épinay, Macnémara, and Dubois de la Motte were all kept in port for weeks by their exaggerations.

voys usually arrived in war, and the difficulty of getting round to the other quarters of the colony favoured a yet further concentration of trade.

The Jamaica squadron also performed from time to time the service of blockading the French colony at the mouth of the Mississippi, by cruising between Jamaica and Cuba, and in the channel between the west end of Cuba and Cape Catoche. New Orleans never was for any important purpose the back door of Canada, but South Carolina and Georgia sometimes thought themselves threatened by invasions of French and Indians, and the squadron could do a little to relieve them of this fear. It captured some troopships and storeships for Mississippi in the Seven Years War.¹

In times of war with Spain the duties of the station were far more various. Vernon had his cruisers dispersed among six separate tracts in 1741: one to windward of Rio de la Hacha, to intercept the trade from Spain to Cartagena and Portobello; another between Cape Corrientes and the Grand Caymanas, for the trade from Cartagena to Vera Cruz and Havana—the middle stage of the galleons' voyage; one in the Old Bahama Channel to catch the trade which might go to Havana down the north side of Cuba (an unusual route, but sometimes used, notably by Pocock and Albemarle for the invasion of Havana in 1762); another to windward of Cap François to protect our own shipping from the Northern Colonies; another to the south-east of S. Domingo to protect the trade outward bound to Jamaica; and one off Santiago de Cuba, for recaptures.²

This dispersion left the Admiral a very small striking force, let alone anything for convoys. His successors never had so many ships; moreover, a war with France as well as Spain necessitated the establishment of several new cruising-grounds and an additional force on some of the old. However, a striking force was not ordinarily needed against the Spaniards; they sent few squadrons to the West Indies after the first year, and once their ships were in the Gulf of Mexico, all the English Admirals except Knowles seem to have regarded them as out of reach. The deliberations of the Cabinet in 1740 show why Havana and Vera Cruz were considered to be outside the sphere of the

¹ Townshend to Cleveland, Jan. 22, 1757, Adm. 1/234; Cotes to Cleveland, June 18, Aug. 7, 1757, Adm. 1/235.

² Vernon to Newcastle, Nov. 3, 1741, S.P. 42/90, f. 388.

Jamaica squadron: an Admiral who took his force so far to leeward would leave Jamaica exposed to the French behind his back. Knowles was, therefore, an exception who proved the rule; he could afford to lie off Havana in 1748 because the war with France was over.

§ iv. *Convoys*

The navy had yet another service to perform in colonial waters—that of convoy. The convoy system was a necessary evil. Some merchants probably valued it more for the sake of the insurance than for the safe arrival of their ships. The underwriters returned a part of the premium for ships which took convoy. The masters and owners were therefore tempted to begin their voyages with convoys which they meant to desert, when they were so near home as to make the risk worth running, for the advantage of arriving first at the market. This practice was further encouraged by the underwriters' habit of accepting proof that sailing-instructions had been received from the commander of the escort, as evidence that the insured had sailed with convoy; also by the difficulty of proving misconduct against anybody in case of separation at sea. No doubt these considerations account for the indiscipline and obstinacy of the merchant captains. The commanders of convoys would have liked to punish them by taking away their sailing-instructions, but that might be hard on the owners if they were not responsible for the captains' misconduct.¹ The underwriters themselves found another remedy. Originally they made a return of premium for the bare fact of sailing with convoy, but they introduced a salutary innovation in 1746: they would only return part of the premium if the ship sailed with convoy and arrived safe—not necessarily with the convoy. The merchants did not like this, but they had to endure it. It does not seem to have succeeded in making the masters more obedient for very long.²

The lot of a convoy commander was one of the unhappiest in the world. He bore a great responsibility, for the owners of a lost merchantman were sure to complain, and the press would take up the cry if it could make any political capital out of

¹ Capt. Man to Cleveland, July 25, 1761, Adm. 1/2113.

² This rule was first made in 1746 for the ships which came home with convoy late in the year, and were liable to dispersion by storms; but the next year it was applied to all ships (Lascelles and Maxwell to Edward Pare, Sept. 17, 1746; to John Fairchild, March 25, 1747; to Thomas Stevenson, Jan. 27, 1747/8, W. & G. ii).

attacking the Admiralty. (The merchants' losses raised a great ferment in 1741/2, and the House of Commons appointed a committee of inquiry; the result was the wretched Bill for Convoys and Cruisers, which was rejected by the good sense or the Ministerial majority of the House of Lords.)¹ The trading captains were only too often to blame for the misfortunes which befell them. The men-of-war repeatedly denounced their disregard of signals and even of cannon-shot. No degree of insubordination was any offence at law; Knowles suggested that it should be made one, but the Secretary of the Admiralty replied that such a Bill must be asked for by the merchants themselves.² Some ships came out or went home too heavily laden or unfit for the voyage. While these slow sailers expected the convoy to stay for them, the ships which could get on faster crowded ahead, especially at night, until they were almost out of sight. The men-of-war had to cruise for leagues in every direction to round them up by day, only to find them as far apart as ever the next morning.³

Indiscipline reached its height as the convoy approached its destination. On the voyage home, the temptation of getting to market a day or two before the others was too great to be resisted. There was a different motive on the way out: the convoys took nearly all the islands in their way, in order to do as much work with as few warships as possible. They made Barbados first and left the trade there, then went down the Leeward Islands and sailed from Antigua or St. Kitts with the shipping for Jamaica.⁴ Some of the masters bound for the Leeward Islands and Jamaica disliked the delay and the additional risk

¹ Wager's notes of Jan. 27, 1741/2, on the evidence before this committee, and his defence of the Admiralty, are in the Vernon-Wager MSS.

² The Law Officers reported in 1711 that it was no offence against the common law to refuse to keep in convoy (Marsden, *Law and Custom*, ii. 221). See Knowles's letter to Corbett, Aug. 16, 1744, Adm. 1/2007; Corbett to Knowles, Dec. 25, Adm. 2/486, p. 118.

³ Kirke to Cleveland, Sept. 19, 1758, S.P. 42/41, f. 225; Alexander Innes to Cleveland, July 6, 1761, Adm. 1/1985; Man to Cleveland, July 25, 1761, Adm. 1/2113; Ourry to Cleveland, July 13, 1762, Adm. 1/2246; O'Bryen to Cleveland, Sept. 8, 1762, *ibid.* The best printed account of a convoy commander's difficulties is in the *Private Sea Journals* of Sir Thomas Pasley (ed. R. M. S. Pasley, 1931), pp. 35-49. Pasley was in charge of one of the homeward convoys from Jamaica in 1778. See also the account of 'Commodore' Walker's meeting with a West India convoy in 1746 (*Voyages and Cruises of Commodore Walker* (ed. 1928), p. 98).

⁴ The Leeward Islands and Jamaica merchants disliked this arrangement, but could not get the Admiralty to change it.

of this circuitous voyage, so they deserted the convoy in the night when it got into the latitude of Antigua.¹ They did not only expose themselves to danger by their selfishness; if they were taken the information of their crews might enable the enemy to intercept the whole convoy.² This was believed to have caused the loss of some ships out of Captain Lisle's homeward convoy in 1746.

The French captains spoke quite as ill as the English of the condition of the merchant ships and the masters' behaviour. They were too ready to ascribe all these shortcomings to the insurance. Wager and Burrell were no doubt right when they argued in the House of Commons that the masters of well-insured ships would not consult their safety too timorously. But that was nothing to the charges made by d'Aubenton, an officer or purser in Conflans's squadron. The enemy privateers, he said, had picked up three ships out of the convoy, which Conflans could not prevent because

'the captains of the ships in question did everything that was necessary to get taken, and succeeded in it; we have no doubt they had consumed part of their cargoes in the various ports where we were forced to stay, and being insured, were delighted to have an occasion to be captured'.

Kersaint was even more sweeping:

'Half the merchant captains and factors at Cap François are worse scoundrels than the *Cartouchiens*. The latter insure goods which they have not shipped, and the former, having spent more than they possess in port or gambled it away, unload goods from their cargoes to pay their debts, and have no hope of getting out of their difficulties short of having themselves taken.'

Very likely this was rhodomontade, and the relations between the King's sea officers and the merchant sailors were if anything worse in the French service than in the English, so we must not look for impartial testimony; but the kinds of barratry which Kersaint describes are not unheard-of.³

¹ Frankland to Cleveland, April 28, 1757, Adm. 1/306.

² *C.S.P. Col. 1704-5*, no. 1510; Printed Instructions for Convoys, 1756. Cotes complained that a merchant ship bound to Jamaica had gone ahead of the outward convoy from Antigua, which might have had very bad consequences if she had been taken, for the French were believed to have a large force on the south side of St. Domingue (Cotes to Cleveland, May 24, 1757, Adm. 1/235).

³ D'Aubenton to Maurepas, Nov. 7, 1746, A.N. Marine B⁴ 59, f. 187; Foligny

The French officers also accused the merchant captains of cowardice: many of them struck to small English privateers, hardly larger than boats, from which, according to Larnage, they could easily have defended themselves if they had had any spirit. The Minister of the Marine had the right to remove them from their command for such offences. No such authority existed in England, where the Government might think itself lucky if a merchant captain who misbehaved himself under convoy happened to possess a letter of marque, so that his securities could be sued in the Court of Admiralty; nor do I know if that prosecution succeeded.¹

The merchants complained of the men-of-war in return. Those of France denounced the haughty carriage of the naval officers to the masters of trading ships, and in particular their habit of commandeering boats to fetch their supplies of wood and water.² In England the commanders of convoys were charged with inefficiency and neglect. Sometimes they were to blame for leaving the trade in order to chase prizes or to engage enemy forces gratuitously.³ The Admiralty tried to discourage the commanders of escorts from taking prizes. Some got round the difficulty by agreeing with privateers to cruise on their joint account in the neighbourhood of the convoy, and none declined the opportunity of a prize if it came in his way without causing him to leave his charge.

The printed instructions for the conduct of convoys ordered the men-of-war to protect the merchants from strange ships by getting between them. Of course this was the ordinary strategy of trade protection; in this way Dubois succeeded in preserving his convoy from destruction off Martinique in 1746, and L'Étanduère did the same in 1747, though at the loss of most of his warships. Dubois was less successful on his return in 1747, when Commodore Fox met him with an overwhelming force.⁴ When two convoys met, as Mitchell and Macnémara did in 1745, Mitchell and Conflans in 1746, the warships on each side to Maurepas, Feb. 28, 1747, B⁴ 61, f. 253; Kersaint to Moras, Jan. 15, 1758, B⁴ 81.

¹ Larnage to Maurepas, April 27, 1745, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 66; Maurepas to Larnage, Jan. 12, 1746, B 83; Case of the *Ellis*, Oct. 6, 1759, H.C.A. 3/284.

² Chamber of Commerce of Guienne to Maurepas, March 30, 1745, Arch. Gir. C 4312, f. 14.

³ A French commander, too, might get into trouble for this—Caumont, for example, was rebuked in 1757 for leaving his convoy to take a frigate.

⁴ Dubois de la Motte to Maurepas, July 8, 1747, A.N. Marine B⁴ 61, f. 292.

might leave the merchantmen in the background and engage, so long as there was no danger of defeat or disablement which would expose the trade to capture by the victorious enemy; when that seemed likely, the weaker force was justified in retiring, rejoining its convoy, and getting away if it could.

The convoy system ought to have been easy to organize in the West India trade, especially that of the English islands. They all produced the same crop, and ought all to have had it ready about the same time. There should have been no difficulty in judging when convoys ought to arrive with plantation necessities, some of which were needed for making the crop, and when they would be able to start home with their loadings of sugar. But rains might delay the beginning of the crop, or interrupt it half-done, or make the roads to the sea impassable; winds might fail, in the islands which ground their canes chiefly by windmills. Other accidents of an extraordinary nature, such as hurricanes or martial law, might put everything back.

In particular, there was a dissension about the times of convoy on the Leeward Islands station, which poisoned the lives of several of the commanders-in-chief. Barbados was unique among the English sugar islands in that it half-refined some of its sugars by a process known as claying. The amount of clayed sugar which the statistics of imports show was small, but the real proportion was much higher, for the Barbadians cheated the Customs by a long-sanctioned abuse, describing their sugars as *muscovados* in order to pay a lower rate of duty. The claying took time, and the sugars of Barbados were ready two months later than those of the Leeward Islands. The trade of Barbados was habitually obliged, in spite of many protests in Queen Anne's reign, to take the same convoy as that of the Leeward Islands. It was exposed to some risk by running the gauntlet of the principal French islands, even under escort, but that could not be helped; there were not enough ships for separate convoys. The great difficulty was to adjust the times of the homeward voyages. If the last convoy sailed at the end of July, as Antigua desired, many of the Barbados sugars could get no convoy at all, or must wait until next year; if it was delayed into September, some of the Leeward Islands trade had to wait into the hurricane season, which exposed it not only to danger, but to a heavier insurance, as the underwriters always charged an additional premium on ships which were not warranted to sail before

July 15/26.¹ Besides, so late a convoy would meet storms off the Banks of Newfoundland, or in the Channel, which made it quite impossible to keep the fleet together. No Commodore ever succeeded in satisfying both Barbados and Antigua so long as the allowance of only two convoys subsisted. In fact, for this reason among others, no Commodore could hope to please both islands. Legge, Osborn, and Frankland were hated in Antigua but popular in Barbados; Moore was burnt in effigy at Barbados but received the thanks of the legislature of Antigua. Only the very inept, like Lee, could be denounced by both at the same time. The Leeward Islands nearly always carried the day—perhaps because, as Lascelles and Maxwell suggested, they had a majority among the merchants who met in London to resolve upon applications to the Admiralty for convoys. At the end of the Seven Years War our superiority was so much assured in those seas that a third convoy could be granted for the trade of Barbados.²

But for this the planters disagreed little over the times of convoys. They wanted one to go out in October, another in February or March at the latest; one to come home with the first-fruits of the crop in April or May and a second later in the summer. These times were hardly ever kept: in Queen Anne's reign the trade sometimes had to wait three, four, or even five months for the outward convoy, at a great expense in wages, victuals, and demurrage. The delays were not quite so bad in the middle of the century, but they were still great. The merchants procrastinated as well as the Admiralty. They were often unready at the appointed day and applied for postponement; but the Admiralty was most to blame for deferring to appoint convoys. The lateness of the convoys home resulted from that of the voyages out, for some planters could not begin crop till they had received the cask or tools which they had ordered from England. However, the merchants of the islands aggravated it by applying for further postponements, chiefly

¹ The date was July 15 before the reform of the calendar in 1752, and July 26 after it.

² *C.S.P. Col.* 1702-3, no. 926; 1704-5, nos. 197, 592; Resolution of the Council of Antigua, Aug. 22, 1747, C.O. 9/18; Legge to Corbett, Aug. 5, Adm. 1/305; Osborn to Corbett, June 21, 1748, Adm. 1/306; Barbados Council Minutes, July 28, 1747, C.O. 31/25; Lascelles and Maxwell to Nicholas Wilcox, Nov. 20, 1747, W. & G. iii; to George Walker, Aug. 6, 1757, vol. viii; to Thomas Stevenson, Oct. 13, 1757, *ibid.*; Frankland to Cleveland, April 28 and June 16, 1757, Adm. 1/306; Rodney to Cleveland, Nov. 3, 1762, Adm. 1/307.

because they were afraid that the convoy would reach England before their advices for insurance of goods upon it.¹

Sailing with convoy was not compulsory in the English colonial trade during these wars; it had been so at some times during Queen Anne's reign. A last vestige of the compulsory convoys survived into the middle of the century. The Irish provision-ships were strongly suspected of getting themselves taken collusively in order to arrive at the enemy's colonies, where the markets were much better than in our own; the Lords of the Admiralty therefore put an embargo on their sailing, and refused to release them from it unless they would give bond to take convoy.² But for this the merchantmen were free to sail without convoy, and a certain number of masters did so, especially in such trades as that of the sugar islands, where the 'runners' who got safe home before the convoy earned increased profits for their freighters. From the correspondence of Messrs. Lascelles and Maxwell it appears that almost all the ships in the Barbados trade took convoy out, for there was little advantage to be made by arriving early in the West Indies; most of them returned with convoy, but many came home alone or by threes and fours, unaccompanied by men-of-war.³ But Barbados was an exceptional island because much of its produce was shipped too late for convoy and had to come home without.

The merchantmen who wished to sail home from the islands without waiting for a regular convoy might apply for an escort to take them clear of the islands. Some warships were almost perpetually employed in this way among the English colonies. The French squadrons gave the same kind of help when they could spare the time, and when the Minister allowed the trade to return without a convoy for the entire voyage. In this way the shipping was protected through one of the dangerous zones, but had to run a more serious risk in the Channel. Both the English and French merchants were for ever entreating their

¹ *C.S.P. Col.* 1704-5, no. 562; 1706-8, no. 926; Knight to ? Sharpe, Aug. 10, 1745, Add. MSS. 22677, f. 61; Admiralty Minutes, April 14, 1747, Adm. 3/57; Cleveland to Drake and Long, March 31, 1756, Adm. 2/704, p. 72; Lascelles and Maxwell to John Frere, Feb. 5, 1757, W. & G. viii.

² Admiralty Minutes, Feb. 27, 1745/6, Adm. 3/53; Lords of the Admiralty to Newcastle, Feb. 28, 1745/6, S.P. 42/30, f. 185; Sept. 18, 1746, S.P. 42/31, f. 194.

³ Lascelles and Maxwell to Edward Jordan, Feb. 24, 1744/5, W. & G. ii. They mention another ship which was delayed a long time at Portsmouth by the desertion of her crew, who refused to continue in her when they found she was to sail without convoy (to Miles James, Jan. 14, 1745/6, *ibid.*).

Governments to keep some cruisers in the Soundings, in order to protect the entry of these vessels at the seasons when they were most expected.¹ Maurepas and Machault attended to these demands as best they could.² The English navy was better able than the French to meet the demand for protection in the Channel because it disposed of a greater force. However, even the English squadrons could not hold the sea at all seasons of the year, and a scheme for enabling them to do so by setting up a dockyard at Kinsale was pronounced to be impracticable.³

Single ships could also come 'north-about', that is to say, round the northern coasts of Ireland and Scotland; but the storms were more dangerous than the enemy's privateers in the winter season, and in the summer the privateers themselves countered this change of route by swarming along the northern capes. They were far from their bases and could not hope to bring back their prizes to France, so they carried them into the Norwegian ports and sold them there, with or without the formality of condemnation; this practice caused a bitter and intractable controversy between the English and Danish Courts.⁴

Convoy clear of the islands did not even halve the risk for the shipping bound home to Europe; however, it was all the North Americans needed. Their own coasts were very little vexed by French or Spanish privateers, and the only dangerous place seems to have been, in Vernon's time, about the latitude of 30°, south of Bermuda, where Spanish privateers picked up prizes. The English navy could not deal with them, and Vernon could only suggest that the North American shipping should be

¹ *C.S.P. Col.* 1702-3, no. 1298; 1704-5, no. 1262; 1706-8, no. 461; 1708-9, nos. 80, 214; Henry Lascelles and son to Governor Byng, March 18, 1739/40, W. & G. i; Lascelles and Maxwell to Edward Jordan, Feb. 24, 1744/5, vol. ii; Admiralty Minutes, Oct. 9, 1739, Adm. 3/43; Oct. 31, 1740, Adm. 3/44; Sept. 16, 1743, Adm. 3/47; Nov. 27, 1746, Adm. 3/56; Lords of Admiralty to Newcastle, May 22, 1740, S.P. 42/23, f. 121; Wager's notes of House of Commons Committee, Jan. 27, 1741/2, Vernon-Wager MSS.

² Chamber of Commerce of Guienne to Maurepas, April 25, 1744, Arch. Gir. C 4262, f. 284; Minutes, July 30, 1744, C 4254, f. 202; May 12 and June 10, 1746, ff. 257, 261; May 31 and July 6, 1747, ff. 289 and 293; Chamber to Machault, June 19, 1756, C 4263, f. 233; Minutes, Sept. 2, 1756, C 4256, f. 19; June 8, 1757, f. 39.

³ Admiralty Minutes, April 14, 1747, Adm. 3/57.

⁴ Lascelles and Maxwell to Conrade Adams, Sept. 10, 1744, W. & G. ii. The Admiralty tried to protect this route in the Seven Years War by establishing cruisers on the north coast of Ireland (Bedford to Lords of Admiralty, April 10, 1759, Adm. 1/4123, no. 31).

obliged to go in convoys.¹ But it must be obvious, from what has already been said about the character of this trade, that it could not have borne such a regimentation. In fact convoys between North America and the West Indies became rarer. In Queen Anne's reign, when the guardships of the Northern Colonies came down in the winter to cruise among the islands, such merchants as wished to take the benefit of convoy had one or two opportunities of doing so; but these interchanges became less common in the war of 1744, and almost ceased after the establishment of the North America station in 1745.

§ v. *Maurepas's Convoy System of 1745*

The English system of colonial convoys was not much tested in these wars. It was a useful protection against privateers, but the general superiority of the navy relieved the convoys from serious danger of attack by warships at the landfalls of Europe or the West Indies. The real value and limitations of such a system are better seen from the history of Maurepas's attempt to organize the protection of the French West India trade in the War of 1744.

At first he had so many special services to employ his ships that he could not take proper care of the colonies or their trade. He had a squadron cruising off the capes of Spain in the early months of 1744, but had to withdraw it later; he promised Champigny a naval force for the Windward Islands, but could not send it. He contrived to dispatch *Épinay* to St. Domingue towards the end of the year, but gave him no positive orders to convoy the trade home. In consequence *Épinay*, who started from Cap François with a fleet of merchants, gave himself no great trouble to keep it together, and would not wait for the slowest sailers.² The news of this 'abandonment' scandalized the merchants; it reached France most inopportunistly, when Maurepas had just finished working out a methodical scheme of convoys and presented it to the Chambers of Commerce.

The merchants had petitioned for regular convoys, but unhappily the Marine could not afford them; its funds were earmarked for paying old debts, and without some contribution from the trade it could do nothing. Maurepas suggested

¹ Vernon to Corbett, Oct. 31, 1741, Adm. 1/232. See also *C.S.P. Col.* 1702-3, nos. 906, 950; 1704-5, nos. 155, 156, 1510.

² *Épinay* to Maurepas, Feb. 29, 1745, A.N. Marine B⁴ 57, f. 316.

an 'indult' of 5 per cent. on outward and return cargoes, but he would not take upon himself to collect such a tax unless the Chambers of Commerce would impose it of their own free will. The money should be accounted for to them, and if the indult produced more than enough, part of it should be remitted or the convoys should be strengthened. In return for this tax, the Marine would furnish every year four convoys, each consisting of two ships for Martinique and two for St. Domingue.¹

This proposal was addressed to the Chambers of Commerce of the three great Atlantic ports—Nantes, La Rochelle, and Bordeaux.² The merchants of Bordeaux refused at first to have anything to do with it. Épinay's misconduct was fresh in their minds, and they were afraid the tax would become permanent even in time of peace. Their attitude was summed up in the phrase 'The burden is fixed but the success uncertain'. But Maurepas's emissaries promised that the indult should end with the war and that the commanders should have the strictest orders not to neglect their convoys. The merchants reconsidered their refusal, and promised an indult of 8 per cent. on returns only.³ They did not state the reason of this variation from Maurepas's original suggestion. Perhaps they hoped to get as much as possible out of the ships of other places which returned with convoy to Bordeaux, Nantes, and La Rochelle. (These would probably be many, as no convoy would offer for the Mediterranean or the Channel Ports, and the law which obliged all ships to return from the colonies to the port of their setting out had been suspended at the beginning of the war.) Perhaps the merchants may have reflected that the indult would be a tax on West India goods which the seller might not be able to force the buyer to pay. They owned most of the outward cargoes, but by no means all the returns, for some planters sent

¹ Chamber of Commerce of Guienne, Minutes, Sept. 3, 1744, Feb. 4, 1745, Arch. Gir. C 4254, ff. 205, 213. Macnémara had given the same kind of offence as Épinay at St. Domingue in the first month of the war, but Maurepas exonerated him because he had no orders to give convoy (É. Garnault, *Histoire du commerce rochelais au xviii^e siècle*, vol. iii (Paris, 1891), p. 112).

² I have only followed the history of this affair in the archives of the Bordeaux Chamber. Collateral material is doubtless to be found at Nantes and La Rochelle; but the attitude of those Chambers is for the most part sufficiently revealed in the letters which they wrote to Bordeaux, and the copies of some of their communications to the Minister—for the three Chambers generally consulted together before any of them approached the Government or replied to its proposals.

³ Chamber to Maurepas, Feb. 13, 1745, Arch. Gir. C 4263, f. 12.

home produce on their own accounts, and some ships went out empty to load on freight; therefore to impose the whole tax on the returns might be to force the planters to bear part of it. This is crude economic reasoning, and leaves several possibilities out of account; but the study of taxation had not got very far in that day.

Maurepas's scheme was further embodied in the next few weeks. He promised to make the convoy commanders understand that the King's estimation of their services should depend on the opinion of the merchants; this pleased the Chambers, for the trade had had occasion to complain of the hauteur of the officers of the navy. The Chambers might even recommend captains for the command; they used this privilege once, and Conflans was appointed at their request to take out the trade in the spring of 1746.

Certain differences of opinion arose: Maurepas had suggested that the merchant vessels should be responsible for getting to the rendezvous, but the Chambers pointed out that this imposed upon them an excessive risk, especially at St. Domingue, where the danger was at least as great between the outports and Cap François as between Cap François and France. Maurepas therefore ordered the commanders to pick up and distribute the trade from port to port in the colonies.¹ It was a more serious question whether ships should be allowed to sail without convoy. La Rochelle advocated it, in the name of freedom of trade, but Bordeaux opposed it. Finally it was agreed that they should only do so when they unavoidably arrived late at the rendezvous, and even so, they should pay the indult. These cases were in practice often referred to the Chambers for their determination. The indult was to be charged upon the ships of Marseilles and the other Mediterranean ports which returned with the convoys to Nantes, La Rochelle, and Bordeaux; but Maurepas later induced the Chambers to abate half because these ships could have no convoy from the Mediterranean to the colonies, and must therefore incur high risks and insurance. The indult was also charged upon all ships belonging to the other Atlantic ports, no matter where they returned to France. Bayonne later tried to get an exemption, but Bordeaux resisted it because

¹ Maurepas to Chamber, March 4, 1745, Arch. Gir. C. 4312, no. 79; Minutes, March 4 and 18, C 4254, ff. 217, 219; Chamber to Maurepas, March 30, C 4263, f. 14.

Bayonne had really no colonial trade of its own, and, if the request were granted, every merchant who wanted to sail without convoy would send out his ship from Bayonne for form's sake.¹

All these regulations threw the colonial trade into the hands of the three great Atlantic ports, and thus accentuated the tendency to concentration which was already produced by the war. Since it had become so difficult to trade between the Mediterranean and the West Indies, some merchants asked permission to transport sugars from Bordeaux to Marseilles by way of the Languedoc Canal; they were rebuffed at first by the pedantry of the Farmers-General, and then by the selfishness of the Bordeaux sugar-refiners, who wished to take advantage of the exceptional glut of sugars in their own market.

The Chambers attached one or two other requests to their acceptance of Maurepas's project. Bordeaux asked him to help the merchants to recruit their crews by ordering the Commissaries of the Marine not to raise men too strictly for the King's ships at the times when the convoys were about sailing. Maurepas agreed to this, but it was not an easy promise to keep, for the French seafaring population was too small to suffice the Royal and the merchant fleets at once, and both needed replenishing at the departure of a convoy. A year or two later, in fact, Maurepas was compelled to announce that he should not be able to grant a convoy for some little time because of the lack of men. The Chambers further asked Maurepas to use his power in order to prevent the seamen from demanding exorbitant wages while the shipping was waiting for convoy. Some form of administrative compulsion was to be exerted for this purpose. Maurepas also promised help of another kind to expedite the return of the convoys. The planters who bought goods of the merchant captains or supercargoes too often eluded or deferred the payment of their debts; postponement was always a grievance, but doubly so when the ships had only a short time to stay and must hurry home with the convoy. He therefore made an edict at this time to compel the debtors to greater promptitude.²

¹ Minutes, March 18 and 20, May 20, Oct. 16, 1745, June 30, 1746, Arch. Gir. C 4254, ff. 219, 220, 226, 240, 264; Chamber to Maurepas, Feb. 4, 1747, C 4263, f. 46.

² Minutes, April 29, 1745, Arch. Gir. C 4254, f. 223; Maurepas to Larnage, June 11, 1745, A.N. Colonies B 81; *v. infra*, p. 341.

The warships which went out with convoys were to remain some two or three months at the colonies to which they were destined; they were to cruise there for the protection of trade, and the King's share of any prizes they might take was devoted to the indult fund. At the end of their time they were to convoy the trade home to Brest or Aix Roads, from which auxiliary escorts would distribute it to the ports.

Admiral Richmond has criticized Maurepas's plan on the ground that it tied up too great a proportion of the French navy in the business of convoying the colonial trade.¹ If it had worked as it was designed, sixteen ships would have been devoted to it each year—a number no larger than was ordinarily to be found on the English West India stations and convoying trade there. But if what Maurepas wrote to the Chambers was true, want of funds might have prevented him from using these ships at all but for the convoys and the indult. It is certain that in the Seven Years War a great part of the French navy was only armed *en flûte*, which Maurepas was to some extent able to avoid. Besides, his system was never fully worked, so that he hardly employed so much as half the intended number of ships in the colonies and convoys; and the proportion of the French navy appropriated for colonial services was probably not so high as that of the English, while the absolute number was much lower. Even if it had been equal, the only important difference between them was that the French hardly ever had even a small striking force in the colonies. I doubt whether that was much disadvantage, for the reasons given earlier in this chapter. The French convoys probably saved the trade from some losses in the West Indies, though Admiral Richmond is quite right in saying that 'in home waters the security of the trade fleets depended to a great extent on evasion'. Even so, the annihilation of French trade between 1744 and 1748 does not seem to have been so complete as it was in the Seven Years War.

This was the system; on paper it was precise and impressive, but it was soon enough disorganized and came to pieces in the face of the superior numbers of the English fleet.

The convoys were never regular; there were delays from the very first. Bordeaux resented them more than the other ports, as it was the chief place for exporting to the colonies wines which leaked and flour which mouldered while the ships waited for

¹ *The Navy in the War of 1739-48*, ii. 193.

convoy. Yet even Bordeaux consented to some postponements, for the arrival of a convoy in the islands was sure to reduce the price of European goods, sometimes by as much as a half, and to increase the demand for produce. If another fleet should reach the market before the prices had recovered a satisfactory equilibrium, the merchant would find himself in danger of a losing voyage.¹ The merchants of France were full of philanthropic zeal to prevent the poor colonist from starving, but they did not mean to leave him much to spare. The delay was nearly always aggravated in the colonies themselves by the blockade which the English squadrons kept up when they heard or suspected that a French convoy was about to leave; it is true that the English were not strong enough to hinder them permanently from sailing, but they could retard them.

As the convoys got behind the time-table, the voyages became much longer, and therefore more expensive to the shipowner. The outward cargoes suffered from the long delays in Aix Road, and sometimes arrived rotten; the crews consumed in France and the colonies almost as much victuals as they had brought out, and the relief to the colonists was therefore small. The infrequency of sailings reduced the volume of trade which could be done by the limited number of ships and sailors that could be procured. Instead of four convoys a year, there were in fact never more than two. Perhaps this was no very great grievance; the English Government had never yet professed to find more than two convoys each way in a year. But as the convoys became fewer they became larger, and grew to such a size that the appointed number of warships could not possibly control them or ensure their safety. Conflans left Aix Road in April 1746 with 230 ships—a number almost twice as great as that of the largest English convoy of which I can find mention. Fromentières in the autumn of 1747 had 252. It is true that Conflans had four warships instead of two—indeed he had six as far as Martinique—and that Fromentières was to have been escorted clear of the capes by L'Étandière; but the protection was not strong enough.

Larnage and Maillart suggested to Maurepas in 1746 that two strong convoys a year would be better than three weak ones; a

¹ Chamber, Minutes, May 26, Nov. 5, Dec. 30, 1745, Arch. Gir. C 4254, ff. 228, 241, 245; Chamber to Maurepas, May 25, 1745, May 17, 1746, C 4263, ff. 19, 36; to Nantes Chamber, May 14, 1746, f. 35.

respectable force was needed in waters where the English kept such large squadrons. Maurepas admitted that for a short time the risk would be lessened, but the English would soon find out when the convoys sailed, and oppose to them a still larger force. To increase the size of the convoys would be putting too many eggs in one basket; if one were taken, the colonists would starve immediately and for a long time.

This was the more likely because the merchants of France usually determined the size, nature, and destination of their cargoes by the advices they received of the sale of the last. If any goods had sold badly, they sent no more such next year; if all sales had been bad at St. Domingue, they transferred their enterprise to Martinique for the next voyage. This system was unnecessary in time of war, at least so far as the more perishable goods were concerned, for the arrivals of convoys in the islands were so few and far between that plenty had time to convert itself into scarcity between one convoy and the next. The merchants were none the less guided by it, and the consequences, harmless enough when the trade was a more or less continuous trickle, were injurious to the colonies when it came in great waves.¹

It was, therefore, more and smaller convoys that were wanted. This lesson was in fact dictated to Maurepas by the Chambers of Commerce. After the news of a misfortune to the first outward convoy in 1745, the Bordeaux Chamber declared that the number of ships in each fleet was far too large, and asked for a small convoy every month. This scheme could not for a moment be entertained, for it would have required a prodigious number of warships; but the Minister entirely agreed with the principle. Unfortunately he could not follow it in practice, and, for all he might say, the convoys continued to grow huger and rarer.²

No more could he keep his promise to refrain from diverting the warships to other services. He ordered Conflans in 1746 to go on to Louisbourg from Cap François when he had seen the

¹ Samson to Maurepas, Dec. 14, 1745, A.N. Colonies C^o A 67; March 29, 1746, vol. 69; Maurepas to Samson, March 28, 1746, B 83; instructions to Capt. Thomas Morong, March 16, 1747/8, Timothy Orne MSS. i. 83, Essex Institute.

² Larnage and Maillart to Maurepas, Feb. 24, 1746, A.N. Colonies C^o A 68; Maurepas to Larnage and Maillart, Oct. 26, 1746, B 83; Chamber of Commerce of Guienne, Minutes, Feb. 10, May 12, June 8, 1746, Arch. Gir. C 4254, ff. 251, 257, 260; Chamber to Maurepas, Jan. 8, May 17, 1746; to Barrail, Aug. 10, 1746, C 4263, ff. 31, 36, 40.

merchantmen in there, leaving them without any escort home. It is true that Dubois and Foligny were hurried out after Conflans to repair this neglect, but that did not save the homeward trade from a very long wait, at a great expense of victuals and wages, besides the damage by the decay of the hulls in tropical water.

The cruises of the warships during their stay at the islands were almost useless. Caylus complained that the commanders would do nothing. The commanders of convoys at St. Domingue were handicapped by the sickness of their crews, lack of victuals, and the damages which two or three of them received in their slight engagements with the English blockaders. The service of distributing the convoys to the smaller ports and islands, and bringing the homeward trade to the rendezvous, was even worse performed. Caylus argued that the ships which came out with these convoys could only protect the trade between Martinique and France, and that the coasting trade needed a force permanently stationed in the colonies. No attempt seems to have been made, during the whole war, to establish any kind of communication between Martinique and Guadeloupe; Du Guay went once to Grenada, but only to carry some military stores there. In consequence, the English took nearly all the coasting craft of the Windward Islands; out of fifteen which ordinarily plied between Martinique and Grenada only one was left at the end of the first year of war.

At St. Domingue the task was attempted, but without very much success. The convoys usually arrived on the north side. The commanders would only sail round Cape Nicola to the western quarter, taking with them any trade which was destined there, and returning with the homeward ships to Cap François, whence the whole convoy would set out for France. (Dubois nearly went home without even this; indeed, he would have done so if he had not been reinforced.¹) No convoy commander went right round the colony to St. Louis; the most that any of them would do was to prompt the ships of the southern quarter

¹ An incident in Dubois de la Motte's campaign shows the importance of local protection of trade in the colonies to the convoy system. Chastenoye and Maillart complained that as he could not or would not come round from Cap François, the shipping of the western quarter could not safely send out boats to get in their cargoes from the plantations; so that when he at last arrived there to pick up the homeward-bound vessels, many of them had to sail half-loaded or stay behind (see their letter to Maurepas, April 18, 1747, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 71).

to sail out, and then cruise off Cape Tiburon for a day or two in the hope of meeting them. Sometimes this succeeded, but more often some of the trade was captured before it could get into touch with the convoy. Only twice in this war did any armed force reach St. Louis. Both these visits were due to the accidents of the campaign, and neither of them gave the merchant shipping of the southern quarter an opportunity to get safely home to France.¹

The imperfection of this service aggravated the tendency to concentration at the great places of trade, which alone were properly served with convoy. Many merchant captains had discretionary instructions to sell their cargoes in any port they could safely make. They durst not go farther than Cap François, even when they were offered convoys for the rest of the journey. In the same way, some of those who had such latitude were content to arrive safe at Martinique, and would not even risk the further passage to St. Domingue.² This concentration naturally played into the hands of the local merchants, who bought up both European goods and island produce as a speculation; it threw the planters still farther into their power. Such a slipshod way of seeing the trade to its destination would never have answered in the English colonies, where most of the outward cargoes were already the property of individual planters, and only the smaller part destined for sale in the open markets.³

¹ Épinay to Maurepas, Feb. 1, 1745, A.N. Marine B⁴ 57, f. 314; Dubois de la Motte to Maurepas, Jan. 7, April 8 and 10, 1747, B⁴ 61, ff. 278, 280, 288; Minute of a council of war, April 9, 1747, f. 282; Larnage to Maurepas, Oct. 28, 1744, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 64; Aug. 5, 1745, vol. 66; Jan. 2, 1746, vol. 68; Chastenoye and Maillart to Maurepas, April 18, 1747, vol. 71; Tramond, *op. cit.*, p. 339.

² In 1745 the crew of the *Providence* refused to go beyond Martinique unless the captain would ensure their private ventures; but this was a slave-trader, and the temptation to stop at the first port was always very strong in such vessels because of the dangers of mortality and rebellion (Petition of Vasselin, and letter of White to Segretain, *Postillon*, Segretain, H.C.A. 32/143).

³ Yet the English colonies did suffer something in this way; the legislature of Jamaica complained that the enemy privateers molested the coasting trade and raised the rate of insurance between Kingston and the outports to 10 or 15 per cent.—about half the premium for a voyage without convoy between Jamaica and London. As a result 'great quantities of sugars and other commodities lie wasting at the aforesaid ports for want of small vessels to transport them, to the great impoverishment of many planters and settlers in these parts, and who for want of a free, and less dangerous intercourse, between them and the ports from whence in time of war they can only ship their increase for England, not only continue under the greatest difficulties but must soon become incapable to sustain and carry on their settlements; the expence of their contingencies for supporting them, increasing in proportion to the dangers and difficulties they find in sending their

The worst fault of Maurepas's convoy system was the danger of attack by the English squadrons. The Board of Admiralty devoted much thought and effort to the business of catching the French convoys; Sandwich, in particular, thought it so important a service that he was ready to delay for its sake the creation of an efficient western squadron in the Channel.¹ The navy made some attempt to intercept almost every French West India convoy at the beginning and end of each stage of its voyage. The St. Domingue convoys were most exposed to these encounters, for the Leeward Islands squadron might waylay them on their way out—thus Lee had an engagement with Dubois in 1746; or the Jamaica squadron might try to catch them between the ports of St. Domingue—thus Mitchell fought Macnémara and Conflans, and Dent attacked Dubois de la Motte.

Yet though the French trade had to run the gauntlet of so many squadrons, its losses in colonial waters were not very great. The commanders on the English stations could never afford to keep a sufficient and perpetual body of capital ships in any one place; therefore the outward-bound convoys seldom met an English force much stronger than that which accompanied them, and often slipped into port without any encounter at all. As for the return voyage, the blockaders outside the French colonial ports could not be relieved regularly enough to prevent a convoy from sailing home sooner or later.

There was another reason for the rarity of serious accidents: some of the French commanders behaved with the greatest possible skill and courage. Du Guay saved three-quarters of his convoy from Townsend, who ought to have succeeded in taking the whole. Conflans's tactics and vigour were very much superior to Mitchell's in 1746. Dubois de la Motte's defence of his convoy from Lee appears to have been a masterpiece, and he showed great resolution in repelling Dent, for he had singularly little help from his consort. In fact there were only two

produce to market' (Legislature of Jamaica to George II, May 8, 1747, C.O. 137/58). Jamaica seems to have complained already that the homeward convoys which sailed from Port Royal did not pick up the trade from the outports; the Admiralty resolved on April 16, 1747, to give orders for this purpose (Adm. 3/57). Vernon had provided for this service, but perhaps it had lapsed. These difficulties made shipowners and captains very reluctant to take freight for the Jamaica outports in war-time (Lascelles and Maxwell to Nicholas Newton, May 19, 1744, W. & G. ii; to Alexander Crawford, Sept. 8, *ibid.*).

¹ Sandwich to Bedford, April 24, 1746, *Bedford Correspondence*, i. 71; to Anson, July 20, Add. MSS. 15957, f. 6; Admiralty Minutes, July 12, 1746, Adm. 3/54.

occasions in the war when a considerable part of a French convoy was taken in the West Indies. One was when Townsend captured some twenty odd ships from Du Guay's fleet just outside Martinique; but Townsend had a much stronger squadron than was usual in the Leeward Islands because he had been sent out to deal with Caylus. The other was in December 1747, when Pocock once more picked up about a quarter of the outward convoy in the same place where Townsend had done so; but then the French shipping was entirely unprotected, having been stripped of its escort by Hawke in the Channel.¹

In order to provide against the possibility of failure, the commanders in the West Indies were ordered to send home by an express any information of the prospective sailing of a French convoy, so that the Admiralty might take measures to intercept it in the Channel. Sometimes the same kind of message was sent out to the West Indies; in this way Hawke warned Pocock and Dent that the convoy was coming out defenceless after his victory over L'Étanduère.²

This system of vigilance began to meet its reward in 1747. Already the French commanders had to dodge to and fro in order to avoid the English forces that lay in wait for them on the beaten tracks. An example of this painful agility is furnished by Foligny, who escorted the trade home from Martinique in the winter of 1746-7. First he sent out a Flag of Truce for news, and heard that Lee was waiting for him in the Mona Passage, where Du Guay Lambert had passed with his convoy the year before (this information was wrong or rather misleading, and he nearly ran into Lee's arms in consequence of it). He decided to go out by the little-used channel between Sombrero and Anegada. His rearguard had a busy time with privateers, especially in the night, but he got safely clear of the islands, with 99 out of 103 ships still accompanying him. When he approached the Azores he began to wonder which side of them he ought to go. The weather would be better to the southward, for it was February—the worst time of the year for approaching the coasts of Europe, yet all the better for that because the English fleets might be unable to keep the sea. But he was

¹ *V. infra*, p. 324.

² Orders to Legge and Knowles, Aug. 15, 1747, Adm. 2/70, p. 277. But the commanders in the West Indies had not waited for these orders; Davers, for example, had sent home an express with the news of Macnémara's departure.

afraid that the English, having so often missed the French convoys, would come to the Azores to make sure of them, so he steered clear to the north and ran into a terrible storm which entirely scattered his convoy. Poor Foligny, too clever by half, arrived at Brest unaccompanied by one vessel out of the hundred and three.¹

The year 1747 was disastrous for the French West India trade. Most of Foligny's convoy arrived more or less battered; but in June, Dubois de la Motte, the hero of two encounters in the West Indies, fell in with a squadron of eight ships under Commodore Fox. He beat off the enemy until nightfall, but then his only hope lay in tacking under the cover of darkness, and hoping that the merchants would have the common sense to do the same—he dared not order it by signal, for fear of letting Fox know his intention. Sixty tacked with him in the night, forty held on their course; the forty were taken and the sixty saved.

Maurepas's system was breaking down, as he and everybody else could see. The English fleets in the Channel were too strong and too many; they could too easily inform themselves of the prospective departure of the trade. They had opposed system to system, and the stronger resources were beginning to tell. Maurepas held consultations and took advice; he was beginning to think he must try some other plan. Some were for strengthening the convoys and increasing their frequency; but they demanded for these purposes far more ships than the King's navy could provide or the indult could support. There had always been a school which believed that the trade could be protected better by strong squadrons at the European and West Indian landfalls—the system which Machault adopted for a short time in 1756. The Chambers of Commerce wished to pile these two systems on top of each other: more and stronger convoys, with large squadrons to escort them clear of the Channel, and to go out and meet them on their return. In particular, the merchants had implored Maurepas to send out the whole available fleet into the Channel to meet Dubois. This advice was too late to save Dubois, but Maurepas determined to try if he could not at least protect the outward convoy by such a reinforcement.²

¹ Foligny to Maurepas, Feb. 28 and March?, 1747, A.N. Marine B⁴ 61, ff. 253, 259.

² Chamber of Commerce of Guienne, Minutes, June 28 and July 6, 1747, Arch.

L'Étanduère was appointed to command a special squadron of eight ships in the Channel. He was to go to Corunna, find out what English forces were in the neighbourhood, and send word to Fromentières in Aix Road when it was safe to come out with the convoy; he was then to meet it and escort it clear of the Channel. But at Corunna he was to detach two of his ships to Martinique, and as his whole squadron had to be reduced, for want of men, from eight to six, that left him a very paltry force indeed. He represented to Maurepas that the plan was unworkable. There was no need to go to Corunna, to know that the English forces were still at sea; if he waited there long he was certain to meet one of the English squadrons soon, whereas if he only passed by he might hope to avoid them all. Besides, a wind which was good to send a message from Corunna would prevent the convoy from sailing, and when it turned the information might no longer be up to date. It would be much better to wait until October, when there would be fewer English ships out, and then to sail from Aix with the convoy and the two ships which were to have been detached to Martinique. He would have a respectable force of eight ships in the Channel, of which four would accompany the convoy all the way. He did not believe the enemy would try to attack the shipping which waited in Aix Road, for the attempt was too difficult; and as for the danger that the convoy would swell in the meantime to an unmanageable size, that could be prevented by forbidding any further departures.

All his suggestions were accepted but the last. Maurepas had foreseen his objections. No doubt L'Étanduère's plan might be safer, but it would lose the advantage of puzzling the English and making them guess what his squadron was going to do. If he went directly to Aix, they would be in no doubt and would devote all their endeavours to catching him. However, as L'Étanduère was dissatisfied with his instructions, he might put his own scheme into execution. At the end of September further doubts crossed the Minister's mind. The winds were

Gir. C 4254, ff. 292, 293; Chamber to Maurepas, Jan. 8, 1746, C 4263, f. 31. 'Réflexions sur les moyens de sauver le débris du commerce maritime de France', A.E. Mém. et Doc. France, 2007, ff. 159 et seqq., probably written about August 1747, recommends a greater regularization of the convoy system, but assumes that almost the whole French navy is to be employed in the protection of trade, and does not touch the problem how to avoid superior English squadrons in the Channel.

still contrary, and Hawke was said to have got notice of the convoy and to have sent a message to Warren to come out of port and join him. Should L'Étanduère wait until Warren, who would not be fit to keep the sea long, should have had to return to port? In the meantime the colonies would starve. Should L'Étanduère take out all eight warships to clear the sea and order the trade to sail in unprotected detachments behind him? Finally, Maurepas determined to take the risk and stick to L'Étanduère's scheme. The enemy might know the convoy was sailing, but he would not expect it to have so strong a force as eight ships, so he would probably scatter his forces over a wide tract, and L'Étanduère might meet nothing worse than small detachments whose opposition he could break down.¹

These cogitations illustrate the perplexity to which the English superiority at sea had reduced the French Minister of Marine. They were all in vain. Hawke was cruising off Cape Ortegale with fourteen ships; L'Étanduère ran straight into his arms, and lost nearly all his squadron in battle. The convoy got away, but Hawke sent an express to the Leeward Islands and Jamaica with the news. Most fortunately Pocock was cruising off Martinique when Hawke's messenger arrived; the next day the convoy began to drop in, and the men-of-war were able to take twenty-seven of them, while the privateers accounted for about ten more. Even so, two-thirds of the French vessels reached Martinique safe. At St. Domingue they had better fortune still. Dent's captains were engaged in one of those tiresome courts martial which so badly interrupted the service when they were held on colonial stations, because nearly all the captains were requisitioned for the court and the commander-in-chief would not trust the ships to the lieutenants. As soon as Dent received the news, he broke up the hearing and beat up towards St. Domingue; but the whole convoy was already safe in port.²

The result of L'Étanduère's disaster might have been very much worse; but it ruined Maurepas's system of convoys. He was forced to suspend it until April 1, and to allow the merchants to sail freely during the winter season, which was the

¹ L'Étanduère to Maurepas, Sept. 1, 1747, A.N. Marine B⁴ 61, f. 181; Maurepas to Camilly, June 17, 1747, B² 331, f. 257; to L'Étanduère, Sept. 8 and 25, Oct. 3, 1747, ff. 98, 124, 131.

² Pocock to Cleveland, Jan. 12, 1747/8, Adm. 1/2289; Dent to Cleveland, Dec. 10, 1747, Jan. 12, 1747/8, Adm. 1/1697.

most favourable to unprotected trade because few English warships or privateers could keep the sea. He wanted the colonial authorities to detain till next September the merchantmen who could not sail home in time to arrive in the Channel before the English fleets were ready and about. In the meantime he tried to send out light vessels to bring home the trade from the colonies, but one of them was taken on her way to St. Domingue and the other, though she arrived at Martinique, was so weak that Caylus dared not even order her round from St. Pierre to Fort Royal. Much of the French shipping was taken in the West Indies or in Europe, and as for sending another convoy out, Maurepas does not seem to have considered doing so before the autumn; so that in spite of the fat fleets which had arrived, the last months of the war were a time of great privation in all the French islands.¹

The Ministers of Marine did not try to re-establish the convoys at the beginning of the next war. How they proposed to assure the subsistence of the colonies is another story, and opens a new scene.

¹ Chamber of Commerce of Guienne, Minutes, Dec. 28, 1747, Jan. 25 and Feb. 1, 1748, Arch. Gir. C 4255, ff. 13, 15, 16; Caylus and Ranché to Maurepas, March 15, July 28, 1748, A.N. Colonies C⁸ A 58; Maurepas to Caylus, May 7 and June 18, 1748, B 87; Chastenoye to Maurepas, Jan. 3 and Feb. 15, 1748, C⁹ A 72. Some of these ships were insured with convoy warranted, and therefore could not take advantage of the season to sail by themselves (Vaudreuil and Samson to Maurepas, Feb. 1, 1748, C⁹ A 74).

VIII

THE FRENCH COLONIES AND THE NEUTRAL TRADERS

§ I. *The Effects of War upon the French Sugar Colonies*

THE relation of colonies to the mother country was even more keenly discussed in the French Empire than in the English. The reason for this is not hard to conceive. The monopoly of colonial trade bore lightly upon the English colonists—at least upon the sugar-planters. The market to which their produce was confined was much better than those from which it was diverted; the manufactures of the mother country were becoming the most efficient in the world, except in certain kinds of textiles, some of which were admitted to the colonies upon very advantageous terms. The French colonies on the other hand made greater sacrifices to imperial self-sufficiency. Their produce was cheap and much desired in the open markets of Holland and Germany; the foreign smuggler offered them a method of conveying it directly to those countries, upon conditions beneficial to them and to himself. They needed slaves, which their own slave-traders could not or did not supply abundantly, and provisions, which could be most cheaply obtained from North America, where the French establishments were too difficult of access, and too little developed to supply the entire demand. The colonist and the merchant were therefore enemies in the French Empire as they never were in the English—especially as the English factor was often no more than an agent of the planter, while the French merchant habitually bought and sold for his own account, and therefore was involved every day with the planter in a warfare of prices. The French merchant justly suspected his customers of trying to escape from the necessity of dealing with him, and the French colonist retorted that the merchants wanted to tie him to a system which did not sufficiently provide for his interests.¹

War aggravated this conflict in many ways. France had not a great merchant marine at this time; it was not so much ships as men that were wanting. The French system of *classes* gave the navy an option upon the available seamen, which it had

¹ See Gaston Martin, *L'Ère des négriers*, pp. 368–82.

to exercise, in time of war, with disastrous effects upon commerce. One of the reasons oftenest given in public and private correspondence for the virtual cessation of French colonial trade in 1757 was the difficulty of collecting crews.¹ No doubt this was very much increased by the great number of French ships and crews impounded by the English during the period of reprisals before the war began, and the long delay in returning or exchanging them. Privateering, even if successful, could add little to the tonnage of the French merchant navy, and worse than nothing to the man-power; it diverted from the trade a great proportion of the ships and an even greater proportion of the men, for privateers were far more heavily armed than the ordinary merchantmen. Neutral sailors might have been enlisted, but the shipowners did not trust them, as they seldom gave themselves much trouble to defend a French ship.² For these reasons the French merchants could not much increase the quantity of their shipping in a sudden emergency, nor could they easily replace losses unless the enemy should show great facility in the exchange of prisoners, which he was very far from doing in the Seven Years War.³ This limitation of the quantity of shipping had important results.

The trade of the French colonies, especially of St. Domingue, was really a barter of goods against goods, in which money seldom changed hands and was in fact very rare. European goods were paid for in produce, whether at agreed, controlled, or current prices. So much sugar bought so much flour or wine or linen. The planters tried to keep up the value of their crops by combination, and even by invoking the interference of the Government—though that was more commonly reserved for their dealings with the foreign traders.⁴ The prices so fixed were

¹ Chamber to Machault, Oct. 9, 1756, C 4263, f. 262; to Moras, May 14 and June 7, 1757, ff. 277, 278; Messrs. Brunaud, Bordeaux, to Danié, Jan. 31, 1758, *Juffrow Alida*, Kock, H.C.A. 42/73. On the other hand, when the Government tried to favour the merchant shipping in war-time, the ships of war were confined to port for want of men (see the letter of Ruis to the Chamber of Commerce of La Rochelle, April 24, 1757, Garnault, op. cit. iv. 157-8).

² Chamber to Moras, Feb. 7, 1758, Arch. Gir. C 4264, f. 6.

³ This only applies to Europe; *v. infra*, pp. 447-50.

⁴ An unsigned 'Account of what was transacted since my arrival in August 1761' describes a combination of the planters round St. Louis to raise the prices of their produce above the rates they had agreed to pay. The rains having made the roads impossible for three months, the supercargoes were in a hurry to get their sugars and be gone. The current price of sugar having for once risen above the fixed rate, the planters who had agreed to deliver it at the latter insisted on the former

nearly always above the market rate. The merchants and supercargoes, however, knew a trick worth two of that: they calculated the price of what they had to sell, by the valuation of the produce which was to pay for it—unless their customers were people in authority who had the power to impose upon them.¹

The effect of war upon this economy was at once to increase the prices of imports and lower those of island produce. No doubt the merchant, who had to shoulder the increased freights and insurance, was justified in selling dearer and buying cheaper, and he had the power to do it because few ships set out for the colonies and still fewer arrived. A pound of sugar or coffee could only buy a quarter, a sixth, or some said an eighth of the European goods which it bought before the war. An outward cargo which could purchase the loading of one ship before the war could now purchase the loading of four, six, or eight in the same commodities.² Even in peace-time there had been a discrepancy between the tonnages of shipping needed to carry the outward and return cargoes, but it became much worse now.³ It was therefore much harder to ship the

(*Archibald Adrian*, Karrestedt, H.C.A. 42/54). Machault ordered Bart to suppress any attempt at fixing the prices of imported goods or produce (Instructions to Bart, Dec. 15, 1756, A.N. Colonies B 103), but Bart does not seem to have obeyed where the neutrals were concerned.

¹ The discrepancy between cash prices and prices for payment in goods was sometimes striking—it might amount to 100 per cent. It existed in the English islands as well as the French (Pimont, Aux Cayes, to Chauvel, Aug. 27, 1757, *Juffrow Maria*, Vandervelde, H.C.A. 42/74; Dugué, Roullier and Co., Léogane, to P. and S. Locquet, Dec. 4, 1757, *Vreede*, Boon, H.C.A. 42/102).

² If flour rose from the ordinary price—about 60 livres the barrel—to about 120 livres, and raw sugars fell from 15 to 10 livres the hundredweight, a hundredweight of sugar would buy a third of the flour it had bought before the war. These are conservative estimates, because flour was often at 150 livres in war-time, and once or twice at 300, while raw sugars sometimes fell to 6—the better kinds did not fall so much in proportion (see the fragmentary collection of prices current in Martinique, A.N. Colonies C⁸ B 20. Adrien Dessalles gives even more striking figures in his *Histoire générale des Antilles*, iv. 468–9; but his authority is not very good). Besides, the colonists maintained that the average price of raw sugars in peace was not 15 livres but over 25 (see the controversy on this point in the two *mémoires* quoted by M. Gaston Martin, op. cit., pp. 388–9). Maillart speaks of it as falling from 26 livres to 10 in 1744 (Maillart to Maurepas, Aug. 10, 1744, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 65). By the end of 1745 it rose to 13; in December 1757 it was 6 livres in cash, 12 to 15 in payment. Coffee seems to have lost even more of its value than sugar; according to Beauharnois and La Rivière, three-quarters (see their letter to Berryer, Feb. 13, 1760, C⁸ A 62).

³ Clieu estimated the needs of Guadeloupe at 4,000 tons of imports and twice as much to carry away the produce of the island; though he was writing in 1747

proceeds of a cargo back to France. The result was a run on money, and on the more portable commodities such as indigo and fine white sugars. Money was already in demand, for there were occasions when the merchants believed that it was the only article of export on which there was not a loss. Insurance was at 55 or 60 per cent.;¹ freights might amount to 30 or 40 per cent. of the net sales, and seamen's wages were twice or three times the ordinary rates;² in these circumstances the transport of sugars to France was not always sufficiently recompensed by the price, for the re-export market on which the French traders so much depended might be partly supplied by prize sugars from England.

At the same time that money was drained out of the colonies, the interruption of their trade with Spanish America cut them off from its principal source, and the merchants of Marseilles who used to send out small Spanish coin to buy sugars were deterred from doing so by the unprofitableness of the purchase.³ There were many complaints of hoarding or scarcity of cash, and the economic life of the islands was seriously deranged by it. The burden of debts and taxes was considerably increased, and with it the arrears. No wonder Maillart and Le Mercier de la Rivière wanted to introduce paper money—that favourite expedient of colonial communities in war-time—and collected taxes in bills on the principal *commissionnaires*; but the French Government would on no account tolerate paper money.⁴

he seems to have been thinking of peace-time conditions. The authorities at St. Domingue complained that the French shipping, especially that of Nantes, often came out to St. Domingue in ballast (Clieu to Maurepas, March 30, 1747, A.N. Colonies C⁷ A 15; Larnage and Maillart to Maurepas, Feb. 10, 1746, C⁹ A 68; Laporte-Lalanne to Moras, Sept. 15, 1757, C⁹ A 100).

¹ Fifty-five or sixty per cent. of what? If brown sugar was bought in the colonies at 10 livres and sold in France at 28, insurance of the cost price would not be a very heavy article, but that of the sale price would. According to the 'Réponse au prétendu mémoire pour les colonies', quoted by M. Gaston Martin (op. cit., p. 396), the insurance was usually calculated on the former. That tendentious and abusive document is hardly to be relied upon for facts, but it seems to be right here. The Bordeaux Chamber of Commerce, trying to prove that the merchant received no profit on sugars, only charges insurance on the cost price in America (Arch. Gir. C 4263, f. 234).

² Of course freight rates and seamen's wages are alternatives not to be added to each other; the latter affected the shipowners who carried their own cargoes, the former was paid by the exporter of goods in other people's ships.

³ Larnage and Maillart to Maurepas, Aug. 10, 1744, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 64.

⁴ Ibid.; Maurepas to Larnage and Maillart, Nov. 30, 1744, A.N. Colonies B 78; Moras to Givry, June 10, 1757, B 105; Le Mercier de la Rivière to Berryer, Jan. 20, 1760, C⁸ A 62; Berryer to La Rivière, March 29, B 111.

After the holder of money, the indigo-grower was the most favoured or the least injured by the war. The value of his produce was great in proportion to its bulk, and it could best afford the high freights. The importers of cargoes sought after it in order to make their returns in their own ships, instead of leaving their funds in the colony; the King's warships willingly carried it home upon freight. The indigo-planter could afford, if anybody could, to insist on receiving cash for his crop, and as he was not often in debt, the money was locked up in his possession.¹ There was also a particular reason for the high price of indigo in some parts of St. Domingue during the Seven Years War. The Governor fixed the rates of other kinds of produce above the real value; the market for indigo was left free; it could be had at current prices, and was therefore most in demand.² This prosperity tended to destroy itself. Indigo was overvalued in the colonies, and therefore answered no better than any other kind of cargo.³ Some merchants thought it better to sell it in St. Eustatius, where the illusion of its superior advantage still kept up the price, than to send it to Europe, where it was as much a drug as any other West India goods.⁴ At any rate, indigo was a resource for St. Domingue alone, for very little was made elsewhere in the French Empire.

After indigo, good white sugar was most saleable, then cotton; last of all came coffee and brown sugar. Nobody who received brown sugar in return for his goods could hope to carry back to Europe half the value of a full outward cargo in time of war. For this reason, the supercargoes sometimes refused to take anything but money, indigo, or white sugar in payment, and the colonial authorities had to oblige neutrals by special regulation to receive brown sugar in preference to other articles.⁵ No

¹ Maillart to Maurepas, March 1, 1746, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 64; Lambert to Moras, June 15, 1757, C⁹ A 100; Laporte-Lalanne to Moras, Dec. 15, *ibid.*; Kavanagh and Belloc to Bouteiller, Aug. 8, 1757, *Maria Joanna*, Lindeboom, H.C.A. 42/80.

² *Ibid.*; Pimont to Chauvel, quoted above (*Juffrow Maria*).

³ Thus Messrs. van Marselis advised their correspondent at Port au Prince to get a return loading of white sugar if possible, for if the cargo consisted in brown sugar, three-quarters of their effects must be shipped in indigo, which was no longer profitable (J. and T. van Marselis to Danié, Dec. 19, 1757, *Juffrow Alida*, Kock, H.C.A. 42/73).

⁴ Texier Brothers, Aux Cayes, to St. Martin Brothers and Angely, Feb. 12, 1758, *Vrouw Clara Magdalena*, van Houten, H.C.A. 42/99.

⁵ Lambert to Moras, June 15, 1757, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 100; Laporte-Lalanne to Moras, Jan. 7, 1758, C⁹ A 101; Lasserre, Port au Prince, to Klock, Dedel, and

doubt this also accounts for the French merchants' neglect of the trade of St. Louis and the southern quarter of St. Domingue, where brown sugar was one of the chief products. Intendant Maillart described thousands of hogsheads rotting away in that district; and as he had a plantation there, no doubt he was speaking from his own experience. The unpopularity of raw sugar with the exporters might have stimulated the planters to refine it; but the stimulus came at the wrong time, for they were least of all likely to possess the capital or credit for expensive new buildings and equipment in war-time, when they could barely meet their current expenses and the security of their property was impaired by the chance of invasion. In fact, they soon began to leave off producing this useless article, because they could not repair their losses of negroes during the war, and because they might as well save themselves the trouble.¹

Both for the French merchant and for the planter who wanted freight, the widening gulf between the prices of imports and exports created a demand for more shipping.

If there was any advantage to be made by the carriage of goods from the West Indies to France, those who had ship-room to dispose of used it for themselves; only when nothing but loss could attend such an operation, were they willing to let out their space upon freight. On the whole, the impression to be gained from their correspondence and instructions is that they generally preferred taking goods on their own account, unless the rates of freight were very high indeed. For example, Jean White of Nantes was extremely angry with Captain Segretain of the *Providence* for sending home seventy hogsheads of sugar on freight in 1745, instead of loading her entirely on account of the owners; the high prices of West India goods would have made her a saving voyage.² Correspondents in the West Indies sometimes found it necessary to apologize if special circum-

Co., Jan. 13, 1758, *Juffrow Susanna*, Cornelis, H.C.A. 42/72; J. and T. van Marselis, Amsterdam, to Danié, quoted above.

¹ Samson, Cap François, to Maurepas, Dec. 20, 1744, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 65; Larnage and Maillart to Maurepas, Feb. 24, 1746, C⁹ A 68; Larnage to Maurepas, Aug. 2, 1746, C⁹ A 68; Maillart to Maurepas, Nov. 20, 1746, C⁹ A 69; Chastenoye to Maurepas, Feb. 10, 1748, C⁹ A 72; Vaudreuil and Laporte-Lalanne to Machault, Aug. 27, 1756, C⁹ A 99; Bart and Laporte-Lalanne to Moras, Sept. 20, 1757, C⁹ A 100; Laporte-Lalanne to Moras, Oct. 2, 1757, *ibid.*

² White to Segretain, July 20 and Nov. 17, 1745, *Postillon*, H.C.A. 32/143; Bouwer and son to Beauchamp, Feb. 10, 1758, *Resolutie*, Johannesz H.C.A. 42/91; Charet to Fougou, Nov. 12, 1757, *Vigilantie*, Paauw, H.C.A. 42/101.

stances had caused them to take goods on freight.¹ The planters often complained that those who wanted to send home produce on their own account were unable to find freight for it, because in time of war the shipowners preferred to buy goods and bring them home for themselves.² But there were exceptions, for of course the equilibrium between shippers and shipowners righted itself by an increase of the rate of freights. A certain elasticity was rendered possible by the choice between very bulky and very portable articles, so that the proceeds of an outward cargo would load anything from half to double the tonnage of the ship, according to the class of goods in which it was invested.

If the demand for shipping was not to be met by invoking the services of neutrals or even enemies, the difficulty could only be overcome in one of two ways: either the colonies must live on credit, or their imports must be reduced.

Credit was almost unobtainable. The merchant who sent out goods to the West Indies was not very well satisfied to leave a large part of his capital there until the peace, especially as it must consist in doubtful debts or in perishable goods. The goods which kept longest in tropical climates were exactly those which were easiest to carry away; the most liable to waste was that which was oftenest condemned to remain in the colony for months or years—namely brown sugar. Some methods were proposed, and perhaps used, for avoiding such waste. Those planters who had the good fortune to charter a ship, French or neutral, to take off their crops in the islands, might sometimes find that she would hold more than the goods they had ready for her. They therefore offered to borrow sugars from their neighbours who could not get freight, and repay the debt in kind out of their next year's crop. But while this arrangement might alleviate the difficulties of individuals, it had no effect upon the trade of the colony as a whole, and in most of the cases in which it was contemplated, white sugar, not brown, was in question. Besides, there appear to have been obstacles.³

¹ Texier Brothers, Aux Cayes, to St. Martin Brothers & Angely, Feb. 12, 1758, *Vrouw Clara Magdalena*, H.C.A. 42/99.

² Larnage and Maillart to Maurepas, Feb. 24, 1746, A.N. Colonies C^o A 68; Maillart to Maurepas, Feb. 10, 1747, C^o A 70.

³ Michel, Luker and Wailsh, Nantes, to Shee and Michel, Leogane, Dec. 31, 1744, *Arnaldus and Johannes*, Kool, H.C.A. 42/23; Beudet and Boutin to Danié, Sept. 25, 1757, *Sta Maria*, Robyn, H.C.A. 42/80; Nolivos to Danié, March 7, 1758, *Resolutie*, Johannesz, H.C.A. 42/91.

Supercargoes were occasionally ordered to invest the proceeds of their sales in a good plantation, if they could not by any means send them home.¹ This form of involuntary investment seems to have been rare. More commonly, the European merchant had to resign himself to hiring a warehouse in the colony and leaving a part of his capital there until a peace or some lucky accident should furnish an opportunity of recovering it;² this probably accounts for the vast quantities of West India produce carried to France during the first years of peace.³

The merchant might leave his capital in the colonies in another form, that of debts owed by the planters. Indeed, he could hardly choose but do so, how great soever the diligence of his supercargoes, for the purchasers could not or would not pay in time. For some classes of goods, such as negroes, credit of eighteen months or two years for part of the sums due had become an established custom in both English and French islands. Whatever degree of delay might be tolerated as normal, happy was the factor who could depend upon receiving payment at the end of the agreed period. This inexactitude seems to have been almost universal in the tropical colonies. It was partly due to the laws which protected so many classes of

¹ Feuillerade, Instructions to Captain Dumas, July 28, 1757, *Les Six Frères*, Dumas, H.C.A. 32/243.

² Van Alphen and Dedel, Instructions to the supercargo, *Gertruy*, Lachonius, H.C.A. 42/68; Bouwer and son to Beauchamp, Feb. 10, 1758, *Resolutie*; Grou, Nantes, to Lory, Nov. 19, 1759, H.C.A. 32/257.

³ Malvezin gives some striking figures for Bordeaux. The greatest importation of sugar before the war of 1744 was 33,724,000 pounds. In 1748 it had sunk to 16,339,000, but rose in the next two years to 37,397,000 and 42,700,000; in the two years after that, it was much lower. The spring upwards at the end of the next war is yet more remarkable. The importation had fallen to 3,417,000 in the last year of the war. In 1763, for some reason, it rose no farther than 9,910,000; perhaps the commerce of France could not immediately provide itself with shipping. But in 1764 it went up to 63,821,000, a figure which it did not approach again, in spite of the very rapid progress of the colonies, till 1768. The figures for indigo are more extraordinary still. This may at first sight be surprising, since indigo was the most in demand of the West India commodities and the easiest carried to Europe in war time. But there may be explanations. Indigo was one of the best articles to keep in the colony until a peace, because it was less liable to wastage than most; besides, a great deal of the indigo was sent home on the King's warships, and would therefore be landed at Brest, not at Bordeaux, so that Malvezin's figures do not represent all the indigo that came home on account of Bordeaux merchants in war time. Further, though indigo might be the favourite form of return cargo from the West Indies, it was just as liable to be captured on the way home as anything else, and this interception of the homeward ships is what in the first place accounts for the reduction of imports into Bordeaux (Th. Malvezin, *Histoire du commerce de Bordeaux*, iii. 303-4).

valuables as real property, and interposed difficulties in the way of their sale or distraint; partly to the prevalent scarcity of money which limited the number of possible buyers of goods distrained for debt, and the prices they were likely to give; and partly to the wars, which upset the never very carefully balanced budgets of the planters and made them really incapable of paying even for their current supplies. Many were the entreaties which the merchants of Europe addressed to their correspondents upon this head: to be careful, in crediting purchasers, to choose only those of clear estate and good reputation, and to be diligent in exacting payment at the appointed times. Good purchasers at moderate prices were to be preferred to people of uncertain credit who would offer more; but, as one factor of St. Domingue replied, a reduction of the price could neither secure the debt nor render it more likely to be paid at once, when nobody in the community had any money.¹ The excuses of the factors were no less various or frequent. The officials, and any others who could protect themselves from prosecution, were particularly remiss in the performance of their engagements. 'As you will see', wrote some merchants of Léogane to their correspondents in Amsterdam, 'these returns are, the greatest part, in the hands of people in office, whose will and convenience must be waited, and whom we cannot sue at law.'² Even the ordinary planter was well enough protected, not only by the customs of the colony, but by special legislation arising out of the war. If he had not been so, many of the plantations must have changed hands and fallen into those of the merchants of France, who gave out that it was indifferent to the national interest whether the present owners remained in possession.³

When the carriage of produce to Europe was so unprofitable as to cause the merchants to prefer money, debtors and creditors began to quarrel in both Martinique and St. Domingue over the manner of paying old debts. The creditors wished to take advantage of the terms of the obligations, which stated in money the sums due, and to exact payment in cash. The debtors, who could not have raised the cash, argued that the traffic of the colonies was really an exchange of goods against

¹ Kavanagh and Belloc to Bouteiller and son, Aug. 8, 1757, *Maria Joanna*, Lindeboom, H.C.A. 42/80.

² Dugué, Roullier and Co., Léogane, to P. and S. Locquet, Amsterdam, Jan. 28, 1758, *Vreede*, Boon, H.C.A. 42/102.

³ Larnage and Maillart to Maurepas, April 21, 1745, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 66.

goods, and that the money in which the prices were rated was only money of account. The local courts usually favoured the debtors, and decided that except when a payment in cash was stipulated, the calculation in money had no importance and the debt was payable in goods. Maurepas approved of these decisions. The supercargoes could still insist upon payments of cash in the future, if they were strong enough to make the planters buy on those terms; what would happen then was not very clear to Maurepas, who contented himself with vaguely surmising that the creditors would not long find their account in it. In fact the merchants forced the planters to pay cash, and consequently the *Conseil Supérieur* of Port au Prince revived at the beginning of the Seven Years War an ordinance of 1720 which commanded payments to be made and received two-thirds in cash and one-third in goods.¹

The debtors tried to advance another step, and to turn all the disadvantage of the situation upon the merchants. Since they could not find freight for their produce, they might as well get rid of it in payment of their old debts.² This need not have been a grievance to the creditor; the current price of sugars was chiefly determined by the difficulty of exporting it off the islands, so that if he was embarrassed by having to receive his due when he could not make much use of it, he ought to have been compensated by the low rate at which the produce was valued. Yet when there was no chance of exporting the article, any price at which it could be estimated must be too high. Accordingly, the agents of some French creditors refused the proffered payment. Besides, the debtors did not propose anything so equitable; they wished to have their goods valued for this purpose at an artificially high rate. The courts of Martinique supported them in the war of 1744. That of the southern quarter of St. Domingue would not order indigo to be received at its peace-time valuation, but compromised by letting it pass at the price current at Léogane; this was a concession, because the indigo of Léogane was better than that of St. Louis, and therefore worth more. The court of the western quarter decided that the debtors who had neglected to pay goods when it would

¹ Laporte-Lalanne to Machault, Jan. 20, 1756, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 99.

² The owners of plantations, or the creditors in Europe, sometimes complained that their agents grasped too eagerly this opportunity of wiping off debts within the colony, to the neglect of remittances which were badly wanted at home (Beudet to Danié, Feb. 26, 1758, *Resolutie*, Johannesz, H.C.A. 42/91).

have been to the creditor's advantage to receive them, should be prohibited from unloading them upon him when it was not. Maurepas tentatively approved this decision.

A stalemate was thus established between creditor and debtor for the duration of the war. The former could not demand payment in money, unless he should in future stipulate it when he made his bargain; the latter could not insist on paying in goods unless the creditor should consent to receive them. Of course he would consent, if the goods were of an acceptable kind, but there was a deadlock where they were not. The only remedy was patience—to secure the debt, charge interest, and wait for the day when there would once more be enough shipping to export brown sugar and coffee at a reasonable freight. This deadlock was the most equitable settlement of the difficulty. If the debtors had insisted on paying in war-time at a peace-time valuation, they would have halved the capital of their creditors; if the creditors had insisted on money, or money's worth at current prices, they would have doubled the burden of the debtors. Admittedly this virtual moratorium put a stop to the collection of old debts during the war, but that was no great hardship to the creditor, who could hardly have brought his effects to France if he had recovered them.¹ It only applied to old debts contracted before the war; the merchants had no interest in letting the planters fall behindhand with their current debts, and the Government supported their efforts to enforce greater punctuality.

I have discussed these difficulties in terms of planter and merchant, which are most appropriate to St. Domingue. In Martinique the situation was not essentially complicated by the intermediacy of the *commissionnaires*, or resident merchants.² In so far as they bought and sold on their own account, they might, by their command of money, render cash transactions somewhat commoner than at St. Domingue. On the other hand they made collection of debts a little harder. In St. Domingue the planter often owed directly to the supercargo or the French merchant. Most of the resident merchants of the island really were *commissionnaires* in the literal sense of the term, acting as factors or agents, without financial responsibility of their own though

¹ Larnage and Maillart to Maurepas, April 21, 1745, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 66; Maurepas to Larnage and Maillart, Jan. 24, 1746, B 83; to Ranché, Nov. 11, 1744, B 78.

² *V. supra*, p. 290.

they sometimes took debts to themselves in return for a special commission. The Martinique *commissionnaires*, on the other hand, had partly lost their original function and set up for themselves; they incurred the debt to the French merchant, and the planter incurred another to them. The French merchant's immediate security for his debt was therefore no more than the estate of the *commissionnaire*, which might consist only in credits on the planters. The difficulty of liquidation was exactly doubled, and perhaps this is why, as Intendant Hurson suggested, the merchants of France preferred the trade of St. Domingue to that of the Windward Islands.¹

The exporters of goods to the colonies during the war were thus forced to give a sort of involuntary credit, which helped the planters to subsist. There was no other kind of credit upon which they could live. The financial relations of the planters and merchants seem to have been less developed in the French than in the English colonies—for instance, there were parts of St. Domingue where bills of exchange were practically unknown and could not be negotiated.² The reason of this was presumably the greater simplicity with which the trade was organized in the French colonies. There was little of that system of financial undertakings by which the English planter sent home his crop on his own account and drew bills upon his factor for what he supposed it would fetch. This system often developed, sometimes against the will of one or even both parties, into a state of affairs in which the overdrawn planter was entirely financed by capital from London. The same state of affairs sometimes existed in the French colonies, but I do not think it was common except among absentees, who were rarer in the French than in the English islands. Thus the English planter was already provided with a correspondent in Europe who was accustomed to being in advance for him, and could probably be driven a little farther in that direction, if the losses and disappointments of war required it. The French system had not the same elasticity, nor, perhaps, were the available capital resources so great.

Even if the French colonies had been much more familiar with the system of bills of exchange, the war would have dis-

¹ *Mémoire* of Hurson, July 26, 1759, A.N. Colonies C⁸ B 22.

² Rouvellette to de Windt, June 27, 1757, *Le Roy Indien*, Anderson, H.C.A. 42/92; see also Tramond, *Revue de l'histoire des colonies*, xv. 168.

organized it. The whole community was at straits for a method of remitting to the outside world. If the prices of West India produce had been very advantageous in the European market, those whose property had arrived safe would have disposed of a surplus on which they could have drawn bills, and the colonies could have supported themselves to some extent out of these funds. But it is far from certain that the trade yielded such a profit in time of war.

'You remember', wrote the Bordeaux Chamber of Commerce to its deputy in Paris, 'that in the last war several colonists agreed in Paris and the seaports to sell their raw sugars at six livres a hundredweight in the colonies, and that those merchants who had their sugars brought home during the war made nothing by it; for you must also remember that several commission merchants in the seaports abandoned sugars for the payment of duties and expenses, or, which is the same thing, refused to receive the consignment of them.'¹

The same Chamber estimated that the net sales of brown sugars after deduction of all costs and duties would be no more than 6 livres a hundredweight—not a very high price for a planter who had to pay more than double the ordinary rate for his stores and victuals. This calculation was not very far wide of the mark—a year after it was made, the gross sales of raw sugar were no higher than it stated them, and the rates of insurance and freight had increased considerably.² In the same sense, a

¹ Directors to Castaing, June 26, 1756, Arch. Gir. C 4263, f. 236. Most of the written information on this subject consists of fictitious and arbitrary calculations, designed to soften the hearts of tax-collectors—the very worst kind of evidence.

² Bordeaux to Nantes, June 26, 1756, Arch. Gir. C 4263, f. 234; Nantes to Bordeaux, July 21, 1756, C 4319, no. 7. Unfortunately I know of no series of prices current for sugar in France during these years. The nearest thing is the valuations for the payment of the duty of *domaine d'occident*, but the rates given are far too low, as will appear from a comparison with such prices current as I have been able to find elsewhere; for example, the valuations of 1757, given below, are much lower than the Bordeaux prices given in letters of June 1757—refined sugars 57 to 68 livres, *communes* 52 to 57, raw 33 (Guadeloupe) to 45 (Leogane); there is an even greater discrepancy in the first half of 1762, when raw sugars were quoted at 55 to 63 livres. These discrepancies can be accounted for partly by the fact that the *domaine* valuations deducted a fifth from the prices, presumably for payment of duties, and partly by the way in which the rates were fixed. There was a tug of war between the Farmers-General, who received the taxes, and the Chambers of Commerce, which argued that no tax was due where no profit was made, and failing the acceptance of that view, set themselves to underestimate wherever they could. However, I give the incomplete figures from the archives of the Bordeaux Chamber (Arch. Gir. C 4404), for what they are worth. They are partly confirmed by some figures furnished by a London merchant to George Chalmers in 1791

mémoire presented to Machault on behalf of the colonies stated that in the war of 1744 'effects shipped to France sometimes did not suffice to pay the excessive charges'; the reply of the Nantes merchants denied it, but not very convincingly.¹

It appears at any rate that few merchants and still fewer planters were able to draw bills on France for considerable sums, because few could be certain of remitting goods to cover such bills, or dispose of credits already lodged in Europe. Those who had good bills to dispose of, knew how to exploit the planters' eagerness for them. They had only to 'try the merchants who are teased for remittances by their correspondents in France, and the planters who have wives and children in France to support'.² Those who gave bills as a commercial speculation and took upon themselves the risk of remitting produce, nearly always came to grief. The celebrated Father

(C.O. 318/1). He gives the prices of brown sugars at Bordeaux in 1758-60; in 1758 it varied between 20 and 30 livres, in 1759 between 22 and 32, and in 1760 between 24 and 33.

	Raw sugar per cwt.		White refined sugar per cwt.		Clayed sugar per cwt.		Indigo per lb.		Coffee per lb.	
	livres	sous	livres	sous	livres	sous	livres	sous	sous	deniers
1741 (1st half)	18	14	38	4	29	15	3	9	9	—
(2nd half)	17	4	37	15	28	—	3	3	8	—
1742 (first)	17	—	36	4	27	—	3	—	8	—
(second)	16	10	36	4	26	10	2	10	8	—
1743 (first)	17	5	35	11	27	10	2	11	8	—
(second)	19	5	39	12	30	5	2	10	8	6
1744 (first)	18	7	36	3	29	—	2	8	8	—
(second)	19	—	36	11	29	5	2	8	10	—
1745 (first)	19	10	38	17	29	7	2	8	10	—
(second)	20	10	39	—	30	3	2	10	10	6
1746	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1747 (second)	22	—	39	—	32	10	2	10	13	—
1748 (second)	18	—	38	—	29	—	2	10	12	—
1749 (first)	19	—	38	9	29	10	2	17	13	—
1750 (first)	15	—	36	—	25	—	2	15	11	—
(second)	13	14	35	10	25	12	3	6	12	6
1751 (first)	13	18	37	8	25	12	3	16	12	6
(second)	14	10	40	—	26	—	4	—	12	—
1752 (first)	14	15	41	—	25	10	5	—	12	—
1753 (first)	14	10	41	—	24	—	4	5	12	—
1754 (first)	14	10	45	—	24	—	4	10	12	—
(second)	16	—	48	—	27	10	6	—	11	—
1755 (first)	22	—	48	—	32	—	8	—	11	—
1756 (first)	19	10	48	—	30	—	6	10	11	—
(second)	21	10	48	—	32	—	6	10	12	—
1757 (first)	21	10	48	—	32	—	7	—	12	—
(second)	22	—	48	—	32	—	6	10	11	—
1758	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1759 (first)	24	—	52	—	35	—	5	5	10	—
1760 (second)	28	—	64	—	40	—	4	—	10	—
1761 (first)	25	—	64	—	36	—	3	10	9	—
1762 (first)	25	—	61	—	40	—	3	17	9	9
(second)	27	—	64	—	40	—	3	19	9	9
1763 (second)	25	—	56	—	35	—	4	—	10	—
1764 (first)	23	10	56	—	35	—	4	3	10	—

¹ Quoted by Gaston Martin, *L'Ère des négriers*, p. 396.

² Nolvos to Danié, March 7, 1758, *Resolutie*.

Lavalette furnished the occasion of the downfall of the French Jesuits by this kind of experiment. He drew bills on France and Holland, and hoped to secure them by sending home sugars, but a long run of losses reduced him and his Order to bankruptcy.¹

In fact the French Government alone possessed enough credit in Europe to pay bills of exchange on a large scale. Maillart proposed in 1740 that it should turn an honest penny in case of a war, by offering bills to planters who were in a hurry to remit, at the high rate of 50 per cent. exchange, and covering them by remittances of sugar collected cheaply in payment of taxes. Maurepas discouraged this scheme, because he feared that the Caisse de la Marine could not stand such a burden.² When the colonists of Martinique could not dispose of their crops for want of shipping in the Seven Years War, they could not subsist without credit, so Le Mercier de la Rivière conceived the idea of supporting the colony on Government bills of exchange—for that is what his schemes amounted to, as Berryer indignantly pointed out. La Rivière was no luckier than Lavalette, with whom he seems to have had some sort of a partnership. The sugars which he remitted on the Government's account were just as liable to capture as those of the planters and merchants. Berryer was left to pay the bills at home. Unfortunately, this was the worst possible time to put an additional strain upon the finances of the King of France; an unauthorized extension of Government credit could least of all be tolerated at the height of a calamitous war. Berryer could not even pay the bills which La Rivière's predecessor had drawn on him for the first siege of Martinique. He stopped payment on all colonial bills in the autumn of 1759. The credit of Government paper was ruined, and La Rivière could not even negotiate the few bills which the Minister still allowed him to draw—let alone subsist the planters in this way. Fortunately the extremity of the crisis was past; Martinique was able once more to import and export pretty freely without such a stretch of credit.³

For all these reasons the unbalanced equilibrium between the

¹ Rochemonteix, *Le Père Antoine Lavalette à la Martinique*, chaps. 5 and 6.

² Maillart to Maurepas, Nov. 28, 1740, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 53; Maurepas to Maillart, Feb. 25 and Aug. 10, 1741, B 72.

³ La Rivière to Berryer, Nov. 16, 1759, and Jan. 20, 1760, C⁸ A 61; Beauharnois and La Rivière to Berryer, Feb. 13, 1760, *ibid.*; Berryer to La Rivière, Aug. 12, 1759, B 109; May 20, 1760, B 111.

prices of European goods and of island produce could not be righted by a voluntary extension of credit to tide the planters over the war. As long as they could buy on credit, their inability to return the whole proceeds of outward cargoes immediately was not of much importance. But so far from giving longer credit, the merchants of France were more anxious than ever to have their debts paid promptly. They persuaded Maurepas to give orders for this purpose. He issued an edict on the manner of arrest for debt. Hitherto, the person of a planter had been liable to seizure for a debt contracted to a supercargo, only so long as the ship remained in port; after her departure, gentler and less effective methods were to be employed. Maurepas extended the period for which arrest could be made. Though Caylus boasted of the promptitude of the people of Martinique to comply with the Minister's desire, it is impossible that they can all have done so; for the supercargoes could only have received and shipped these effects if they were paid in money, indigo, or white sugar.¹ The convoy system itself made it still more difficult to collect debts in a hurry; for so many cargoes arrived in the islands at once, that they could not all find a quick sale or a ready payment. Moreover, this punctuality which was enjoined upon the debtors produced a result which the merchants of France cannot have liked: the planters, fearing that for once they would get into trouble if they fell behindhand with their payments, bought no more than they could afford, and the price of European goods in the colonies became a little harder to keep up.²

There was only one other way in which the balance could be restored between the inward and outward cargoes: by reducing the size and value of the former. This was only too often done, in one of two forms. A ship which had sold her cargo for more sugar than she could hold, would return on the next voyage wholly or partly in ballast, so as to collect the effects of the original cargo and leave none behind her a second time. Or else the French merchant would send out on each voyage a cargo only just large enough to load his vessel back—another advantage was that a small cargo took a shorter time to sell and

¹ Maurepas to Larnage, June 11, 1745, A.N. Colonies B 81; Caylus to Maurepas, March 26, 1746, C⁸ A 56.

² Samson to Maurepas, Dec. 14, 1745, C⁹ A 67; Maillart to Maurepas, March 1, 1746, vol. 69.

the ship would the sooner be ready to return with convoy. There were frequent complaints of both these practices, especially of the former. Thus the quantity of victuals and manufactures which arrived at the French colonies in time of war depended, not directly on the tonnage of the shipping which frequented the trade, but on the value of the return cargoes which that tonnage could carry back to France. Therefore the number of vessels in the colonial navigation, often vaunted by the French merchants as a proof of their ability to carry on the trade by themselves, was no evidence of their intention to keep the colonies adequately supplied.¹

This reduction of the imports from Europe may not have been quite so injurious to the colonists as it was represented to be. Their purchasing power had been severely reduced by the depreciation of their crops, and some of them were obliged to forgo the luxuries or even the common comforts of life which they had enjoyed in the time of peace. Some of them gave up imported flour and wine, and lived on country provisions like their negroes; indeed, if all had had the prudence to plant enough of these root crops, as the Government urged them to do, the problem of supplies would hardly have been so serious as it became. But the majority of white planters declined to change their diet before extreme necessity drove them to it. They suggested that it would injure their health, but perhaps racial snobbery was the real reason. They therefore planted only enough ground provisions for their negroes.²

The officials in the colonies sometimes expressed the fear that the planters would lose the habit of luxury altogether, and that the colonial trade would on that account become less valuable to the manufacturers and merchants of France. The colonists even alleged this as a reason for permitting the introduction of neutral ships during the war. The merchants of France, they said, would gain more by the continuance of the planters in their present standards of life than by insisting on a cramping monopoly of their trade in time of war.³ They might have spared their surmises and their reasonings. The consumption

¹ Larnage and Maillart to Maurepas, Feb. 10, 1746, C⁹ A 68; Maillart to Maurepas, Feb. 15, 1748, C⁹ A 73; Ranché to Maurepas, Dec. 10, 1746, C⁸ A 57.

² Bart and Élias to Berryer, Feb. 11, 1760, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 105; Peyrac to Berryer, March 22, 1760, vol. 106; Tramond, *op. cit.*, p. 525.

³ Clieu to Maurepas, Jan. 8, 1747, C⁷ A 15; Samson to Maurepas, Dec. 14, 1745, C⁹ A 67; Vaudreuil and Samson to Maurepas, Feb. 1, 1748, vol. 74.

of European goods in the colonies continued to increase after each war, though perhaps the momentary disuse of certain habits of life may account in part—but only in part—for the glut of which the merchants always complained for a year or two after the conclusion of each treaty of peace.

Thus the shortage of shipping helped to cause a decrease of production on the one hand and of imports on the other. There may have been other reasons for this decline of trade, but they were less easily controlled, while the need of ships could be relieved, as it seemed, by a stroke of the Minister's pen.

§ ii. *The Admission of Foreign Traders in the War of 1744*

For the first year of the war Maurepas could not organize any regular system of defence for the colonial trade. His inability to provide for this service does not seem to have distressed him so much as it ought; he admitted very freely that although the colonies themselves were presumably safe, the trade could not but suffer from the war. A year or two later he told Ranché that there was no question of maintaining the remarkable progress which the commerce of the Windward Islands had made in the last years of peace; the most that could be expected was to keep them supplied with victuals, and to furnish shipping to take off their crops.¹ Even this, however, he could not assure before the institution of the convoy system, for which he could spare neither ships nor money at first. He therefore resorted for a moment to a method which was quite contrary to the traditional policy of the French Government since Colbert's day; he issued three passports for neutral ships to trade to the French colonies.

France had yielded to the same necessity in the wars of Louis XIV, but always with reluctance. The great point of Colbert's colonial system was to drive the Dutch out of the trade between France and her colonies. Every relapse into dependence upon these officious carriers—themselves sometimes the enemies of the State—was an admission of defeat and entailed disagreeable consequences. Where the Dutch came, they stayed. Incredible efforts were required to dislodge them. They formed correspondences which enabled them to carry on the trade in secret when they could no longer do so with official

¹ Maurepas to Larnage, March 17, 1744, A.N. Colonies B 78; to Ranché, Aug. 11, 1746, B 83.

sanction; and in the brief periods for which their presence was permitted, they overstocked the markets so as to make them valueless to the regular French traders during the first year or two of peace.¹

After the Treaty of Utrecht, the Government did its best to discourage the foreign interloper, regardless of the cries of the colonists, which even culminated in a revolt at Martinique.² The Dutch continued, however, to introduce dry goods and slaves from St. Eustatius and Curaçao. The English smuggler became an even greater nuisance—or blessing—to the colonies than the Dutch; for as the farmers and lumbermen of North America extended their production, they began to frequent the French markets in the West Indies in order to sell what the English islands could not consume. Besides, they took off the by-products of sugar, for which the French planters could not else have found a market. Upon certain emergencies such as fires and hurricanes, Maurepas permitted the introduction of foreign North America goods into some of the islands, but always found it attended with such intolerable abuses that he made up his mind not to repeat it. Other goods were imported besides those necessities of life which were meant to be supplied by this method, and the finer West India products—sugars, indigo, and cotton—were exported instead of being reserved, as they should have been, for the mother country (the Government only meant to allow rum and molasses to be disposed of in this way). For these reasons, Maurepas and his successors refused to listen, in times of peace, to the most vehement demonstrations of the necessity of foreign mules and horses, or the most beneficent schemes for favouring the distilleries by forcing the New Englanders to take a certain proportion of rum with their molasses.³ Besides the petty smuggler from North America, whose little sloops and schooners were hardly large enough to do great mischief unless they came in swarms, the English slave-traders haunted the least developed and worst guarded parts of the French colonies.

This trade, however salutary and indeed necessary to the

¹ May, *Histoire économique de la Martinique*, pp. 140–2.

² May, *op. cit.*, pp. 143–6.

³ Maurepas to Caylus, Dec. 10, 1746, A.N. Colonies B 83; Caylus to Rouillé, Oct. 6, 1749, C⁸ A 58; Rouillé to Conflans and Maillart, Dec. 4, 1749, B 89; to Caylus and Ranché, Jan. 28, 1750, B 91; Roma, *mémoire* on the illicit trade of Guadeloupe, Nov. 23, 1754, C⁷ A 17; A.E. Mém. et Doc. Espagne, 80, ff. 78–103.

development of the French plantations, aroused violent complaints from interested parties in France. The slavers of Nantes, the East India, linen, and milling interests, the fishermen of Cape Breton, the lumbermen of Canada, all had a word to say against the dilution of the colonial monopoly. Maurepas incessantly urged Larnage to enforce the penalties against smuggling, and Larnage replied again and again that they were so disproportionately heavy that he could never get anybody to bring forward evidence, nor induce any court to condemn.¹ The trade still went on. New England vessels put into French West India ports, in danger of foundering from fictitious leaks or quite disabled by imaginary cracks in their masts. The very merchant captains who cried loudest against the interlopers when they were at home in France, complaisantly certified the necessity of a number of illusory repairs, whose cost could only be defrayed by selling the cargo. Indeed, these captains themselves engaged in the illicit trade, sending their ships' boats to the Dutch islands for dry goods which they sold to the planters as part of their own cargoes. Even those branches of foreign trade which were genuinely patronized by the Government—such as the intercourse with the Spanish West Indies—were made the channels of all kinds of unintended imports and exports.²

It was the help of foreigners—neutrals and even enemies—that Maurepas and his successors were finally obliged to seek in time of war; but their conversion to such an unorthodox measure was tentative, compunctious, and hindered by the resistance of the merchants of France.

The three passports which Maurepas issued for neutral ships at the end of 1744 were not the first-fruits of a consistent policy; perhaps they were extorted from him by court favour or some other kind of special influence. Before he announced them to the Governors of the colonies, he had made up his mind that they were not to be repeated. The reason he gave for them was the difficulty of procuring Irish beef for export to the islands;

¹ Chamber of Commerce of Guienne, Minutes of Jan. 15, Feb. 5, March 5, 1739, July 14, 1740, Arch. Gir. C 4254, ff. 46, 47, 49, 74; Larnage and Maillart to Maurepas, July 2 and 4, Dec. 1, 1739, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 50; Maurepas to Larnage and Maillart, April 19, 1740, B 70.

² Roze to Maurepas, June 11, 1745, A.N. Colonies C⁸ A 56; Poinable to Maurepas, Jan. 8, 1744, *ibid.*; Ranché to Maurepas, June 8, 1745, *ibid.*; Roma, *mémoire* quoted above.

soon after they were issued, the trade between France and Ireland was reopened, and the case for admitting neutrals into the French colonies ceased to exist, in his opinion. He might grant a few more for the transport of ammunition, but in principle he should reserve the trade of the colonies for the shipping of France so long as it was able to carry the necessary supplies. The losses which the French traders had suffered in the first months of the war, before he had succeeded in providing for their protection, entitled them to the compensation of security against foreign rivals.¹

To the colonists, Maurepas's logic must have appeared doubtful; if the French shipping had been diminished by captures, that was a cause, a proof, or an aggravation of its insufficiency to supply the needs of the islands, not an additional reason for insisting on the monopoly. However, Maurepas remained faithful to his principle that the sufferings of the French merchants must be rewarded by the increased profits and freights which the maintenance of that monopoly would presumably entail.

This attitude was of course entirely congenial to the merchants. As soon as the Chambers of Commerce got wind of the proposed issue of passports to neutrals, they concerted an agitation against it. Bordeaux demonstrated that French ship-owners could not hope to compete with Dutchmen whose expenses of insurance and seamen's wages were only half as heavy. Moreover, the neutrals once admitted into this trade would find ways of continuing it after the war, whatever efforts the Government might make to drive them out of it. (This indeed was only too true: Maurepas had to rebuke Caylus for allowing Dutch traders to return to the French colonies after the peace of 1748 on the pretext of recovering their debts—an excuse which they had used from time immemorial in order to maintain a position acquired by favour of a temporary emergency.)² La Rochelle added that the neutrals would ruin

¹ Maurepas to Champigny and Ranché, Nov. 30, 1744, A.N. Colonies B 78; to Larnage and Maillart, Dec. 9, 1744, *ibid.* See also the *mémoire* of 1745 in A.E. Mém. et Doc. France, 2007, ff. 133 et seqq., which recommends the admission of neutrals only as a temporary expedient until the navy can give the trade adequate protection.

² Maurepas to Caylus, March 6, 1749, A.N. Colonies B 87. For an example of the way in which the Dutch tried to keep the door permanently open, see the instruction of Messrs. L. André & Co. of Rotterdam to Messrs. Pasquier of Port au Prince, Dec. 24, 1757 (intercepted, in Adm. 1/235). If there were any goods of the outward cargo unsold when the ship set sail from the colony, Messrs.

both the manufactures of France and the re-export trade in French colonial produce; the Chamber appealed to the national honour and claimed that the shipping of France was quite able to furnish the colonies with all they wanted, if only the navy would protect it.¹

Maurepas seems to have accepted the argument that the sufficiency of French shipping depended on proper naval protection, for soon after he had resolved upon the exclusion of neutrals he instituted his system of convoys. As he did not foresee the imperfections and breakdown of this system, he naturally hoped that it would resolve all difficulties and render foreign help unnecessary.² In principle he was right. The reason why England was not forced to suspend the Navigation Acts in these wars, as she had sometimes done in the past, was the efficient protection of her trade by her navy.³ If Maurepas's system of convoys had succeeded, the French Empire would hardly have needed the neutrals.

He issued no more neutral passports after the first three. The Governors and Intendants presumed to doubt the wisdom of his abstention. They withdrew their first criticisms when they heard that he meant to provide for the protection of French trade; but at the end of the war, when the system of convoys had failed, they openly told him it was a pity that the French merchants had resisted the admission of neutrals. Those merchants would have saved themselves great losses (though nobody explained how they would have employed their capital, their ships, and what sailors the navy had left them). The cultivation of the West India colonies would have been maintained and extended, instead of declining for want of a market. The ordinary mortality of negroes would at least have been replaced (the French slave trade had been almost annihilated during the

Pasquier were to make a formal declaration that some of Messrs. André's effects could not be returned to them by their ship, 'which may procure us a permission for another such ship; if it does no good, at least it can do no harm'.

¹ Chamber of Commerce of Guienne, circular letter to other Chambers, Dec. 11, 1744, Arch. Gir. C 4263, f. 9; La Rochelle, *mémoire* of merchants to the Chamber of Commerce, Dec. 22, 1744, C 4312, no. 71.

² Maurepas to Ranché, Feb. 10 and June 13, 1745, A.N. Colonies B 81.

³ In April 1747 the London merchants threatened to apply to Parliament for the suspension of the Acts, but this may have been mere rhetoric (Admiralty Minutes, April 14, 1747, Adm. 3/57). The Acts had been suspended, to all intents and purposes, in 1665 and 1672. In later wars only those clauses were relaxed which obliged English shipowners to employ a certain proportion of English seamen.

war by the risks in Africa and the West Indies, and by the fall of the price of negroes, whose value was in some degree determined by the price of the crops they were to make). The planters' standards of living would have been preserved—in fact, the economic machine of the French colonies would have remained in working order. Some planters might have gone farther; the high price of their produce might have enabled them to remit cash or Dutch bills to France in payment of their debts. The neutrals could thus have been used for correcting the rate of exchange, which was usually against the colonies. This plan of keeping the colonial trade in cold storage during the war was not only repugnant to most people's sense of mercantile patriotism, but also based on too sanguine a view of the planters' dispositions. History may afford some examples of colonial communities which cheerfully devoted the proceeds of an interloping trade to the payment of their lawful debts, but not one which gave up all connexion with the interloper upon the signature of a treaty of peace.¹

It was only natural that the Governors and Intendants should feel the distresses of the colonists more strongly, and appreciate the merits of the mercantile system less than the Minister at Versailles. Most of them had acquired estates in the islands during their terms of office. Maillart had one near St. Louis, which perhaps accounts for his peculiar susceptibility to the woes of that quarter; Chastenoye had a plantation, and Vaudreuil and Laporte-Lalanne dealt largely in sugars. Champigny certainly had estates in Martinique, and his son possessed one in Guadeloupe. Caylus had interests in the Neutral Islands; Givry was accused of owning three large plantations, and pleaded guilty to one small one. Le Vassor de la Touche came of a planting family and inherited an estate in Martinique, so that his appointment as Governor was a solecism according to the strict tradition of the French Colonial Office. Besides these interests, which naturally moved the rulers of the colonies to sympathy with their subjects, other advantages accrued to them from the introduction of neutrals.

There were five kinds of foreign trade to the French colonies

¹ Larnage and Maillart to Maurepas, April 20, 1745, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 66; Feb. 10, 1746, vol. 68; Chastenoye to Maurepas, Feb. 10, 1748, vol. 72; Maillart to Maurepas, Feb. 15, vol. 73; Caylus to Maurepas, Jan. 15, 1748, C⁸ A 58; Vaudreuil and Laporte-Lalanne to Machault, Oct. 20, 1756, C⁹ A 99; Bart and Laporte-Lalanne to Moras, Sept. 20, 1757, C⁹ A 100.

in time of war. At one end of the scale were the smugglers, who received no countenance from anybody and almost ceased to exist for the time being, because it became so easy to obtain a lawful entry. At the other end were the neutral ships which obtained passports from the King of France. Of these there were only three during the war of 1744. The merchants of Nantes who received them, passed them on to Francis Libault of Amsterdam. He sent out three ships to St. Domingue. Two of these were taken by the English and condemned as prize at New York, but were restored on appeal.¹ Besides these, there were the neutrals from Europe without permits, the neutrals from the Dutch and Danish islands in the West Indies, and the Flags of Truce, French and English.

Not many Dutch ships ventured during this war to come from Europe to the French colonies without first obtaining some authority to do so. Libault of Amsterdam, not content with the three passports which he obtained from Maurepas, sent out three more vessels which contrived to put into Martinique on the pretext of disability to continue their voyages, and got themselves compelled to sell their cargoes there. These vessels are the only ones of which I have found mention in the English Admiralty records,² but there were others which presumably escaped capture.

This trade was most repugnant to Maurepas's sense of propriety. He could tolerate the admission of small vessels from St. Eustatius and Curaçao, but the Dutch from Europe ought never to be allowed to trade until the resources of those islands had been exhausted. He reproached Maillart for merely turning away such a ship, instead of confiscating her for breaking the laws of France by entering a French colonial port without real necessity.³ As he pointed out to Caylus and Ranché on a later incident of the same kind, the scarcity of victuals could be no excuse for such an omission, for the cargo would have

¹ *Arnaldus and Johannes*, Kool, H.C.A. 42/23; *Maria Elizabeth*, van der Kroon, H.C.A. 42/40.

² The *Endraght*, Edsert de Graaff, H.C.A. 32/108; the *Vryheid*, Vos, H.C.A. 42/50. There was also the *Amstel*, which probably got home safe. There may be more ships of this kind in the Prize Papers (H.C.A. 32), of which I have only looked at certain bundles, but I am sure there are none in the Prize Appeals Papers (H.C.A. 42), of which I have examined every bundle for these two wars.

³ Maurepas to Maillart, Nov. 15, 1747, A.N. Colonies B 85; to Clieu and Marin, June 8, 1746, vol. 83; Maillart took the hint and confiscated the next vessel which appeared from Holland on a like errand.

been just as certainly brought to market by confiscation as by a free admission.¹ At the end of the war he had to deal with a complicated fraud from Martinique. A Dutch ship named the *Young Peter and Adrian* sailed from Rotterdam to Martinique, where she suffered a collusive confiscation for illicit trade. Most of her cargo was withheld from public sale—that is to say, it was presumably disposed of as if she had been an ordinary licensed trader—and the ship herself was ‘bought’ at an upset price by somebody concerned in her, who renamed her the *Société*, got her a cargo of produce, and dispatched her for Bordeaux. Her real destination seems to have been Holland. When she got clear of Martinique, she met an imaginary English privateer, threw her French papers overboard, and then, having escaped this bugbear, retired in equally fictitious terror to St. Eustatius, in order to provide herself with papers, namely the Dutch clearance she had always meant to take from St. Eustatius for Holland.²

Episodes of this kind were still rare in Maurepas’s time. A more serious question was that of the trade from St. Eustatius and Curaçao.

These two Dutch islands had been thorns in the side of every power with West India possessions which it wanted to keep to itself. Curaçao had been expressly founded as a smuggling settlement, and St. Eustatius had never been anything else. As long as English sugar had a higher value in the world market than in England, it had been smuggled out by way of the Dutch and Danish colonies, which still performed that service for the French planters. Since they were no longer of much use in smuggling sugars out of the English colonies, they had now begun to smuggle them in. St. Eustatius was particularly important in peace or war, as the rendezvous of North American traders who wished to export their fish and lumber indirectly to the French Windward Islands and to receive French West India produce. Curaçao was more closely connected with the interloping trade to the Spanish colonies, but it had a short and easy navigation to the southern quarter of St. Domingue, to which it kept up a great trade in time of war. When the intercourse of St. Eustatius with its nearest French neighbours

¹ Maurepas to Caylus and Ranché, April 1, 1748, B 87.

² Maurepas to Caylus and Ranché, May 13, 1748, B 87; Caylus to Maurepas, July 29, 1748, C⁸ A 58.

became too hazardous, as in 1758, the traders of that island turned their attention to St. Domingue, to which the voyage was pretty free from molestation, because, lying between the cruising-grounds of the two naval stations, it was not very closely supervised from either.

The Danish island of St. Thomas had played a similar part in the War of the Spanish Succession, because the Danes, unlike the Dutch, enjoyed the advantages of neutrality at that time. Since then, they had settled St. Croix as well, but in these wars they were entirely eclipsed by the Dutch, whose command of capital and convenient situation, both in Europe and the West Indies, qualified them to be the greatest neutral carriers for the French Empire.

None of the French colonies could dispense in time of war with the help of these professional smugglers. Guadeloupe and Grenada lived by nothing else, for they had then no other communication with the world outside. In 1743 sixteen French ships came to Guadeloupe; in 1744 four; in 1745 one. St. Eustatius sent 168 vessels there in 1745, with a total tonnage twice as great as that of the French shipping in the very prosperous year 1743.¹ Clieu and Marin, the rulers of the colony, were so much impressed by its dependence on the Dutch, that they capitulated before their threat to discontinue the trade, and allowed them to declare and pay duties on only half their cargoes. As Maurepas and Caylus pointed out, the Dutch found their business far too lucrative to give it up for any consideration; Clieu himself was of this opinion later, for he spontaneously proposed to charge the neutral traders with three thousand livres for every permit.²

The complete abandonment of the trade by the French merchants, and its domination by the Dutch, affected each other in a vicious circle. Clieu justified the latter by the former, the merchants of France justified the former by the latter. Maurepas tried to keep the balance even by retailing Clieu's arguments to the merchants, and those of the merchants to Clieu. To the Chamber of Commerce of Bordeaux he wrote that he had given orders against the neutral traffic of which it complained, but he must point out that hardly any French

¹ Various figures in A.N. Colonies C⁷ A 15.

² Ranché to Maurepas, Feb. 25, 1746, C⁸ A 57; Maurepas to Clieu and Marin, June 8, 1746, B 83.

ships had gone to Guadeloupe or Grenada during the war, and if they would not supply those islands by themselves, they could not object to his letting the neutrals do so. He had already told Clieu that the King would not allow Guadeloupe to exist for the sole benefit of foreign traders; no doubt the French merchants were tired of sending ships to Guadeloupe, but that was because the trade of the island was entirely in the hands of the Dutch. He would try to induce them to frequent that trade again, but Clieu must make it worth their while by keeping the neutrals at a distance. The Chamber of Commerce, however, put its finger on the centre of this circle of argument when it said that the real reason why so few French ships went to Guadeloupe was the impossibility of getting there; there were no direct convoys, and the local trade with Martinique received no protection. The remedy therefore lay in Maurepas's own hands.¹

Some quarters of St. Domingue were almost as much isolated and neglected by the trade as the lesser Windward Islands. Here too the pretext for the admission of neutrals was the scarcity of the necessaries of life. But the great bulk of the brown-sugar crops of those districts created a need for more shipping than would suffice to supply them with necessaries. Accordingly Larnage and Maillart argued that even if the convoy system was enough to assure the subsistence of the colony, yet more ships were wanted for taking off the produce which the merchants of France could not or would not carry to Europe. They proposed that the small craft of Curaçao should be admitted in ballast for the purpose of buying this crop. The Dutch would bring money into the colony to pay for the sugar, and need only be allowed to introduce cargoes of victuals when they were very scarce. The only objection could be, that they would raise the prices of brown sugar; Maillart wrote regretfully of a Dutch captain who, if he had been allowed to enter, would not only have taken goods on freight, which the French traders would hardly ever do, but would have bought brown sugars at 15 livres, for which the French would not offer more than 5 or 6. This might raise the price for the French buyer, who would not fail to complain to Maurepas, as he did in fact denounce the same state of affairs

¹ Maurepas to Clieu and Marin, June 8, 1746, B 83; Clieu to Maurepas, March 30, 1747, C⁷ A 15; Chamber of Commerce of Guienne, Minute of Sept. 7, 1747, Arch. Gir. C 4255, f. 7; Chamber to Maurepas, Sept. 9, 1747, C 4263, f. 57.

at Martinique. Maillart thought he could get over this difficulty by distinguishing between the rates at which Frenchmen and foreigners might receive goods; for the former, the very low prices of produce which had ruled after the departure of the last fleet were to be preserved—in cold storage, as it were, for there were few or no dealings. For the foreigner the price of sugars was to be somewhat higher, and in order to prevent him from raising the rate of his flour in proportion, that too was to be fixed. Maillart began to put this scheme into execution, a few months before the end of the war.¹

Maurepas was not impressed by the arguments in favour of admitting neutrals for the sole purpose of taking off the crops. The only criterion of the necessity of neutral trade which he recognized was the scarcity of provisions. Though he acknowledged that the St. Louis quarter would not be able to find a market for its produce during the war, he did not wish, at present, to enable it to do so by means of foreigners. In the same spirit Caylus and Ranché rebuked Clieu and Marin for admitting small craft from St. Eustatius in ballast.² In fact, the authorities determined to prevent the produce of the colonies from leaking out to foreign markets without performing the obligatory journey to France and passing through the hands of French brokers. They were equally attentive to prevent another of the commonest abuses of the neutral trade—the introduction of dry goods and negroes under cover of provisions. The officials in the colonies had always been exhorted to take great care of this point, whenever they had found it necessary in times of peace to have recourse to foreign supplies of the necessities of life. They were to be no less vigilant now. Ranché detected a case of this kind and punished it with confiscation; Maurepas commended him and warned him to be on his guard against a repetition of the offence, for interested people would always try to deceive him in this way.³

Where the shortage of provisions was the pretext for introducing neutrals, Maurepas made no objection to it at first. He

¹ Larnage and Maillart to Maurepas, Feb. 10, 1746, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 68; Larnage to Maurepas, Nov. 16, 1746, *ibid.*; Maillart to Maurepas, Feb. 10, 1747, vol. 70; Feb. 15, 1748, vol. 74.

² Maurepas to Larnage, Nov. 19, 1746, B 83; Caylus and Ranché to Clieu and Marin, Feb. 10, 1746, C⁸ A 56.

³ Maurepas to Ranché, June 24, 1746, B 83.

warned the Governors and Intendants to confine it to cases of the utmost necessity, and above all not to let the neutrals spoil the market for the French convoys by lowering the prices of European goods and raising those of produce. The Governors and Intendants professed to be anxious to satisfy these conditions; according to their own accounts, they only allowed the colonists to live from hand to mouth, and suspended the dealings of neutrals as soon as the trade arrived from France. For a time, Maurepas made no criticism.¹ But in 1746 the merchants of France began to clamour against the licence which was allowed to neutral trade, especially at Martinique and Guadeloupe. They were very much excited by the rumour of an exceptional number of ships fitting out in Holland for St. Eustatius, and in Denmark for St. Thomas.

Maurepas warned Caylus and Ranché against the designs of the interlopers, and his advice appears to have produced a momentary effect, for in the spring of 1747 the merchants of Holland were very much alarmed to hear that a Dutch vessel had been refused admittance to Martinique because provisions were plentiful there. If this was true, wrote the English agent at Rotterdam, the Dutch would be deprived of one of the chief reasons for their neutrality, and the trade of St. Eustatius which had lately employed two hundred ships would be ruined. But Caylus could not or would not maintain this exclusion very long, the cries of the merchants redoubled, and Maurepas's note of warning soon became one of sharp reproach.² Caylus and Ranché tried to justify their own actions by necessity, and heaped accusations upon their subordinates. Guadeloupe had escaped altogether from their control, and was pouring millions of pounds of its best produce into St. Eustatius; members of the *Conseil Supérieur* absented themselves from sittings at which cases of illicit trade were to be judged; officers were guilty of smuggling, but nobody would bring forward any evidence against them.³ The Chambers of Commerce found the same

¹ Maillart to Maurepas, Nov. 22, 1747, C⁹ A 70; Vaudreuil and Samson to Maurepas, Feb. 1, 1748, vol. 74; Maurepas to Ranché, June 3, 1745, B 81; to Caylus, June 8, 1746, B 83.

² Maurepas to Caylus and Ranché, Aug. 22 and Sept. 10, 1746, B 83; to Caylus, April 17 and May 19, 1747, B 85; La Rochelle intelligence, Feb. 6, n.s., 1747, S.P. 84/429, f. 71; Wolters to Chetwynd, Feb. 3/14, 1747, f. 65.

³ Ranché to Maurepas, Dec. 10, 1746, A.N. Colonies C⁸ A 56; Caylus to Maurepas, Dec. 22, 1746, *ibid.*; Caylus and Ranché to Maurepas, July 1, 1747, *ibid.*

difficulty in procuring evidence against Caylus himself, or rather they hesitated to use the letters they had received on this subject, for fear of getting their correspondents into trouble with him. Bordeaux, however, complained to Maurepas in July 1747 that there were eighteen Dutch ships at Martinique according to last advices, selling goods so cheap and buying produce so dear that French merchants, with their high charges of freight and insurance, could not afford the competition.

Maurepas wrote to Caylus with real severity. At the same time he instructed Conflans, who was going out Governor to St. Domingue, to suppress all Dutch trade and to confiscate Dutch vessels which arrived in the colony upon any pretext.¹ Maillart, though he pursued a policy very like that of Caylus and Ranché, seems to have escaped a similar censure from Maurepas; but he had his enemies in the colony, particularly one Binau, who charged him with favouritism in the issue of permissions for neutrals and Flags of Truce. The accusation is quite plausible, for Intendants did much worse than that in the next war; but Maillart was defended by the acting Governor Chastenoye, and Binau's charge seems to have been prompted by a personal feud, of a kind which only too often arose between the civil and military officials.²

There is no telling whether Maurepas's indignation would have culminated in any effective action, for considerations of another order intervened, and affairs took a new turn. The tension between France and the States-General was developing into a state of virtual war. Orders for reprisals were issued on both sides, and the Governor of Curaçao began to seize French ships. Caylus laid his hands on the Dutch traders at Martinique, and rejected the argument that they were protected by his own permission to trade. Chastenoye with more hesitation followed in Caylus's footsteps. The cessation of intercourse with the Dutch was a very serious blow to the French colonies, for it deprived them of their chief source of supplies. The mercantile agility of the Dutch traders overcame this difficulty in some degree: they instantly metamorphosed themselves into Danes. Caylus and Chastenoye even had to continue granting passports openly to Dutchmen, not only for the last months of war,

¹ Chamber of Commerce of Guienne to Maurepas, July 18, 1747, Arch. Gir. C 4263, f. 61; Maurepas to Caylus and Ranché, July 26, 1747, A.N. Colonies B 85; Instructions to Conflans, July 16, 1747, *ibid.*

² Chastenoye to Maurepas, Feb. 10, 1748, C^o A 72.

but for the first of peace, until the new crop of wheat could be milled in France and sent out to the islands.¹

The colonies had now to rely upon certain other resources. The privateers had always brought in a number of small victuallers from North America. Sometimes indeed their harvest had been rich in the Windward Islands, and sufficed to keep the colonists in plenty; but St. Domingue had hardly any privateers, and had to obtain the produce of North America in a more peaceful way, namely by the Flag of Truce trade.

The exchange of prisoners was the commonest pretext for this intercourse between enemies, though there were other excuses as well. The Flags of Truce from North America were especially welcome. They brought large quantities of flour, which was inferior to that of France, but a great deal better than manioc. Wine, the other great necessity of life in the French colonies, they very seldom supplied. The New England privateers took enough ships loaded with wine to have exported their prize cargoes, but the North Americans probably preferred to drink the French wine themselves, for it was a luxury not very easily obtained in the English dominions.

Larnage was shocked by the idea that enemies should trade with each other more freely in war than in peace, yet he allowed these cargoes to be sold whenever a scarcity required it, and the proceeds to be exported in rum and molasses. His successor Chastenoye admitted them quite freely to the ports which were already so well known that the enemy could learn nothing new about them; he reserved the less frequented ports for the neutrals. Vaudreuil of Cap François had a correspondence with Admiral Knowles, who wished to stop this intercourse altogether. The same reasons for which Knowles wished to suppress the trade rendered it politic for the French authorities to encourage it; Knowles was quite right, from his point of view, to be angry with the Flag of Truce traders, but though Vaudreuil might despise such unpatriotic scoundrels he thought

¹ Maurepas to Chastenoye and Maillart, Nov. 15, 1747, A.N. Colonies B 85; Chastenoye to Maurepas, March 10, 1748, C⁹ A 72; Faesch, Governor of Curaçao, to Caylus, April 15, 1748, C⁸ A 58; Caylus to Maurepas, May 31, 1748, *ibid.*; Case of the schooner *Pietre*, April 1748, Antigua Arsenal, Admiralty papers, bundle 1. It would appear that some merchants of Paris proposed at the very end of the war to borrow the names of Danish shipowners to a very considerable extent (Ogier to Rouillé, Nov. 18, 1755, A.E. Denmark, 130).

it his duty to take advantage of their disloyalty.¹ Maurepas had sanctioned the use of this resource in cases of extreme scarcity, but at the end of the war he ordered Conflans to put an end to the Flag of Truce trade, in which great quantities of valuable sugars and indigo leaked out of the colonies under cover of authorized exports of by-products.²

The Flag of Truce trade with the English West India colonies was less welcome even to Larnage and Maillart. The reasons which made any form of trade with North America valuable and justifiable could not be invoked here: dry goods were more likely to be imported than provisions, and the principal export was not rum and molasses which must else perish in the planter's hands, but the much prized indigo. Larnage asked the Governor of Jamaica to stop this illicit trade by making the English Flags of Truce come in ballast. He professed to restrain the French Flags of Truce in the same way; but owners would not send their sloops to Jamaica for nothing, and Larnage was sometimes, like the English Governors, forced to pay them for their trouble by allowing them to export indigo.³

Another kind of intercourse with the English might have arisen out of the practice of ransoming the ships and cargoes which were taken by privateers.⁴ Ordinarily these ransoms were paid by bills of exchange upon the owners, but some masters of ships captured on the outward voyage wanted to export their ransom in West India produce. Maillart would have liked to allow it, especially as he was obsessed by his desire to get the brown-sugar crop shipped off by every possible method; but he dared not take the responsibility for such an innovation. He permitted one or two captains to go to Jamaica and buy back their ships and cargoes, though he pointed out to them that this was not a true ransom but a trade with the enemy. Caylus was mixed up in some such transactions, but Maurepas did not approve of them.⁵

¹ Larnage to Maurepas, Jan. 10 and Aug. 18, 1745, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 66; Maillart to Maurepas, Jan. 5, 1748, vol. 73; Chastenoye to Maurepas, Feb. 10, 1748, vol. 72; Vaudreuil to Maurepas, Feb. 22, 1748, vol. 74. There seems to have been some Flag of Truce trade at Martinique, but no record of it appears to exist in the correspondence of Caylus and Ranché.

² Maurepas to Conflans, Jan. 31, 1748, B 87.

³ Larnage to Maurepas, Aug. 18, 1745, C⁹ A 66; Feb. 19, 1746, vol. 68; Bart and Élias to Berryer, Feb. 11, 1760, vol. 105.

⁴ For the dealings of this kind between Jamaica and Mexico, *v. supra*, p. 121.

⁵ Maillart to Maurepas, Feb. 10, 1747, C⁹ A 70; Maurepas, to Maillart Nov. 15,

In spite of all these sources of supply, the islands complained of scarcity. They were often reduced to two or three weeks' provision of flour or wine, before the authorities consented to relieve them by sending permits to St. Eustatius or Curaçao. The bakers were sometimes forced to close their shops. The last few months of the war were those of the greatest distress. The famine in France was so great that very little flour could have been exported, even if there had been ships ready to carry it; in fact, some masters were forbidden to take any on board.¹ The trade of Curaçao and St. Eustatius was hampered, though not destroyed, by the strained relations of the French and Dutch Governments. Large English forces blockaded the colonial ports and interfered with the success of privateering. The Governors were at their wits' end and the planters were on the edge of mutiny. From the very beginning of the war, Larnage and Maillart had reported seditious agitations among the people of St. Domingue, who compared the naval protection of the French colonies very unfavourably with that of the English. These criticisms had been silenced by the institution of convoys, but revived when that system began to break down. Caylus and Ranché hinted at the possibility of similar discontents at Martinique.²

At the end of the war the eagerness of the planters to procure victuals broke out into insubordination. Chastenoye justified his admission of some Flags of Truce by this angry temper, and supported his argument by enclosing a letter from Champfleury, commandant at St. Marc. An English Flag of Truce arrived there at the end of January 1748. Champfleury had reason to believe that three principal innkeepers were preparing to buy up all the wine in the cargo, so that the rest of the town and the outlying quarters would get none; at the same time three merchants came to him with enormous orders for wine from their country customers, which they asked leave to execute. He instructed the captain of the Flag of Truce to deliver no wine without his permission, and sat down to think of a way to reconcile all interests, town and country, innkeepers and private consumers.

1747, B 85. Adrien Dessalles gives an obscure but highly coloured account of Caylus's commercial enterprises (*Histoire générale des Antilles*, iv. 519-21).

¹ Caylus to Maurepas, May 15, 1748, C⁸ A 58.

² Larnage to Maurepas, Oct. 28, 1744, C⁹ A 64; Maillart to Maurepas, Feb. 10, 1747, vol. 70; Caylus and Ranché to Maurepas, March 10, 1748, C⁸ A 58; Caylus to Maurepas, March 10, *ibid.*

'As I was trying to find means to please as many people as possible, the English captain came to my house, with a vast mob at his heels. He complained that as fast as he disembarked his flour, the mob seized it by force,—that two barrels were missing, and the mob was fighting over the flour upon the shore. I ordered him in the presence of forty people to deliver no more than two barrels to anybody. . . . In less than four hours, this captain, who had brought 240 or 250 barrels, had none left, and our bakers did not get a barrel. In spite of that, 150 persons more came to me asking for orders for flour; I did what I could to calm them, but they were very much annoyed. Some good people came to tell me that there was great talk in the town about the wine, and that the mob was saying it would have some, otherwise it would not allow any to be unloaded.'¹

§ iii. *The Chambers of Commerce and the Neutral Passports, 1756*

As soon as the war was over, Maurepas and Rouillé set themselves to suppress the trade of foreigners afresh, and to prevent the licence, which their subordinates had allowed in the war, from having any permanent ill consequences. The colonists must have felt some annoyance when they found that the Government, which could not afford ships to protect them regularly in time of war, could so readily spare some in peace to put down some popular and necessary forms of colonial smuggling.²

Machault was the Minister in charge of the Marine and Colonies at the outbreak of the Seven Years War. He seems to have made up his mind not to repeat Maurepas's experiment of convoys. In his letters to the Governors and Intendants he admitted that the convoys had successfully protected the colonial trade—that most of the ships lost in the last war had sailed without convoy, or been separated from it before the moment of capture. Nevertheless, there was a prejudice against the system, and the King had other uses for his warships.³ Machault intended, as Admiral Richmond would say, to make a 'true military use' of them, and indeed he did so: the years of his administration are not the least distinguished in the history of the French navy. He meant rather to take the alterna-

¹ Champfleury to Chastenoye, Feb. 1, 1748, C⁹ A 72; Chastenoye to Maurepas, Feb. 10, *ibid.*

² Maurepas to Ranché, June 18, 1748, B 87; to Caylus, March 6, 1749, B 89; Minute of Nov. 1749, A.N. Marine B⁺ 62.

³ Machault to Bompar and Givry, June 19, 1756, A.N. Colonies B 103.

tive method of defending colonial trade—that of squadrons stationed at the landfalls of France and America, to protect the entry and departure of shipping.¹ It is doubtful whether this was really a more economical way of using the warships. Perhaps it combined the protection of trade with aggressive strategy better than the convoy system, but that is uncertain; the English squadrons in the Channel and the West Indies had not achieved those two objects with equal success in the last war, so long as they had to deal with forces of their own size.

Be that as it might, Machault's choice was made. In fact he and his successor could not continue to afford even that kind of protection which they had in mind. Kersaint's squadron at the end of 1757 was the last important one to spend any long time in the colonies, if we except those of Bompar and Blénac which were sent out to deal with special emergencies and returned to Europe soon after they were over. Nor was the French navy more successful in defending the coasts of France, and the all-important cruising-ground off the north-west capes of Spain; for want of which the French homeward trade often put into the Galician ports where it was almost permanently blockaded, and could only convey its cargoes to France by collusive transshipments into Dutch and Spanish bottoms.² So destitute of protection were the French coasts, that quite small English privateers, backed up by men-of-war in the neighbourhood, made a chain through which the trade could hardly escape. Even the mouths of the French rivers were not safe, and French privateers, returning with their prizes, often had the misfortune to lose them almost in sight of the coast. The Chambers of Commerce represented to Machault and Moras that a few frigates cruising and escorting the trade would force these privateers to fall back nearer to the men-of-war, and oblige even the latter to cruise in squadrons instead of doing so singly. The meshes of the net would so be widened, and more trade would slip through.³ The Ministers were not often able to take this advice; Moras meant to send out Conflans with a

¹ Chamber of Commerce of Guienne, Minutes, Sept. 2, 1756, Arch. Gir. C 4256, f. 17; Chamber to Machault, Sept. 4 and 18, 1756, C 4263, ff. 249, 252.

² Chamber of Commerce of Guienne, Minutes, Aug. 5 and 25, 1756, Arch. Gir. C 4256, ff. 13, 17; Chamber to Macnémara, Aug. 7, C 4263, f. 243; to Machault, Aug. 21, *ibid.*

³ La Rochelle Chamber to Moras, March 17, 1757, C 4320, no. 24; Minutes of April 14 and June 8, 1757, C 4256, ff. 35, 39.

large force to clear the Channel in the autumn of 1757, but he could not carry out his plan.

Since he did not mean to revive the convoys, Machault had to take into account the probability that the colonial trade would be entirely defenceless. The merchants still had the benefit of an occasional escort, whenever a squadron bound to or from the colonies was able to take charge of them; but as the commanders were no longer obliged to regard convoying as their principal business, they made little scruple of deserting the traders, like Caumont, in order to chase an enemy, or like Kersaint, because they had no longer the patience or the authority to insist on keeping the merchant fleet together. Moreover, if the royal navy was to put forth its full strength, and privateers were to be suitably encouraged, the merchants would be in straits to find crews, without whom they could not carry on their trade. Too many of their sailors had been seized by the English before the war had begun, and were not yet released. Besides, if the merchant crews were to navigate in future at the mercy of the enemy, they would only too probably become prisoners of war, and the navy could not count on their services again until they were exchanged. In the interest of the King's warships, which could not protect them, it was important that the seamen should not expose themselves to this risk.¹

Machault therefore proposed to do what the colonial Governors had vainly urged upon Maurepas. He would put the French colonial trade in cold storage during the war, and rely on neutrals to supply the colonies and to carry their crops to market. He did not mean to prohibit the French merchants from trading to the colonies if they would, but he took his measures on the supposition that the enormous rates of insurance and the difficulty of getting seamen would prevent them from taking much part in that trade. In their opinion, these measures were such as to discourage them from taking any part at all.

The Chambers of Commerce learnt with displeasure in March 1756 that the Deputies of Commerce at Paris, nominally their own agents, had laid before Machault a complete scheme for throwing open the trade. The neutrals were to get permission

¹ We learn that this argument weighed with Machault, from the additional *mémoire* of Lamestrie and Jarreau, the special deputies of Bordeaux, May 15, 1756, Arch. Gir. C 4318, no. 55.

from the Minister, or rather from the Deputies themselves, and to pay a tonnage duty. This was to be distributed among the French ships which still used the trade, as an indemnity for their heavy expenses and for the damage which they would suffer by the neutral competition.¹ The Chambers at once struck up a violent agitation against this scheme. Some of them sent special deputies to Paris to combat it. Pamphlets were written on both sides of the question, and the affair made a great noise.

Spokesmen for the colonies argued that French shipowners were already, or soon would be, unable to carry on this trade. The risks would prove too great, the insurances too high. What right had they then to prevent the colonists from making use of the neutrals? The experience of the last war proved the extremities to which the islands were reduced by the high price of necessaries, the low value of crops, and the difficulty of getting freight or making remittances. The merchants were asking for a monopoly which, so far as they could use it at all, enabled them to extort high profits from the planters' distress.²

All this the Chambers of Commerce denied. They pointed to the number of ships now fitting out for the colonies, and to prove its sufficiency La Rochelle fixed the tonnage necessary to this trade at 50,000. This figure would have been generous in 1736 and perhaps equitable in 1746, but was certainly too small now.³ Besides, there was no certainty that the ports of France would be able to furnish so much. There would have

¹ Chamber of Commerce of Guienne, Minutes, March 20, 1756, Arch. Gir. C 4255, f. 276. Most of the Deputies' letter is printed by E. Garnault, *Le Commerce rochelais au xviii^e siècle*, iv. 76-8. Garnault has a whole chapter on this subject, pp. 75-117; he prints the *mémoire* of La Rochelle in full, with extracts from those of other Chambers.

² See the 'Mémoire pour les colonies de l'Amérique' presented to Machault and printed by Gaston Martin, in *L'Ère des négriers*, pp. 383-99.

³ La Rochelle to Bordeaux, March 23, 1756, Arch. Gir. C 4318, no. 20. Beauharnois and Givry, who were no doubt as much inclined to exaggerate as the Chambers of Commerce to underestimate, claimed in 1758 that the Windward Islands alone needed 30,000 tons of shipping annually from Europe (to Moras, June 20, 1758, A.N. Colonies C⁸ A 61). Laporte-Lalanne wrote that the trade of St. Domingue had employed between 200 and 250 ships, upon an average, in the years of peace: in fact the number was 216, including 40 slave-traders, in 1754. If we suppose the burthen of a ship in the colonial trade to be about 200 tons, this would make 40,000 to 50,000 tons of shipping. Laporte-Lalanne adds, however, that some of them, especially those of Nantes, had always come out in ballast to load sugars home, so that the tonnage of the necessary provisions would be much less (Laporte-Lalanne to Moras, Sept. 15, 1757, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 100; see also the figures he gave Machault on April 11, 1755, C⁹ A 97).

been no difficulty in times of peace. Bordeaux alone, according to its Chamber, annually employed 32,000 tons of shipping in the colonial trade;¹ but so much was not to be expected in war-time. In fact, not more than 22,000 tons appear to have left Bordeaux in the first year of the war, when the merchants were making every effort to prove the sufficiency of their shipping; and much of that was taken on the way out or home.

The Chambers denounced the reasons of the colonists as the clamours of self-interested individuals; one's own is always the public interest in a mercantilist controversy, all others are private. They accused the planters of trying to break through all the restraints and traditions of the colonial system, by obtaining a free trade with the foreigner upon the pretext of the war, and to escape from their debts by cutting off all relations with their correspondents in France.² The Chambers also tried to deal with the argument that the naval reserve of France must not be exposed in defenceless trading-vessels. They replied that if the seamen were not to be employed in this trade, they would take service in privateers, and surely a privateer ran even more risk of destruction or capture than a merchant ship?³ This argument was both untrue and specious. Privateers may have been equally liable to those dangers, but they were not more so; besides, they played at least some part in the war by molesting the enemy's commerce.

Several distinct interests were enlisted together against the admission of neutrals. The manufacturers of France feared that the Dutch would substitute foreign goods for French in the colonial markets, perhaps in such quantities as would overstock them in the first years of peace, and with such success that the planters would lose the taste for French goods. The Lille and Lyons Chambers therefore took part in the agitation; but Lille made a significant reservation, by suggesting that if the scheme of neutral passports could not be prevented altogether, the Government should at least confine the neutrals to carrying goods of French growth and manufacture to the colonies.⁴ This would have been small comfort to the French seaports. The interests of French agriculture were not so much concerned.

¹ Bordeaux to Dunkirk, Aug. 28, 1756, Arch. Gir. C 4263, f. 248.

² Bordeaux Chamber to Machault, Oct. 9, 1756, C 4263, f. 260; *mémoire* of La Rochelle, printed by Garnault, op. cit. iv. 91.

³ Additional *mémoire* of Lamestrie and Jarreau, quoted above.

⁴ Lille to Bordeaux, April 2, 1756, C 4318, no. 29.

French wine had no rivals for the preference of Frenchmen. Few countries in western Europe exported flour in great quantities to compete with that of France; the only other sources of supply were in the dominions of the enemy. The French colonies had long relied upon Ireland for beef, and the only change which the introduction of neutrals would make was the substitution of Dutch for French carriers. For these reasons the neutral scheme could hardly have had consequences for French agriculture, besides those which must in any case arise from the suspension of French commerce by captures. However, agriculture had no organized body to express its will, and its name was taken in vain by the Chambers of Commerce which freely prophesied its ruin. None of them did anything to help it, except that of Bayonne, which justified itself for distributing passports to neutrals by stipulating that their ships should carry provisions of French growth to the colonies.¹

The shipowners, merchants, and brokers were the classes really affected by the scheme. The shipowners feared the destruction of their capital by the depreciation of vessels lying idle in port, and the loss of their current profits, which would probably be larger than those of any other interest concerned in the trade if the monopoly were maintained. They pointed to the heavy expenses of insurance—if indeed it could be made at all—and the high wages of seamen. It was impossible to compete on such terms with neutrals who navigated cheaper even in time of peace, and would not be subject to the same extraordinary charges.² (To some extent the Chambers destroyed their own argument here, by foretelling on the other hand that the English would not respect the neutral flags, and that neutral vessels would be no safer than French; it came to pass as they said, and insurance on Dutch ships was little lower in 1758 than on their own.)

The merchants had something more at stake. Nantes, Bordeaux, and La Rochelle lived largely by re-exporting West India produce, especially to Holland, Hamburg, and the Baltic. In fact they often spoke of the re-export market as their chief salvation—an encomium which it seems to have deserved, if we may judge from the figures to be collected from Malvezin's

¹ Bayonne to Bordeaux, Jan. 22, 1757, C 4320, no. 5.

² Minutes of March 20, 1756, C 4255, f. 276; Chamber to Machault, March 23, 1756, C 4263, f. 226.

*Histoire du commerce de Bordeaux.*¹ For these towns, the point of the colonial monopoly was their command of the world market through the re-export trade. Any arrangement which would enable the foreigner to obtain West India goods without applying to them, would ruin the whole colonial system. They would be reduced to supplying the consumption of their own country, which could not nearly absorb the stocks on hand. It was the colonists' business—so the Bordeaux Chamber told Machault—to see that the merchants of France made an 'honest profit' on the sales of West India produce, by discouraging interlopers and forcing the foreigner to apply to France. He would then have to pay a price for it which would reimburse the owners of ships and cargoes for the high wages, freights, and insurance, and procure them a livelihood as well. If the colonists broke the united front against the foreigner, by allowing him to obtain their produce directly without the intermediacy of the French merchants, the remittance of goods from the West Indies to France would never be profitable, as the prices, which depended upon the re-export, would not keep up. The crops and importations from the West Indies had been large in recent years, and the merchants seem to have had a large capital invested in West India goods which they had not yet succeeded in exporting, but were forced to keep in entrepôt. It was the annihilation of this capital, by the reduction of the value of these stocks, which most oppressed them; in fact, they could hardly see beyond it.² Very little of these goods would keep throughout a long

¹ I quote his statistics for the years 1749 to 1756, the period from which the Chambers would naturally draw their arguments (op. cit. iii. 302-3, 308-9):

	<i>Coffee</i>		<i>Sugar</i>		<i>Indigo</i>	
	<i>Imported</i> (thousands)	<i>Re-exported</i> (thousands)	<i>Imported</i> (thousands)	<i>Re-exported</i> (thousands)	<i>Imported</i> (thousands)	<i>Re-exported</i> (thousands)
1749	4,804	4,577	37,397	14,388	1,171	940
1750	4,139	3,733	42,700	29,201	819	574
1751	3,348	4,214	28,878	30,412	546	558
1752	3,799	4,818	29,069	29,839	436	446
1753	4,480	4,650	46,173	35,526	640	537
1754	6,815	6,275	40,586	34,173	567	327
1755	5,978	6,004	39,703	28,713	598	396
1756	4,262	4,370	19,218	22,277	214	316

No doubt the re-exports must have been overestimated for the sake of exemption from duty.

² Minutes of March 20, and letter to Machault, March 23, quoted above; Chamber to Machault, Oct. 9, 1756, C 4263, f. 260.

war; and even if they had been imperishable, the right of entrepôt could only be enjoyed for a limited time, after which the goods must actually be exported or pay the heavy duties on consumption. This period was usually extended in times of difficulty; it had been so in the last war, but the merchants could never rely on obtaining any privilege which it depended on the Farmers-General to obstruct, and in fact they seem to have had trouble over this matter in the years which followed.¹

The Chambers of Commerce won the day in 1756. Machault wavered; indeed, some thought he had never regarded himself as committed to the details of the Deputies' scheme. Laporte, the powerful first *commis* of the colonial department, used his influence on the merchants' side, and supported himself with quotations from his brother, Laporte-Lalanne, Intendant of St. Domingue, who is said to have asserted that the colonies did not need the neutral passports.² Machault interviewed the special deputies of Bordeaux, and told them that he only wanted to ensure a proper supply of necessaries to the colonies, and an outlet for their goods. He wished the trade of France might be able to perform these services by itself, but he thought the neutral passports would be a valuable supplement. He only meant, by proposing the scheme, to procure additional facilities for the merchants of France to carry on their own business (a phrase of which Bordeaux made excessive use in the sequel). Therefore he would send the passports to the Chambers of Commerce, to be distributed on what conditions they thought fit to impose. For himself, he would make none, except that the neutrals should carry provisions to the colonies and pay the duties of the *domaine d'occident*. (In fact, he never expressed any opinion about the regulations which the Chambers later submitted to him.) The Chambers were to inform him of the

¹ Minutes of April 22, 1745, C 4254, f. 221; Feb. 1, 1748, C 4255, f. 17; Chamber to Contrôleur Général, Dec. 23, 1756, C 4263, f. 267; Trudaine to Tourny, March 16, 1757, C 4320, no. 22; Nantes to Moras, June 28, 1757, no. 43.

² La Rochelle to Bordeaux, March 23, 1756, C 4318, no. 20; Lamestrie and Jarreau to Chamber, April 10, 1756, no. 37; Beudet to Danié, Feb. 26, 1758, *Resolutie*, Johannesz, H.C.A. 42/91. I have not found in the public archives any evidence that Laporte-Lalanne said anything of the kind. Beudet presumably refers to his private letters to his brother, which are not preserved in the Archives Nationales. All his dispatches to the Ministers recommend the admission of neutrals, though not in very pressing terms (Vaudreuil and Laporte-Lalanne to Machault, Oct. 20, 1756, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 99; Laporte-Lalanne to Moras, Sept. 15 and Oct. 2, 1757, C⁹ A 100).

number of French and neutral ships which left their ports, and if he did not consider it large enough, he should take other measures.¹

Machault did not know how this compromise would turn out. The Chambers were not entirely satisfied with it, but were glad it was no worse. They had in their own hands the power of expediting or obstructing the neutral trade.

Everything depended on the regulations which they imposed. The Bordeaux Chamber at once took the lead in favour of severity, and its influence had weight because the conversations of its deputies with Machault enabled it to pose as an authority on his intentions—which, as it delicately hinted, were ‘susceptible of extension’. La Rochelle followed this example closely; Rouen even surpassed it. They preached the necessity of co-operation between the Chambers, and apparently induced some of them to promise to take no step without common consultation. Nantes wavered; Marseilles soon began to distribute passports, quite abandoning all thought of keeping up its own trade to the colonies, for the difficulty of getting safe through the Straits was indeed an exceptional hindrance. Machault had sent some passports to towns which had very little American trade of their own, and had no interest in them except their market value, which was no doubt considerable. Bayonne, always a centre of collusive international accommodations from its neighbourhood to the Spanish frontier, soon showed a tendency to make what it could of them. Dunkirk on the other hand, which was to the Dutch trade what Bayonne was to the Spanish, exhibited an inexplicable altruism: relying on the sufficiency of the ports properly concerned in the American trade, it decided to make no use of the passports.²

The chief interest of the affair lies in the obstinate struggle of Bordeaux and La Rochelle to avoid issuing the passports, or to subject them to such conditions as would prevent bona fide neutrals from applying for them. They insisted first of all that

¹ Minutes of June 16, 1756, Arch. Gir. C 4256, f. 7; Machault to Bompar and Givry, June 19, 1756, A.N. Colonies B 103. Some neutrals objected very strongly to paying the duties of *domaine d'occident*, but were obliged to do so (Laporte-Lalanne to Moras, Sept. 15, 1757, C⁹ A 100).

² Rouen to Bordeaux, June 28, 1756; Bayonne to Bordeaux, Aug. 28, Dec. 14; Marseilles to Bordeaux, Sept. 6 and 29; Dunkirk to Bordeaux, Sept. 29, C 4319, nos. 10, 22, 25, 39, 41, 60. The regulations of the La Rochelle Chamber are printed by Garnault, *op. cit.* iv. 105-7.

the neutrals must load and unload in French ports. They must load there, because, as La Rochelle observed, their outward cargoes would not otherwise consist of French manufactures. Goods could not easily be carried from France to Holland, nor could the loading be supervised there to see that foreign goods were not put on board. If the Chambers did not insist on this restriction, they could hardly justify their loud denunciations of the danger to French manufactures.¹ It was equally necessary, as Bordeaux argued, to demand effectual guarantees that the neutral ships should bring back their cargoes of West India produce to France. Otherwise they would reduce the volume of business in French ports, lower the price there by diminishing the foreign demand, and 'deprive us entirely of the compensation which we may expect from the real need in which the foreigner stands of these goods, for which he is unavoidably tributary to us'. The monopoly could not be too jealously guarded; the Chambers should on no account content themselves with a mere promise to return to a French port if possible, nor should they make allowances for circumstances which might render it impracticable. Indeed, all questions of guilt, responsibility, or intention were beside the point; it was essential that the produce of the colonies, carried for whatever reason or with whatever justification to foreign ports, should pay such duties as would annihilate the profit of such a short-circuit.

For this purpose Bordeaux insisted on security to pay the duties upon consumption known as the *cinq grosses fermes*, and would accept no substitute.² The Chamber even argued that Machault must have meant this condition to be imposed, in spite of the obvious proof of the contrary. Machault had indeed used language which might mean that he hoped the real benefit of the neutral passports would accrue to French traders, and he had made no open objection to the Bordeaux regulations; but neither had he criticized the proposals of the other Chambers, some of which were of a directly opposite tendency. The

¹ Nantes to Bordeaux, June 16 and July 21, 1756, C 4318, no. 70, 4319, no. 5; La Rochelle to Bordeaux, June 20, 1756, C 4318, no. 72.

² Bordeaux to Nantes, June 26, 1756; to Nantes and La Rochelle, July 3; to La Rochelle, July 14; to Machault, July 24; to Nantes, July 26, Aug. 28; to Machault, Sept. 28, Oct. 9, C 4263, ff. 235-60 *passim*; Bordeaux Committee for Passports to St. Malo and Bayonne, Sept. 11, 1756; to Bayonne, Jan. 29, 1757, C 4418, ff. 3, 5; Minute of July 13, 1756, C 4256, f. 11; Bayonne to Bordeaux, Jan. 22, Feb. 11, 1757, C 4320, nos. 5, 12.

only condition he had made—the payment of the *domaine d'occident* duty—would have been entirely unnecessary if the neutral ships were bound to return to French ports where they could not choose but pay it.

Given these indispensable conditions, Bordeaux saw no reason for making any difference between Frenchmen and neutrals. Relying on Machault's phrase about increasing the facilities of the French trade, the Chamber publicly assumed that he meant the real users of these passports to be Frenchmen; and indeed, if they set out from French ports and returned to them, the neutrals might be made to act as simple carriers in the French trade without any interest in it besides their freight. Bordeaux therefore deprecated the imposition of discriminatory tonnage duties.

Bordeaux and La Rochelle blandly professed to believe that neutrals would be eager to engage in the French trade upon these terms. For some time, however, they had very few applicants for the favour. A man of La Rochelle who had some effects in St. Domingue for which he could not get freight, requested of his Chamber a passport for a neutral ship. The Chamber pitied the poor fellow, and all Americans in like case with him, but austere resolved to sacrifice the private to the public interest.¹ The Bordeaux Chamber was pestered for a passport by the Swedish consul, but hardly any one else asked for them. This is no wonder, for Bordeaux, La Rochelle, and Rouen openly declared their intention to issue no passports so long as they considered that there was enough French shipping in this trade.² Nor did they take a generous view of the colonies' requirements. La Rochelle proposed to regulate the number of passports upon 'the real needs, not the abundance' of the planters. Nantes amplified this grim phrase, by suggesting that they should only be issued when the colonies were known to have 'less than average plenty', or to be nearer starvation than abundance. The number of interlopers—that is to say, of vessels from St. Eustatius and Curaçao without passports from the King—should be taken into account in estimating the supplies.³ As the merchants usually believed all they heard

¹ La Rochelle to Bordeaux, Jan. 9, 1757, C 4320, no. 2. A similar application was rejected at Bordeaux.

² Minutes of Nov. 18 and 25, 1756, C 4256, ff. 25, 26.

³ La Rochelle to Bordeaux, June 20, 1756, C 4318, no. 72; Nantes to Bordeaux, July 21, C 4319, no. 5. The Rouen Chamber had asserted at the beginning of the

about the number of interlopers, this did not promise well for the colonists.

In fact, to make a long matter short, Bordeaux, La Rochelle, and Rouen did not mean to issue any passports at all. They anxiously exchanged proofs—slenderer and slenderer, but still satisfactory to their fond eyes—of the sufficiency of French shipping. The prices of European goods were reported to be low in the islands—some said, lower than in time of peace.¹ That of West India produce was constantly falling in France. Perhaps this last fact was partly due to the licence accorded in the islands to the traders of St. Eustatius. But the chief cause was the ease with which foreigners could supply themselves with prize goods from the English—a circumstance which neither merchants nor colonists could control, and did as little good to the one as to the other.² The Bordeaux Chamber was not afraid to argue that the merchants had only fitted out their ships in spite of great discouragements on the understanding that, as long as they did so, the neutrals would not be permitted to compete with them.³

Thus when Nantes first broke the ring and gave a passport to one Orry, Bordeaux complained that its merchants were betrayed. Nantes lamely excused it by the pressure of Machault himself, with whom Orry was somehow connected. Nantes reaffirmed its intention to withhold the passports, but changed its mind again a few months later, alleging that the shipping of France had already shown itself unable to carry on the whole trade. Bordeaux furnished some proof to the contrary, and the resolution of Nantes was rescinded; but evidence or interest was at last too strong, and Nantes announced once more in January 1757 that the time had come to distribute some passports. Sugar was lying in the warehouses of the islands, and merchants with

controversy that all the French islands except Martinique could support themselves upon their own food crops (Garnault, *op. cit.* iv. 82).

¹ This was not corroborated by much evidence from the colonies, nor did those Chambers believe it which had no objection to issuing passports. Vaudreuil and Laporte-Lalanne reported in August 1756 that many kinds of goods were four times as dear as they usually were in peace (to Machault, Aug. 27, 1756, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 99).

² The Chambers of Commerce which, like Bayonne, wished to distribute the passports, made the most of this point (Bayonne to Bordeaux, Feb. 11, 1757, C 4320, no. 12; Rouen to Bordeaux, March 31, no. 27).

³ Bordeaux Committee for Passports to Bayonne and La Rochelle, Jan. 29, 1757, C 4418, ff. 5-6; Bordeaux Chamber to Moras, Feb. 26, C 4263, f. 270.

funds there could not get them home for want of freight. Martinique was distressed for necessaries by a hurricane; the navy gave the trade no protection, and seamen were very scarce.

The slave-traders of Nantes apparently found it impossible to carry on their business under the French flag, and were ready to use neutral ships—not that this would be much reason for issuing Machault's passports, which were not applicable to that purpose. They had particular reasons for keeping up this branch of trade at a slight sacrifice. A long suspension might permanently destroy their influence among the native chiefs; the English and Portuguese would get hold of the trade, and equip with cheap slave labour their own colonies which competed with those of France in the production of sugar.¹ Moras gave them some passports for this purpose, though he would rather they had used them to import victuals into the colonies.²

Rouen, Bordeaux, and La Rochelle would not yield yet. They asked Moras, the new Minister of the Marine, to prevent Nantes from taking these measures. Bordeaux continued to inform him that all would be well—that enough ships were fitting out for the colonial trade, and would certainly sail if only he could give them some protection at the landfalls and help them to sailors by procuring the release of those interned in England. If the obstinacy of Bordeaux was exceptional, so were its efforts to keep up the trade. Vaudreuil and Laporte-Lalanne reported in October 1756 that it was almost the only port which had not abandoned St. Domingue, and its ships had brought enough provisions to save the colony from absolute want. But in the summer of 1757 the trade of the colonies, both outward and homeward, was visited by heavy losses. The Bordeaux Chamber could hold out no longer; it shamefacedly announced to Moras in October that it intended to give out the passports.³

This conversion was too late. Moras had already determined to admit the neutrals, though he had not quite decided upon the method of doing so. He acknowledged the indirect usefulness

¹ Nantes to Bordeaux, Sept. 29, Oct. 20 and 30, 1756, C 4319, nos. 40, 42, 49, 52; Jan. 26, 1757, C 4320, no. 8; La Rochelle to Nantes, Nov. 4, 1756, printed by Garnault, *op. cit.* iv. 111-14.

² Moras to Bart and Laporte-Lalanne, Feb. 3, 1758, A.N. Colonies B 107.

³ La Rochelle to Machault, Jan. 29, 1757, printed by Garnault, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-16; Bordeaux to Moras, Feb. 26; to Rouen, April 23; to Moras, May 15, June 7, Oct. 15; to Tourny, July 9, C 4263, ff. 270, 278, 280; 4264, f. 1; Vaudreuil and Laporte-Lalanne to Machault, Oct. 20, 1756, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 99.

of Machault's passports in stimulating the French merchants to further efforts; but the fact remained that the Chambers had issued very few, and some new arrangements must be taken. Moras seems to have granted some passports underhand in the summer. The secrecy of his arrangements was advantageous, as even the Chamber of Bordeaux recognized; for the notoriety of Machault's passport scheme and the unconcealed distribution by public bodies could not fail to excite the attention of the English, who would keep a good look-out for the holders of such permissions. But whatever was done in the dark at Versailles in those days was almost certain to be done corruptly and unfairly. In fact the only people to obtain Moras's passports were absentee proprietors of American plantations, who possessed court or ministerial influence, such as the Comte de Conflans, Vice-Admiral of France and a former Governor of St. Domingue; Carbon, a law officer of that colony; the Marquise de Ségur; and Nolvos, a nobleman who afterwards became Governor of Guadeloupe. It was reported—I do not know with what truth—that they paid something for these licences.¹ This should be remembered and set off against the complaints which were made against the colonial officials for selling permissions. At any rate this kind of passport was of very little use to anybody else in the colonies. The recipients were planters, not merchants, and were chiefly concerned to stock their own plantations and get home their own crops. They were not likely to export provisions or plantation necessaries for sale, as a merchant would have done; whereas had the merchants received the passports they would have helped the planters as well as themselves, by taking their produce in payment of their goods.²

Moras made up his mind to preserve this business in his own office. Instead of allowing the Chambers to deliver the passports, which they were at last ready to do, he caused applications to be made to nominees of his own. He arranged these requests in order of merit. Those which would both sail from French ports and return to them would receive most favour; next, those which would set out from France and return to a neutral port; third, those which set out from a neutral port and returned to

¹ Moras to Beauharnois and Givry, June 10, 1757, A.N. Colonies B 105; Lemasne to Poy, Nov. 29, 1757, Adm. 1/235; deposition of the master in the case of the *Hoop*, Keetel, H.C.A. 42/70; see Tramond, *op. cit.*, p. 515.

² Bart and Laporte-Lalanne to Moras, Sept. 20, 1757, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 100.

France; and lastly those which both started and finished their voyage in neutral ports. This classification shows that Moras valued the export of French goods to the colonies above the preservation of the re-export trade. He explained to Bart and Laporte-Lalanne that the admission of neutrals would be useless unless they carried provisions, and that it was very unlikely they would do so unless they set out from France (for indeed such articles were not to be had so easily in their own countries); he would, however, do all he could to supervise their loading in the neutral ports, and to insist upon this condition. The Bordeaux Chamber had entreated him to insist above all things on the return of the neutrals to French ports; but he soon found that neutrals did not offer on those terms, and resolved to take other order.¹

From this time little more was heard of the subject. It was too late for any passports, open or secret, to be of much use. The colonists complained that the Chambers of Commerce and their allies at Versailles had obstructed the remedy until it was worse than the disease, for the English were now fully informed of the scheme and would not spare the Dutch traders. This argument was a little precious, for the English Ministry knew all about Machault's scheme through Holland as soon as it was conceived. It is true, however, that the English men-of-war and privateers did not make many seizures of Dutch ships on their way home from the French colonies until the autumn of 1757, just at the time when Moras was thinking of throwing open the trade to neutrals effectually; perhaps, therefore, a larger number of Dutchmen could have escaped seizure in the first year of the war, and the colonies could have been better preserved from want for so long. Moras himself seems to have held this opinion, and blamed Machault for his delays and compromises.²

The wholesale seizure of Dutch vessels in 1757 and 1758 discouraged the French merchants from trusting to neutral flags, under which they ran no less risk than under their own. The

¹ Minutes of Oct. 10 and 17, 1757, Arch. Gir. C 4256, ff. 47, 48; Chamber to Moras, Oct. 15 and Dec. 3, 1757, C 4264, ff. 1, 4; Moras, circular letter to Governors and Intendants, Nov. 25, 1757, A.N. Colonies B 105; Moras to Beauharnois and Givry, Feb. 18, 1758, B 107; to Bart and Laporte-Lalanne, Feb. 3, *ibid.*; Mathieu Brothers to Desportes, Nov. 7, 1757, Adm. 1/235.

² Moras to Bart and Laporte-Lalanne, Feb. 3, 1758, A.N. Colonies B 107; to Beauharnois and Givry, Feb. 18, *ibid.*; Beudet to Danié, Feb. 26, 1758, *Resolutie*, Johannesz, H.C.A. 42/91; Nolivos to Danié, March 7, *ibid.*; Mathieu Brothers, Nantes, to Desportes, Nov. 7, 1757, Adm. 1/235; Lemasne to Poy, Nov. 29, *ibid.*

English Court of Prize Appeals upheld the condemnation of neutrals trading directly to the French colonies; after its decision in the *America* there could no longer be any question of issuing French passports to foreigners. Perhaps this accounts for the slight revival of French shipping in the French colonial trade towards the end of the war.

The public history of the neutral passports does not quite end here. Bernis and Choiseul tried to persuade the Dutch merchants to continue carrying on the trade of the French colonies, even after the English seizures and condemnations had begun. Choiseul went farther, and was ready to bribe them by promising to throw the trade open to them for some years after the peace. His ambassador at The Hague remonstrated against this proposal and pointed out the injury to the trade of France. It was a great price for a French Minister to pay in a mercantilist age, and Choiseul knew it; but he was ready, as he said, to sacrifice trade to politics. Nothing came of it, however, because Choiseul allowed himself to be convinced that it was not even good diplomacy; besides, it did not take in Holland.¹

Berryer always took the complaints of the colonists very seriously. He believed that they were suffering from a shortage of negroes, which must be relieved at once if the plantations were to be saved from ruin. Bart and Laporte-Lalanne had strongly recommended Moras to let neutral ships import negroes during the wars. They calculated the annual mortality of St. Domingue at 5 per cent., or 8,825 negroes a year, and pointed out that since the largest number ever introduced in any year of peace was 15,000, it would take many years to repair the damage done by the interruption of the trade during a long war.² In 1761 Berryer set about granting passports to neutrals for this purpose. Nantes, which had obtained such permissions from Moras in 1757, now denounced them vehemently. They were so worded as to allow the neutrals to carry on this commerce for some years after the peace, if it should be made before a certain date. Nantes was afraid of losing its monopoly to the foreigner for ever; in fact, the new Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture at Cap François had demanded so much. There

¹ Choiseul to d'Affry, Dec. 27, 1758, A.E. Hollande, 499; d'Affry to Choiseul, Jan. 4 and March 27, 1759, vol. 500.

² Bart and Laporte-Lalanne to Moras, Sept. 20, 1757, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 100; Bart and Peyrac to Berryer, May 6, 1760, vol. 105.

were other objections to the scheme. Even if the foreign slave-trader were only admitted in war time, he would stock the markets so that the French merchants, who had laid up their ships during the war, would lose the advantage of the scarcity prices which usually reigned for the first few years after the peace. It would also suspend the liquidation of the debts which the colonies already owed to the French slave-traders; but that was a flimsy argument, for the result would be the same when the planters bought of the French traders themselves. A cheap and plentiful supply of slaves, such as the foreigners were likely to offer, would in the long run do more good than harm to the French creditor, by putting his debtor upon his feet and enabling him to pay.¹

After a slight hesitation, Bordeaux joined frantically in the agitation. Berryer replied that he was astonished at such a fuss, and that nothing was decided. Nevertheless, Nantes was not happy until Choiseul had replaced him. Choiseul too considered for a moment the admission of neutrals after the war, fearing that the French slave-trade would not pick up strength quickly enough to satisfy the crying needs of the colonists; but the Chambers convinced him on this head, and the national monopoly of slaves was restored at the peace. In this sphere, therefore, the privations and expedients of the war did not lead to any infraction of the old colonial system.²

§ iv. *The Foreign Traders in the Islands, 1756-62*

In this war, as in the last, the introduction of neutrals was managed not only by the Minister but by his subordinates in the colonies as well. The Minister hoped that his own passports would make all others unnecessary. Machault warned the Governors and Intendants not to let in any foreign ships from Europe or America without his licence, unless extreme necessity required it. In fact his own system had been designed to pre-

¹ The arguments on both sides are rehearsed in an able letter of Clugny to Berryer, Aug. 5, 1761, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 108.

² Bart and Laporte-Lalanne to Moras, Sept. 20, 1757, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 100; Chamber of Commerce of Guienne, Minutes of June 11, Aug. 13, Sept. 18 and 26, 1761, Dec. 2 and 29, 1762, Arch. Gir. C 4256, ff. 143, 147, 149, 150, 183, and 188; Nantes to Berryer, June 6, 1761; Castaing to Chamber, July 28 and Sept. 15; Nantes to Bordeaux, Aug. 8 and Nov. 7, C 4324, nos. 12, 33, 37, 47, 53; Chamber to Berryer, Aug. 18, 1761; to Trudaine, Aug. 18, C 4264, ff. 73, 74; Garnault, *op. cit.*, pp. 238-56.

vent the abuses which always attended the admission of neutrals by the colonial authorities. Moras was more willing to entrust the officials in the colonies with this business, but when he decided to issue permits of his own he once more forbade them to do so—not this time in the interests of the French merchants, but in that of the neutrals whom he should license. They would never apply for passports in Europe if they were afraid of the incalculable competition of other neutrals in the islands.¹

These admonitions had little effect; nor did they deserve much more, for hardly any of the neutral ships arrived which the Ministers promised. The Chambers of Commerce obstructed the distribution of Machault's passports, and most of the neutrals who received them from Moras were taken or did not start at all.² Vaudreuil and Laporte-Lalanne began to grant permits for neutrals quite early in the war; but they do not seem to have issued an inordinate number, and few of them were used. Bart and Laporte-Lalanne issued some more—we do not know how many—in 1757, and these were taken up.³

Bompar and Givry delivered 261 permits for the Windward Islands in 1756. This liberal dose could hardly be justified by any momentary necessity; besides, Bompar distributed 138 more at the beginning of 1757, before the first were all used. Moras could see no reason for this, but Bompar may have known he was soon to be superseded, and therefore resolved to make hay while the sun shone.⁴ Even though not all Bompar's licences were used, the neutrals were far more freely admitted to Martinique in the Seven Years War than in Caylus's time: 145 vessels entered from foreign ports in 1757 against 70 in 1747.⁵

Bompar and Givry proceeded upon a specious principle. They did not think it proper to throw open the trade without

¹ Machault to Bompar and Givry, June 19, 1756, A.N. Colonies B 103; instructions to Bart, Dec. 15, *ibid.*; Moras to Beauharnois and Givry, June 10 and Nov. 25, 1757, B. 105.

² Bompar and Givry to Machault, undated (end of 1756), C⁸ A 60; Beauharnois and Givry to Moras, June 20, 1758, C⁸ A 61; Laporte-Lalanne to Moras, Jan. 5, 1758, C⁹ A 101.

³ Laporte-Lalanne to Machault, July 13, 1756, C⁹ A 99; Bart and Laporte-Lalanne to Moras, Sept. 20, 1757, C⁹ A 100; Tramond, *op. cit.*, p. 515.

⁴ Just as Governor Denny of Pennsylvania dealt out commissions for Flags of Truce with extraordinary profusion during the last weeks of his administration.

⁵ A.N. Colonies C⁸ B 21. The figures for the latter years of the war are very imperfect, but it appears from what there are that the number fell off considerably in 1758 and 1759—perhaps because of the English seizures—and increased vastly in 1760.

restraint or formality; nor, on the other hand, did they accede to private applications, for fear of favouritism. They delivered some fifty licences to public officials—including twenty-four to themselves; only a dozen or so to foreigners, of which the Governor of St. Eustatius got six; and over two hundred to 'principal merchants'. These people, they said, were the greatest dealers in the trade with France, and had large remittances to make there. They could, therefore, have no interest in allowing the best produce of the islands to leak out to the neutral markets. This argument was plain nonsense, for when the *commissionnaires* could not remit to France for want of shipping they had not the least repugnance to disposing of their sugars elsewhere; it deserves no more consideration than Givry's sentimental plea that the recipients of passports were 'indebted fathers of families'.¹ No planter received any of these licences; the *Conseil Supérieur* of Martinique later complained of this discrimination.

Unfortunately the system was not so free from favouritism and abuse as it was supposed to be. There were loud complaints of the merchants' ring which surrounded Givry; he rationed out the permits to St. Eustatius in such a way as to keep up the price of imports. Instead of entering freely and selling on his own account, the neutral had to find among the resident merchants a surety for his general observance of the laws, and for the payment of 3,000 livres, which the authorities charged for the permits. These sureties were often the real owners or buyers of the cargoes, or they took a high commission on sales and returns as a reward for the favour of procuring the licence. Others resold the licences in St. Eustatius, where an office was said to be openly kept for this sort of business; so that the cargoes were charged with their profits as well as the 3,000 livres—all of which, according to the planters, was paid by the consumer.²

There was the same kind of graft in St. Domingue under Vaudreuil and Laporte-Lalanne. Vaudreuil seems to have

¹ List of permissions issued, Aug. 21, 1756, A.N. Colonies C⁷ A 17; Bompar and Givry to Machault, undated (end of 1756), C⁸ A 60; Moras to Givry, June 10, 1757, B 105.

² Lieutenans du Roy of Martinique to Beauharnois, Jan. 1, 1759, A.N. Colonies C⁸ B 10; Rouillé de Raucourt to Berryer, Jan. 30, C⁸ A 61; *Conseil Supérieur* of Martinique to Beauharnois, March 7, *ibid.*; Allot to Berryer, *ibid.*; La Martinière to Berryer, May 28, C⁸ B 10.

made his market of the neutrals. One Rouvellette wrote to the Governor of St. Eustatius, whose interests he looked after in St. Domingue, that while Vaudreuil was in office, 'he had the same doings as the present Intendant, which sacrifices all things to his own interest, he is jealous of all the profits foreign merchants can expect from this trade in the French colonies. When the permissions were given out, the Intendant took the half to distribute to his favourites, and the General the other half for the same use. . . . I promise you, dear sir, the transactings I have been a witness of in this place are shocking.'¹ In other words, Vaudreuil and Laporte-Lalanne would rather keep the trade and the profit in the hands of two rings of favoured merchants, than admit the neutrals freely. They justified this policy in the same way as Beauharnois and Givry; the *commissionnaires*, who were well established in trade, could be made responsible for abuses or breaches of the law.² In fact, however, the privileged merchants seem to have discouraged the neutrals by asking for too great a profit; that is probably the reason why the passports of Vaudreuil and Laporte-Lalanne were not all used.

Messrs. Kavanagh and Belloc of Port au Prince described in great detail the failure of one of Vaudreuil's schemes. They obtained from him a licence for four large ships from the Dutch islands; the Dutch shipowners were to put on board some cargo and ship the proceeds for Holland, but most of the freight was reserved for Vaudreuil and for Kavanagh and Belloc at a very low rate. They could not induce anybody in St. Eustatius to accept of these terms: 'The Dutch', they complained, 'who will share nothing, and who might have been admitted without permission, would not be concerned; besides, as the large Dutch vessels were confined by their orders to load in their colonies, the captains did not dare to undertake the proposal, though it would have been much better for them.' It does not seem to have occurred to them that they were asking

¹ Rouvellette to de Windt, June 27, 1757, *Le Roy Indien*, Anderson, H.C.A. 42/92.

² Vaudreuil and Laporte-Lalanne to Machault, Aug. 27, 1756, A.N. Colonies C^o A 99. This policy seems to have been abandoned for a time, but was renewed at Cap François in Sept. 1760 by an ordinance which required all foreign traders to entrust their affairs to French merchants and pay them 10 per cent. commissions. This requirement could easily be evaded by collusion (Lopez to Henriquez, Oct. 4, 1760, *Young Moses*, Lopez, H.C.A. 42/109).

too much. They had to content themselves with selling one licence outright; the other three were never used.¹ One Clérisse, a merchant of Cap François, seems to have got leave from the Commissaire-Ordonnateur of that place to introduce two Dutch ships. He sent a friend to Curaçao to dispose of the privilege, on the terms that he and his partners should have half the profits without subscribing anything to the capital. One of the partners was the Commissaire-Ordonnateur himself, who seems to have been responsible for this extravagant demand. In consequence of it, the Dutch would not bite.²

Bart, who succeeded Vaudreuil as Governor in 1757, was an honest or at least a more plausible man; but even in his time the trade was subjected to some extortions and vexations. Under the pretext of submitting the foreign traders to a convenient form of control, the colonial authorities obliged them to deal with certain merchants. At Cap François a certain Macarty enjoyed a monopoly of this kind; at Aux Cayes it was Messrs. Texier. The strangers were also expected to compliment the secretaries of the Governor and Intendant with presents of money; and when Peyrac succeeded to the Intendance in the spring of 1760, he obliged all foreign traders to pay, or at least give security for, the duties of the *domaine d'occident* which they would have had to pay if they had imported their cargoes into France. He justified himself by the example of the passports which Machault had issued in 1756; but he acted without warrant, and contrary to the intentions of Berryer. He also provoked an extremely tiresome constitutional squabble in the colony. He was heavily rebuked; his impositions, with the other vexations and abuses mentioned above, came to an end in 1761 with the arrival of Intendant de Clugny, a factious prig who was strongly under Berryer's influence.³

Vaudreuil and Laporte-Lalanne seem to have got their crops remitted to Europe by the neutral traders, or else to have become dealers in other people's sugars. Sometimes they only granted permission to enter on condition of carrying on freight so much sugar for their account. Messrs. Texier of Aux Cayes

¹ Kavanagh and Belloc to Bouteiller and son, Aug. 8, 1757, *Maria Joanna*, Lindeboom, H.C.A. 42/80.

² Memorandum of Clérisse, Dec. 1758, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 102.

³ Berryer to Bart and Clugny, May 10, 1760, A.N. Colonies B 111; Clugny to Berryer, April 20, 1761, C⁹ A 108. Volumes 105-8 abound with furious controversy about Peyrac's duties.

asked pardon of their correspondents for accepting a hundred hogsheads on freight for Laporte-Lalanne.

'The Intendant, who gave his assistance at the admission of your ship, has desired that he might ship in her 100 hhds. of sugar, and we could not refuse him, for two good reasons, the first is that we shall want him for the admission of your ships if you follow your intentions of sending others, and the second was the 300 barrels of flour which he had taken for the King, and which he would have paid us in brown sugar, a commodity that would have turned out an entire loss for the want of being able to ship it, instead of which he has drawn bills of exchange upon France . . . we shall be obliged to you Gentlemen if you will use him favourably with regard to that, and if you incline to send ships to this colony we advise you to sacrifice something to make sure of his protection for your commerce, . . . he is here all-powerful, and he does everything to oblige those that make their applications to him and that prevent¹ him, and even if you had permissions from the Court for your ships his protection is always wanted.'

Another merchant reported that he had to buy some of the Governor's sugars at a high price, and take some of the Intendant's at a low freight.²

The Dutch ships which came from Europe without a passport and put in to the French colonies upon pretext of distress, were peculiarly liable to these impositions. They committed a technical breach of the French laws, and were therefore at the mercy of the authorities. Some of them were actually confiscated at St. Domingue in 1756, but Moras afterwards complained that others had been allowed to trade.³ They had some hope of escaping confiscation if they were 'addressed to those that are a little in favour'. What this meant, may be judged from the elaborate instructions from Messrs. Auger to the master of the *St. Fernando*. They seem to have been confident of their interest with the authorities, but appearances must be kept up. He was to pretend to put in at Cap François for wood and water on his way to Curaçao. 'You are by no means to inquire of anybody for us at your coming on shore, you are to say that you are

¹ Presumably a too literal translation of *prévenir*, to prepossess. Most of the foreign documents which I quote from the Prize Papers are translated by the interpreters of the Admiralty Courts—sometimes very badly.

² Texier Brothers to St. Martin Brothers and Angely, *Vrouw Clara Magdalena*, van Houten, H.C.A. 42/99; Auger Brothers to Jouaneaulx and Parelle, Feb. 23, 1758, *St. Fernando*, Hilkes, H.C.A. 42/67.

³ Laporte-Lalanne to Machault, Feb. 10, 1757, A.N. Colonies C^o A 100; Moras to Bart and Laporte-Lalanne, May 11, 1757, B 105; Tramond, *op. cit.*, pp. 513-14.

unacquainted with any person at the Cape, we shall watch you and after all these ceremonies are over we shall meet you, and do what is needful, don't let anybody know that you know us and always say that you are put in.'¹

The merchants of the islands advised their correspondents to procure passports from the French Government. It would save them infinite trouble and delay—though Messrs. Texier did not think it an infallible protection against the Governors and Intendants. Messrs. Auril and Capdeville impressed this lesson on John de Witt of Amsterdam. The passport would be cheap at the price of 20,000 livres, for the commandants could not then 'make their own laws', and a great deal of time would be saved. Roullier of Leogane threw a clearer light on the way the authorities made their own laws. 'He must have a permission and not otherwise or else he would run the risque of being confiscated or it might cost largely for his introduction, besides those in power would load one half of the ship and would limit the freight at their pleasure and not on condition of 25 p̄ Ct as you make mention.'²

The pretext on which these informal permits were granted was shortage of provisions. Machault and Moras had laid it down that no neutrals were to be admitted unless they brought provisions; but even the vessels which bore their passports sometimes failed of complying with this condition, and imported little but dry goods.³ It appears from a paper in the archives of St. Domingue for 1757, that somebody in authority proposed to admit neutrals on condition that they carried a quarter of their cargoes in provisions. This proportion was criticized as too low; victuals were scarce, and it was the interest of French trade and even the colonies themselves that dry goods should not become too cheap. If a great quantity of dry goods was imported, the price must fall very low sooner or later, for the planter, who had to pay more for the necessaries of life out of a smaller income, could only afford luxuries if they were very cheap indeed. When dry goods no longer yielded a profit, the neutrals would cease to come at all and the colony would run short of provisions again, or else the dry goods would be stored

¹ Auger Brothers to Hilkes, Sept. 11, 1757, *St. Fernando*.

² *Vrouw Maria*, Marloff, H.C.A. 32/252; Dugué, Roullier and Co. to Orry, May 31, 1757, *Joannes*, Malmstrom, H.C.A. 42/77.

³ Laporte-Lalanne to Machault, July 13, 1756, A.N. Colonies C^o A 99; to Moras, Oct. 2 and Dec. 14, 1757, C^o A 100.

and spoil the market after the peace. The writer therefore suggested a much lower proportion of luxuries, and added that the Governors and Intendants had better be left to regulate it; they would thus have a hold over the neutrals and could oblige them to put a reasonable price upon their victuals.¹

Vaudreuil seems to have been indifferent to the introduction of provisions in neutral vessels; his concern as a planter was to get the crops of the colony shipped off, and he granted licences at a time when, as he admitted, there was no immediate danger of famine. He even forbade the neutrals to import such provisions as the Bordeaux and La Rochelle traders were likely to bring out from France, in order to keep up the market for them.² Bart proceeded on the opposite principle, and would not ordinarily admit neutrals unless they carried wine or flour. He and Laporte-Lalanne had a peculiar reason for their objection to excessive imports of dry goods. In all the other colonies, the captains, whether neutral or French, usually sold their cargoes wholesale to the merchants, but in St. Domingue they had the option of retailing them directly to the planters. The resident merchants, whose interests Laporte-Lalanne seems to have favoured consistently, had bought large stocks of dry goods from the first Dutchmen who arrived, and he did not wish to have them undersold in the retail trade by the later comers. Bart also tried to reserve the indigo and white sugars for the French ships, and confine the neutrals to exporting brown sugars and coffee, which would otherwise perish in the warehouses for want of a buyer.³

These restrictions seem to have been observed up to a point. Messrs. Auger advised Captain Hilkes of the *St. Fernando* to buy flour, even at a very high rate, at Monte Cristi where he lay waiting for admission. It would legitimize his cargo, as it were. Countless other letters could be cited, which express the opinion that a ship was sure of admission if she had wine and flour in her cargo, and not otherwise. The people of Curaçao,

¹ 'Observations sur les passeports qu'on veut donner aux vaisseaux neutres pour nos colonies, sous la condition qu'ils n'y seront point introduits s'ils n'ont en comestible le quart de leur chargement', C^o A 100. See also the letter of D. Argoût to Berryer, Dec. 14, 1760, C^o A 107.

² Vaudreuil and Laporte-Lalanne to Machault, Aug. 27 and Oct. 20, 1756, C^o A 99.

³ Laporte-Lalanne to Moras, Dec. 14, 1757, C^o A 100; Kavanagh and Belloc to Bouteiller, Aug. 8, 1757, *Maria Joanna*, H.C.A. 42/80.

silly with greed, violated this principle at St. Louis and brought punishment upon themselves. Instead of bartering provisions for brown sugar and coffee, which was all they might lawfully do in the southern quarter, they openly exchanged dry goods for white sugar and indigo, to the great indignation of the French supercargoes. Worse still, they actually exported flour from St. Domingue to Curaçao when it suited them. The French authorities were very angry, and forbade them the port unless they came laden with provisions.¹

Aucane, the director of the *Domaine* at Martinique, complained that the St. Eustatius trade did harm by the introduction of East India goods and European textiles, which stole the market from French goods of the same kind. He had lately seized a sloop which had applied for a licence with an invoice of victuals; she proved to be full of dry goods, without a single barrel of provisions on board. He went on to lament that these neutral cargoes were distributed to the several quarters without inspection, so that he could not prevent the importation of prohibited goods, having no ships or guards at his disposal.² Indeed, the whole coastguard service of the Windward Islands was soon afterwards disbanded by Le Mercier de la Rivière. Berryer approved of this measure, for there could no longer be any question of repressing smugglers when all neutrals were to be admitted freely; but perhaps he forgot that even he had not given the neutrals *carte blanche* to introduce any kind of goods they pleased.³ There was a great scandal over a convoy sent to St. Eustatius in 1758 to bring some badly needed victuals which the Dutch traders no longer dared to send without protection. When the vessels arrived, they proved to be full of dry

¹ Labat to Council, April 12 and June 13, 1756, *Juste*, Council, H.C.A. 32/204; Bouché to Hotessier, April 26, 1758, Adm. 1/235; Laporte-Lalanne to Moras, Jan. 7, 1758, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 101 (I am not sure if the ship referred to was a neutral, but it seems so from the context); Pieter Kock Jansz, Curaçao, to Berewout, Jan. 27, 1758, *Caterina Maria Galley*, Gestloff, H.C.A. 32/176; Mesnier, Cap François, to Lebeuf, March 2, 1758, *St. Fernando*; Kavanagh and Belloc to Bouteiller, Aug. 8, 1757, *Maria Joanna*.

² Aucane to Ranché, March 14, 1758, *Stadt Rotterdam*, Peer, H.C.A. 42/96. Some factors appear however to have had difficulty in obtaining leave to export West India produce in vessels which had arrived in Martinique without any provisions for sale (Diant Brothers to Klock, Dedel & Co., Feb. 4, 1758, *Snip*, Schultz, H.C.A. 42/96).

³ Berryer to Le Mercier de la Rivière, March 29, 1760, A.N. Colonies B 111. Berryer blamed La Rivière in the same letter for hiring out the *Domaine* vessels to an adventurer like Father Lavalette.

goods. Rumour accused the Intendant of responsibility for this shameful abuse; he could only boast that he had turned away neutral vessels with cargoes of dry goods in the past, and retort on his principal accusers, the commanders of the convoy, the irrelevant charge of demanding a fee of 10 per cent. for their services.¹

Moras and his successor Berryer disapproved of their subordinates' conduct, but for exactly opposite reasons. Moras gave ear to the complaints of the Chambers of Commerce, who attributed to the 'smuggling' through St. Eustatius the unprofitableness of remittances, the decay of the re-export trade, and the low price of West India produce in France.² He still forbade the Governors and Intendants to admit neutrals except in the utmost necessity, and ordered them to justify it by giving an account of the victuals in store on every occasion when they permitted a neutral to enter. Beauharnois and Givry resented this well-deserved insult to their integrity, and asserted that such statistics would be valueless because the shopkeepers and planters would always hide their stocks from such an inquisition, in order to establish a case for importing more.³

The year 1758 was a bad one for the French Windward Islands. Commodore Moore established a blockade which, though not always effective, paralysed the trade of St. Eustatius and reduced the merchants to despair. No shipping dared move between the French and neutral colonies, unless protected by a man-of-war or fitted out with a heavy armament and expensive crew after the manner of privateers. Few neutrals, however exasperated against the English, would dare to carry on the trade in this way.⁴ The French privateers were employed to bring victuals from St. Eustatius, and sometimes contributed to the subsistence of the islands by making prize of

¹ Conseil Supérieur of Martinique to Beauharnois, March 7, 1759, A.N. Colonies C⁸ A 61; *Mémoire* of Givry, Nov. 21, A.N. Marine B⁴ 91.

² Bordeaux to Nantes, Nov. 10, 1756, Arch. Gir. C 4263, f. 263; Chamber to Castaing, Dec. 18, 1756, f. 267; Dubos, Bordeaux, to Rose, June 7, 1757, H.C.A. 32/258; Brunaud Brothers to Denohic, June 6, *ibid.*

³ Moras to Beauharnois and Givry, June 10, 1757, A.N. Colonies B 105; Beauharnois and Givry to Moras, June 20, 1758, C⁸ A 61.

⁴ J. P. Allier, St. Eustatius, to E. Bouwer and sons, June 24, 1758, *Vrouw Gesina*, Nicolaas, H.C.A. 32/252; Allier to van Marselis, June 5, 1758, *Helena*, Flor, H.C.A. 42/71; Locuillart, St. Pierre, to Doumer, March 1758, *ibid.*; Berryer to Beauharnois and La Rivière, July 26, 1759, A.N. Colonies B 109. Some Dutch vessels actually showed fight; see Cotes's letter to Cleveland, May 11, 1759, Adm. 1/235; Nadau to Massiac, Dec. 25, 1758, A.N. Colonies C⁷ A 17.

English vessels with provisions on board. At present, however, the resource of prizes was not a great one, though Martinique almost lived on the proceeds of privateering in the later years of the war.

The situation of the islands was really pitiable on the eve of the English attempt in 1759. On New Year's Day the Lieutenants du Roy protested to Beauharnois against the high prices fixed by the merchants' ring. No neutrals had arrived for two months, the negroes were dying of under-nourishment, the cattle had all been slaughtered to feed the children and invalids. The *Conseil Supérieur* hinted, after the danger from the English had passed over Martinique, that the starving planters and their negroes deserved some credit for preserving their allegiance and repelling the enemy. Beauharnois consented to hearten them by opening the ports to all neutrals, without any fee or special licence, for four months from the first of February—not that he would admit the fee of 3,000 livres to be the real cause of the discouragement of neutrals, which he attributed to the English blockade and the resale of permits at a profit. This freedom was prolonged for the rest of the war.¹

It might have been expected that Berryer would object in the style of his predecessors to this abandonment of all traditional restraints. On the contrary, he commended it. He believed that the colonists had a real grievance, and that the neutral trade could easily be carried on but for the extortionate monopoly by which the Governors and Intendants had confined it. Unlike Maurepas, Machault, and Moras, who had all thought that neutrals were too freely admitted to the colonies, Berryer believed that they were not free enough. Just as Maurepas had assumed that the economic and financial difficulties of the colonies would vanish if the exports and imports were kept up by the convoy system, Berryer expected the same result from the uninterrupted flow of neutral trade. He made the mistake of thinking that the Governors and Intendants alone could make it flourish by disinterested and liberal conduct. They had great difficulty in explaining to him that the English blockade was the real reason why the neutrals did not come; and as he believed that the trade would be best left to itself, he never could think it necessary for Le Mercier de la Rivière to assume

¹ Rouillé de Raucourt to Berryer, March 16, 1759, A.N. Colonies C⁸ A 61; Beauharnois to Nadau, Jan. 8, *ibid.*

the duty of importing victuals for the colony at the Government's expense, and exporting sugars on its account. No doubt La Rivière was too anxious to try his hand as a practical economist, but he did not deserve all the niggling, exasperated *marginalia* upon his correspondence with which the Minister relieved his impotent indignation.¹

Less and less was heard of the difficulty of victualling Martinique after 1759. Some decisions in the Court of Prize Appeals caused the spirit of privateering to slacken in England. Although they brought little direct relief to the trade between St. Eustatius and Martinique, they indirectly helped it to revive.² The Martinique privateers were far more successful in the latter years of the war than in the earlier. It is hard to see why this should have been so, for Commodores Moore and Douglas were no fools, and disposed of a considerable force. Perhaps the English traders, confident in the command of the sea and relieved from the embargoes which had hampered their operations at first, spread themselves too carelessly among the islands and exposed themselves to too many risks. Perhaps the number of French privateers was swelled by those whose other occupations were become unprofitable—a very common thing in the West Indies, where small planters and merchant sailors turned privateers when their estates or trade had been ruined by the war. At any rate, Martinique lived cheerfully upon prizes and the imports of the neutrals. Sometimes there was a positive plenty, and the French captains who arrived there in 1761, on the eve of the English conquest, found the markets so well supplied by prizes and neutrals as to be quite disadvantageous.³

¹ Berryer to Beauharnois and La Rivière, July 26, 1759, A.N. Colonies B 109; Le Mercier de la Rivière to Berryer, Nov. 16, C⁸ A 62; Beauharnois and La Rivière to Berryer, Feb. 13, 1760, *ibid.*; Berryer to Le Mercier de la Rivière, March 15, 1760, B 111; see also Berryer to Bart and Élias, July 26, 1759, B. 109; to Bart and Clugny, May 10, 1760, B 111.

² I hope to deal with these decisions in a book, shortly to be published, on the privateers and prizes, 1739-63.

³ 'Letter from Martinique', April 15, 1761, S.P. 84/494; various intercepted letters, Nov.-Dec. 1760, apparently taken out of the *Union du Cap*, S.P. 42/42, ff. 293-6; Dumas to Van Heyningen and Heyliger, June 15, 1760, *Don Carlos*, Poeste, H.C.A. 42/63; Laforcaud and Dargenton to Penistone, *Mary*, Correer, H.C.A. 42/80; Le Vassor de la Touche to Berryer, June 11, 1761, A.N. Colonies C⁸ A 63; Le Mercier de la Rivière to Berryer, *ibid.* These last letters speak of the plenty as somewhat precarious, and dependent upon the high prices which La Rivière characteristically thought it the duty of the Government to keep up by large orders for the victualling of the island. At the capitulation of the island, the English commanders would not recognize these contracts, or promise immunity

The situation of St. Domingue was unpleasant, though not serious, for the first two years of the war. There was no real scarcity in 1756, but at the beginning of the next year the colony would have wanted flour but for the prizes. The planters were forbidden to feed their negroes on wheat bread, and most of them were soon afterwards obliged to live on yams and cassava like their slaves; but nobody starved. When, however, the English began to treat cargoes of provisions in neutral ships as contraband, and still more when Moore declared his blockade, Bart and Laporte-Lalanne were really afraid of a famine, especially in the northern quarter where the drought had destroyed the ground provisions. The price of necessaries fluctuated greatly from month to month, and differed between one place and another because the coasting trade was suspended. Sometimes a few neutrals would slip past the cruisers, at others the scarcity was worse than ever. From October 1757 to February 1758, wine and flour were very dear in Cap François; the one cost 500 livres the hogshead and the other 300 livres the barrel. Wine was only 300 at Léogane at the same time. In March some cargoes were imported to the northern quarter, and the prices fell to 300 and 120, but afterwards the scarcity set in again.

In the autumn of 1758, Bart and Laporte-Lalanne hoped that the Danes would take the place of the intimidated Dutch, but the English soon put an end to that resource by condemning all neutrals alike.¹ However, the neutral trade revived after the middle of 1759 at St. Domingue as in the Windward Islands; neutrals must have come in freely, and the prices do not seem to have risen again to those of the winter of 1757-8, though they were still above the average of peace. They varied a great deal between one quarter and another; for instance, in May 1760 wine was at 250 livres the hogshead at Cap François and to the neutral vessels which arrived to fulfil them (see the capitulation, C.O. 166/2).

¹ Vaudreuil to Machault, March 1, 1757, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 100; Bart and Laporte-Lalanne to Moras, Sept. 20 and 25, *ibid.*; Bart to Moras, Oct. 17, *ibid.*; Chastenoye to Moras, Oct. 19, *ibid.*; Lambert to Moras, Oct. 14, *ibid.*; Bart and Laporte-Lalanne to Moras, Jan. 5, 1758, C⁹ A 101; Laporte-Lalanne to Moras, Feb. 15, *ibid.*; to Massiac, Nov. 1, *ibid.*; Bart to Massiac, Oct. 1 and Nov. 27, *ibid.*; Lambert to Moras, Feb. 10, July 15, and Oct. 12, C⁹ A 102. The history of prices is to be traced in the papers of the Dutch ships and Flags of Truce in the Prize Appeals Papers, especially the *Archibald Adrian*, Harstedt, H.C.A. 42/54; the *St. Fernando*, Hilkes, H.C.A. 42/67; the *King William III*, Robinson, H.C.A. 42/79; the *Queen of Bohemia*, La Tora, H.C.A. 42/90, and the *Vrouw Clara Magdalena*, van Houten, H.C.A. 42/99; see also Tramond, *op. cit.*, pp. 509-39.

500 at Léogane, while sugars fetched twice as much at Cap François as at Léogane. The southern quarter, the most neglected in peace by the traders of France, was the best served during the later years of this war by the neutrals and Flags of Truce. Flour never rose above 150 livres the barrel, and it was as low as 50 and even 30 livres in 1760 and 1761. Brown sugar fetched peace-time prices at several times in those years, though it fell at the end of 1761 when the demand of the New England Flags of Truce fell off. Conditions were good in the northern quarter at this time; it was the west that suffered most of all, because it was the most difficult of access.¹

The English Flag of Truce traders came into play about the middle of 1758. The North Americans had frequented the French islands more than ever in the interval between the two wars. They were commoner at St. Domingue than at Martinique, for several reasons. St. Domingue was farther than the Windward Islands from any smugglers' head-quarters until the establishment of Monte Cristi in 1755; a direct intercourse was therefore more necessary. It was nearer to North America, and the risks from French and English warships were much less. These considerations were even more important in time of war, consequently there was very little Flag of Truce trade with Martinique and a great deal with St. Domingue.

Although the French Ministers had done their best to discountenance this trade in the intervals of peace, the necessities of the colonists and the interests of the local commandants frustrated their intentions. There was usually some pretext, such as a fire or a drought, which would justify the admission of these useful interlopers. Vaudreuil or his underlings were probably concerned in illicit dealings with them before the war, and he naturally had recourse to them after it began.² He had very little success at first: the embargoes in North America kept the neutral and even the English islands short of provisions, and the

¹ Bart and Élias to Berryer, Feb. 11, 1760, C^o A 105; Bart and Peyrac to Berryer, May 6 and Sept. 22, 1760, *ibid.*; Peyrac to Berryer, March 22 and Sept. 23, 1760, vol. 106; d'Argoût to Berryer, Dec. 14, 1760, April 27, June 2, and Sept. 25, 1761, vols. 107 and 109; Clugny to Berryer, April 20 and July 1, 1761, vol. 108.

² Rouillé to Conflans and Maillart, Dec. 4, 1749, A.N. Colonies B 89; Instructions to Dubois de la Motte, March 31, 1751, B 93; Fournier de la Chapelle to Chastenoye, April 19, 1754, C^o A 98; Vaudreuil and Laporte-Lalanne to Machault, Jan. 6, 1755, *ibid.*; Dumesnil to Machault, Feb. 22, *ibid.*; Fontenelle to Machault, Feb. 22, *ibid.*; Laporte-Lalanne to Machault, July 5, *ibid.*; Machault to Vaudreuil and Laporte-Lalanne, Jan. 31, B 101.

Flour Act seems to have intimidated some Governors for a time.¹ The commanders at Cap François sent a sloop to the Bahamas to make an arrangement with Governor Tinker, who had supplied them with victuals in the last war. There was plenty of prize flour at New Providence, but this time Tinker dared not let them have any, because he was afraid to break his instructions.²

This shyness soon wore off, and before the end of 1758 the North Americans were pouring their goods into the French ports. Bart reported at the end of the next year that they had brought the colony a supply for four or five months.³ In 1760 it was said that the North Americans 'revive the spirits of the sugar-planters who had given up cultivating, and now begin it again with some rays of hope; they make enough sugar to buy themselves victuals, and what they sell for money enables them to pay their taxes'.⁴

Berryer made not the least objection to this trade. He criticized the excessive zeal of Beauharnois, who only admitted some Flags of Truce and confiscated others; in Berryer's opinion he ought to have let them all enter freely. Blénac was shocked to find the trade so prevalent at St. Domingue in 1762; it was repugnant to his sense of patriotism, and he asked Choiseul whether he ought not to stop it. Choiseul told him to do nothing of the kind.⁵ The French commanders took measures which might have injured the very similar Monte Cristi trade; a French warship entered the bay in December 1758 and burnt a number of English vessels at anchor. This, however, was only a reprisal for the like treatment of some French vessels there in 1757; it was not inspired by any hostility to the business, which the authorities of the colony continued to tolerate so long as it lasted.⁶

¹ This was an Act of 1757, which forbade the export of provisions from the British Dominions to foreign parts; *v. infra*, pp. 437-45.

² Laporte-Lalanne to Moras, April 9, 1757, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 100; Lambert to Moras, April 15, *ibid.*; Bart to Moras, April 18, *ibid.*

³ Bart to Berryer, Dec. 15, 1759, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 103.

⁴ Bart and Peyrac to Berryer, July 12, 1760, C⁹ A 105.

⁵ Berryer to Le Vassor de la Touche, May 20, 1761, A.N. Colonies B 111; Blénac to Choiseul, March 28, 1762, A.N. Marine B⁴ 104; Choiseul to Blénac, June 20, B² 370, f. 321.

⁶ Bory to Berryer, March 14, 1759, A.N. Marine B⁴ 81; Berryer to Bart, April 21, 1759, Colonies B 109. For a description of the Monte Cristi trade, see pp. 456-67. The Flag of Truce trade was much more seriously interrupted by the Spanish privateers after the outbreak of war between England and Spain in 1762. The President of S. Domingo refused to restrain them, because it was axiomatic that

These expedients could not entirely remedy the shrinkage of trade in the islands. The statistics of neutral and Flag of Truce shipping are fragmentary: putting the average tonnage of a St. Eustatius bark or North America sloop at seventy tons—and that is a high estimate—and the average ship in the French trade at something over two hundred, it appears that the former did not fill the void left by the virtual disappearance, during the worst crises, of the latter. Only at places habitually neglected by the French trade, such as Guadeloupe and St. Louis, can the imports and exports have been increased or at least maintained during the war; and in fact some of these deserted outposts seem to have been half-starved in spite of the help which the Dutch might bring them. No ship had arrived in Cayenne from France for fourteen months in June 1758, and until the Dutch found out the way from Surinam the colonists were living on cassava bread and on the verge of having to drink water.¹

§ v. *The Value of the Blockade*

The effect of the English blockade upon the French colonies has, I hope, been sufficiently described in the course of this chapter and the last. Its impact upon France is much harder to judge. The clamour and lamentation of the merchants is not very good evidence, for there was always too much cry in that quarter, and often very little wool. There was talk of idle shipping, bankruptcies among insurers, unemployment among manufacturers, but all in terms so general as to be insignificant. The figures of exports and imports tell more. Those given by M. Martin for the slave-trade of Nantes show that it was almost destroyed in the War of the Austrian Succession and quite annihilated in the Seven Years War. Malvezin's statistics for Bordeaux prove likewise that the latter war was much more disastrous than the former. The combined value of imports and exports to the French colonies, which had risen to its highest at 24 million livres in 1743, was reduced to 7 in 1748, although the war was finished half-way through that year. In the years 1753 to 1755 it rose well above 30 millions, but fell below 8 in 1758

trade between enemies was forbidden in time of war (Bory to Choiseul, Sept. 2, 1762, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 111).

¹ Guimar, Cayenne, to Widow Prévost, June 12, 1758, *Young Peter*, Daaler, H.C.A. 42/105; Pruite to his brother, June 6, 1758, *ibid.*; de la Rivière to his father, June 10, 1758, *ibid.*

and 1759 and below 4 in 1760. The next year it rose to nearly 7, and in the last year of the war almost touched 15.

The re-export trade fell off to an even more pitiable degree. That of sugar, which was round about 300,000 hundredweight between 1750 and 1756, was below 8,000 from 1757 to 1761. The other re-exports were less seriously affected, but that of indigo fell to a quarter, and coffee to a tenth, of the average figure for the period between the two wars.¹ This trade was very dangerous, for it was often interrupted by English privateers even though it was carried in Dutch ships; it was also unnecessary, because the Dutch had made their own contacts with the French producer through St. Eustatius and Curaçao, and with the English seller of French prize goods. In fact, Dutchmen were offering French sugars and indigo to the merchants of France, instead of asking for them.

The prices of West India goods in France do not seem to have risen so high as might be expected from these striking reductions; but that is not really surprising if the French sugar-trade depended so much upon the re-export market, which was itself almost entirely cut off during the war. For the first years of the Seven Years War the large stocks on hand, which could not be disposed of abroad as usual, kept the price of colonial goods low in the French ports; but as those stocks were absorbed, and imperfectly replenished, it began to rise, although the merchants had nothing left but the despised home market. In the last years of the war it was really high, and stories were told—only, indeed, in a French *alamain*, the most worthless of all forms of news—of Parisian housewives using honey instead of sugar for preserves after the fall of Martinique.² Brown sugars are quoted at 55 to 63 livres the hundredweight in Bordeaux at the end of March 1762, and whites at 75 to 90; these prices are nearly 20 livres higher than those of June 1757. Perhaps it was this revival of prices that stimulated the French merchants to their new efforts of 1761 and 1762; and it may be added as a corollary, that possibly the low value of West India goods in France in 1757 had something to do with the collapse of the trade which was usually attributed to the heavy losses at sea.

¹ Malvezin, *Histoire du commerce de Bordeaux*, iii. 306–7.

² Dubos to Rose, June 7, 1757, H.C.A. 32/258; Crozilhac to Coudesc, April 16, 1757, *ibid.*; Brunaud to Denohic, June 6, 1757, *ibid.*; La Rochelle to Bordeaux, June 29, 1758, Arch. Gir. C 4321, no. 28; Mme de Frémicour to Lamole de Feuille, H.C.A. 32/257; Paris intelligence, April 1, 1762, Add. MSS. 32936, f. 247.

If the object of the blockade was to put the French colonies permanently out of action, it was a failure. After every war French production of West India goods rose steeply to new high levels. Within eight years of the Peace of Paris, the colonial commerce of Bordeaux, which had never before handled 40 million livres' worth of imports and exports, only just fell short of a hundred. This rate of progress quite surpassed the plodding climb of the English colonies, even with all the conquests of 1763.¹

Whether the blockade contributed materially to England's victory is equally questionable. The success of such an effort depends on the importance of overseas trade in the economic life of a country, and, in those days, on the strength of Ministers' nerves. At first sight there appears to be some reason for thinking that the colonial blockade brought France to terms when nothing else could have done so. The colonies of France had never appeared more completely in our power than in the spring of 1748; her navy was diminished by the loss of two squadrons, and her trade was disorganized and defenceless. Louis XV sacrificed brilliant prospects on land in order to save his country from starvation and commercial crisis. But the famine, which was the chief cause of this distress and despair, was no work of ours; on the contrary, we actually relieved it even before the war came to an end. Still less had it anything to do with the colonial trade.²

The Seven Years War demonstrates to my mind the impotence of blockade and colonial conquests to break the will of France. The French colonial trade did not slowly decline until in 1762 it reached vanishing-point and so forced the Government to make peace. On the contrary, it collapsed quickly in the spring

¹ This advance was due chiefly to the exploitation of St. Domingue. Martinique, like the older English islands in its neighbourhood, was too fully settled to be capable of such striking increases, as the figures show which M. May reproduces in the appendixes of his *Histoire économique de la Martinique*.

² A different impression is given by a dispatch which d'Argenson sent to his ambassador at Madrid in January 1746. He was to tell the Catholic King that France could no longer undertake to insist on so large an establishment for Don Philip as she had promised in the Treaty of Fontainebleau. She had neglected her navy for her army, in order, as d'Argenson here suggested, to render the more effectual help to Spain in Italy. The loss of Louisbourg and 200 million livres' worth of prizes had caused a complete collapse in the trade and manufactures of the kingdom; so disastrous a policy could not go on (*Recueil des Instructions, Espagne*, iii. 259). This, however, was special pleading for a policy whose real merit in d'Argenson's eyes was the Sardinian alliance.

and summer of 1757, and in the last two years of the war it was reviving a little. The colonial merchants simply went out of business, and contented themselves with getting home their old debts if they could.¹ If France was ever to have been reduced to submission by the loss of this trade, it would have been in 1758 or 1759. Bernis did indeed fill the air with lamentations over the deplorable state of the French overseas commerce.

'No trade left, consequently no money or circulation. No navy, consequently no strength to resist England. The navy has no more sailors, and having no money, cannot hope to procure them. What must be the result of this state of affairs? The loss of all our colonies for ever; our land forces cannot protect our coasts. . . . Even if we save Louisbourg, what help can we send to our colonies without ships or money? . . . I tell you, my dear Count, that even if the King of Prussia were crushed, we should be ruined none the less. England carries on all the trade there is, and we shall never reduce her to reasonable conditions unless we can interrupt it.'²

Choiseul, to whom he wrote this letter, was made of other stuff. He proved, with the circumscribed help of the neutrals, how easily a nation can live without colonial trade, and even without colonies. Pursued by the imprecations of the seaports and manufacturing towns, he continued a losing war at sea and kept his hold of Germany the better to recover the colonies and trade of France. If she made peace in 1763 on terms not unworthy of her, it was because her Minister would not yield to a form of pressure which only touched the circumference of her economic life.

¹ Gradis to Marin, Oct. 18, 1759, quoted by Jean de Maupassant, *Abraham Gradis* (Bordeaux, 1917), p. 91.

² Bernis to Choiseul, Aug. 20, 1758, *Mémoires et Lettres du Cardinal de Bernis* (ed. Masson), ii. 259.

TRADE WITH THE ENEMY

THE necessity and propriety of starving the French colonies into submission were assumed without much question by English Ministers and commanders. The exact purpose of this blockade was not very expressly defined; the authorities who directed it could hardly have said whether it was to conquer the French islands without striking a blow, or to weaken them so that they could not resist a blow to be struck, or to put their sugar plantations out of action for the advantage of our own, or simply to create a general pressure which would make them uncomfortable for the mere sake of doing so. War is war, and those who wage it are not always at the pains of defining clearly the kind of success at which they aim. In those days a blockade only required definition when neutrals called its legality in question; the English Government did not think itself obliged to justify it either to the enemy or to its own subjects.

The French West India colonies were marked out for such a blockade. They all depended for the conveniences and even the necessities of life upon overseas traffic, for the French Government was no more successful than the English in forcing them to grow their own supplies of food. An English critic of the blockade tried to argue that while there was some hope of reducing Martinique by it, there was none at all of starving St. Domingue, where more land was available for the cultivation of provision crops; but the French records do not seem to show that St. Domingue relied any less than the Windward Islands on imported provisions, or was any less distressed by their interception.¹

The blockade cannot be fully understood if it is treated only as a military measure or a question of international law. It was both those things; but it also provoked, or rather intensified, a long-standing conflict of interests, which must be examined as shortly as possible from its beginning.

¹ 'Observations on the trade which is now carrying on by the English to Monto Christi a Spanish settlement in Hispaniola', Add. MSS. 36211, ff. 256 et seqq. This manuscript was presumably drawn up for the use of Charles Yorke, Solicitor-General, who had lately been briefed in some Monte Cristi cases before the Lords Commissioners of Prize Appeals.

§ i. *The Interests Affected by the Blockade*

North America and the West Indies were made for mutual trade and intercourse; each depended on the other from a very early date in the history of the colonies. This is equally true of the English, French, and Dutch Empires. The Dutch of New York exported horses, lumber, and provisions to Curaçao before the English conquest. In the eighteenth century there was a small but growing commerce between Louisbourg and the French sugar islands. It never became so important as the similar trade between the English colonies. The French settlements in North America were thinly populated and for the most part inaccessible; moreover the French West Indies relied more than the English on foodstuffs from Europe.

The connexion of New England with Barbados and the Leeward Islands was almost as old as the colonies themselves.¹ The sugar-planters needed flour, horses, fish, and lumber, some of which they could only obtain from England with difficulty and after much administrative formality, others could scarcely be had there at all. Most of these branches of export to the West Indies were resigned by England to North America without much reluctance, and the only important class of provisions which the sugar-planters still drew from Europe was the beef and butter of Ireland. If North America was thus indispensable to the West Indies, the West Indies were hardly less necessary to North America. They furnished sugar, rum, and molasses—the last two articles were more necessary, if anything, than the first. They also offered a market for the agricultural produce which was almost all that the Northern Colonies were at that time capable of producing. This is not the place to illustrate the many ways in which the West India trade interwove itself with the economic life of North America, and the convenience it afforded, especially to small traders and beginners, for making remittances to pay for manufactures imported from England. It is enough to say that the merchants of North America professed, and perhaps also believed, that they could not profitably carry on any branch of business without liberty to export their produce to the West Indies and bring back West India goods.

In the seventeenth century the agriculture of the Northern

¹ V. T. Harlow, *A History of Barbados, 1625-1685*, c. vi.

Colonies could do little more than supply the needs of the English sugar islands; but already the farmers of North America were beginning to look for wider markets in the West Indies. In the reign of Queen Anne there were frequent complaints of an unpatriotic trade with Curaçao and St. Thomas, two nests of cosmopolitan smugglers from which provisions were finding their way to the French islands. The Board of Trade suggested some ill-considered measures against this trade.¹

The disproportion of North American production to West Indian consumption continued to grow; New England, New York, and Philadelphia traded more and more with the French islands. I have already dealt with the French attitude to this trade, and referred in an earlier chapter to the Molasses Act, which was designed to stop it by laying heavy duties on certain goods imported from the foreign West Indies.² Many of the arguments which attended the passage of that law, reappeared in the discussion of the 'pernicious and unwarrantable traffic' which the Northern Colonies carried on with the enemy in these wars. It was only a new form of the old controversy between North America and the West Indies, sharpened by the charges of treason, or at least want of patriotism, which the disputants bandied about. The expedients with which the West Indians obstructed the trade with the enemy sometimes bore a likeness to those which they demanded in peace for the permanent protection of their interests; the traders' devices for eluding the duties or the penalties of unlawful commerce with the French, were very much the same in peace and war.

The Molasses Act did not determine the controversy, for it was not executed. The price of West India goods in England and America began to rise about 1740, as the North American merchants had prophesied; but that did not satisfy the West Indians, nor could it be ascribed to a cessation of the traffic with the French West Indies. That traffic continued and increased; the sum of the duties paid under the Act was absurdly small.³ The customs officers hardly tried to collect them; for example, when those of Salem began in 1758 to demand a tenth of the duties, the merchants exclaimed against

¹ *C.S.P. Col.* 1702, nos. 498, 743; 1702-3, nos. 16, 950, 1014, 1072 (i), 1150 (ii); 1704-5, nos. 669, 671, 677 (i), 846, 914; 1710-11, nos. 47, 104.

² *V. supra*, pp. 79-82.

³ T 70/1205. The duties on foreign West India goods—apart from prize goods—did not amount to £1,000 until 1749.

the innovation as unprecedentedly burdensome.¹ Compounding for these duties was very common, and the Act must have had a very bad effect on commercial morality and on the probity of the customs officers.² When the traders with the French were brought up in the Prize Courts during the wars, they very often defended themselves by arguing that the customs officers of North America made no objection to the entry of French West India goods, whether they came from neutral or even enemy ports.³

The officers in the West Indies were equally to blame for the state of affairs: through their connivance or neglect, the traders got false clearances from our own islands for cargoes which were loaded elsewhere. At Kingston, Jamaica, North American vessels were allowed to clear out with imaginary cargoes representing what they intended to take on board in the outports where there were no custom-houses; nothing easier than to load at St. Domingue instead of going to the outports at all.⁴ False clearances must have been obtained in other West India ports without even this respectable excuse.⁵

Yet even if the officers had always been honest, they had very little power. Sometimes an accident might make this trade so obvious that it could not be passed over—as when one of Peter Faneuil's vessels fell into the hands of the public authorities after suffering piracy and shipwreck. Nothing more than intention to smuggle could be proved in these cases, so that the worst the customs officers could do, whether backed or resisted by public opinion, was to exact the Molasses Act duties.⁶

¹ Timothy Orne to George Dodge, July 18, 1758, April 30, 1759, Timothy Orne MSS. iii. 136, iv. 35, Essex Institute.

² Letter to the *Boston Evening Post*, Nov. 21, 1763; letter of 'Shearjashub Squeezum' to the *Boston Gazette*, Aug. 27, 1764, *Colden Papers (N.Y.H.S. Collections, 1877)*, ii. 371.

³ See, for example, the deposition of George Williams in the *Chester*, Angell, H.C.A. 42/59.

⁴ Knowles to Board of Trade, Jan. 10, 1753, C.O. 137/25, X 122.

⁵ The Governor of the Leeward Islands charged Dunbar, the Surveyor-General of the Customs, with various irregularities designed to favour the illicit traders, especially with refusal to make vessels coming or going to St. Eustatius enter and clear; he even accused him of partnership with the smuggling Governor of St. Eustatius. This last accusation, however, was very freely thrown about in the West Indies, and Mathew seems to have had a feud with Dunbar, so his invectives must be discounted (Mathew to Yeamans, May 29, 1741, C.O. 152/44; Yeamans to Stone, Aug. 4, *ibid.*).

⁶ Report of the Solicitor-General of St. Kitts, Assembly Minutes, May 18, 1752 (St. Kitts Administrator's Office). For the history of Faneuil's ship, see his letters

The planters soon set to work to get the Act reinforced. They aimed at forbidding all intercourse with the foreign West Indies—this had been the original form of the Molasses Act, as it passed the Commons in 1731, and many planters regretted that Parliament had contented itself in the end with imposing severe duties. A Bill was introduced into the House of Commons for this purpose in 1739, but it fell short of a complete prohibition; the precautions against fraud were too elaborate and onerous, and the representatives of planters and merchants disagreed about it. For these reasons the Agents of some islands took it upon themselves to resist it. Their constituents did not blame them, though the legislatures of Barbados and St. Kitts were ready to accept a partial measure if the complete prohibition could not be obtained.¹ The sugar colonies, headed by Jamaica and Antigua, tried again in 1749–51, making capital of the unpatriotic character of the trade carried on by the Flags of Truce in time of war. They petitioned Parliament, but the Agents of Pennsylvania and New York struck back by taxing the planters with monopoly and *latifundia*, and for the next few years the planters had to defend themselves against a similar attack from the sugar-refiners. Their Agents still blustered, and summoned the chief representative of the Northern Colonies to prepare himself for a final trial of strength in 1752; but the threatened Bill was never introduced, and the West India interest busied itself with other expedients.²

On the eve of the Seven Years War a new circumstance disposed the West Indian and North American interests to a reconciliation; the Ministry was known to have its eye on the trade as a source of revenue, and both parties concurred to

to Benjamin Faneuil, Sept. 26, 1738; to Jacques Castera, Oct. 11; to Capt. John Browne, Dec. 4, 1738, Faneuil Letter-book, New England Historical and Genealogical Society.

¹ St. Kitts Council Minutes, Nov. 7, 1739, C.O. 241/4; Barbados Council Minutes, March 19, 1739/40, C.O. 31/21.

² Antigua legislature to John Sharpe, Nov. 30, 1750; Minutes of Dec. 14, 1752 (Antigua Assembly Minutes, St. John's Court-House); St. Kitts Council Minutes, Nov. 10, March 11, 1750/1, May 1, 1752 (St. Kitts Administrator's Office); Legislature of Jamaica to George II, Nov. 21, 1749, Nov. 20, 1752, C.O. 137/25 X 48, 115; C.7. xxvi. 107–8 (petition of West India merchants), 156 (petition of Bollan), 169 (petition of Partridge), 183–4 (petitions of Charles, and of various merchants); Partridge to Greene, July 24, 1751, April 10, 1752, West Indian Agents to Partridge, July 11, 1751, Kimball, *Correspondence of Colonial Governors of Rhode Island*, ii. 131–5; Lascelles and Maxwell to Gedney Clarke, April 19, 1751, W. & G. v.

resist this as the worst possible settlement of their differences.¹ I do not know whether the Government's project was an anticipation of the Sugar Act of 1764 or that of 1766—that is to say, whether it tended only to lower the duties on foreign West India goods so as to make them payable, or to charge British West India produce with them as well. The scheme was dropped for the time being, like that of the Stamp Act, to be revived after the war with fatal and disconcerting effects.

The North Americans imported foreign sugars chiefly for their own consumption, but they might tranship some of it and send it to London as English produce. This was unfair to the English planters, whose produce would have had to pay the 'Plantation duties' of 1674 if carried to England by the same roundabout way, whereas the French sugar actually paid nothing at all. They petitioned the Treasury for the exclusion from England of all West India produce not imported straight from the West Indies, or at least for a rule that sugars thus indirectly imported were to be presumed foreign and pay duties as such.² The Treasury took this last piece of advice in 1756, to the great discontent of some North American merchants. The West Indians sometimes urged that the Plantation duties of 1674 should be abolished. The Government, however, would not hear of this.³

The planters resorted to other methods for protecting themselves against foreign competition. Besides the smuggling of foreign sugar and rum into the Northern Colonies, they had to meet a danger nearer home, by stopping the leaks in their own islands. Measures had already been taken for this purpose. The introduction of foreign sugars into the West India colonies damaged the planters, for it tended to lower the price in the home market. It ruined them when there was a large crop, and took away the benefit they might have gained by a short

¹ Letter of William Bollan, Agent for Massachusetts, 1754, M.H.S. MSS. 91 L; Bollan to Willard, Aug. 12, 1754, *ibid.*

² Petition of planters and merchants, ? 1754, Add. MSS. 34729, f. 350; Lascelles and Maxwell to Nicholas Wilcox, Aug. 28, 1754, W. & G. vii. See also *C.S.P. Col. 1720-1*, nos. 44, 197.

³ Lascelles and Maxwell to Florentius Vassall, Nov. 9, 1752, March 10 and 16, 1753, W. & G. vi; Trelawny to Board of Trade, Aug. 15, 1752, C.O. 137/25 X 104. Paterson, the surveyor-general of the customs in the West Indies, thought that the abolition of these duties would not lower the price but only put money in the planters' pockets (Paterson to Wood, July 5, 1751, Bodleian Library, North MSS. a 6, f. 176).

one. In 1715, as soon as this trade had begun to flourish, the legislature of Barbados passed an Act to load it with prohibitive duties, and Antigua tried to forbid it altogether.¹ In spite of these laws, French sugars were still smuggled into our own sugar colonies, and imported into England paying duty as English produce—insomuch that some exasperated pamphleteers absurdly charged the planters, during the Molasses Act controversy, with wishing to prevent the North Americans from smuggling in order to have the monopoly of doing it themselves. (This accusation was echoed in 1760 by the writers who pointed out that the Admirals at Jamaica spared the Flag of Truce trade which was carried on from that island while they confiscated all the North Americans.)²

At the same time the advocates of the Northern Colonies developed a contradictory but more serious argument. They attributed the decline of the English re-export trade in sugar to these West Indian laws which kept French sugar out of the Empire and forced it into the European markets.³ It would have been more to our interest to allow, even encourage, the French to smuggle their produce out of their colonies into ours, and then let our merchants import it all to England or carry it straight to Europe. We should gain the benefit of the freights (an important matter for North American shipping) and should make England the 'staple' of the sugar trade, so that the world price would be fixed in London.⁴ Of course this ambitious scheme could not be realized. It was not to be expected that the French Government would allow such a breach of its colonial system. But the suggestion contained the germ of

¹ There is an illuminating account of the arguments for and against this measure, and the conflict of interests involved, in *C.S.P. Col. 1717-18*, no. 495 (i). When the Crown had disallowed the Act, the legislature of Antigua substituted a duty like that of Barbados (*C.S.P. Col. 1720-1*, no. 557). The Customs Commissioners in London thought it equally objectionable (*ibid.*, nos. 623, 641).

² Holmes thought it necessary to answer this in his memorial of Dec. 1760 on the Flag of Truce trade, Adm. 1/236. He said it was not the men-of-war but the Admiralty judges who were to blame. See also the letter of James Duncan to Bowler and Champlin, Dec. 24, 1760, *Commerce of Rhode Island (M.H.S. Collections)*, i. 86. Cotes seized and prosecuted some Jamaica traders whom he caught carrying provisions to Hispaniola; but the Vice-Admiralty judge was persuaded by the merchants to acquit them (Cotes to Cleveland, Feb. 14, 1760, Adm. 1/235).

³ This point is made in *A True State of the Case between the British Northern Colonies and the Sugar Islands in America* (London, 1732).

⁴ Something like this argument appears in Colden's letter to Pitt, Dec. 27, 1760 (Kimball, *Correspondence of William Pitt*, ii. 380) and in the MS. 'Observations in the Monto Christi trade', Add. MSS. 36211, f. 256.

important arguments, for on the one hand it challenged, in the interests of the English consumer, the sugar-planters' monopoly of the home market, and on the other it recognized that a great proportion of the French West India produce found its way to foreign markets, and proposed to substitute England or North America for France as the intermediary of that trade—a thing which could much easier be done in a war than in a peace, owing to the English command of the sea. All these considerations were set forth again in the controversy over the Monte Cristi trade.

They had little effect upon the sugar-planters. The legislature of Barbados confessed itself shaken in its convictions, and ready to give up obstructing the imports of French sugar into the islands, if a moderate duty could be collected which would equalize the prices of English and French produce at London, and enable them both to be kept up.¹ The other Assemblies, however, were unconverted, and those which had not already forbidden or penalized the importation of French produce did so after 1739. Jamaica prohibited the export of sugar-machinery to the foreign West Indies, and laid a heavy duty on foreign West India merchandise. The means of enforcing this law had to be strengthened repeatedly. In 1741 two special customs officers were appointed for the purpose; in the next year they were increased to seven, and in 1745 they were given a salary, obliged to take an oath, and furnished with boats and negroes for the execution of their offices.² Finally, the importation of French and Spanish produce was entirely forbidden in 1746 for the duration of the war.

Between 1750 and 1756 the island legislatures passed a series of laws for supplementing the Molasses Act. Some amounted only to a declaration that whosoever imported French sugars into the English islands was an enemy to his country and unworthy to be a member of civil society. Others obliged the masters of ships loaded for England to prove the English origin of their cargoes by furnishing the customs officers with certificates from the producers.³ Some colonies went farther still. The Board of Trade had sent out in 1752 a circular which

¹ Barbados Council Minutes, March 19, 1739/40, C.O. 31/21.

² C.O. 139/15.

³ Antigua Assembly Minutes, Nov. 15, 1750 (Court House, St. Johns); St. Kitts Assembly Minutes, May 18 and June 11, 1752 (St. Kitts Administrator's Office); Montserrat Assembly Minutes, Feb. 22, 1755, C.O. 177/8.

ordered the West Indian Governors to prevent at the same time the emigration of English planters to foreign sugar colonies, and the introduction of foreign sugars into our own.¹ On the strength of this, Jamaica prohibited such imports outright in 1756, and afterwards went so far as to establish the penalty of death in certain cases. The Board of Trade had always questioned the wisdom of such an extreme policy.² Since the Molasses Act allowed foreign produce to be entered upon payment of heavy duties, it did not become the legislature of a colony to exclude it altogether. For this reason among others, the Board advised George III to disallow a re-enactment of this law in 1761. The Assembly of Jamaica furiously refused to accept any of the alterations which the Board had suggested, and solemnly indicted it for negligence and folly.³

The trade from Ireland to the foreign sugar colonies had never excited so much controversy. The French fleets and colonies depended almost entirely on Irish beef, and to a less degree on Irish butter. The attempts to establish a cattle-raising and grazing industry in the south of France were almost entirely unsuccessful before 1775; so were the efforts to replace Irish beef with Danish.⁴ The only question was whether the provisions should be exported from Ireland in French, Dutch, or English ships. The customs authorities disliked the French traders, because they smuggled tea, brandy, and silks into Ireland; but this branch of exportation was presumably too necessary to Ireland to be hindered in time of peace by restricting the use of foreign shipping. Although the sugar-planters sometimes included Ireland in their general condemnation of all forms of trade with the French West Indies, they did not usually ask to have the export of Irish provisions suppressed in time of peace; the agitation for an embargo in 1740 was exceptional, because everybody believed that we should very soon be at war with France. However, the suggestion was sometimes made. For instance, in 1748 the English merchants trading to Hamburg put it forward in a memorial on the ways

¹ Circular of June 3, 1752, C.O. 138/19, pp. 360-1.

² *C.S.P. Col. 1717-18*, no. 611; *1719-20*, no. 201.

³ Act of Feb. 7, 1756, C.O. 139/18; Wood to Pownall, June 20, 1761, C.O. 137/32, BB 26; Pownall to Moore, July 6, 1761, C.O. 138/22, pp. 176-7; Board of Trade to George III, Jan. 27, 1762, *ibid.*, pp. 227-39; Lyttelton to Board of Trade, Oct. 13, 1762, C.O. 137/32, BB 65.

⁴ L. Vignols, in *Revue Historique*, vol. 159, pp. 79-95.

of meeting French competition; they lamented the complete decay of the re-export of English sugar to that market, and proposed to consolidate the slight advantage regained in the war, by depriving the French islands permanently of Irish beef.¹

This was the background of the disputes which arose in war-time over the propriety of trade with the enemy. North America and Ireland found it increasingly hard to abstain from intercourse with the French colonies, regardless of peace or war; their livelihood depended on it. For the West Indies on the other hand the path of patriotism should have been smooth in war-time; they were entitled to demand as a military necessity an abstention which it had always been to their economic interest to enforce. Some of their arguments against the Flag of Truce and Monte Cristi trades rested entirely upon the assumption that the blockade was only a move or an incident in the economic war of the English and French sugar colonies.²

§ ii. *The Expediency of Trade with the Enemy*

Was it right, politic, or lawful to trade with the enemy? No doubt there were some unthinking conservatives who answered no to all these questions at once; but it needs something subtler than outraged patriotism to define the real interests of a trading nation. All sorts of distinctions were to be observed.

The advocates and critics of trade with the enemy started from incompatible premisses. One of the most important questions in dispute was the effect of prohibition. One party assumed without proof that the enemy could never be reduced to extremities by withholding any branch of trade from him. Pulteney (if he was the real author of the notorious *Considerations upon the Embargo of Provisions of Victual*) went so far as to ask:

‘Whether any folly be more exploded, if fatal and general experience can explode a folly, than the supposition, that any nation can exclude the rest of the world from any branch of commerce? Whether it can be supposed that Providence has been so severe upon any country, as to put it in the power of another to starve her inhabi-

¹ Memorandum of English Merchants Adventurers in Hamburg, Oct. 8, 1748, S.P. 75/91.

² For instance, Admiral Holmes’s apologists dwell on the evil effect of the Flag of Truce trade, which renders sugar-cultivation possible in St. Domingue and raises the value of its plantations, at the same time that it drains Jamaica of cash and raises the prices of the necessaries of life (Unsigned paper of 1760, and Memorial of Dec. 1760, Adm. 1/236).

tants? Whether it is possible to conceive, that any nation abounding in wealth can fail to be supplied with necessaries for money?¹

On the other hand, the partisans of prohibition pointed to the existence of certain natural monopolies or acquired superiorities, which would enable us to inflict real privation on the enemy.

One of the best examples of natural monopoly was Irish beef. The French Government talked glibly, at the beginning of each war, about supplies of Jutland beef and Iceland mutton. Experiments were made, and some orders placed; indeed the French victuallers were forced in the Seven Years War to buy a great deal more Danish beef than they wanted, in order to smooth the path of French diplomacy in the Baltic. The meat was wretchedly prepared, and stank; if the fleets and colonies of France could not have obtained Irish victuals surreptitiously in spite of the war, they must have been very severely embarrassed.² So far, experience seemed to show that in some cases a nation could inflict real damage upon another by refusing to export certain goods or services.

A particularly interesting case was that of insurance. Here we seemed to have built up a superiority even over the Dutch, by the greater punctuality and science of our underwriters (Beckford denied this, but most of the writers on the subject, such as Magens and Beawes, contradicted him). Sir John Barnard and others argued that this pre-eminence was not great enough to be presumed upon; they prophesied that if we refused to insure the enemy's ships, the Dutch would do it, or the French could insure themselves, and we should have sacrificed our own gain for nothing. Willimot adduced on the same side an argument peculiar to insurance. Our advantage arose from our lower premiums, which we could afford to take because we did a greater volume of business. Subtract from that volume, and you are obliged to increase the premiums; business flies away from London to Amsterdam. Yet, as Walpole pointed out, the mere fact that all foreigners applied to us for insurance proved that we could inflict a real damage upon them by withholding it. The advantage they gained from it consisted in getting it done at cheaper rates than any other underwriters

¹ This pamphlet is reprinted by Cobbett in *Parl. Hist.* xi. 867-74.

² Chamber of Commerce of Guienne, minutes of Dec. 15 and 22, 1740, Arch. Gir. C 4254, ff. 82-3. See also M. Vignols's article quoted above.

would offer. We could deprive them of that advantage at least, and by doing so we might prevent them from competing with us in the neutral markets. Some spokesmen on the same side went farther. Cheap and reliable insurance was indispensable, especially to traders with small capital. Without it, they must give up their business.¹ A writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* even predicted that France would otherwise pursue her continental schemes in security without troubling to protect her maritime trade, knowing that we should in any case insure it for her. That might be an exaggeration; yet there was some absurdity, as Magens suggested, in the spectacle of a vast navy and a horde of privateers diligently engaged in interrupting a commerce which their own fellow countrymen had protected, at a price, from total loss.²

'Throwing the trade into the hands of the Dutch' was one of the great national bugbears, not only of England but of France. Those who did not absolutely deny that we could lose a trade in any circumstances, were forced to acknowledge that we might be unable to recover at a peace the customers we had flung away for reasons of state during a war. Economic thinkers were obsessed by the idea of 'channels' of trade, which they claimed to have derived from Locke.³ A customer soon forgets the merchant with whom he dealt in the past, in favour of the shop which supplies him at present. Once alienate him and accustom him to dealing with a rival, he is lost for ever. No doubt there was good psychology in this, but there was also

¹ There is here a parallel with certain arguments used in the Molasses Act controversy. That discussion turned partly on the question whether, if the export of provisions and lumber from North America to the French sugar islands were withheld, the French planters would be forced to go out of business, or be put to serious inconvenience. The North Americans maintained that the only effect would be to stimulate production in Canada and Louisiana, which could easily fill their own place after a few years. Here they were probably wrong, but they were never proved so by experience, because in fact they never ceased to trade with the French West Indies in peace or war.

² See the debates of Feb. 27, 1740/1, Dec. 18, 1747, and Feb. 25, 1752, *Parl. Hist.* xii. 7 et seqq., xiv. 108 et seqq., 1208 et seqq.; *Gentleman's Magazine*, xvi. 17; Nicholas Magens, *An Essay on Insurances*, 1755, i, pp. vi-ix, 42-5; Wyndham Beawes, *Lex Mercatoria Rediviva*, 1771 edition, p. 272.

³ 'When trade is once lost, it will be too late by a mistimed care, easily to retrieve it again, for the currents of trade, like those of waters, make themselves channels, out of which they are afterwards as hard to be diverted as rivers that have worn themselves deep within their banks.' (Quoted by James Knight, Add. MSS. 22677, f. 65, from the *Considerations of the Lowering of Interest and Raising the Value of Money*, vol. v, p. 14 of the collected *Works* of 1823.)

some economic unreason. Alderman Janssen pointed out that we had obtained our position as the leading insurers of the world by doing business on better terms than anybody else; even if we should forfeit that advantage during the war in order to distress our enemy, we could recover it after the peace by the same methods which first gained it for us. Yet the theory of 'channels of trade' was very dear to most writers, and justified in their eyes almost any kind of dealings with the enemy. Pulteney held up for imitation the example of the Dutch, who are 'so careful to preserve the inlets of gain from obstruction, that they make no scruple of supplying their enemies with their commodities, and have been known to sell at night those bullets which were next day to be discharged against them'.¹

Bound up with the argument of 'channels' was that of 'dependence'. If we could continue to supply a nation with a necessary article for a long enough time, that nation would become so dependent on us that it would not dare break with us for fear of the privation. This suggestion was made on some very inappropriate occasions. For example, the South Sea factors at Cartagena, who had contracted before the war to supply the galleons with flour, tried to induce Vernon to let them fulfil their bargain, by arguing that

'not only this city and province, but all this coast, would in a small course of years, have been entirely dependent upon the English; for we gave the flour at so low a rate, that all ranks of people began to make use of that, instead of maize or Indian corn. The husbandmen in Santa Fé, which is the only place in all this Kingdom that produces wheat, began to neglect their tillage, for they could not afford to sell the quintal of flour, for less than near double what we sold it for . . . so that in two or three years more, we may safely affirm, no other flour would have been consumed in this province, but what was introduced from our colonies, which . . . would have made the Spaniards so dependent upon us, that it would not have been easy for them to have freed themselves.'²

¹ Debate of Nov. 25, 1740, *Parl. Hist.* xi. 849. The author of *The Advantages and Disadvantages which will attend the Prohibition of the Merchandises of Spain impartially examined* (London, 1740) both advances and denies the argument of channels of trade. Extraordinary as Pulteney's statement about the Dutch may seem, it did not go much beyond the truth. François Libault, a merchant of Amsterdam, sent out a consignment of arms to St. Eustatius in 1745, observing to his correspondents that they would be 'a very good article, whether we enter the war ourselves, or only to sell to the enemy privateers' (Libault to P. and J. Heyliger, May 15, 1745, in the *Vryheid*, Vos, H.C.A. 42/50).

² Ord and Gray to Vernon, Nov. 20, N.S., 1739, S.P. 42/85, f. 117. Vernon

There was little point in this contention at the very outbreak of a war. The argument was sometimes used in more respectable contexts. Governor Dalrymple proposed supplying the French with North America produce through a free port on Dominica, in order that we might keep control of that trade and, if necessary, reduce the French islands, grown dependent upon it, to instant starvation by a sudden suspension.¹ In fact the argument of dependence was at the bottom of the proposals to make England the 'staple' of the sugar trade by encouraging imports from the French colonies, and of all other schemes of national monopoly. It was not a very satisfactory piece of reasoning. Besides the miscalculation which might be involved in all such assumptions of dependence, it required the Government to tolerate a trade during one war in order to make all future wars impossible; and such a plea would presumably be repeated by interested parties every time a war should happen, for the ideal moment of dependence could never be proved to have arrived.

Even if we deprived the enemy of a real advantage by withholding our goods and services from him, did we inflict upon him a damage equal to our own loss? This must turn on the size of the profits in any given branch of trade, and on the nature of the goods and services themselves. The *Considerations upon the Embargo of Provisions of Victual* pointed to the vast reduction of profits and rents which must ensue in Ireland from a suspension of the export of beef; this must in turn diminish the subject's capacity to pay taxes and therefore the national resources to carry on the war. The same arguments came up in the debates on insurance. Walpole assumed without question that a lesser evil must be suffered for the purpose of inflicting a greater; and other speakers on the same side set the expenses of a further prolongation of the war against the much smaller loss incurred in order to reduce the enemy to terms quickly.² Murray and Ryder, the Law Officers of the Crown, set out to exaggerate the profits of the business, in order to justify insuring enemy ships in war time. Magens took them to task in his

thought this reasoning odd; see his letter to Newcastle, Jan. 18-31, 1739/40, f. 105.

¹ Dalrymple to Bute, Feb. 27, 1763, *Correspondence of George III* (ed. Fortescue), i. 44-9.

² This argument is also used in the discussion on the propriety of exporting corn to France, *Gentleman's Magazine*, xviii. 20-1 (Jan. 1748).

Essay on Insurances, but his arguments seem to assume that the underwriters knew very little about the conduct of their affairs. Here again, however, insurance raised issues peculiar to itself. Advocates of prohibition contrasted the smaller loss of individuals with the greater gain of the nation. If we refrained from insuring the enemy's ships, then every prize taken would be a clear addition to the national wealth; if on the other hand all these prizes were insured, the national gain could only consist of the insurer's profits.

Some people justified by its profits the trade between North America and the French colonies in time of war. Judge Auchmuty of Boston, in his long and elaborate sentence on the *Victory*,¹ found it necessary to meet the argument that the Flag of Truce trade was lucrative and brought in a profit of 5,000 per cent. He did so indirectly, merely admitting that it 'enriched some particular favourites', but denying that it ever added or would add a farthing to His Majesty's revenues, because the importers of French West India goods always eluded paying the duties. This was true, although the Flag of Truce traders defended themselves in the Prize Courts by alleging that the public Treasury benefited from the customs dues which they paid on their importations.² It was also relevant, for one of the strongest arguments for allowing any trade with the enemy was the increase of the public revenue. Moreover, there was something reprehensible in the spectacle of the English navy creating, by its blockade, high profits for the English blockade-runners—the more so as that blockade was maintained at the expense of neutrals. Admiral Holmes adverted to this point in the memorial which he wrote or inspired against the Flag of Truce trade.³ Even if the trade was as lucrative as it was represented to be, we were buying the advantage by the sacrifice of our national honour and consistency.

Besides, Holmes denied that any profits were made in the commerce, for it was so overdone that North American goods were sometimes sold below their first cost, and the scramble for sugars and molasses was so great as to raise the prices to a height which afforded the buyer no profit. This assertion is in some degree borne out by the private correspondence of traders.

¹ H.C.A. 42/48.

² See the master's depositions in the case of the *Three Brothers*, Gilbert, H.C.A. 42/97.

³ Dec. 1760, Adm. 1/236.

North American captains and supercargoes were slow to admit that trade was good at any time or place, so it would be unsafe to make too much account of their jeremiads; but certain statements are so precise as to leave little room for discount.¹

The trade which the North Americans carried on with the French through the Spanish free port of Monte Cristi was defended by the same arguments as that of the Flags of Truce. It disposed of some English manufactures at high prices to the French colonists, whose produce was bought very cheap in return. A great deal of this produce was carried directly or indirectly to the neutral markets of Europe, especially Hamburg and Leghorn.² Here the North Americans were claiming the right to usurp the French carrying trade during the war, and pocket the profits of it. All these profits, they said, 'centred' in England. Such commerce was at any rate less harmful to the English sugar-planters than the unlawful importation of French sugar into the markets which were reserved for them alone; it only interfered with the hypothetical profit they might have made by re-exporting their produce to the neutral countries which were deprived of French sugars by the blockade. The benefit which English industry received from this commerce was not to be measured only by the manufactures which were sold directly to the French planters—for indeed that was one of the least important parts of the trade, and strictly discouraged by the French Government. All those manufactures ought also to be comprehended which the Northern Colonies were able to buy out of the profits of this commerce; thus quite apart from any direct increase in the yield of taxes, a general prosperity

¹ For example, Captain Randall reports from Port au Prince to his owners in Rhode Island, 'As for dry goods, the place is glutted from York, Philadelphia and Jamaica. Every store full. I am in hopes to make the first cost, but numbers are obliged to sink 20 & 30 & 50 per cent. who has purchased effects before the sale of their goods' (John Carter Brown Library, Nicholas Brown MSS., Brigantine Providence, March 5, 1760). Many other informations of the same kind could be quoted, e.g. Thomas Rimington, Monte Cristi, to the owners of the *Windmill*, Rhode Island, March 15 and 23, 1760 (Champlin Papers, R.I.H.S.).

² The following are some of the vessels employed in this trade—*Baron von Bernstorff*, Lemwig, H.C.A. 42/57 (Amsterdam); *St. Croix*, Debroskey, H.C.A. 42/61 (Hamburg); *Sharp*, Maitland, H.C.A. 42/95 (Venice); *Quebeck*, Pew, H.C.A. 42/90 (Hamburg); *Gregg*, Nichols, H.C.A. 42/68 (Gibraltar and Venice); *General Wolfe*, Thompson, H.C.A. 42/68 (Ireland and Hamburg); *Charming Polly*, Horton, H.C.A. 42/59 (Leghorn). A detailed view of the trade between New England, Monte Cristi, and Gibraltar can be obtained from the Derby Family MSS., vol. xii, in the Essex Institute, Salem, Mass.

would diffuse itself through the Empire if this intercourse with the enemy were allowed.¹

This argument was borrowed directly from the debates over the Molasses Act,² and could only be answered, in so far as it was answered at all, by another of the same kind.

'If such commerce should be decreed in courts of judicature lawful, then such traders even paying the duty can afford to undersell his Majesty's good subjects in his sugar colonies, and much more so when according to their usual practice they pay no duty, to the impoverishing those plantations, and diminishing his Majesty's revenue, furthermore . . . these illicit traders bring back into the northern colonies rum, sugar, molasses, indigo, cotton &c., for all which we ought to depend upon his Majesty's colonies and not upon the enemy.'³

Thus the calculations of national profit and loss were by no means easy to adjust out of hand, and finally became embroiled in sectional controversies. There were other considerations from which the statesmen might get some guidance as to the kinds of trade with the enemy to be allowed and condemned. The popular economic doctrines of the time afforded a rough and ready criterion by distinguishing the countries with which, as a whole, trade was 'beneficial' and 'unprofitable'. This criterion was itself determined by the supposed balance of payments, and by the character of the goods imported and exported. On this last point, strategy and international law also had some advice to offer.

It would not be too much to say that many people thought of trade itself as a kind of warfare. Some regarded each individual bargain as a battlefield, in which one party must lose and the other gain. In the debate upon prohibiting the insurance of enemy ships, Baltimore argued that as we made a profit

¹ Horatio Sharpe, Governor of Maryland, to William Sharpe, July 8, 1760, *Correspondence of Governor Sharpe*, ed. Maryland Historical Society, ii. 442; 'Observations in the Monto Christi trade', Add. MSS. 36211, f. 256.

² So were those with which Governors Hopkins and Colden answered Pitt's circular letter of August 1760 about the Flag of Truce trade. They laid stress on the vast excess of North American production over British West Indian consumption, and the impossibility of paying for English manufactures except by exporting the surplus to the foreign colonies (Hopkins to Pitt, Dec. 20, 1760; Colden to Pitt, Dec. 27, 1760, Kimball, *Correspondence of William Pitt with Colonial Governors*, ii. 373-82).

³ This piece of political economy comes from Auchmuty's sentence upon the *Victory*; it is a good and somewhat rare example of the incorporation of current economic controversy into the judicial pronouncements of the Prize Courts.

by underwriting foreign ships (without which we should not be ready to do the business), we must inflict a proportionate loss upon the foreigners whom we insured, and this trade was therefore fit to be continued during the war. Others did not consider each transaction in detail, but looked rather at the totality of exchanges between any two nations. It is commonly thought that this national gain or loss was measured only by the ultimate payment of money from one country to another. That is an injustice to the mercantilists, who had other criteria of success or failure in this economic struggle; for example, a nation might be regarded as the winner which exported all its products as manufactured as possible and imported those of other countries as raw as possible. The exact form of the judgement does not matter; the point is that international trade was thought of as warfare. The duty of the Government was therefore quite clear when a war, in the political sense, broke out. It must do the enemies of the state as much harm as possible by protecting all those branches of trade with them in which we gained, and cutting off all those in which we lost; or if the thing was conceived in terms of whole nations, intercourse with our enemies was to be favoured or discouraged according as our trade with them was 'advantageous' or 'unprofitable'.

Hence the distinction between the treatment of French and Spanish trade. We believed ourselves to be gainers in our trade with Spain, losers in that with France. In the former, manufactures went out and cash came in, while in the other we bought manufactures or luxuries with money.¹ The Government discriminated accordingly. A war with France was usually an opportunity of stopping up all commerce with her; the Act of 1740 against trade with Spain was drawn up very carefully so as to avoid proscribing the exportation of English manufactures to the Spanish colonies—or to Spain in Europe, for that matter, if she would receive them. In fact, although the preamble recited the necessity of a general suspension of trade with Spain, nothing was prohibited but certain imports; the enlarge-

¹ The Customs statistics do not support the opinion that we lost in our trade with France. The declared exports always overbalanced the declared imports; but there was a great deal of smuggling to be taken into account. The same figures show a contrast between the effects of the prohibitions against trade with France and Spain. The imports from Spain sank to about a sixth of the ordinary quantity, but the imports from France were abolished altogether (see Whitworth's tables, *State of the Trade of Great Britain*).

ment of the market for English manufactures in the Spanish dominions was not only a necessary consequence, but perhaps one of the principal objects, of the war.¹

Even the suppression of commerce with France was rendered less rigorous by the disposition to spare exports while discouraging imports. An Act of 1691 had actually threatened exporters of any goods to France with a *praemunire*, but that was an exception. That of 1705, modelled on an earlier one of 1689, merely forbade imports, reciting in the preamble that

'it hath been found by long experience, that the bringing in of French wines, vinegar, brandy, linen, silks, salt, paper and other the growth, product or manufacture of France, or of the territories or dominions of the French King, hath much exhausted the treasure of this nation, lessened the value of the native commodities and manufactures thereof, and greatly impoverished the English artificers and handicrafts.'

Parliament discovered by 1710 that the prohibition against importing French wines injured the revenue and the nation at large. It therefore allowed them to enter in neutral shipping on condition that the vessel which carried them should have paid for them by exporting a cargo of English manufactures.² The same tendency to encourage exports can be seen in the treatment of the tobacco trade. A great deal of the Virginia and Maryland crop was exported in times of peace to France, where the Farmers-General had a monopoly of buying and reselling it. Both the producers and the London tobacco-merchants in this trade would have been injured, if not ruined, by a complete suspension of their very specialized business; nor could the Farmers-General supply themselves from any other quarter. Accordingly the export of tobacco from England continued throughout the wars of 1744 and 1756 in ships licensed for that purpose. One of the few conditions which the English Government made, was that no French goods should be imported in return. France was not in a condition to resist or resent this proviso.³

Most people thought it proper to distinguish the kinds of

¹ This subject has been dealt with at greater length in Chapter III, pp. 114-27.

² 1 W. & M., c. 34; 3 & 4 W. & M., c. 13; 3 & 4 Anne, cc. 12, 13; 9 Anne, c. 8.

³ *A.P.C. Col.* iii. 796-8; iv. 328-33. Marsden prints a specimen pass in *Law and Custom*, ii. 375. Seventy-eight passes were granted for tobacco-ships between Aug. 13, 1756, and Jan. 1, 1760, all in the name of George Fitzgerald (S.P. 42/140).

goods which ought to be exported to the enemy or imported from him. Obviously the sale of warlike stores to the enemy was out of the question. Nobody defended it; even Pulteney, with his rhodomontade about the Dutch, did not really justify it. The same thing may in one sense be said of the export of naval stores and provisions. Although many arguments were found for this trade, hardly one of them was grounded on its inherent harmlessness. It might be a necessary or a profitable trade, but nobody denied that it was advantageous to the enemy and helped him to carry on the war. A writer on behalf of the Monte Cristi trade argued that as St. Domingue could never be starved out, there was no harm in carrying victuals there; but this assertion, itself quite false, seems to be almost the only argument for this trade which recognized that there were military as well as economic necessities to be considered. The exporters were content for the most part to smuggle *sans phrase*, or to put forward their own interests as a sufficient excuse. For example, the merchants of Barbados and Jamaica would allege that perishable goods such as flour and fish must rot in their stores for want of a market; they neither specified the places to which they wished to export them, nor faced the argument that their commodities had better perish than be carried to the enemy.

Even the objectors to the export of provisions had other reasons for their policy besides their desire to reduce the enemy to famine. Most of the North American embargoes were designed to serve a double purpose—to distress the enemy and to render possible the accumulation at a reasonable price of victuals for a military expedition. This is clear from the letters of Governor Clinton, Lord Loudoun, and General Amherst, and the coincidence of the embargoes with such operations.¹ When Vernon appealed to all colonial Governors in the autumn of 1740 to stop the export of provisions to the Neutral Islands, he did so both because he wanted to paralyse the enemy's fleets and because he was afraid that if a free trade was allowed, the forces under his own command might suffer hunger.² The

¹ Loudoun to Sharpe, Aug. 20, 1756, *Correspondence of Governor Sharpe* (Maryland Hist. Soc.), i. 463. Amherst, for example, took off the embargo in 1762 when it had served the purpose of enabling him to commandeer enough shipping and collect enough provisions (Amherst to Ward, June 13, 1762, *R.I. Col. Rec.* vi. 323).

² Vernon to Ward, Nov. 13, 1740, Kimball, *Correspondence of Colonial Governors*

victualling contractors were always suspected of prompting such embargoes. Whenever large forces were raised, or arrived in the colonies, they created a market for provisions and rum, and caused the prices to rise, to the disadvantage of the contractors, who had undertaken to furnish the supplies at a fixed rate. It was their obvious interest to have the price artificially depressed by confining the goods to the home market. For this cause, the Opposition ascribed the Irish embargo of 1740 to the victualling contractors, and Commodore Legge observed some years later that 'an Irish embargo was an English job'. There are some traces of such interference. Augustus Boyd was certainly concerned in the victualling during the Seven Years War; he called the attention of the Ministry to the clandestine exportation of Irish beef to the enemy, and argued strongly for its repression. In the Spanish War he had done the same, but with a virtuous disclaimer of interested motives—for, he said, if orders from abroad could be executed, he would have the handling of them.¹

The opposition to the export of provisions did not proceed only from those who were charged with the business of supplying our own forces. The consumers were equally concerned in it. James Knight hinted that he was not sorry to see Irish beef embargoed for military reasons, because otherwise the West India planter would have had to pay too high a price.² In the islands this motive becomes much clearer. Trelawny allowed the export from Jamaica of such provisions as were plentiful there. Barbados, with its large population of poor whites, had always attended more than most other islands to their subsistence, and the real object of embargoes apparently military in

of Rhode Island, i. 185; Vernon to Newcastle, May 26 and Oct. 7, 1740, S.P. 42/85, ff. 222, 333.

¹ Boyd to Gore, Dec. 5, 1741, Add. MSS. 32698, f. 393; Cleveland to Robinson, Aug. 8, 1755, S.P. 42/37, f. 235; Lords of Admiralty to Pitt, Feb. 2, 1757, Adm. 2/371, p. 103. Mason and Simpson, victualling contractors for the forces in the West Indies, complained of the high price of Irish butter, which they were obliged to supply, and suggested that its exportation to foreign parts should therefore be prohibited (Petition to Newcastle, Feb. 24, 1745/6, S.P. 63/409).

² Knight to Sharpe, Oct. 17, 1740, Add. MSS. 32695, f. 280. One Macfarland of London wrote to Corbett, Oct. 7, 1745, that he had bought beef last year for exportation to the West Indies, at 20 shillings the barrel; this year it was 25 shillings, on account of the many orders for St. Eustatius or Martinique. His correspondents in Ireland wrote to him that 'if you merchants in London do not get an embargo laid on ships bound to the Dutch islands or fall upon some other method to prevent this trade, it will raise the price more and more, and be detrimental both to the colonies and to His Majesty's service' (S.P. 42/29, f. 284).

character, was plainly to assure a cheap and plentiful supply of the necessaries of life. For example, Gedney Clarke was allowed in August 1741 to export some fish only after he had assured the Council that he had a great quantity in stock and was expecting more, and promised not to raise the price. At the beginning of the Seven Years War, scarcity and high prices appear to have determined the attitude of the legislature once more; and the Act which it passed in 1757 against trade with the enemy contained a permanent system of regulation to prevent forestalling and engrossing. Pinfold informed Pitt in 1760 that no licence was granted for the export of provisions without 'strict previous examination of the quantity then in the island and of the current prices'.¹ In almost all the islands, the prohibitions were relaxed or enforced by administrative action according to the plenty or scarcity of victuals. In fact, so far as the planters imposed upon themselves or upon others the duty of patriotic abstention, their interest impelled them to it.

Money was another article whose export to the enemy was sometimes deemed unpatriotic. This is not surprising, for even in the course of normal trade, the outflow of precious metals was commonly regarded as a disaster, and its introduction as a public benefit. The planters had often complained that the North Americans, in their eagerness for cheap molasses, had refused to buy at the English sugar colonies, demanding the proceeds of their outward cargoes in cash, which they carried to the French islands where the price of West India goods was lower. Exactly this argument was brought forward during the Seven Years War against the Monte Cristi and Flag of Truce trades. Jamaica complained that it was being drained of its currency by these methods. This, said a pamphleteer inspired by Admiral Holmes, was how the North Americans disposed of the great quantities of money which the English Government spent among them for the upkeep of the troops. He ought at least to have admitted that the Government itself was partly to blame for the state of affairs: when the export of provisions was embargoed, there was no article which could be sent to the French colonies with so much profit as gold.²

¹ Barbados Council Minutes, Aug. 4 and 5, 1741, C.O. 31/21; April 14, 1756, Jan. 19, 1757, C.O. 31/28; Pinfold to Pitt, Nov. 15, 1760, C.O. 152/46.

² Philip Cuyler to Henry Cuyler, Dec. 3, 1759, Letter-book, N.Y.P.L. The French authorities commented upon the large sums of money imported into St.

Besides the arguments which did duty in times of peace, there were others which applied to the export of cash to an enemy. Money was the sinew of war; it was included in the contraband list of certain treaties—for example, that of 1661 between England and Sweden—though certain others, such as the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1674, expressly excepted it. Obviously, therefore, it was a public service to draw out the enemy's bullion by means of trade, and highly unpatriotic to part with our own. For this reason, again, certain writers distinguished the lawfulness of the trade with the Spanish and the French West Indies. Judge Auchmuty put this point somewhat obscurely in his judgement on the *Victory*.

'Indeed to send to an enemy things that tend to the gratification of their luxury and wantonness is said to be lawful, for such supplies contribute to render them weak and effeminate, and from this reason whatever debilitates the enemy may be deemed lawful, which leads me into the consideration of the case put concerning the open trade now allowed between Jamaica and the Main. That there is such a trade in practice I believe, but that the same is lawful is what I deny, unless the same is fully within the meaning of the last mentioned law as a trade that weakens the enemy. For if I'm rightly informed the British manufactures are carried from that island to the main and there sold for silver and gold and not trucked for other goods of no account to the enemy as molasses. The carrying [off?] the enemy's bullion which are the sinews of war is a case no wise similar to the present case. The trade in the first weakens, the trade in the latter succours the enemy.'¹

This point was important, because the North Americans sometimes asked why they should be forbidden to deal with the French enemy when the people of Jamaica were encouraged to trade with the Spanish enemy.² Holmes's pamphleteer of 1760 brought forward arguments very like those of Auchmuty. He denied any analogy between the two trades, because in that which Vernon had allowed to be carried on to the Spanish Main, English manufactures, not provisions, were exchanged

Domingue by the New England Flag of Truce traders (Bart and Élias to Berryer, Feb. 11, 1760, A.N. Colonies C^o A 105).

¹ *Victory*, Bardine, H.C.A. 42/48. There was a passage of Seneca, which international lawyers were never tired of quoting on this topic, though they usually applied it to neutral trade; it is quoted, for example, by Grotius, *De Jure Belli et Pacis*, iii, c. i, § 5.

² Francis Bernard, *Select Letters on the Trade and Government of America* (London, 1774), pp. 21-2.

against gold and silver;¹ whereas in the trade with the French, cash and provisions were exported, in return for West India goods which competed with the produce of the English plantations. If they would buy their sugar and molasses from the English West Indies alone, the North Americans would keep their money within the Empire.

This last argument is drawn from the stock-in-trade of the West India controversialists, and shows yet again how closely, in the minds of the planters, war patriotism was connected with their own economic interests. Another proof is afforded by the attitude of Jamaica to the imports in this trade. The law of that island which prohibited the importation of French West India produce was only a continuation, or accentuation, of a peacetime policy, and appears to have been occasioned by the smuggling of sugar. Governor Trelawny had already forbidden the commanders of Flag of Truce vessels to import from the French islands anything contrary to the interests of Jamaica.² This language implies that there were some articles which could be brought in without damaging those interests. Trelawny was undoubtedly thinking of indigo, and perhaps also of cocoa. Jamaica had once produced those crops, but the industries had almost died out; therefore indigo and cocoa were welcome imports, the more so as the former was needed for the dyeing industry of England.³ Trelawny had openly allowed some indigo to be imported in a French Flag of Truce in the War of 1744; this trade was carried on freely between Jamaica and St. Domingue.

Among the papers of the *Providence*, owned by Messrs. Brown of Rhode Island, there is a cryptic letter from John Burges, at Kingston, Jamaica, to Captain John Randall at Port au Prince. Randall had sent Burges to Jamaica 'for the good of the consarn', and Burges was obliged to report that 'I have not been able to do anything with the admerl (Cotes), for him to give

¹ This was not quite true; see p. 435, note 3.

² Trelawny to Murray, Nov. 23, 1745, in *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica*, iv. 18.

³ The author of the *Histoire et commerce des Antilles angloises* (1758, p. 86) says almost all the indigo which the English bought under the name of Jamaica indigo, was really of French or Spanish growth. In 1720 there had been a quarrel between Governor Lawes and Commodore Vernon over the seizure of some French indigo which the traders attempted to export from Jamaica to England. The Governor wished to protect the interests of the Jamaica indigo-growers, but the Customs Commissioners and Board of Trade repudiated him (*C.S.P. Col. 1720-1*, nos. 340, 471, 603, 608, 609).

me a protection would be directly opposet to what he has set out in, that is to take all shuger & molases laden vesells that comes out of any French port if posable'. For this reason Burges resigned his half of a prize snow bought at Port au Prince, to a merchant of Jamaica, who presumably would have some immunity which would help her to get safe out of St. Domingue as Burges could not have done. Burges added, 'I would advise you whatever quantety of indigo you purchace to send it in sum Jamaica flag of truce to this place, for if you should go out before there is a better prospect you have teen to one against your getting clear, and all indigo that is taken in any vesel laden with suger or molases is as lyable as any other part of the cargo, as I have been informed'. From all this it appears that Cotes connived at the Jamaica Flags of Truce, so long as they only imported indigo—a licence which he did not extend to the North Americans.¹ In this instance the sugar islands, so diligent to protect their own crops against competition, were making free with the interest of another class of producers within the Empire: indigo of a sort was cultivated in South Carolina. An attempt was made in 1757 to legalize the introduction of French indigo during the war. One Hutchinson Mure applied to the Board of Trade for leave to export slaves to St. Domingue and import indigo thence. The Board considered the proposal, but rejected it at the instance of the Carolina merchants.²

When Admiral Holmes at last made up his mind to interfere with the Jamaica Flag of Truce trade as well as that of the Northern Colonies, he seized among others the *Greyhound*, John Fowles master. The claimant in the Vice-Admiralty court argued that 'by the purchase of the said cargo of indigo and cocoa with the manufactures of Great Britain he has as much as in him lay advanced the commerce of Great Britain and the territories thereunto belonging without prejudicing any of its

¹ Burges to Randall, Feb. 28, 1760, John Carter Brown Library, Nicholas Brown MSS., papers of the Brigantine *Providence*, voyage of 1760. See also the letter of Bart to Élias, Feb. 11, 1760, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 105. On the other hand some owners advised their captains not to carry indigo, presumably because it would prove that the cargo was French produce; they must have hoped that so long as their ships carried nothing but sugar and molasses, they could successfully pretend, with the help of false clearances, that it came from the English colonies (Instructions to Captain J. Brown, Dec. 5, 1758, Derby Family MSS., vol. xxiii, Essex Institute). Cotes would have stopped even the Jamaica traders from carrying provisions to the enemy, if he could (Cotes to Cleveland, Feb. 14, 1760, Adm. 1/235).

² *Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, 1754-8*, p. 371.

colonies in America', and further, that 'indigo has always been admitted to an entry from the French colonies and that it is notorious it is not produced in the English or any foreign colony except the French colonies in quantities sufficient to supply our manufactures'. In fact, he made out that the duties on French indigo imported in a single year of the war amounted to nearly £2,000 (a statement which the Receiver-General of the island confirmed). He pointed to the existence of permanent laws allowing the introduction of foreign indigo free of duty, which could not be overridden by the King's declaration of war (a line of argument very like that by which the North Americans justified the Flag of Truce trade from the existence of the Molasses Act). Judge Long impudently approved in this case a process of reasoning which he never would have accepted from a North American with sugar in his hold. He acquitted vessel and cargo, but the Court of Prize Appeals reversed his sentence.¹

§ iii. *The Lawfulness of Trade with the Enemy*

The lawfulness of trade with the enemy might be considered in two ways—as it affected the vessel and cargo employed in the trade, and as it constituted a punishable offence on the part of the trader himself. On the latter point, some very wild and vague ideas prevailed in the colonies, but the Law Officers at home took for the most part a more temperate view. The state of the law was in fact pretty clear, in spite of the too comprehensive language of the statute of 25 Edward III, which defined as high treason the giving of any kind of aid and comfort to the King's enemies. This law was held to be insufficient in the reign of William and Mary, for the exportation of arms and ammunition to the French was once more made high treason. That act expired with that war, but was in effect renewed for the duration of the next, by the 3 & 4 Anne, c. 14. At the same time another law was passed, to prohibit during the war all trade with France; trade with Spain was only forbidden in contraband goods. These laws were not renewed in the later wars; the prohibitions which were then enacted were only partial, and in no sense covered all trade with the enemy,

¹ *Greyhound*, Fowles, H.C.A. 42/69. See also the letter of the Jamaica Committee of Correspondence to its agent, Dec. 19, 1761, against the Monte Cristi trade; the committee assumed that the trade of Jamaica with St. Domingue had been legal and even laudable so long as only indigo was imported, and only became pernicious when sugar also was introduced (*Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica*, v. 320).

whether French or Spaniards. The importance of the statutes of William and Mary, and of Anne, consisted in the fact that it had been thought necessary to pass them at all. The apologists of the Flag of Truce trade argued, in the press and before the courts, that commerce with the enemy could have been no treason by any permanent laws, or these special enactments would not have been needed.¹ This reasoning could not get the ships and cargoes acquitted, but it was enough to protect the persons of the offenders from extreme penalties.

It was only a high misdemeanour to trade to the enemy contrary to a royal proclamation, so long as no stores of war were exported.² This was the opinion of Sir Edward Northey, Attorney-General, at the beginning of 1704, before the Act of the 3 & 4 Anne had renewed the prohibition. The Law Officers of Barbados had already expressed the same view in the case of Manuel Manasses Gilligan, who was apparently acquitted even of misdemeanour. However, Northey's opinion does not seem to have been accepted universally or at once.³

Heneage Legge, counsel to the Admiralty, advised in 1745 that smuggling with the enemy was high treason, but very little attention need be paid to his opinion.⁴ More weight is due to that of the Law Officers Ryder and Murray. At the beginning

¹ For example, the Vice-Admiralty Judge of Philadelphia held this language (Hamilton to Pitt, Nov. 1, 1760, Kimball, *Correspondence of William Pitt*, ii. 352). So did Daniel Laroche, Judge surrogate in the Bahamas, in his sentence on the *Thomas and Waddell*, C.O. 23/7, E 20. A private lawyer, John Reade of Boston, to whom the case of Aeneas Mackay was referred by the Council, reported in the same sense in 1740 (Shirley to Newcastle, Oct. 25, 1740, C.O. 5/899). See the letter of the Customs Commissioners, Dec. 8, 1704, in which they reported (before the Acts of the 3 & 4 Anne were passed) that there was no law which forbade the importation of goods from France and Spain, so that they were bound to admit them to an entry. This compares strangely with the Secretary of the Admiralty's letter, in June of the same year, upon the same subject; he said that admitting such a vessel to an entry was nothing to do with the Admiralty, but if any of the men-of-war caught one, she would seize it pursuant to the Queen's declaration of war (*H.M.C., H. of L. MSS., N.S.* vi. 203).

² In what this misdemeanour consisted is not very clear; perhaps, as Reade reported of Mackay, 'in exposing himself and crew to be corrupted or insulted by the common enemy of his King and Country'. This is not impossible, for the King's power of restricting or prohibiting his subjects from foreign trade appears to have been founded partly on his duty to preserve them from such 'corruptions', especially in matters of religion (see the arguments of Holt and Sawyer in the case of *The East India Company v. Sandys*, Cobbett's *State Trials*, x. 376-80, 474-88).

³ *C.S.P. Col.* 1702-3, no. 1121; 1704-5, no. 203; 1711-12, no. 423; 1712-14, no. 51. The papers of Gilligan's case in the Vice-Admiralty court are to be found in H.C.A. 42/11 (*Charles the Second*).

⁴ Opinion of Dec. 14, 1745, Adm. 1/3675.

of 1748 the Government wanted, for diplomatic reasons, to renew, in as severe a form as it legally could, the injunctions against trading with the French which were contained in the King's declaration of war. It consulted the Law Officers, who reported thus:

'We are humbly of opinion that the war which is now existing between His Majesty and the French King by which the French King and his subjects are enemies to His Majesty and his subjects, and His Majesty's declaration of war against them are in point of law a prohibition of all commerce and trade between His Majesty's subjects and the French, and that every exportation of corn, or other commodities by His Majesty's subjects to France without licence from His Majesty, knowingly and designedly, is a misdemeanour; for which they are punishable by indictment or information in the ordinary course of law; tho' we do not recollect, nor can at present find any case where any person has been in fact tried for such a misdemeanour. And we don't know what can be done by His Majesty more upon this subject to prevent such exportations than by issuing a proclamation directing the laws to be put in execution against such offenders.'

Such a proclamation was therefore made, in order to bring it to the notice of the King's subjects that trade with the French was a high misdemeanour, forbidden by the declaration of war and therefore punishable by law.¹

Again in 1756 Murray advised on a case of trade with the enemy, that while the vessel and cargo might be condemned in the High Court of Admiralty, there was no hope of getting any kind of conviction against the master and crew. Such trade was a misdemeanour, greater or less according to the circumstances; but he could find no prosecutions for it at common law since the reign of Edward I. Misdemeanours were local as to trial, that is to say the case must be tried in the county where the offence had been committed; but none had been committed in any county, and nobody could be punished for the mere intention.² The hot-headed officials of Antigua were presumably ignorant of this opinion when they had a certain William Pickles tried for high treason and condemned to death on

¹ Report of Ryder and Murray, Feb. 18, 1747/8, S.P. 84/431: Proclamation of Feb. 19, in Jamaica Council Minutes, May 18, C.O. 140/32. Hardwicke seems to have agreed with the Law Officers that trade with the enemy was already fully prohibited by the declaration of war (Hardwicke to Sandwich, Feb. 21, o.s., 1747/8, Add. MSS. 35590, f. 15).

² Murray to ? Fox, Sept. 15, 1756, S.P. 42/138.

account of trade with the enemy. The sentence was passed by a 'commission for trying pirates', and seems to have been chiefly founded on the application of an Act of the 18 George II, 'inasmuch as by supplying his Majesty's enemies in this part of the world with provisions they are enabled to carry on the war to their advantage and to the prejudice of his Majesty's subjects trading to and residing in the sugar islands more effectually than they would be by the personal service of many of his Majesty's subjects on board their public or private ships of war, the cruisers of the enemy in these seas being more and oftener in want of provisions arms and ammunition than of men.'

The Court recommended Pickles to mercy and he was reprieved.¹

Since it was almost impossible to punish a trader with the enemy as a criminal, he could only be deterred by the confiscation of his property. Even this method of proceeding against him was sometimes obstructed in the colonies by the sanctity with which English property was hedged about. Some colonial lawyers said that the King could not lawfully interfere with this trade by any proclamation or declaration of war. The claimants' proctors at Jamaica often suggested that the property of Englishmen could only be taken away, or their trade restrained, by a statute of Parliament. They also pointed out that the Molasses Act was regularly renewed every seven years, even in time of war; they argued that Parliament, by continuing the duties upon foreign West India produce, had tacitly admitted the legality of importing it, and thus recognized a right to trade with the French, which could not be taken away except by another statute.² This was very bad logic. If the Molasses Act had expressly referred to French produce, there would have been something in the argument; but even then, a royal declaration of war might well be held to modify or override such a statute. The Act, however, only specified foreign produce, and did not create a right to import the dutiable goods in all circumstances from any given places.

¹ Commissioners for trying piracy to Governor Thomas, Jan. 1759, C.O. 152/46. I cannot find in the Statutes at Large any Act of the 18 George II which appears to cover this case. The legislature of Massachusetts enacted in 1744 that exportation of provisions, naval stores, &c., to the French should be high treason for the future (C.O. 5/884, FF 29). Auchmuty thought it ought to be felony without benefit of clergy (*Gentleman's Magazine*, xv. 356).

² Popple to Board of Trade, Oct. 10, 1748, C.O. 37/16, M 158; Appellant's appeal case in the *Chester*, Angell, Add. MSS. 36212, f. 69.

Even when they did not thus explicitly challenge the royal authority, the claimants and their proctors generally insisted on the British property of the vessels and cargoes in question, and left it to be inferred that such property could not become prize. The captors attempted to turn this position by arguing that as the King's subjects could not lawfully have any transactions with the French during the war, no valid transference of ownership had ever been made from the French, in whom therefore the property still resided. On that account the cargoes at least would be lawful prize like any other French effects—how the vessels came to be included in the condemnation, the captors did not give themselves much trouble to explain. Since this somewhat metaphysical distinction was much used in the libels of the Advocate-General of Jamaica, it may fairly be presumed to have commended itself to the judges of that court. Judge Edward Webley dealt with the argument that not even an Englishman who traded with a public enemy could be deprived of his lawful property consistently with Magna Carta. He replied that property could not lawfully be acquired from an enemy during a war, therefore Magna Carta could not protect the goods in this trade.¹ Judge Morris of New York, on the other hand, adopted exactly the argument rejected by Webley. He said in the *Catherine*, 'I am clearly of opinion that the property of an English subject made out by clear and concluding proof is not subject to condemnation as prize to any private vessel of war tho' taken in any unlawful or forbidden commerce.' Had the property been clearly made out in the case of this vessel, he should have acquitted her and should have left the offender to be punished for his crime by fine, imprisonment, or otherwise by prosecution at the suit of the Crown as the law directed.² In fact, he acquitted a Jamaica Flag of Truce on this kind of grounds. The Philadelphia judge in the same war

¹ With the appeal case of the *Charming Elizabeth*, Fay, H.C.A. 42/59, there are some notes of Charles Yorke's argument on this point; but unfortunately they are almost unintelligible (Add. MSS. 36210, f. 289). See also the pronouncement of Judge Auchmuty of Massachusetts in the *Victory*, Bardine, H.C.A. 42/48.

² *Reports of Cases in the Vice-Admiralty of New York*, ed. C. M. Hough, p. 203. Morris added that such property 'may be forfeited when informed against by proper officers legally appointed to carry into execution the Acts of Trade'. But that was an illusory concession, for the Acts of Trade did not deal with the subject. Charles Yorke's argument on behalf of the claimant of the *Beaver* seems to follow these lines; but it was unsuccessful, for the Court of Prize Appeals condemned her (Add. MSS. 36212, f. 81).

acquitted traders with the enemy for the same reason, so that captors did not think it worth while to bring such cases before him.¹ The malice and partiality of these judges left the state as well as the captors without an effective remedy, for that which they indicated was least of all likely to be applied by a colonial jury. Their opinions cannot have commended themselves to the Lords Commissioners of Prize Appeals, who condemned all the Flag of Truce traders.

By its decisions this court appears to have established the principle that an Englishman who traded directly with the enemy during a war, without a special licence, forfeited his ship and cargo. There remained one possible exception to this rule. What was the status of an Englishman naturalized as a neutral? The question was an important one in the West Indies, for a great number of North Americans and people from the Leeward Islands inhabited such neutral colonies as St. Eustatius and St. Thomas, where naturalization was all too easily obtained.² This practice had already been common in earlier wars; and one of the many questions involved in the case of Manuel Manasses Gilligan was the right of English-born subjects to trade with the enemies of the state as neutrals. The Governor of Barbados then pointed out that if Gilligan's Danish naturalization was to entitle him to trade where he would, a great many people would follow his example; and it appears from later evidence that a great many did so. Northey advised that Gilligan's transference of his allegiance without the Queen's leave was invalid, and did not discharge him of his natural duty to her; but as he was really settled in St. Thomas, and had received no orders to return to Her Majesty's dominions, his trade with the enemy was not a capital offence, if it was any offence at all. The Queen, however, might call upon her subjects to return from the neutral islands, and might proceed against them criminally, if they refused to comply and continued to trade with the enemy.³ Gilligan, it may be added, was afterwards an accredited representative of England at Madrid, and appears to have died an inhabitant of Barbados.⁴

¹ Lt.-Gov. Hamilton to Pitt, Nov. 1, 1760, Kimball, *Correspondence of William Pitt*, ii. 352.

² This was one of the chief grievances against St. Eustatius in the War of the American Revolution.

³ *C.S.P. Col.* 1702-3, no. 1223; 1704-5, no. 203; 1706-8, no. 53.

⁴ *V. supra*, p. 11.

The same question came up at the beginning of the war of 1739. One Aeneas Mackay divested himself of his allegiance after the outbreak of reprisals, and took the oath of a citizen of Amsterdam. Soon afterwards, he was captured in command of a vessel partly owned by Spaniards, which was condemned with its cargo by Judge Auchmuty at Boston. The authorities were perplexed what to do with Mackay himself; some were for sending him in chains to England, as guilty of high treason, but the Governor favoured him and even protected him against a trial for misdemeanour. Finally, he was bound over to appear in England before the Secretary of State. I cannot discover what Newcastle did with him; most likely nothing at all.¹

The right to be naturalized a foreigner, and the privileges of Englishmen so naturalized, do not seem to have been conclusively defined in these wars;² but two decisions of the Prize Appeals Court somewhat softened the rigour of the prohibitions. In the case of the *Hoffnung* (September 1744), the Court seems to have admitted that an Englishman naturalized as the subject of a foreign power might trade with the enemies of England, if his naturalization had taken place before the war had begun; otherwise he fell under the rule that 'we are not to trade with our enemies—we are not to support them but to distress them by all manner of means'. In the case of the *Humility*, the right of an Englishman to trade with Spain as a naturalized Swede was likewise recognized, but for the special reason that he was in partnership with other Swedes, from whom his interest could not be distinguished.³

In the Seven Years War, several Englishmen naturalized at St. Croix were concerned in the Monte Cristi trade. Their

¹ Shirley to Newcastle, Oct. 25, 1740, C.O. 5/899.

² Judge King of Antigua had a controversy with the Governor of St. Eustatius on this subject. Heyliger reproached King for condemning Dutch property, but King replied that it was English; letters of burghership of St. Eustatius might entitle an Englishman to the benefit of Dutch laws but could not withdraw him from his English allegiance. (King to Heyliger, Nov. 12, 1745, Adm. 1/3881; to Corbett, Nov. 22, 1746, *ibid.*)

³ Notebook in H.C.A. 30/875, ff. 10–11, 20. This is the book quoted by Marsden, *Law and Custom of the Sea*, ii. 436. There are some observations on the same cases in Stowell's note-book, copied by Rothery, in the High Court of Admiralty Registry (pp. 51, 102, 122, 138, 213, 216). This volume is the first described by Mr. E. S. Roscoe in his *Lord Stowell*, p. 104. It appears to be a collection of old opinions; the cases are seldom named and the authors never, but both may sometimes be identified. Most of them seem to come from Dr. Andrewe, an eminent civil lawyer of the 1740's.

vessels were seized, and carried to the English sugar colonies. The *St. Croix* was condemned at New Providence on grounds which necessarily imply that the judge considered her owners as Englishmen; but the Lords of Prize Appeals reversed the sentence, and it appears from a note of Charles Yorke, one of the advocates, that they applied to her the criteria by which they judged neutral ships.¹ Another vessel was condemned at Jamaica because her owner's naturalization was invalid, and the claimants deserted their appeal. However, a vessel in the same case which had been likewise condemned at Antigua, was restored on appeal in 1760.²

§ iv. *The Embargoes and the Flour Act*

It was not enough to forbid commerce with the enemy. The restriction could not be complete without a control of all exports from the King's dominions to neutral as well as enemy countries. This was particularly necessary in the West Indies, for the North Americans had long established a trade with the French through the Dutch and Danish islands. The legal right of the Government to prevent it was doubtful. To restrain trade with the enemy was one thing, but to interfere with English property which was not demonstrably designed for his ports was another.

Besides the uncertainty of the law, the Government had to deal with practical difficulties when it tried to limit or suppress the trade. The control could only be effective, let alone popular, if it was general. An embargo on Irish beef and butter were useless, so long as the North Americans contrived, for want of supervision, to carry the same articles to the French. Such partial vigilance could only divert trade and prosperity from one part of the Empire to another.³ In the same way the North Americans resented the system of restraints which was designed to keep their trade within the Empire, when ships loaded with Irish victuals played themselves into the hands of the enemy or slipped their convoy and ran into Martinique on pretext of distress. The West Indians thought it hard they should be forbidden to re-export provisions while the Irish and North Americans could carry the same articles straight to the French

¹ *St. Croix*, Debroskey, H.C.A. 42/61; Endorsement of Charles Yorke, Add. MSS. 36213, f. 2.

² *Baron van Bernstorff*, Lemwig, H.C.A. 42/57; *Jane*, van den Bergh, H.C.A. 42/78.

³ Albert Nesbitt to Chesterfield, Oct. 23, 1746, S.P. 63/409.

islands.¹ Finally, even if the Government established the necessary control in those parts of the Empire which produced victuals and warlike stores, that was not enough when other colonies, consumers rather than producers of those articles, were free to re-export their surplus. The burden of patriotism was already borne by the producers of provisions, while the consumers received a positive advantage from it; but if the West Indians were to get Irish and North American exports restricted, and then ship off from their own islands whatever they could spare, they would have the privilege of stopping all the other leaks in the system in order to enjoy a monopoly of turning on the tap themselves. Thus both Ireland and North America complained that it would be of no use for them to confine their exports loyally to the English sugar colonies, unless proper measures were taken to see that the goods remained there.²

Whatever limitation might be imposed must therefore be general to Ireland, North America, and the West Indies. It must also be general within each of those areas. This was not easy to enforce. In Ireland the great port for victuallers was Cork—insomuch that the Government sometimes thought it could achieve its purpose by laying an embargo at Cork alone. This was neither fair nor effective, for Dublin, Waterford, and other towns took part in this trade. The Mayor of Cork protested against the discrimination, and the West India planters, concerned for the entirety of the restriction, took the same side; on the other hand, when the embargo was coupled with a permission to proceed to the English colonies under escort, Cork had the advantage, for the convoys started there and the shipping of the other ports often had some difficulty in picking them up.³

Much more important than this resistance to discrimination was the unpopularity in Ireland of the whole policy of embargo.

¹ Sir Charles Hardy, Governor of New York, reported that the North American Assemblies would not prohibit the trade to the French colonies, so long as Ireland carried it on with impunity (Hardy to Board of Trade, June 19, 1756, *N.Y. Col. Doc.* vii. 117; see also Colden to Pitt, Dec. 27, 1760, *Colden Papers (N.Y.H.S. Collections, 1876)*, i. 49-53; Thomas to Pitt, Dec. 8, 1760, C.O. 152/46).

² Devonshire to Newcastle, Jan. 10, 1741/2, S.P. 63/405; Lt.-Gov. Clarke to Newcastle, Feb. 28, 1740/1, *N.Y. Col. Doc.* vi. 180; Frankland to Cleveland, March 10, 1756, Adm. 1/306.

³ Mayor of Cork to Newcastle, Feb. 22, 1744/5, Add. MSS. 32704, f. 81; Sharpe to Corbett, Feb. 18, 1744/5, S.P. 42/28, f. 62; Irish merchants to Corbett, Oct. 8, 1746, S.P. 42/31, f. 264.

Cattle-raising and dairying were the chief livelihood of southern and western Ireland; indeed, it was argued that the Government itself had driven the Irish into these branches of business by its restrictive commercial policy, which proscribed both the woollen industry and the importation of unfattened cattle into England. To destroy the export trade in beef and butter without the gravest necessity, was to impose upon Ireland too large a part of the burden of patriotic endeavour. The new season's beef and butter would depress the prices of the old (a strong argument in the eyes of the merchants with stocks on hand); the slaughtering must fall off, rents must come down, and in fact the whole country must be ruined. The Lords Lieutenant, Devonshire, Chesterfield, Hartington, and Bedford, all protested with various degrees of vehemence against this interference with Ireland's prosperity. Chesterfield induced the Admiralty to exempt certain goods, such as tallow and candles, from the prohibitions, and finally persuaded Newcastle to remove an embargo altogether in 1746, very much to the annoyance of that Board.¹

The Government always tried to compensate Ireland for the loss of markets by ordering large quantities of beef and pork for the Royal Navy. Ireland naturally obtained some relief from the increased orders which the Government must in any event have placed in war-time; but she was deprived by the embargo of larger profits still, for all nations increase their naval and military establishments during a war, and all, friends and enemies alike, would have bought their rations of beef and pork from Ireland had she been free to sell. Besides, the Government never took off anything like all the season's killing. The Admiralty and War Office seldom ordered more than five or ten thousand barrels at a time, while the total production of beef alone was estimated at a hundred thousand barrels a year.

At the beginning of hostilities with France in 1755 Hartington heard that beef was on the point of being exported to France, so he ordered it to be unloaded and bought up for the Government. Some of this was of the old season's killing, and

¹ Nesbitt to Newcastle, March 7, 1744/5, S.P. 63/407; Nesbitt to Chesterfield, Oct. 23, 1746, S.P. 63/409; Mayor and Sheriffs of Cork, petition of March 8, 1744/5, S.P. 63/406; Lords of the Admiralty to Newcastle, Feb. 25, 1745/6, S.P. 42/30, f. 184; Chesterfield to Newcastle, Nov. 3, 1746, S.P. 63/409; Hartington to Lords of the Admiralty, Oct. 16, 1755, S.P. 42/38, f. 135; Hartington to Robinson, Oct. 31, 1755, S.P. 63/413; Bedford to Pitt, Sept. 2, 1758, G.D. 8/19.

the Victualling Commissioners could not recommend its purchase; but the Lords of the Admiralty decided to sacrifice the digestions of their crews to political expediency, and ordered the beef to be bought if it was found passable upon a survey. So far, so good; but the new season's beef would be upon the market in a few months, and the Government could not think of buying the whole of that. Hartington did not see how else he could restrain the merchants from exporting it where they would. To make the matter worse, half of what he had already reserved for the navy proved on survey to be cow beef, which the Victualling Commissioners would not take. He was providentially delivered from embarrassment by the great earthquake of Lisbon. The Government determined to send relief to the sufferers, and Hartington's two thousand barrels of cow beef were conscientiously shipped off, as no worse than 'the poorer sort of people amongst the Portuguese' would have bought in the ordinary course of trade.¹

Earthquakes could not turn up in this way every year, but within a few months war was declared, and the Lord Lieutenant was invested with the proper power for restraining the trade by means of an embargo. Bedford had been the First Lord of the Admiralty who so much objected to the removal of the embargo in 1746; but now he protested, as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, against the wanton or light-hearted use of embargoes. They seem to have been fewer than usual in Ireland during his reign, and the merchants of Cork did a lively trade with the French colonies in Dutch ships through St. Eustatius.

In the intervals when their vessels were released from the embargoes, the Irish shipowners often instructed their captains to get themselves taken by the enemy's privateers. One or two of them made elaborate arrangements for trading in this manner on a large scale. The ship was 'captured' by a privateer belonging to the real consignee of the cargo, who, having appropriated the provisions as prize, sold the vessel collusively back to its owner for a nominal sum, and got her loaded with West India produce. In order to stop this abuse, the Lords of

¹ Hartington to Robinson, Aug. 21 and Dec. 12, 1755, S.P. 63/413; Cleveland to Amyand, Sept. 2, 1755, S.P. 42/38, f. 2; Amyand to Cleveland, Sept. 4, 1755, Adm. 1/4120, no. 46; Horatio Townshend to Cleveland, Oct. 14, 1755, S.P. 42/38, f. 109; Hartington to Lords of Admiralty, Oct. 16, 1755, f. 135; Lords of Admiralty to Robinson, Oct. 31, 1755, f. 129; Robinson to Hartington, Nov. 29, 1755, S.P. 63/413.

the Admiralty insisted that the Irish exporters should not only give the usual bond to land their goods in the King's dominions, which would of course be void in case of capture by the enemy, but also take convoy, and bind themselves not to depart from it during the voyage. This arrangement was burdensome to the merchants, for convoys were few and often caused expensive delays. The Admiralty sometimes dispensed individuals from it in particular cases, but insisted on the principle in both wars.¹

Ireland might well resist the Government's attempts to confine her trade during war-time, when even England carried the necessaries of life to the enemy. Great scandal was caused at the end of 1747 by the export of large quantities of corn from England and Ireland to the famine-stricken ports of France. Vessels cleared out under neutral colours for the colonies or neutral ports, and promptly made the best of their way to Bordeaux.² Sandwich, our Minister at The Hague, was particularly embarrassed by this practice, for he was trying to drive the States-General into a war with France by inducing them to break off all commercial relations with her, and he could have wished for a better example to be shown in England. So long as the trade was a fraudulent one under foreign colours, the Government could have claimed plausibly that it was doing all that lay in its power to suppress such an abuse.³ It could not gracefully palliate the resolution which the House of Commons passed in January 1747/8, to the effect that it would not be for the advantage of the country to prohibit the export of corn. The Duke of Newcastle tried to explain this away:

'Some officious, designing fools had given out, that, in order to prevent carrying corn to France, there must be a total prohibition of all exportation. The country gentlemen, and some *others* were so

¹ Bussy to Amelot, Oct. 27, n.s., 1740, A.E. Angleterre, 409, f. 183; *Gentleman's Magazine*, xii. 273; Holburne to Corbett, Dec. 25, 1744, Adm. 1/1884; Warren to Corbett, Feb. 7, 1744/5, Adm. 1/2654; Yeamans to Newcastle, May 31, 1745, with annexed letters to Bradshaw, C.O. 152/44; Admiralty Minutes, May 6, 1742, Adm. 3/46; Lords of the Admiralty to Newcastle, Feb. 28, 1745/6, S.P. 42/30, f. 185; Sept. 26, Nov. 20, 1746, S.P. 42/31, ff. 194, 323; Nesbitt to Chesterfield, Oct. 23, 1746, S.P. 63/409; Lords of the Admiralty to Fox, Sept. 15, 1756, Adm. 2/371, p. 71.

² Sandwich to Chesterfield, Nov. 21 and 28, Dec. 1, n.s., 1747, S.P. 84/427, ff. 79, 121, 126; extract from Van Deurse's letter, Nov. 10, 1747, f. 96; *Vrai patriote hollandois*, no. vi, Jan. 1, 1748, S.P. 84/433.

³ Chesterfield to Sandwich, Dec. 8, o.s., 1747, S.P. 84/427, ff. 209-10; Hardwicke to Sandwich, Dec. 15, o.s., 1747, Add. MSS. 35589, f. 396.

alarmed at this, that without considering the consequences, or knowing what had passed in Holland, they came to a resolution against prohibiting the exportation of corn; but this is only general, and can't authorise the carrying it to France, which, as all commerce is, is prohibited by the declaration of war.¹

That was all very well; but foreigners found it hard to understand how such a resolution came to be passed in defiance of the wishes of the Ministry, which they credited with a degree of control over the House which it possesses now but did not exercise in the days of Henry Pelham. Besides, it is more than likely that the country gentlemen and their advisers deliberately meant to strike out of the Government's hands the weapons it was preparing against the clandestine exports to France:² if so, they were claiming a liberty to succour the enemy which they allowed the Government to deny to the farmers of Ireland and North America.

The embargo was far more difficult to enforce in North America than in Ireland. Nothing short of extreme danger could bring into line so many governments subject to popular influence. The chief commercial colonies keenly rivalled each other, and those which did not possess any first-class trading town were for ever trying to emancipate themselves from the domination of those which did.³ No branch of trade was the object of more mutual jealousy than that of the West Indies. Pennsylvania tried again and again to monopolize the trade of Maryland; the legislature of Maryland warded off the attack, and attempted to build up an indigenous carrying trade to the West Indies, by high duties on the exportation to Philadelphia of articles which could compose a West India cargo. Connecti-

¹ Newcastle to Sandwich, Jan. 29, O.S., 1747/8, Add. MSS. 32811, f. 125.

² Sandwich had for some time been urging Chesterfield and Newcastle to stop the trade by exacting security from the masters of vessels for the landing of their cargoes of provisions in the ports to which they were nominally bound. This measure, which he represented as necessary to the satisfaction of the Dutch, must have been seriously considered, for, even after the House of Commons resolution, Newcastle comforted Sandwich with the hope of it. Mischief-makers may have known this, and determined to intimidate the Government beforehand, by a resolution which would appeal to the self-interest of the landed gentlemen in the House (Sandwich to Chesterfield, Dec. 1 and 23, N.S., 1747, S.P. 84/427, ff. 126, 276; Chesterfield to Sandwich, Dec. 8, O.S., 1747, ff. 209-10; Jan. 19, O.S., 1747/8, S.P. 84/431; Newcastle to Sandwich, quoted above).

³ Some details of this rivalry can be obtained from A. A. Giesecke's book on *American Commercial Legislation before 1789* (Philadelphia, 1910). The subject of embargoes is discussed on pp. 80-6.

cut and New York fought in the same way. Moreover, the imports and even the exports in the West India trade were among the commonest sources of indirect taxation, whose rates varied from colony to colony. Just before these wars began the Lieutenant-Governor of New York deplored the lack of uniformity in the provincial customs duties; a colony which laid no tax on a particular article, allowed it to be smuggled overland into the territory of a neighbour which laid a high one.¹ It is easy to imagine the difficulties which a common policy of abstention would meet from the mutual suspicion of the colonial merchants and legislators.

Admiral Vernon tried to inspire such a policy in 1740, by a circular in which he asked the Governors of North America to prevent victuals from being exported to any place but the King's dominions. Some at least of the Governors complied, and the others were soon afterwards relieved of responsibility by the Flour Act of 1740, which forbade such exportation to foreign parts for the critical year 1741. Vernon was dissatisfied with these endeavours, for he informed Trelawny in January 1741/2 that flour was still exported to the foreign sugar islands from North America and even from Jamaica itself. Vernon does not seem to have taken the precaution of sending his circular to the authorities in the other West India islands; but Lieutenant-Governor Clarke of New York guessed the possibility of such an omission and forwarded copies of Vernon's letter to them. Trade, however, will always find the leaks in a system of restriction, and such a leak existed at Bermuda, where neither Vernon's nor Clarke's letter was received for a long time. Captains from New York found that having entered their cargoes in Bermuda they could re-export them without any conditions, and the Governor could not at first persuade the Council, which contained some eminent professional smugglers, to prevent the abuse. Finally, however, copies of the Act of Parliament arrived, and determined the question.² The system seems to have worked well for a short time. Judge King of Antigua called for its revival in 1746. He declared that there was no other way of stopping the export of provisions to the neutral colonies, and that it had obliged the people of St. Eustatius to

¹ Clarke to the Board of Trade, June 13, 1740, C.O. 5/1059.

² Clarke to Newcastle, Feb. 28, 1740/1, *N.Y. Col. Doc.* vi. 180; Alured Popple to William Popple, Dec. 21, 1741, C.O. 37/14, M 56.

sue to Antigua for leave to buy victuals for themselves at the beginning of the war.¹

The Assembly of Pennsylvania told Governor Thomas that it would be useless to restrain the exportation of flour unless it was done by all the colonies alike.² Massachusetts and Rhode Island passed acts for confining the export of provisions to the British dominions, but they expired in 1742 and were not renewed; indeed, the active stage of West Indian warfare being finished, it would have been a futile piece of self-sacrifice to continue them. With the outbreak of the French war in 1744 a new wave of enthusiasm passed over the colonies, at the height of which Massachusetts and New York enacted new laws for depriving the enemy colonies of provisions and warlike stores; but the Massachusetts Act only continued in force eleven months—at the end of which time, none of the other colonies having followed the example, the General Court declined to renew it. Governor Shirley told the Board of Trade again and again that nothing could stop the trade but a general Act of Parliament restraining all the colonies. The Board tentatively agreed, but feared that it could not be done immediately.³

Nothing, in fact, was done for the rest of that war. Before the outbreak of the next, Shirley was already repeating his advice, and trying to bring about a general embargo throughout North America. Other Governors had the same policy at heart, and there was some chance of pursuing it as long as the Northern Colonies were interested in the reduction of Cape Breton. Both Massachusetts and New York passed laws in 1755 to restrain trade with the French colonies. Each of these laws was designed to last a very short time unless the neighbouring colonies would come into the scheme.⁴ The attempt to procure a concert of

¹ Vernon to Ward, Nov. 13, 1740, Kimball, *Correspondence of Colonial Governors of Rhode Island*, i. 185; to Trelawny, Jan. 5, 1741/2, S.P. 42/92, f. 19; King to Corbett, May 21, 1746, Adm. 1/3881. Governor Mathew, however, said later that the Flour Act of 1740 was not obeyed (see his letter to the Board of Trade, Sept. 19, 1746, C.O. 152/25, Y 162).

² Assembly to Thomas, May 26, 1741, C.O. 5/1234.

³ *Laws of the Colony of New York* (1894), iii. 569–71; Shirley to Board of Trade, June 16, 1744, C.O. 5/884, FF 27; Feb. 6, 1747/8, C.O. 5/886, GG 3; Board of Trade to Shirley, Feb. 21, 1744/5, C.O. 5/918, p. 141. Although the Flour Act had expired in 1741, the Board seems to have regarded the Order in Council of Feb. 19, 1740/1, made in pursuance of it, as remaining valid for the rest of the war. (Report of March 26, 1746, C.O. 153/16, p. 273).

⁴ *Acts and Resolves of the Province of Massachusetts Bay*, iii. 814, 865; xv. 270. Shirley to Sharpe, Feb. 17, 1755; Delancy to Sharpe, Feb. 24, 1755, *Correspondence*

measures seems to have failed. Next year it was tried again. New York led the way once more, with an Act which was to continue in force for three months if New Jersey and Pennsylvania would pass similar laws, but was to end in three weeks if they would not. Pennsylvania passed such a law, likewise depending on the concurrence of her neighbours; New Jersey also came into the scheme, but it broke down because the King's Counties (the modern state of Delaware) would only keep up the prohibition for three weeks. Hardy tried to effect the same purpose by a concerted embargo; New Jersey agreed, but some others did not.¹ Meanwhile Pennsylvania complained that Maryland, likewise a bread colony, remained at liberty to export. The Governor of Maryland promised to do his best at the next session of the Assembly, 'tho' I apprehend they will not be very fond of it and will be apt to say that Virginia as well as Pennsylvania should set us an example'. Finally the knot was cut by the arrival of a letter from Lord Loudoun, Commander-in-Chief, requiring an embargo to be declared. A few months after it was laid, the Governor of Virginia relaxed it, Maryland followed suit, and the chain was broken again.² All this time, Massachusetts had kept up, by a succession of laws and proclamations, a very rigid system of prohibition; it was unlawful to export provisions even to the British West Indies, without a special order of the legislature. Unfortunately, Massachusetts was not one of the colonies which produced important quantities of food, so its abstention did not make much difference.³

Another proof of the futility of isolated action came from Rhode Island. The legislature had brought itself to pass, in good faith or bad, several laws against trade with the French and even against exporting provisions to foreign parts. The evasion of these laws by the Monte Cristi traders provoked a new and violent Act in June 1757; but in May of the next year

of Governor Sharpe (Maryland Historical Society), i. 169-70; *Laws of the Colony of New York* (1894), iii. 1050, 1121, 1139.

¹ Hardy to Board of Trade, May 10, June 19, Oct. 13, 1756, *N.Y. Col. Doc.* vii. 81, 117, 163; *Laws of the Colony of New York*, iv. 84, 96; *Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania, 1682-1801*, v. 223; *New Jersey Archives*, xvii. 23, 55-7.

² R. H. Morris to Sharpe, July 19, 1756; Loudoun to Sharpe, Aug. 20; Sharpe to Morris, Aug. 25; Dinwiddie to Sharpe, Sept. 8, *Correspondence of Governor Sharpe*, i. 458, 463, 472, 480; Loudoun to Pitt, June 17, 1757, C.O. 5/48.

³ *Acts and Resolves of the Province of Massachusetts Bay*, iii. 806, 814, 865-6, 870, 880, 901, 949-50, 955-7, 998, 1028, 1069-70; xv. 270-1, 317, 383, 621, 657.

the General Assembly repealed it, finding that 'all the British subjects in North America, except those of this colony, are allowed to carry on trade and commerce with the subjects of His Catholic Majesty, at a place in the West Indies, under his jurisdiction, called Monti Christo . . . and no bad consequence can attend such a traffic'.¹

The same mutual suspicions caused no less difficulty in the West Indies. Although the planters had a strong interest in assuring themselves of proper supplies of victuals, the merchants had influence enough to get leave to export whatever was left over when the island consumers were served. Perhaps they obtained this influence by threatening to reduce the importations for the future if their request was not granted. For example, Richard Morecroft obtained leave to send off some beef which was in danger of decaying on his hands, by pointing out that

'the quantity of old beef remaining upon the spot must necessarily prevent the importation of new, which your Petitioner is well assured from the advices he has received is to be expected. But while the old is permitted to remain, and thereby the proper vend for the new prevented, your petitioner will be obliged in justice to his employers as well as others, to send away the vessels consigned to him with new beef to some other and better market.'²

Other motives produced the same result in Jamaica, where the merchants addressed Trelawny in 1745 for leave to export flour, alleging that otherwise the factors would be

'under a necessity of advising their correspondents to stop shipping, which may be of bad consequence as it will put them on sending the provisions (which must be exported or perish) to Curaçao and other Dutch islands from whence the Spaniards have been constantly supplied and of course has enabled the Dutch to send great quantities of dry goods (a branch of trade well known to be of great consequence to this island). And . . . if an export be allowed, the merchants of New York and Philadelphia will be constantly supplying the markets in the hopes of a call from the Spanish market.'³

¹ *R.I. Col. Rec.* v. 423-5, 499, 516-17; vi. 11-12, 58, 147-8.

² Barbados Council Minutes, Dec. 1, 1741, C.O. 31/21. The same motive can be seen at work in Boston in 1713; corn was scarce, and the people was provoked to riot by Capt. Andrew Belcher's sending some to Curaçao. 'The Selectmen desired him not to send it; he told them, The hardest fend off! If they stop'd his vessel, he would hinder the coming in of three times as much' (*Diary of Samuel Sewall, M.H.S. Collections*, ii. 384).

³ Jamaica Council Minutes, Aug. 26, 1745, C.O. 140/31. At the beginning of

Even if the merchants and factors of the islands had taken no measures to control the supplies as they threatened, the North American traders themselves would have done the same thing. The supercargoes, generally at liberty to sell at any market according to their judgements, and accustomed to try one port after another until they had suited themselves, would not knowingly approach an island from which no re-export was allowed. When the legislature of Antigua laid an embargo in October 1740, it ordered all pilots to swear 'not to inform any person whatsoever on board any vessels inward bound that such embargo is laid', so that the North Americans should be committed to selling at the island before they could discover the trap into which they had walked. The Assembly of Montserrat refused to pass a law for continuing in force the imperial Flour Act of 1740, 'because we think it will be prejudicial to the importation of that kind of commodity amongst us'.¹ St. Kitts and Antigua passed laws in 1745 for preventing the export of provisions, but were forced to repeal them the next year, because they found that in spite of the system of licensed exports which they grafted on their prohibition, the Northern Colonies left off supplying them, so that prices rose instead of falling. Governor Mathew excused this retreat by charging the people of North America with something like a definite conspiracy against these unwisely patriotic islands. 'The Northward Colonies took fire at what we did, and were resolv'd and actually did refuse supplying these islands (that had pass'd the law) with provisions. We then were in danger of famine, without a repeal of the law for preventing exporting provisions.' This palliation did not the war, when the South Sea factors had asked leave to continue supplying the galleons with flour, Trelawny and the Council had refused it; but the factors put it about that they had agreed to connive at it in private. They were made to withdraw this accusation, but that proves little (Jamaica Council Minutes, Aug. 7 and 8, Oct. 2, Nov. 6, 1739, C.O. 140/30; Trelawny to Stone, Nov. 5, 1739, C.O. 137/56, f. 262). In fact large quantities of flour were sent from Jamaica to the Spanish ports. A certain James Christie made a contract with the Viceroy of Santa Fé to supply several cargoes to Portobello; he took the opportunity of importing other kinds of goods as well, and one of his vessels was seized by a *Guarda-Costa* and condemned. The merchants of Kingston complained to Admiral Ogle of this 'breach of public as well as private faith, and of the rights and privileges the English ought to enjoy on that coast', and Ogle, so far from leaving this double contrabandist to his fate, sent some ships to demand instant redress and to batter down the walls of Portobello if it was withheld (Petition of Kingston merchants to Ogle, April 2, 1744, S.P. 42/89, f. 150; Ogle to Newcastle, Aug. 19, 1744, f. 146; various papers annexed, ff. 149-91).

¹ Montserrat Council Minutes, Jan. 2, 1741/2, C.O. 177/3.

satisfy the Board of Trade, which advised George II to disallow the repealing Acts, both for certain technical reasons and because they conflicted with the policy of the imperial Government. The two islands were therefore legally tied to maintaining the restriction.¹

No wonder Frankland found, at the beginning of the next war, that though the prohibition of exports had been suggested in Antigua, yet 'by some distresses which arose last war in consequence of a similar law, I fancy they will not enact another of that kind in haste again.'² The legislature consented, however, to pass such another Act in 1757; but in this war, as in the last, the mutual distrust of the four Leeward Islands was so great that none of them would commit itself until it was quite sure the other three would do so. St. Kitts only agreed after Governor Thomas had promised that he would withhold his assent to their Bill until he could ratify at the same time similar ones from the other three islands.³ The Assembly of Antigua declared that only an Act of Parliament binding all the colonies could effectually stop abuses.

The Government was already moving towards such a policy. The Secretary of State sent out a circular to the Governors in March 1756, ordering them to get laws enacted for prohibiting the export of provisions to the French. Not all of them could do so. In October the Board of Trade recommended a general embargo, and at the end of the year it made up its mind to introduce a Bill into Parliament.⁴ This became the Flour Act of 1757, which, unlike that of 1740, continued in force for the duration of the war.

¹ Mathew to Board of Trade, Sept. 19, 1746, C.O. 152/25, Y 162; Board of Trade, Representations to the King, March 26, Dec. 3, 1746, C.O. 153/16, pp. 273-5, 292-4. The sugar islands suffered in another way from the excessive though occasional zeal of the Northern colonies. Some of their laws—for example, the New York Act of 1744 and the Massachusetts Act of June 25, 1755—prohibited the export of provisions so rigidly as to interfere with the trade to the British West Indies. Particular exceptions were obtainable in Massachusetts by special order of the legislature; the New York and Pennsylvania Acts of 1756 provided that British colonies in need of provisions might apply to the Governors for permission to export a reasonable quantity.

² Frankland to Weekes, April 2, 1756, Adm. 1/306; see also Antigua Council Minutes, Nov. 17, 1756, C.O. 9/21.

³ St. Kitts Council Minutes, Feb. 16, 1757, C.O. 241/7; see also Antigua Council Minutes, Nov. 20, 1740, C.O. 9/13; Assembly Minutes, Feb. 17, 1740/1, C.O. 9/14.

⁴ Fox, circular to colonial Governors, March 13, 1756, *N.Y. Col. Doc.* vii. 76; Board of Trade circular, Oct. 9, 1756, p. 162; *Journal of Commissioners of Trade and Plantations, 1754-8*, Oct. 1, 1756, Jan. 12, 1757, pp. 257, 285.

A long series of administrative measures culminated in this Act. The Government had frequently held the whole or parts of the King's dominions under embargoes; these were sometimes applied to all shipping, English and neutral—sometimes to all kinds of victuals, and sometimes only to certain classes whose export it particularly wished to prevent. These embargoes were imposed, withdrawn, and reimposed at the will of the Ministry. The Act of 1757 was meant to be more permanent than the embargoes, but it was not in every sense more complete. It applied to 'all kinds of victual', but it was to be in force only in the colonies. The export of corn and its products from England and Ireland was forbidden at the same time, but for one year only, and for a special reason—the scarcity which then prevailed.¹ Thus the English landed interest was to be free to send corn abroad as soon as the ease of the consumer would allow it; it was doing so in 1759. Further, the export of beef, pork, and butter from Ireland was not affected by the measure; that is why the Government continued to depend on embargoes for the control of this branch of trade. There was an exception in favour of the privileged rice-growers of Carolina, who had already been allowed a partial release from the restraints of the Acts of Trade.

The Act was to be enforced by demanding security that all victuals exported from any part of the King's dominions should be landed in some other part. Certificates were to be brought back from the place where the cargo was unloaded, and until they had been produced, the bonds were not to be cancelled. This system had a long history; it was in fact the most natural way of keeping within the Empire such articles as must be carried, in the ordinary course of trade, from one part of it to another. Nottingham had ordered the Governors to put it into force in 1703.² Vernon recommended the same thing to them in 1740, and when the colonial legislatures passed laws for the

¹ It is worth noticing that the temporary Act of 1740 owed its introduction in part to a similar scarcity. The first draft of that measure was so stringent as to prevent all intercourse between North America and our own West India colonies; it needed strenuous efforts both by the West Indians who depended on such trade for their subsistence, and by the North Americans who depended on it for their prosperity, to get this clause modified (Bussy to Amelot, Dec. 12 and 15, N.S., 1740, A.E. Angleterre, 409, ff. 353, 360. See also the petitions against the Bill, C. J., Nov. 25 and 26, Dec. 1, 1740, xxiii. 538-9, 543-4).

² *C.S.P. Col.* 1702-3, no. 1194.

prevention of trade with the enemy, they often took this method of getting them executed.¹

The system would only have worked well if the Customs Officers in the colonies had been many, upright, and efficient. Unfortunately they were few, and for the most part unworthy of their trust; all the efforts to regulate the export of provisions were thwarted by their negligence and by various abuses. Perhaps the commonest of all was the return of certificates for provisions which had never been landed in the English dominions. This practice was widespread and notorious.² A particular form of it existed between Barbados and the Leeward Islands. A vessel would clear from one of those governments for the other, sell her cargo at St. Vincent or Dominica on the way, and get a certificate at the end of her journey for provisions which were no longer on board. Pinfold offered to exchange with Thomas the lists of shipping entered and cleared, that the entries of one colony might be compared with the clearances of another.³ Some ships took their cargoes to the English sugar islands, landed them and had the bonds cancelled, and then re-embarked them secretly.⁴ False papers, or falsely obtained, were used likewise for covering the return cargo of French produce. Some masters went to Jamaica, cleared their vessels with imaginary cargoes of French prize sugars, and then loaded at St. Domingue; others cleared at Kingston with cargoes which were to have been put on board in the outports—a malpractice which was common enough in peace-time.⁵

Another sin of the officials was allowing the bonds to remain uncanceled after they ought to have sued for their forfeiture. Further abuses arose from the irregularity or incompleteness of the clearances themselves. Many vessels were cleared out from

¹ For example, Rhode Island in 1741 and 1755 (*R.I. Col. Rec.* v. 27, vi. 11).

² James Hamilton, Lt.-Gov. of Pennsylvania, to Pitt, Nov. 1, 1760, Kimball, *Correspondence of William Pitt*, ii. 354.

³ Pinfold to Thomas, April 29, 1759, Pinfold Letter-Book, Library of Congress.

⁴ Captain Edward Smith caught one of these—a Rhode Islander—red-handed at Antigua and got her condemned (Smith to Burchett, May 20, 1741, Adm. 1/2459; Mathew to Yeamans, May 29, C.O. 152/44).

⁵ Holmes to Cleveland, Oct. 27, 1761, Adm. 1/236. False papers seem to have been obtainable at Guadeloupe after the conquest (G. G. Beekman to Metcalfé Bowler, July 1, 1761, Letter-book, N.Y.H.S.). Governor Dalrymple attributed many of the abuses there to the participation of the revenue officers in trade (Dalrymple to Pitt, July 15, 1761, Kimball, *Correspondence of William Pitt*, ii. 450).

North America for the West Indies in general. Perhaps this vagueness was necessary to the supercargoes, who did not always know where they should sell their goods; but it did not help the customs officers to get the certificates returned. Other vessels were deliberately cleared for places where no Custom House existed, like the Moskito Shore, and then proceeded straight for the French colonies; no certificate could be expected from them. Others again cleared for ports where the officers were notoriously corrupt. The chain of imperial restriction was only as strong as its weakest link, and a few scoundrels at New London or Tortola could frustrate the whole system.¹ The former was especially frequented by illegal traders; exactly what kind of fraud was practised there, is not quite clear.² Lieutenant-Governor Colden noticed that vessels cleared from New York for New London with cargoes of onions, boards, and apples, which was like sending coals to Newcastle. Certainly these cargoes were not wanted at New London, and perhaps they never went there; Colden could only guess that the provisions were really landed and then reshipped without a new bond given.³ Colden put all the blame on the New England

¹ The following entry is taken from the 'Journal of a Captive, 1745-8' in the Library of Congress: 'Feb. 4th 1747/8. Captⁿ Austin went away in a small boat to Spanish Town another of the Virgin Isles to clear out his vessel, he finding it impracticable to clear out at Tortola as usual, for since Captⁿ Purcell has been Governor he has sworn all his officers not to clear out any vessel but such as completely load here,—for formerly the North American vessels used to load at St. Thomas' or St. Cruz, two Danish islands, then stand over to Tortola and purchase a barrel of sugar and a little cotton, and by virtue of them clear out the whole cargo as the produce of the British islands, which now Captⁿ Purcell's laudable conduct hath prevented those abuses.' Some practices of this kind had revived a few years later (John Gardner to Timothy Orne & Co., May 10, 1760, Timothy Orne MSS. xii, 6, Essex Institute). The same malpractice accounts for the cargoes of sugar entered in North America as from Turks Island, which produced nothing but salt.

² See an intercepted letter of James Thompson, Cap François, to Capt. Edward Dishington of the *Prosper*, April 6, 1762, Adm. 1/237; also the case of the *Black Joke*, Packwood, H.C.A. 42/57. Philip Cuyler of New York wrote to one Lechmere, a corrupt official in Connecticut, 'Inclosed you have a certificate for the landage of 300 barrels flour on board the schooner Dolphin John Hickey to your place which I request you'll be good enough to endorse and send it me per return of the bearer, the charge thereon be pleased to draw for and your bill shall be paid on receipt. I have also the brigantine Charming Sally Capt. Joseph Hunt cleared from Amboy to Kingston, Jamaica with 318 barrels flour, should be glad likewise youd send me a certif^t for the landing of it with a clearance for Jamaica as well for the former' (Aug. 19, 1760, Letter-book, N.Y.P.L.).

³ Colden to Amherst, April 23, 1762, *Colden Papers* (N.Y.H.S. Collections, 1876), i. 195.

colonies and New Jersey, whose officers connived at a trade which, he implied, was not carried on directly between New York and the West Indies. This was an exaggeration, for the Prize Appeals records contain many cases of New York vessels which seem to have proceeded to the West Indies without touching anywhere in North America to adjust their papers on the way; perhaps Colden erred out of tenderness to a son in the New York Custom House.¹

Sometimes a master would declare only a very small part of his cargo, and give bond to land it in His Majesty's dominions. He would sell all the undeclared goods among the French or Dutch, and then proceed with what little he had formally cleared to an English colony, where he would get the bond cancelled.² There were other abuses so ingenious and so mixed up with Custom House technicalities that to describe them would be to overload this topic with detail.³

It would be a thankless work to follow all the devices by which the merchants cheated the mediocre vigilance of the Custom House men, or corrupted their less than mediocre integrity. Even if the supervision had been as diligent as it was lax, the officers could do nothing without the courts; and, as Colden informed Pitt, it was difficult to prosecute with success for breaches of the Flour Act 'against the bent of the people, while they are under the prejudice to think that the sugar islands have gained a preference inconsistent with the true interest of the mother country'.⁴ This difficulty is illustrated by the classic squabble in Massachusetts over the writs of assistance, which originated in the seizure of smuggled French molasses during the war. The obstructive strength of public

¹ Colden to Pitt, Oct. 27 and Nov. 11, 1760, *Colden Papers* (1876), i. 27-8, 36.

² 'This night expect to saill for Montsuratt in a sloop belonging their with what fish and mack^l cleared out in order to cansall my bonds' (George Dodge, St. Eustatius, to the owners of the schooner *Beaver*, July 23, 1757, Timothy Orne MSS. x. 88, Essex Institute).

³ See the report of J. T. Kempe, a law officer of New York, to Governor Monckton, Nov. 3, 1762, *Aspinwall Papers* (*M.H.S. Collections*), i. 469-72. The Collector of the Customs at Rhode Island allowed provisions to be exported to Surinam in spite of the Flour Act; I do not know if there was any complicated fraud or a plain breach of the Act. Some people distinguished Surinam from the other Dutch colonies because it had hardly any commercial intercourse with the French; but French privateers could victual there and thereby prolong their cruises (John Bowditch to Timothy Orne & Co., Nov. 7, 1757, Timothy Orne MSS. x. 82, Essex Institute).

⁴ Colden to Pitt, Dec. 27, 1760, Kimball, *Correspondence of William Pitt*, ii. 382.

opinion is also proved by the curious complaint of George Spencer, an informer of New York who was maltreated in coffee-houses and packed off to prison by the device of buying up one of his debts from a creditor and suing him for it.¹

Finally, the best supervision in the world could not have looked after so immense a coast-line, without a number of subordinate officers far greater than the imperial Government allowed. Many, perhaps most, of the traders with the enemy took on board the best part of their cargoes in remote bays without clearing at all, or after clearing a nominal loading of small value; and perhaps even more brought home their cargoes to such unauthorized outports and smuggled them on shore.²

The Flour Act had other defects which made it useless. In the first place, the export of provisions to foreign parts could only be proved after they had been landed; there was no punishing an English subject for an intention.³ Secondly, the Act did not offer the captors enough incentive to make seizures under it. It only applied half the forfeitures to their use; they were entitled to the whole value if the vessel and cargo were condemned as lawful prize. The officers of the navy naturally showed what ingenuity they could in avoiding the half for the sake of the whole. For both these reasons, they made no attempt to stop English vessels on their way into the French ports, but concentrated their attention on catching them as they came out. There are conclusive proofs of this. The mate of the *Speedwell* deposed that she was stopped on her way into Port au Prince by H.M.S. *Viper*, which, having searched her cargo, let her go and watched her proceed into the harbour. The *Defiance*, Northam, was allowed to carry a cargo of fish into Monte Cristi in the same way. Both these ships were taken on their way home. Richard Mercer, a supercargo at Monte Cristi, gave other instances of the same kind, and advised his employers to send a ship to Monte Cristi with a cargo of flour, even if she went away in ballast. 'The men of war would take no notice of them, they don't care what they bring provided

¹ Spencer to Colden, Dec. 16, 1761, *Colden Papers* (N.Y.H.S. Collections, 1922), p. 93.

² See the owners' instructions in the *Betty*, Freeman, H.C.A. 42/56; *Fair Lady*, Lovett, H.C.A. 42/67.

³ Less scruple was shown on this point where neutrals were concerned.

they have not loaded here with French produce. This they told me on board the *Defiance*.¹

A memorial inspired by Admiral Holmes puts one side of the case very clearly. Condemnations under the Flour Act will never be enough to stop the Flag of Truce trade, because they can never be procured. Only the exportation of provisions contravenes the Act; the return voyage does not incur the penalties, since a ship can only be condemned for an offence committed on the voyage in which she was taken. But it is almost impossible to take a vessel on her way to the French colonies.

'For whenever any of these vessels are met with by the King's ships, they are bound for Jamaica; their clearances are for Jamaica; and upon this assertion, and her clearances produced, she goes free from molestation. His Majesty's ships have given chase to them when they have attempted to make the Cape [Cap François]; the *Defiance* chased the schooner *Resolution*, Abraham Whipple master, belonging to Rhode Island, crowding all the sail she could make for Cape François, following and in company with a French privateer. When she saw that she could not escape she brought to, declared herself bound to Jamaica, was brought in by the *Defiance* but could not be condemned, because she had not actually entered the port. She was to distrust all colours; was not obliged to know the *Defiance* to be the King's ship; and might be, tho' ignorantly or foolishly, prosecuting her voyage; therefore she was returned by the opinion of counsel without being libelled. Many are the instances of vessels spoken with by his Majesty's ships at sea, when cruising off the enemy's coast, who were bound to Jamaica and with all the favourable circumstances of wind and weather never arrived there, but have gone into the enemy's ports, discharged their cargoes, taken in the enemy's produce and proceeded to sea, on their respective voyages. Wherefore, none of the North Americans can be taken on their voyage outwards, it is only in their return, when they are loaded with the enemy's produce, that they are liable to be seized and condemned by the King's ships; and then they cannot be condemned by the Act against exportation of flour, corn, &c., but as ships and produce of the enemy.'²

¹ *Speedwell*, Lake, H.C.A. 42/93; *Defiance*, Northam, H.C.A. 42/62; Richard Mercer to Greg and Cunningham, New York, Nov. 6, 1760, *Recovery*, Castle, H.C.A. 42/92 (the *Defiance* referred to in this letter was a man-of-war). See also, to the same effect, William Drope, Monte Cristi, to Hugh White, Oct. 11, 1760, *General Wolfe*, H.C.A. 42/68.

² Memorial no. 1, Dec. 1760, Adm. 1/236. The force of Holmes's complaints is possibly diminished by the fate of the *Fox* in the Jamaica Court in 1762. She was

No doubt the difficulties here described were real; but the officers of the navy had another reason for what they did and left undone. Edward Long, the new judge of the Jamaica Vice-Admiralty, attempted in 1760 to overcome their difficulties for them, and his efforts were most unwelcome. He allowed the Advocate-General to alter the libels of certain Flag of Truce prizes, and to claim condemnation under the Flour Act instead of demanding it as lawful prize; and then he condemned them half to the King and half to the captors, for the curious reason that

'if the bare design to export such commodities contrary to the intention and letter of the said statute be punishable with the (forfeiture of the) said vessel and cargo, how much more shall the carrying of that design into execution fall under the same penalty? . . . It did manifestly appear to his Honour that the homeward-bound cargo of sugar and molasses was the actual proceed and return of the said contraband provisions so unloaded and landed as aforesaid out of the said sloop in and upon the enemy's territory.'¹

So far from accepting with pleasure this unexpected facility for executing the Flour Act, the captors resisted every step of the proceedings, appealed, and got the sentence reversed and the Advocate-General condemned in costs. Holmes asked the Lords of the Admiralty to dismiss Long, whose doctrine he denounced as 'a chimerical conversion of flour into indigo'. The ancient rule was restored, and the captors continued to enjoy the whole benefit of their prizes so long as they only took them on their return.² Whether Holmes was inspired by motives of private gain, or obliged by circumstances to act as he did, is an immaterial question. Whatever the cause, the blockade of

seized on her way to Port au Prince, and showed her clearance for Jamaica. The ships of war made a prize of her in spite of that. In the trial the mate produced the owner's orders to keep her close into the Bight of Léogane until she should meet with an English ship of war which would convoy her to Jamaica. Nevertheless Judge Long condemned her; but he may have done so because papers had been thrown overboard—a circumstance which was nearly always sufficient by itself to procure a condemnation. It is therefore impossible to ascertain how far this gives the lie to Holmes's assertion that confiscation of outward vessels was impossible. In any case the whole affair took place after his death (*Fox, Tosh, H.C.A. 42/67*).

¹ *Catherine*, Seabury, H.C.A. 42/60; see also the *Polly*, Easton, H.C.A. 42/88; *John and William*, H.C.A. 42/72; *Burrell's Reports*, ed. Marsden, p. 194.

² Holmes to Cleveland, Aug. 22, 1760, March 18, 1761, Adm. 1/236; Cleveland to Holmes, Nov. 17, 1760, Adm. 2/529, p. 512; Opinion of Advocate-General Hay and Solicitor-General Yorke, Nov. 1, 1760, Adm. 7/299, no. 23.

St. Domingue was robbed of all its direct military effectiveness by the dispensation which let provisions in and only stopped sugars coming out. A long series of seizures might ultimately destroy a trade either way; indeed the North Americans were almost entirely frightened out of the Flag of Truce trade by the condemnations at Jamaica, which were all upheld on appeal; but it is a curious blockade which deliberately omits doing the chief thing a blockade is instituted to do.

The failure of all its measures for the suppression of this trade was very soon apparent to the Government. At the end of 1757 the Board of Trade, which had hitherto taken the lead, gave orders for the collection of evidence upon the subject; but, for some unknown reason, the whole matter was dropped.¹ Perhaps Pitt may have been responsible for this change. Mr. Hubert Hall has pointed out the curious fact that Pitt took no action at all against the commerce with the enemy in the first three years of his Ministry.² The omission may have no significance, for many things were naturally forgotten in the confusion of public business. But these abuses must have been most repugnant to Pitt's ideal of patriotism—indeed, this appears from the strength of his language in the circular of August 23, 1760. Therefore it may be presumed that there was a reason for the delay; which may probably be found in his anxiety to avoid annoying the Americans while their help was necessary to the reduction of Canada. This object once achieved, he denounced the trade and called for its suppression. He chose his time wrongly; the colonists of North America had been ready enough to stop the trade with the enemy who threatened their own settlements, but did not see the point of this kind of patriotism when they were out of danger.

The colonial Governors returned what information they could, but held out little hope of stopping the trade. Some, like Fauquier of Virginia, declared with the pride of virtue that they had never granted a Flag of Truce in their lives; others, like Bernard of Massachusetts, simply lied, or evaded the question. Hamilton of Pennsylvania lamented his inability to put down this unwarrantable traffic, and asked exactly what kind of offence it was in law; Stephen Hopkins of Rhode Island defended the trade whole-heartedly, while Colden of New York

¹ *Journal of Commissioners of Trade and Plantations, 1754-8*, p. 337.

² *American Historical Review*, v. 668-9.

impersonally put forward the arguments that were used on its behalf, and threw the blame for abuses on the Custom Houses of every colony but his own.¹ The trade seems to have continued very much as it had been carried on before. Rodney discovered in 1761 evidences of a complete scheme for supplying Martinique with large quantities of flour from North America in ships with double papers. Amherst made a great fuss in the spring of 1762 over a similar revelation in New York; but nothing very startling or exceptional was exposed by the documents which he handed over to Colden. In May of that year somebody in New England wrote to Barbados, perhaps about the same affair, that French passports were sold in Boston and elsewhere for 200 dollars apiece.² In fact the trade continued throughout the war, in one form or another. It excited some indignation in England. The Agent for Rhode Island was afraid that some leading politicians would bring forward in Parliament further measures for stopping it; but he prophesied rightly that the Government would be content with the condemnation of vessels and cargoes in the Court of Prize Appeals.³

§ v. *The Flag of Truce Trade*

How was this trade carried on? There was direct intercourse with the enemy, and intercourse through neutral ports. The former was nearly all covered by Flags of Truce, for the French authorities themselves sometimes punished the English traders who dared to approach without any sort of official licence. French passports were sometimes sent to the English colonies, but only towards the end of the war, when the Flag of Truce trade was suppressed. As long as it was safe, it remained the commonest form of direct intercourse with the French islands.⁴

The volume of the trade is not easy to guess. In the Prize

¹ Pitt's circular is printed in Kimball, *Correspondence of William Pitt*, ii. 320. The Governors' answers are to be found in pp. 344-429, *passim*; see also *Colden Papers* (*N.Y.H.S. Collections*, 1876), i. 26.

² Rodney's Memorandum, Dec. 14, 1761, G.D. 20/2, p. 36; Amherst to Colden, April 15 and 16, 1762, *Colden Papers* (*N.Y.H.S. Collections*, 1922), pp. 136-9; Extract of a letter from New England to Gedney Clarke, May 3, 1762, Adm. 1/237.

³ Sherwood to Hopkins, May 30, 1761, Kimball, *Correspondence of the Colonial Governors of Rhode Island*, ii. 320.

⁴ Flag of Truce trade was by no means a new invention; Marsden produces what looks like an instance of it from 1485 (*Law and Custom*, i. 139). It existed and was subject to abuses in the War of the Spanish Succession (*H.M.C., H. of L. MSS., N.S.* vi. 112).

Appeals papers only 49 cases are recorded, of which 40 from Jamaica; but that is no guide, for the claimants must have given up a number of ships and cargoes for lost, and compounded or deserted their appeals, when they saw that the Court of Prize Appeals had set its face against the trade. The captors tried to induce the witnesses at Jamaica to admit that there were 300 ships employed annually in this trade, but none of them ever did so, and some expressly denied it. Cotes believed in February 1760 that there were then 85 in the ports of French St. Domingue; that is almost the only positive figure that was ever given.¹

Where the exchange of prisoners was in the hands of the colonial Governors or legislatures, merchant vessels were always employed.² This might be free from abuse if certain conditions were observed. The most important was, that the owners of the vessels should be so well paid, either by the Government which sent the prisoners or by that which received them, as to be above the temptation to cover their costs by trading with the enemy. This necessary condition was very seldom realized. The colonial politicians strongly disliked expense. They sometimes agreed to it with a bad grace and for a short time, and were generally more willing to pay for sending the prisoners away than for maintaining them. This qualified compliance was more often found among the West Indian than the North American colonies—that is doubtless one of the reasons why the Flag of Truce trade was never scandalously large there, at any rate in the Windward Islands. The North American Governments almost always expected private shipowners to carry the prisoners at their own cost, and allowed them to repay themselves by the profits of trade.

The Flag of Truce traders often justified themselves, when they were brought up in the Vice-Admiralty Courts, by arguing that prisoners must be exchanged, that the Governments could not afford to subsist them or to pay for their transport, and that nobody could be expected to carry them for nothing.³ All this

¹ Cotes to Cleveland, Feb. 14, 1760, Adm. 1/235. Governor Bart said that 253 foreign vessels came to Cap François between July and Nov. 1760; but many of these—there is no knowing how many—must have been neutrals (Bart to Berryer, Sept. 14, 1761, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 108).

² The control of prisoners was finally vested in the officers of the Navy by an Order in Council of March 25, 1761.

³ The appellants' appeal case in the *General Amherst*, Add. MSS. 36213, f. 212;

was true, and might have been a valid defence, if the exchange had been loyally carried out for its own sake, instead of becoming a mere pretext for trade. In the first place, some of the claimants who urged these excuses had never carried any prisoners at all, or so few as to render the argument ridiculous. Reasons were sometimes given for this absurdity: the master had been in a hurry to get away before the rivers were frozen up, or to take advantage of a fair wind. Sometimes there were no prisoners to exchange, so that they had to be brought from the neighbouring colonies.¹ Governor Hopkins of Rhode Island refused to issue a Flag of Truce commission because the prisoners were purchased in Boston for the voyage. Clinton, of New York, was taxed with selling French and Spanish prisoners at several pistoles a head; and his refutation of the charge was far from convincing.² Frenchmen were sometimes hired to serve as prisoners for the voyage; they were brought back to North America for further use, and during their absence the ship's owners took care of their wives and families.³

The worst abuses were committed in Pennsylvania by Governor Denny. He issued blank Flag of Truce commissions, with lists of imaginary French names. At first he seems to have dealt them out in moderation, but towards the end of his career he scattered them freely over his own and the neighbouring colonies at twenty pounds sterling apiece. They were bought up and resold at advanced prices, and some were still in circulation several months after his departure. Eager inquiries were sent to Philadelphia from New York and New England.⁴ In Rhode Island the Assembly granted Flags for some strange errands, quite unconnected with the return of prisoners, such as the pursuit of insolvent debtors.⁵ A very common pretext for com-

William Popple, Governor of Bermuda, to Board of Trade, Oct. 10, 1747, C.O. 37/15, M 107.

¹ *Young Charles*, Carr, H.C.A. 42/109; *Venture*, Hymers, 42/100; *Three Brothers*, Gilbert, 42/97; *Polly and Fanny*, Tudor, 42/87; *Nancy*, Rooke, 42/84; *Greyhound*, Shoales, 42/68.

² *R.I. Col. Rec.* vi. 173; Representation of the Assembly of New York to Clinton, May 19, 1747, C.O. 5/1095.

³ *Tryton*, Bowd, H.C.A. 42/97; *Sarah*, Borden, H.C.A. 42/94.

⁴ Hamilton to Pitt, Nov. 1, 1760, Kimball, *Correspondence of William Pitt*, ii. 351-5; G. G. Beekman, New York, to Thomas Clifford, Philadelphia, Dec. 12, 1759, Clifford Correspondence, H.S.P., ii, no. 265; *Louisburgh*, Nuttle, H.C.A. 42/79; *Greyhound*, Shoales, H.C.A. 42/68.

⁵ General Assembly of Rhode Island, Aug. 20, 1759, *R.I. Col. Rec.* vi. 218; *Windsor*, Clarke, H.C.A. 42/104.

mercial intercourse between enemies was the ransom or repurchase of necessary goods which had been taken as prize on their way to the West Indies. This led to the settlement of a regular correspondence between Jamaica and Havana in Trelawny's time; one or two attempts were then made at a similar trade with St. Domingue. In the next war the Governor of St. Domingue sent one Tanguy du Chastel to Jamaica to make a regular business of repurchasing French ships and goods. Caylus seems to have allowed Governor Mathew to ransom a cargo of wine in which he had been interested, and himself sent a merchant to Barbados for the like purpose.¹

These irregularities could only be checked if the Imperial Government undertook the whole management and cost of the prisoners, which it would not do until 1761. Failing that, the only possible expedient was to insist on exchanging them in such large batches that the occasions for Flags of Truce would be extremely few. This is what the English Admirals always tried to do. Knowles in 1748 and Holmes in 1761 proposed to the French authorities to send not less than forty at a time. The French replied that it would be inhuman to keep the prisoners in the jails until the complement of forty should be made up, or to insist on sending them to Jamaica when they wanted to go elsewhere.² Some of the colonies ordained that the exchange should take place whenever a certain number of French prisoners had accumulated—fifteen in Rhode Island, twenty-five in Montserrat.³ The importance of this arrangement is obvious. If it was not adopted, the prisoners were doled out to the merchants by ones and twos in order to create an excuse for as many Flags of Truce as possible. There are so many instances of this that it would be tedious to name them all. The most remarkable is to be found in Bermuda, where Governor William Popple seems to have made a point of supplying each vessel of the colony, no matter what her voyage, with a French prisoner to protect her against the questioning of French privateers. Presumably the whole shipping of Bermuda was covered by Flags

¹ Petition of Manning and others to Trelawny, Nov. 11, 1745, Jamaica Council Minutes, C.O. 140/31; Deposition of Tanguy du Chastel in the *Florence*, Breakill, H.C.A. 42/67; *Valeur*, Dery, H.C.A. 42/50; Barbados Council Minutes, March 24, 1745/6, and May 13, 1746, C.O. 31/23. *V. supra*, pp. 121, 357.

² Knowles to Newcastle, Nov. 20, 1747, Add. MSS. 32713, f. 473; Knowles to Vaudreuil, Jan. 23, 1748, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 71; Vaudreuil to Knowles, Feb. 6, 1748, *ibid.*; Holmes to Bart, Aug. 8, 1761, Adm. 1/236.

³ *R.I. Col. Rec.* v. 241; Montserrat Assembly Minutes, Nov. 19, 1757, C.O. 177/9.

of Truce, and hardly any vessel carried more than one prisoner. The Board of Trade rebuked Popple for this fault, but it became general to the colonies in the next war.¹ The advocates of the Flag of Truce trade defended it by arguing that it expedited the exchange of prisoners, who would otherwise be kept in prison until the batches of twenty or forty were made up; but Holmes retorted that the return of prisoners to their own ports was positively delayed by the commercial demand for them, as the Governors found it more profitable to deal them out one by one, than to send off as many as they had in one vessel. The suggestion is plausible, but very few instances of delay for this reason can be proved.²

Some colonies tried to regulate the Flags of Truce so as to prevent at least the export of provisions and naval stores. Trelawny ordered the Naval Officer at Jamaica to search the vessels in this trade at least as carefully as any others, and prevent them from carrying away any 'contraband'.³ This gentleman chose to neglect the duty, and could do so with impunity because he was protected by his powerful relation, the great Lord Mansfield. Even Rhode Island, the home of all abuses, passed laws which would have been excellent if they had been obeyed or enforced. A committee was appointed to examine the Flag of Truce vessels on their departure, and to certify that they carried no warlike stores and no more provisions than would suffice to victual the crew and prisoners. Unfortunately the committeemen only too often certified without examining, or else they calculated the victuals at a generous allowance for more than the full crews, and for a number of prisoners vastly greater than was likely to be found on board. It is even possible that these certificates were bought and sold, like the Flags of Truce themselves.⁴

¹ Board of Trade to Popple, June 29, Dec. 21, 1748, C.O. 38/8, pp. 490-4, 505-6; Popple to Board of Trade, Oct. 10, 1748, C.O. 37/16, M 158.

² Holmes's memorial, no. 1, Dec. 1760, Adm. 1/236. The *Nancy*, Rooke (H.C.A. 42/84) and *Charming Elizabeth*, Fay (H.C.A. 42/59) are possibly examples. M. Tramond mentions another in the *Revue de l'histoire des colonies*, xv. 516.

³ Trelawny to Murray, Nov. 6 and 23, 1745, in *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica*, iv. 18.

⁴ *R.I. Col. Rec.* vi. 93; Hopkins to Pitt, Dec. 20, 1760, Kimball, *Correspondence of William Pitt*, ii. 374-5; Philip Cuyler, New York, to William Tweedy, Rhode Island, Sept. 14, 1759, Letter-book of Philip Cuyler, N.Y.P.L. (This letter-book contains some very interesting light on the purchase of Flags of Truce, chiefly from Rhode Island and Philadelphia.) An instance of such overestimation is to be found in the *Sarah*, Borden, H.C.A. 42/94.

Many of the colonial Governors profited by the sale of Flags or dipped into the trade itself. The merchants in Trelawny's circle were undoubtedly concerned in the trade to both Spanish and French West Indies. Robinson of Barbados was suspected, perhaps unjustly, of remissness in its suppression, and he certainly granted Flags for curious errands, such as going to look for other Flags which had not returned. Mathew was interested in the *Valeur*.¹ Tinker, Governor of the Bahamas, was concerned in the *Bladen* Flag of Truce—indeed, she was named for his father-in-law. He was also said to have threatened to hang as a pirate the mate of a New York privateer who having caught another of his vessels, was foolish enough to bring her into New Providence.² Clinton of New York and Popple of Bermuda were accused of criminal compliances with the traders. In the Seven Years War, President Gambier of the Bahamas granted a Flag to a vessel owned by himself.³ One of Governor Hopkins's sons commanded a Flag. No more need be said of Denny. Henry Moore, Lieutenant-Governor of Jamaica, and Thomas Cotes, Admiral on that station, were rumoured to have partaken in the trade.⁴

Not all the Admirals were so complaisant as the Governors. Knowles was a determined enemy of the Flag of Truce trade to the French islands, though he had partners who carried on a similar business with the Spaniards. Vaudreuil attributed his rigour to a feud with the North Americans, and indeed it was only against North American Flags that Knowles issued his severe orders. A French Governor is never a very good witness to the motives of an English Admiral, but Vaudreuil may have been near the mark, though he probably gave the wrong explanation of Knowles's animosity.⁵ Holmes was a no less

¹ Barbados Council Minutes, March 24, 1745/6, May 13, 1746, C.O. 31/23; *Valeur*, Dery, H.C.A. 42/50; Lee to Corbett, May 26, 1746, Adm. 1/305.

² *Bladen*, H.C.A. 42/24; Case of George Ring, 1746, C.O. 23/5, D 40. See the letter of Bart to Moras, April 18, 1757, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 100, which says that Tinker was afraid to break the Flour Act by trading with the French colonies as he had done in the last war.

³ *King of Prussia*, Micklethwait, H.C.A. 42/79.

⁴ Moore may have been concerned in the *Tassell*, Ross (H.C.A. 42/98). The obscure struggle between Moore and the Assembly of Jamaica over the expediency of returning prisoners to St. Domingue looks as if it may have been inspired by a jealousy over the profits of the trade (*Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica*, v. 207-10, 215). Cotes was slandered in a letter, of which the author withdrew the charge (Jamaica Council Minutes, Oct. 11, 1759, C.O. 140/38).

⁵ Knowles, orders to Capt. Hughes, Feb. 10, 1747/8, Adm. 7/744; Vaudreuil

violent persecutor of Flags of Truce, and went a step farther than Knowles or Cotes, in that he finally took measures against the trade which was carried on from Jamaica itself.¹

Though the privateers lived by their prizes, they spared their countrymen more than the men-of-war. They very seldom made real seizures of vessels belonging to their own colonies, and they sometimes did service to the traders by capturing them collusively.² Such collusive capture was a very serious offence at law, but instances of it abound in the High Court of Admiralty records. No doubt the profits fully compensated for the risk, especially as the counterfeit captor seldom forfeited his own ship, though he often lost his prize if a real captor lighted upon her. The practice was sometimes excused by the argument that it was only meant to protect the trade against the notorious Bahama privateers, and would never have been pleaded in bar of a real capture by a man-of-war. Certainly the collusive captors seldom made any attempt to vindicate their claims against the King's ships in the courts of law.³

The privateer would make arrangements for the farce to be played just outside the enemy port upon the return voyage. A gun would be fired, and a prize-master put on board. Sometimes he would be the sole member of the prize-crew—a circumstance which may be taken by itself to prove the falsity of the seizure. He would receive a copy of the 'captor's' commission, and instructions for an imaginary voyage to some privateering port. When another captor appeared, the prize-master was to step forward and claim that the vessel was already a

to Maurepas, Feb. 22, 1748, A.N. Colonies, C^o A 74. Vaudreuil thought Knowles resented the refusal of the North Americans to engage in an expedition to Florida. But the real reason was more probably the riots against the press-gang at Boston. Although Knowles treated the rumour of his partnership with Manning and Ord as the invention of scandalmongers, he was certainly connected with the firm at some time, for his correspondents in London wrote to him in 1754, 'We are extremely sorry for the vast loss you are apprehensive of suffering by Messrs. Manning & Ord' (Lascelles and Maxwell to Knowles, Feb. 12, 1754, W. & G. vi). *V. supra*, pp. 183-4.

¹ For Cotes's attitude to the trade, see pp. 417-18.

² Some North American privateers made prizes of North American Flags of Truce, but seldom those of their own colonies; for example, the *Hope* privateer of New York took seven Flags belonging to Philadelphia, Rhode Island, and the Bahamas (Philip Cuyler to Richards and Coddington, March 25, 1760, Letter-book, N.Y.P.L.).

³ *Belle Savage*, Lindsay, H.C.A. 42/57; *Pompey*, Tucker, 42/89. The only cases in which they appear to have done so are the *Mary and Ann*, Chiapple, H.C.A. 42/82, and the *Young Jan*, Navaret, H.C.A. 42/109.

prize. Some of these feigned prize-masters were very little suited to their parts, and the real captors generally saw through the pretence.¹

Sometimes the privateers accompanied their feigned prizes for some distance, and gave them signals for keeping together.² This amounted to convoying the trader, who paid a great deal for the service except where the captor and the prize belonged to the same owners.³ Such convoy, with or without collusive capture, was very common in all branches of the trade between North America and the West Indies, for many of the vessels—even those employed in the Flag of Truce and Monte Cristi trades—were armed and commissioned as privateers.⁴ The traders could not rely entirely on the fidelity of their escorts, who sometimes converted a farce into a seizure in good earnest. This happened to the *Adventure*, a brigantine in the Monte Cristi trade, and even to a neutral, the *Vrouw Ursula*.⁵

Prosecutions under the Act against collusive captures only became frequent at the end of the Seven Years War. The forfeitures were to be divided equally between the King and the informers, therefore the latter would rather libel the traders as lawful prize, since they would receive the whole in case of

¹ See the very entertaining deposition of Peleg Rogers in the *Nancy*, Rooke, H.C.A. 42/84.

² *General Amherst*, Hunt, H.C.A. 42/68; *Miriam and Ann*, Lake, H.C.A. 42/82.

³ The best instance of this is the *Recovery*, Castle, H.C.A. 42/92, which was taken by the *Harlequin* privateer. Both vessels belonged to Messrs. Greg and Cunningham of New York. The *Catherine*, Henshaw (H.C.A. 42/59), is probably another case of the same kind. Both she and her captor belonged to New York, and Francis Koffler, commander of the captor, had formerly been master of the prize.

⁴ For instance the *Thurloe*, Ireland, H.C.A. 42/97; the *Charming Polly*, Horton, H.C.A. 42/59; the *General Johnson*, Little, H.C.A. 42/69; the *Ranger*, Crowninshield, H.C.A. 42/92. The *Prussian Hero*, Campbell (H.C.A. 42/88), actually made prize of some neutral vessels in her voyage to Monte Cristi. Other English privateers, however, convoyed neutrals to and from the French colonies (Douglas to Cleveland, Feb. 6, 1761, Adm. 1/307). There are many references to convoys in the intercepted correspondence of other prizes. Robert Purviance, a supercargo at Monte Cristi, described a negotiation with a New York privateer, to whom 500 pieces of eight were offered for convoying eight or ten vessels through the Bahamas. He held out for 700, so that the traders decided to sail by themselves, though few or none of them had guns. Purviance made the reflection that 'nothing will do here if a man is not able to fight his way' (Purviance to Irwin, Sept. 2, 1760, *Stadt Flansbourg*, H.C.A. 42/93). The author of an intercepted letter of Aug. 13, 1761 (S.P. 42/42, f. 440), says, 'Tis dangerous now convoying, that scheme is blown.'

⁵ *Adventure*, Graisbury, H.C.A. 42/53; other cases are reported in a letter from Joseph Gale to Hugh White & Co., Oct. 17, 1760, *General Wolfe*, Thompson, H.C.A. 42/68. For the history of the *Vrouw Ursula*, see a letter of Nicholas Gouverneur to J. R. Faesch, July 22, 1758, *Resolutte*, Rieverts, H.C.A. 42/91.

condemnation;¹ but when the Court of Prize Appeals decided that Monte Cristi ships were not lawful prize, the captors naturally preferred the half to nothing.²

While the privateers usually abstained from molesting the illicit trade of their fellow countrymen, they freely interrupted that of other colonies. Sometimes this created what one Governor called 'the kind of civil war that has been waged by the privateers on these traders belonging to different provinces'.³ Resentment ran high between North Americans and West Indians. The master of a condemned Flag of Truce vessel exclaimed against the severity of the Jamaica court: 'I know of no other way to get satisfaction, but to fit out a small vessel against the Jamaica men who have at least 40 sail of vessels running up and down to Hispaniola.'⁴ These were only words; but there was nearly an open quarrel between Rhode Island and Antigua. The Antigua privateer *Hawk* seized two trading vessels on their way to Monte Cristi in the autumn of 1759, 'which', as William Grant wrote to his correspondent in Newport, 'I believe will be attended with very bad consequences in case they are condemned, as there is two or three more here and only waits to hear the fate of those already carried to port before they begin to make reprisals'. Next year a Rhode Island privateer made prize of an Antigua vessel belonging to one Hanson, who indignantly reminded the captor that 'he ought to consider how many of his countrymen were then in my power. . . . I owned three privateers that were cruising off Hispaniola, and I imagined the same liberty allowed me to steal vessels out of a road at anchor, as what Captain Michener had, there were many vessels then in the same port belonging to Rhode Island.'⁵ It does not appear whether privateers ever rescued their fellow countrymen out of the hands of captors from other colonies; but possibly this is what Captain Randall

¹ In the case of the *Catherine*, Henshaw (H.C.A. 42/59), the captors refused to associate themselves with a libel for collusive capture, appealed against the sentence, and won their case.

² *Pompey*, Tucker, H.C.A. 42/89.

³ Boone, New Jersey, to Pitt, Oct. 23, 1760, Kimball, *Correspondence of William Pitt*, ii. 344.

⁴ Duncan to Bowler and Champlin, Dec. 24, 1760, *Commerce of Rhode Island* (*M.H.S. Collections*), i. 87.

⁵ *Commerce of Rhode Island*, p. 79; *Good Hope*, or *God Haal*, Felan, H.C.A. 42/69. Hanson's privateers seem to have given convoy to North American as well as West Indian traders (Purviance to Irwin, Sept. 2, 1760, *Stadt Flansbourg*, H.C.A. 42/93; Philip Cuyler to Richards and Coddington, July 28, 1760, Letter-book, N.Y.P.L.).

of the *Providence* meant by telling his owners (after his seizure by a Bahama privateer) that 'if I meet with any Northern cruisers shall beg my releaf if can be don'.¹

The judges were as partial as the privateers to their own countrymen; it seldom happened that any of them condemned the Flags of Truce belonging to his own port. Three New York Flags were indeed condemned at New York;² but that seems to be exceptional. In general, North American judges acquitted these traders, and West Indian judges condemned them;³ but Judge Bullock of Jamaica accumulated a great number of cases, which contrary to all expectation he acquitted wholesale in May 1760. Within a week he was removed from his office.⁴ Samuel Gambier, whose doctrines were almost subversive on this topic, had a very short career as an Admiralty judge at New Providence.

It was the opinion of the Lords Commissioners for Prize Appeals that finally determined the fate of the Flag of Truce trade. That court uniformly condemned both vessels and cargoes. Its sentences in these cases are not recorded in full, but its policy was so clear and sweeping as to need very little interpretation. It can hardly be presumed to have taken into account the nature of the cargoes exported to the enemy, for the condemnations would not then have been so universal. More likely it regarded all direct intercourse with the enemy as unlawful. This probability is strengthened, as will be seen, by its attitude to the Monte Cristi ships. By the middle of 1760, the condemnations at Jamaica, backed by the decisions of the Prize Appeals Court, had virtually suppressed the Flag of Truce trade, and driven the North Americans into subtler forms of unpatriotic conduct.⁵

¹ Randall to owners of the *Providence*, May 18, 1760, Nicholas Brown MSS.

² Hough, *Reports of Cases in the Vice-Admiralty of New York*, p. 198.

³ No doubt this was why the master of the *Keppell* offered money to the captors' prizemaster if he would allow the vessel to be carried to any port in North America (*Keppell*, Chambers, H.C.A. 42/79).

⁴ Jamaica Council Minutes, May 17 to 25, 1760, C.O. 140/42.

⁵ Philip Cuyler chartered a vessel for a Flag of Truce voyage at the beginning of 1760, but her owner repented of the bargain and Cuyler had to get another. The condemnations at Jamaica staggered Cuyler himself, and in May he thought it wise to put off his enterprise for a time. Bullock's acquittals did not much reassure him, for the captors insisted on having the cargoes lodged as security for appeal, so that they were as much lost to the owners, for the present, as if they had been condemned. A few days later, he got his courage back and decided to send a Flag of Truce to Cap François in the hurricane season, when the risk would

§ vi. *Indirect Trade with the Enemy: St. Eustatius and Monte Cristi*

If direct intercourse with the enemy was out of the question, indirect trade was by no means so. The warehouses of St. Eustatius were fuller than ever of North American goods, which were sent down in small cargoes to the French islands, usually at the risk of French or Dutch merchants, hardly ever of English subjects. Factors flocked to the place from Ireland and the Northern Colonies, and profited by the excessive ease of naturalization. Ships as well as goods were in demand, and a cargo sometimes sold to better advantage if the vessel which carried it was included in the bargain.¹ The English navy and privateers seem to have satisfied themselves with intercepting the trade between St. Eustatius and the French colonies, in which the North Americans do not appear to have engaged. They did not try to stop the English ships on their way to or from St. Eustatius; at least the Prize Appeals records show no trace of interference with such voyages.

St. Eustatius was an old-established free port whose commerce was merely swelled by the war; the same thing may be said of St. Thomas and St. Croix. A completely new trade of the same kind sprang up at the Spanish colony of Monte Cristi. This was a small settlement on the north coast of Hispaniola, not far from the boundary of the French and Spanish possessions. Some time not long before the war the authorities appear to have made it a free port in order to encourage the introduction of provisions—a proceeding which France imitated soon afterwards at Cape Nicola Mole. A Lieutenant-Governor was appointed, and a battery mounted; but Monte Cristi seems at all times to have been a one-horse place. A North American sailor wrote home in 1758: 'This place has been settled about six years. Their houses are built of cabbage-trees—they have a church, a gaol, six pieces of cannon for to guard the town, wherein there is about fifty houses, about one dozen chairs in the place to sit in, they ride on jackasses, for the most part, with

be less because fewer men-of-war would be about (Letter-book, Feb. to July 1760, N.Y.P.L.). About the same time, G. G. Beekman of New York expected to lose £7,000 by Flags of Truce; many merchants of North America must have agreed with him in his heartfelt cry of 'I say dam them all'.

¹ A great deal of information on the North American trade with St. Eustatius during these wars can be gathered from the Timothy Orne MSS. in the Essex Institute, Salem, and the Hancock MSS. in the Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University.

a saddle made of straw.' Nor did he think much better of the people: 'I am among a parcel of Romish savages, I may call 'em with safety. I assure you they are a compound of the greatest knavery in life, which I believe is the chief thing they study.'¹ The place was described in April 1760 as 'a poor settlement of about a hundred families'. Captain Hinxman, of H.M.S. *Port Royal*, who went into the harbour in March 1761, reported that the harbour was only two feet deep for two hundred yards from the shore, and that in the season of the north winds, to which the road was exposed, boats could not come within a quarter of a mile of the land for the great surf. On shore there was a guard-house, three 'sutling huts', and five sheds for coopers and carpenters; the town was two miles away.²

Such a place did not promise to be the seat of a lively commerce, but it served well enough for an accommodation address, and even for more. As the North Americans did not come there to trade with the Spaniards, it mattered little to them that there were no merchants, no wharves, and no sugar-plantations at Monte Cristi. For their own police and security, they did not rely on the Spanish forts and officers, but on the guns which some of them possessed, and the vigilance of their 'commodores'.³ Only once did the trade suffer any interference from the French. Nor did the Spanish authorities molest it; the Lieutenant-Governor appears to have doubted its propriety at first, but he was soon converted or superseded, and the authorities began to make a handsome profit by their connivance.⁴

The trading vessels from North America lay in the open road, sometimes as many as 130 at a time.⁵ There was no need for any communication with the shore, except for reporting and clearing the vessel, paying duties, and perhaps negotiating a counterfeit bargain with a Spanish intermediary. In fact, some witnesses deposed that the English supercargoes were forbidden

¹ Jonathan Clarke to Moses Brown, April 17, 1758, R.I.H.S., Moses Brown Papers, i. 24.

² Deposition of William Taggart, April 21, 1760, C.O. 23/7, E 3; Hinxman to Holmes, April 13, 1761, Adm. 1/236.

³ Intercepted letter from Monte Cristi, April 13, 1761, S.P. 42/42, f. 440.

⁴ See the letter of 'Dom Gaspar' to Chastenoys, Aug. 11, 1757, A.N. Colonies C⁹ A 105.

⁵ This figure, reported by Cotes (Feb. 14, 1760), is almost the highest of those given. Shirley on March 29, 1760, put the number between 80 and 90; seamen reported various figures between 50 and 100. Hinxman only found 42 in March 1761. Moore sent home a list of 29 in Feb. 1759.

to land at all. Sometimes the ship's master would himself go down to the French settlements; but this was dangerous, because it might be a ground of condemnation in the English courts (the only reason I can assign for the sentence against the *Ranger* was the visit her captain paid at Fort Dauphin).¹ There were certain factors who resided at Monte Cristi to do business for correspondents in the Northern Colonies, and others at Fort Dauphin and Cap François.² No doubt these had some communication between them. A master arriving without recommendation could send down a message to the French settlements, if he did not choose to go himself, or apply to a Spanish *préte-nom*, preferably the Lieutenant-Governor or his secretary.

Some North Americans arrived in ballast and bought molasses with cash; those who had cargoes of goods unloaded them directly into small barks which carried them down to Fort Dauphin and Cap François or even farther.³ At whose risk this part of the voyage was made, does not clearly appear; the depositions of witnesses conflict. Felice Russo, a boatman in the trade, denied that the Spanish *patrons* of barks ever had any interest in the cargoes. They were sometimes made to sign papers which made the sugar and molasses appear to be their property; this device would at the same time protect the goods from seizure between Fort Dauphin and Monte Cristi, and justify the English claimants when they declared in the Vice-Admiralty courts that the return cargo was lawfully bought of Spaniards. But according to Russo there was no truth in these papers; and another witness in the same case deposed that the merchants had to stop demanding them, because the *patrons* sometimes took advantage of them to behave as if they were the real owners of their loadings, and sell them to Englishmen for whom they had not been intended.⁴ On the other hand, witnesses in other cases said they believed the Spaniards of

¹ Long to Moore, Dec. 31, 1760, C.O. 137/60; *Ranger*, Crowninshield, H.C.A. 42/92.

² The most prominent of the former class were Purviance and Mercer; of the latter, Waag and Carnegy.

³ Sometimes, according to Holmes's memorial on the trade (Adm. 1/236) the Spanish craft ventured right round Cape Nicola into the Bight of Léogane or even to the south side of the island; but their chief trade was with Fort Dauphin and Cap François.

⁴ Depositions of Felice Russo, Antonio Russo, Joseph Baliente, and Francis Mayole, *Sea Nymph*, Mitchell, H.C.A. 42/94; Hinxman to Holmes, April 13, 1761, Adm. 1/236.

Monte Cristi were sometimes concerned in the cargoes; and it is plain from many indications that the produce which was brought up to Monte Cristi was not always earmarked for a particular English vessel. Some North American supercargoes preferred buying their sugars at Monte Cristi to making arrangements at Fort Dauphin; one letter-writer described 'people almost fighting for sugars when it came up'.¹ Thus the trade between Monte Cristi and the French settlements took a number of forms: the interest and property might be English, French, or even Spanish. On the return voyage, the cargo would be put straight on board the English vessels, and was seldom or never landed on the shore. Witnesses sometimes tried to make the best of their belief that the goods came from 'towards' the shore, but in fact they neither need nor could come from it.

When the Monte Cristi traders were brought into the Vice-Admiralty courts, they always said they had dealt only with the Spaniards. They could hardly pretend that the Spanish merchants bought their goods for consumption in Monte Cristi, which was a desolate little hole, or in the rest of the Spanish colony, with which it had very little communication. Countless witnesses deposed that Monte Cristi by itself could hardly consume a single cargo of imports in a year. Nor could the sugar and molasses in the return cargoes be passed off as Spanish produce, for there were no sugar-works at Monte Cristi, until Lieutenant-Governor Cavrejas thought of setting one up for this purpose;² and that was merely a concession to the human weakness for acting the lies we mean to tell. There was no concealing the obvious truth that the French were the real recipients of the provisions and lumber that passed through Monte Cristi, and the real producers of the sugar which was exported in return. But the trade might still be lawful, so long as the supercargoes had no direct dealings with Frenchmen.

For this reason, some shipowners advised or ordered their agents to deal only with Spaniards. Thus the owners of the *Dolphin* of New York wrote to their captain, 'You are positively ordered and directed that while you are at Monte Cristo you

¹ Deposition of Augustin Jorba Calderon, *Sea Flower*, Gelston, H.C.A. 42/95; John Carnegy to James Baillie, Nov. 18, 1759, *Amherst*, Maddocks, H.C.A. 42/53; see also the deposition of the master in the *Sally*, Napier, H.C.A. 42/96.

² Holmes's memorial of Dec. 1760 on the Monte Cristi trade, Adm. 1/236; Mercer to Greg and Cunningham, Nov. 6, 1760, *Recovery*, Castle, H.C.A. 42/92; Long to Moore, Dec. 31, 1760, C.O. 137/60.

do not by any means deal trade or traffic with any subjects of the French King but solely with Spaniards, that the rascals who act as judges in some of the Admiralty courts in the West Indies may not have so much as a pretence to confiscate the vessel and cargo.¹ Where such instructions as these could not be complied with, there were ways to cover up transactions with the French. The Lieutenant-Governor of Monte Cristi and his nephew made a living by certifying that the North American masters had dealt with none but Spaniards and residents of Monte Cristi. They did not even shrink from this perjury in cases where it afterwards appeared in evidence that the supercargo had gone down to the French settlements and transacted all the business there.² These certificates soon lost all credit with the Admiralty courts of New Providence and Jamaica; Judge Bradford and Judge Long expressly refused to pay any regard to them at all.³ The Jamaica court was also impressed by the consideration that the Spaniards, if they really had any concern in the matter at all, were only factors or agents for the French, and not traders on their own account. This view was no doubt supported by the abundant evidence of the poverty of the inhabitants of Monte Cristi, most of whom could not conceivably have done any business except as men of straw.

The Admirals at Jamaica were at first perplexed how to treat the Monte Cristi ships. Cotes and Holmes wrote to England repeatedly for advice, but received none. They regarded this trade as an unjustifiable extension or substitute of the Flag of Truce trade, which they had just succeeded in suppressing. It injured the interests of Jamaica in the same way, and ought to be put down in the same manner. Lieutenant-Governor Moore also sent to England a description of the trade; he thought it especially pernicious because some English vessels

¹ Livingston and Welch, instructions to Capt. Candy, Aug. 26, 1761, *Dolphin*, Candy, H.C.A. 42/63; Capt. Crowninshield of the *Ranger* was ordered to be sure to take bills of parcels for his sugars, with an oath of neutral property (H.C.A. 42/92).

² Shirley to Cavrejas, March 1760, C.O. 23/6, D 89. Good examples of Cavrejas's certificates are to be found in the *Speedwell*, Davis, H.C.A. 42/96, and *Industry*, Putnam, H.C.A. 42/73.

³ See Long's judgement of March 2, 1761, on the *Recovery*, Castle, H.C.A. 42/92. This was apparently a leading case in the Jamaica court, and the worthlessness of Cavrejas's certificates, as established by the evidence and papers, was thereafter assumed by Long in all other cases. See also Long's letter to Moore, Dec. 31, 1760; Bradford's judgement in the *Ranger*, H.C.A. 42/92.

arrived at Monte Cristi in ballast, and bought their cargoes with cash which had been drained away for the purpose from the English sugar islands. The Board of Trade was indignant, and represented to the King that though the traffic with a neutral port might not be contrary to law, yet it was contrary to good policy to allow it when the neutral port was only interposed to cover a trade with the enemy. It suggested a royal proclamation against the trade. This would have been to prejudge a question which the Government most likely preferred to leave to the Court of Prize Appeals; therefore the representations of Moore, the Jamaica legislature, the Board of Trade, and the Admirals were all ignored until the eve of the Spanish war.¹ Meanwhile, pending the instructions which never came from England, the Jamaica squadron seized the vessels as they left Monte Cristi and brought them up before the Admiralty courts.

Monte Cristi was so near Cap François that though the two places could not be closely watched by the same ships at once, a small squadron could easily divide itself between the two services in normal times. Nevertheless, it was also very well situated for the traders; Cotes reported that they slipped away by night and were among the Caicos shoals next morning, where the men-of-war dared not follow them. Therefore they could not be efficiently intercepted without going into the harbour.

The temptation to cut the knot in this way must have been overwhelming, and one or two commanders yielded to it. The men-of-war and privateers made several captures within the harbour of Monte Cristi. The *Prussian Hero* was taken at anchor there by some Philadelphia privateers.² The *God Haal* was seized within a pistol-shot of the shore, and Cavrejas wrote a stiff letter to Governor Hopkins, to complain of this and other

¹ Cotes to Cleveland, Feb. 28 and June 4, 1759, Feb. 14, 1760, Adm. 1/235; Holmes to Cleveland, July 25, Nov. 11, Dec. 31, 1760, March 18, April 14, June 16, July 14, 1761, Adm. 1/236; Moore to Board of Trade, March 28, 1759, C.O. 137/30, Z 43; Board of Trade Representation to George II, Aug. 31, 1759, C.O. 138/20, pp. 447-50; Jamaica Committee of Correspondence to its Agent, Dec. 19, 1761, *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica*, v. 320-1; Shirley to Board of Trade, March 29 and Aug. 1, 1760, C.O. 23/6, D 87 and 23/7, E 1.

² She nearly escaped condemnation by an extraordinary ruse. The captain waited until midnight when the captors' prize-crew were dancing drunk; then he threw all his contraband goods out of the port-hole. Having done so, he ordered some more cable to be paid out, so that the ship might change her position, and the captors, when they discovered the loss of the arms, should not know where to dive for them. Unfortunately some of the captors were just too sober for him, and finally recovered a number of muskets and cutlasses from the water (*Prussian*

outrages of Rhode Island privateers.¹ The men-of-war committed far more serious offences. Not only were they guilty of 'low conniving arts'—sending their boats at dusk into the harbour, to find out which ships were ready to sail; sometimes they openly violated Spanish neutrality.

Three trading vessels, the *Edward*, the *Superbe*, and the *Don Philip*, weighed anchor from Monte Cristi on September 24, 1760. They were hardly out of the bay before they saw three ships-of-war—which later proved to be the *Hussar*, Captain Carkett, the *Boreas*, and the sloop *Viper*. The traders turned back for the harbour, but the *Hussar* sent a boat after them under the ensign of a red handkerchief. As this boat came up quickly, the *Don Philip* fired a shot at her or towards her. The three traders reached the harbour in safety, but the men-of-war came in behind them, and after some vapouring threats to hang the captain of the *Don Philip* at the yard-arm, seized all three of them in the midst of the shipping that night. The next day Carkett had an interview with the Lieutenant-Governor. What passed there was afterwards disputed. Carkett said he had asked Cavrejas to detain the *Don Philip* for insulting the English flag, and Cavrejas, unable to do so for want of the necessary force, had permitted him to remove the offenders for himself, the more willingly because they had behaved badly in the harbour and had not paid the proper duties. Cavrejas afterwards gave out a different version, and denied that he had ever given Carkett positive leave to take the ships away. However that might be, Carkett bore them off to Jamaica, where Judge Long acquitted them on the sole ground that the seizure had been a violation of Spanish neutrality. The Court of Prize Appeals upheld the sentence.²

Hero, Campbell, H.C.A. 42/88). For a similar attempt, see the intercepted letter of April 13, 1761, S.P. 42/42, f. 440.

¹ Cavrejas to Hopkins, Aug. 7, 1760, *Good Hope*, or *God Haal*, Felan, H.C.A. 42/69. In 1759 a certain Silas Cooke petitioned the General Assembly of Rhode Island against the seizure by a Rhode Island privateer of a vessel belonging to Cavrejas's secretary. He observed sagely 'that there are many vessels with cargoes owned by the inhabitants of this colony now at the said Monti Christo, and in the power of the said Antonio Gomez Franco who is the King of Spain's secretary there, and will undoubtedly detain some or all of them, by way of reprisals for this act of violence done against the laws of nations'. I do not know that the Assembly took any definite action on this hint (*R.I. Col. Rec.* vi. 184, Feb. 26, 1759).

² *Edward*, Bishop, H.C.A. 42/64; *Don Philip*, Smith, H.C.A. 42/89; *Superbe*, Waters, H.C.A. 42/94. See also their appeal cases in Add. MSS. 36212, ff. 128-45, 170-88, with notes of Charles Yorke on the sentences, ff. 145, 177. The affair is

This outrage displeased the Spanish authorities; nor did Holmes's treatment of Spanish shipping give them any more satisfaction. For a time Holmes seems to have meant to keep his hands off the Spanish craft which plied between Monte Cristi and the French settlements;¹ but in September 1761, with or without his leave, Captain Mackenzie of H.M.S. *Defiance* seized twenty or thirty of these boats on their way into the harbour. He even came within pistol-shot of the shore, and refused to leave the place. The new Governor, Las Sobras, hastily mounted some guns and sent him a very rough letter, which caused him to release most of the vessels and crews; but the cargoes he took with him to Jamaica for condemnation.²

This filled the cup of Holmes's offences. He had already been in correspondence with Azlor, the President of Santo Domingo, over the right of Spain to protect this trade. Holmes had sent copies of Cavrejas's false certificates, and explained how the English traders abused them. He had also argued, on the strength of extracts from treaties, that English and Spanish subjects could have no lawful trade with each other in America. He even denied the King of Spain's right to set up such a free port without consulting his neighbours in America on a step so prejudicial to their interests. If such a port had been created in time of peace, France would have objected to it; its establishment during the war could only be regarded as an act of collusion with France. Thus Holmes tried, with his muddle-headed Admiralty logic, to apply the Rule of the War of 1756, which denied the legitimacy in war of those branches of colonial trade which the enemy would not have admitted in peace. Besides, this free port had no regulations, no officers, and no police; the first omission was important because only a positive regulation could have taken off the force of the time-honoured Spanish prohibitions, which must be considered as still subsisting. From this Holmes seems to have concluded that he had a right, by Spanish laws, to take the ships, whether English or Spanish, which used this trade.³

described in a letter of James Turner, Monte Cristi, to Andrew and Alexander Symmer, Maryland, Dec. 1, 1760 (*Recovery*, Castle, H.C.A. 42/92).

¹ Holmes to Cleveland, Nov. 11, 1760, Adm. 1/236.

² Las Sobras to Azlor, Sept. 9, 1761; Las Sobras to Mackenzie, Sept. 8, 1761, *Sea Nymph*, Mitchell, H.C.A. 42/94.

³ Holmes to Cleveland, July 25, Dec. 31, 1760; Memorial on the Monte Cristi trade, Dec. 1760, Adm. 1/236.

Azlor expressed great displeasure with Cavrejas and deprived him of his post. The new Lieutenant-Governor had orders to prevent the English from frequenting Monte Cristi, and Azlor asked Holmes to co-operate in putting a stop to it. So far, so good. Holmes could ask nothing better than to be desired by a Spanish Governor to suppress the trade. Azlor, however, did not mean to tolerate violations of Spanish neutrality or seizures of Spanish ships. He dismissed most of Holmes's reasoning as irrelevant, which, indeed, it was. If he had wished to do so, he could easily have justified the establishment of a free port by the article in the Treaty of 1670 which reserved to the King of Spain the right to license English subjects to trade to his dominions on such terms as he saw fit.¹ However, Azlor confined himself to claiming the Spanish vessels which Holmes's squadron had taken, and insisting with asperity on the privileges of the Spanish flag.²

The news of Mackenzie's outrage reached England at a ticklish point in the Anglo-Spanish negotiations. The Court of Spain never made any complaint about the behaviour of the English officers at Monte Cristi, but the English Ministry resolved to forestall it. At the same time merchants of London who were concerned in the trade (especially in the transport of sugars from Monte Cristi to Venice, Leghorn, and Hamburg) denounced Holmes's conduct to the Government.³ Lord Egremont ordered the Admiralty to send out a frigate to Holmes with a rebuke for his violations of Spanish neutrality, and prepared to prime our Ambassador at Madrid with an apology and an explanation. This was hard on Holmes, who had always asked for instructions and received none. It was also unnecessary, for Spain had not raised the question of Monte Cristi, and too late, for the Ambassador had already left Madrid and diplomatic relations were broken off between the two countries. This created a new situation, for, as the Admiralty foresaw, the Jamaica squadron might very well be blockading the English traders in Monte Cristi when the news of the war arrived, and thus might cause them all to fall into the hands of the Spaniards.⁴

¹ The ingenious claimant of the *Charming Polly* made this point in the Vice-Admiralty court of Gibraltar (H.C.A. 42/59).

² Azlor to Holmes, Sept. 27, 1761, *Sea Nymph*, Mitchell, H.C.A. 42/94. Holmes's letter to Azlor is missing, but can be guessed from the reply.

³ Bourdieu and Lewis to Under-Secretary Wood, Dec. 16, 1761, S.P. 42/42, f. 514; this firm was concerned in the *Sharp*, Maitland (H.C.A. 42/95).

⁴ Cleveland to Wood, Dec. 17, 1761, S.P. 42/42, f. 499; Egremont to Lords of

In fact the Spanish authorities had turned against the traders some months earlier. Las Sobras, who had succeeded Cavrejas as Lieutenant-Governor, revoked the licences of the Spanish craft, and tried to force the English vessels out of the harbour. These measures had no effect. The trade had never received any protection from the Spaniards on shore; it stood in no need of their help, and had nothing to fear from their menaces. The supercargoes had usually done most of their business afloat, and they made their habitations in large storeships which sometimes lay as far as three miles from the shore. Thus when H.M.S. *Port Royal* came into the harbour to warn the traders of the war with Spain, most of them disregarded her. When the Spaniards began to fire, they moved down the coast to Fort Dauphin, where they apparently found protection from the French, with whom they had so long been connected. A few supercargoes were caught on shore at Monte Cristi and imprisoned, but the rest had no difficulty in winding up their affairs on French soil—a fact which proves how little part the Spaniards had ever played in the trade.¹

Nearly all the Monte Cristi vessels were condemned in the courts of first instance, especially Jamaica, New Providence, and Gibraltar. The Court of Prize Appeals reversed most of these sentences. This is the more remarkable when it is compared with the sweeping condemnation of the Flag of Truce trade. The court appears to have distinguished between direct and indirect commerce with the enemy. The claimants of the *Penguin*, appealing against her condemnation at Jamaica, could argue that

‘The question has been repeatedly adjudged, that an English vessel taken in the return voyage from Monte Cristi to the Northern Colonies, with a cargo purchased wholly of Spaniards, and no proof of any correspondence with the French, is free, and not liable to condemnation; the captors have themselves proved the ship in question to be within this predicament, and the former determinations supersede the necessity of any reasoning upon the case.’

A lawyer who attended this trial described it to his correspondent in Massachusetts:

Admiralty, Dec. 22, 1761, Adm. 1/4124, no. 146; Admiralty Minutes, Dec. 25 and 26, 1761, Adm. 3/69.

¹ Forrest to Cleveland, April 14, 1762, Adm. 1/1788; depositions in the cases of the *Walnut Grove*, Taylor, H.C.A. 42/104; *Keppell*, Chambers, H.C.A. 42/79; *Sea Nymph*, Mitchell, H.C.A. 42/94; *Sea Horse* (Hough, *Reports*, p. 206).

'Altho' the whole evidence taken in the court of Vice-Admiralty agreed that all the sugars came from Cape François in Spanish boats and had never been landed at Monte Christi, but was immediately put on board, and altho' the several depositions agreed that the supercargo was never ashore at Monte Christi; yet my Lord Mansfield would not permit the appellants' counsel to go into their defence, but immediately reversed the sentence given below and acquitted both these vessels, declaring the trade to be legal, he went so far as to declare that if the sugars had been bought of Frenchmen at Monte Christi, yet the trade would have been legal for a Frenchman residing at Monte Christi for the sake of trade, he said was to all commercial intents a Spaniard.'¹

The reasoning of the court appears further from the cases of the *St. Croix*, *Young Abraham*, and *Stadt Flansbourg*. It affirmed the condemnation of the first two because 'the evidence was sufficient to prove an authorized and licensed trading', and acquitted the last because it was not.² It is not quite certain how far this criterion was applied to Englishmen, since all three vessels had some claim to be regarded as neutral property³ (for the Dutch and Danes in the West Indies took the same advantage of Monte Cristi as the English, and introduced, in particular, large parcels of slaves into St. Domingue through that channel).⁴

The few condemnations which the court upheld, throw yet more light on its attitude. The *Africa* was condemned, probably because it was in evidence that she sent down a number of empty hogsheads to be filled with molasses, an act which implied a scheme prearranged with somebody in the French settlements. The *Kingston* was also condemned, either because the master had destroyed some papers, or because he sent his mate down to Fort Dauphin; the *Ranger*, probably because the master had

¹ Add. MSS. 36212, f. 8; John Gardiner, Inner Temple, to Richard Derby, March 19, 1762, Derby Family MSS. xii, Essex Institute.

² Endorsements of Charles Yorke, Add. MSS. 36213, ff. 2, 26.

³ *St. Croix*, Debroskey, H.C.A. 42/61; *Stadt Flansbourg*, Christian, H.C.A. 42/93; *Young Abraham*, Hassell, H.C.A. 42/109.

⁴ For this reason Holmes thought the Monte Cristi trade even worse than that of the Flags of Truce; the latter could only be carried on by the King's subjects, but the former 'gives an unbounded latitude to the whole world, and besides the innate baseness of it, will be taken soon into the entire possession of the Dutch, who can undersell his Majesty's subjects at the market, in all things except lumber, and they will be greatly preferred before them as carriers to the French' (Holmes to Cleveland, Dec. 31, 1760, Adm. 1/236).

gone to Fort Dauphin 'for his health'.¹ If these surmises are right as to the causes of the rare condemnations, it becomes more obvious that evidence of direct intercourse with the enemy in his own settlements was the criterion of guilt.

Thus the Court of Prize Appeals recognized the legality of the Monte Cristi trade in most of its forms. In this it did no more than was expected of it. Underwriters had already insured the trade as one which would certainly be proved legal; customs officers not only in America but in Ireland and London had given clearances for Monte Cristi and had admitted to an entry the return cargoes from the port.²

The trade was revived after the war, but it never was so important again, partly because the French of St. Domingue set up a free port of their own. Possibly the free-port movement, which gained such strength in the West Indies after 1763, owed something to the example of Monte Cristi.

The persistence of the trade between North America and the French colonies taught many lessons. It strengthened the demand of the French planters for the free admission of some kinds of North American produce. It must have destroyed whatever public spirit the North American merchants still possessed, for it proved once more that the burdens of patriotism were imposed by England and the West Indies but borne by Ireland and North America, and that America might not always find it convenient to fight in England's wars. It may also have increased the tendency to law-breaking which is the most disastrous legacy of the British Empire to American business men. In the Flag of Truce trader and the privateer we have the boot-legger and the hijacker; sometimes they were at war with each other, sometimes they combined to cheat the police—the men-of-war—by a collusive capture. The men-of-war themselves, like other policemen in America, were not above connivance in some cases, or the third degree in others. The commerce made the Northern Colonies very unpopular not only in the West Indies but in the political circles of England. It accustomed the men-of-war to the suppression of illegal

¹ *Africa*, Saltonstall, H.C.A. 42/53; *Kingston*, Poaug, H.C.A. 42/79; *Ranger*, Crowninshield, H.C.A. 42/92.

² Anderson and Macniel, Gibraltar, to Richard Derby, Salem, Aug. 6 and 11, Oct. 1, Nov. 1, 1760, Feb. 11, 1761, Derby Family MSS. xii, Essex Institute. See the arguments in the *Charming Polly*, Horton, H.C.A. 42/59; Mercer to Greg and Cunningham, Nov. 6, 1760, *Recovery*, Castle, H.C.A. 42/92.

trade—a function they had never performed so thoroughly in the colonies before—and thus prepared the way for the disastrous efficiency of Grenville and Charles Townshend.¹

¹ The Admiralty had ordered naval commanders in the Colonies to help the customs officers put down illicit trade as early as 1740 (Adm. 2/56, p. 197); and indeed the Navigation Acts empowered all Admirals and other naval officers to do so. But the navy's first experience of wholesale suppression of smuggling was gained in the attack on the Flag of Truce and Monte Cristi trades.

THE ENGLISH SUGAR ISLANDS IN WAR-TIME

IT is a difficult thing to calculate the cost of a war to a community. Reliable statistics of prices are wanting for almost all American trades in this period. The prices current printed in the newspapers seem to have been carelessly edited; they were often left unaltered for long periods and then brought up to date with a jerk. It is unlikely, however, that they are very far wrong. Better still, if we had enough of them, are the prices current which merchants often gave at the foot of their letters. Unfortunately it is almost impossible to compile a satisfactory series of them for any one market. There were so many islands in the West Indies and so many commercial ports in North America, that the great mass of available information is spread rather thin over them all. The records of actual sales are really the least reliable and precise kind of evidence. We know too little of a single transaction to be able to tell whether it was a representative one. 'Rum' in a North American day-book may mean Jamaica, West India, or New England rum; it may have been good or bad of its kind, sold at special rates of credit and payable at different valuations in money or other goods. The categories of the London sugar-market were yet more specialized. There was clayed sugar and muscovado, to say nothing of the bastards and pannels in which there were only a few dealings. The muscovados of each island had a special range of prices; and in the course of years, or even less for particular circumstances, they might exchange their reputations and values. The prices of each sort usually varied eight or ten shillings according to the quality; we can seldom discover whether a given parcel of sugars was good or bad of its kind. There are tables which show the prices of the King's sugars, but do not indicate the times of the year at which they were sold—an important consideration; moreover the transactions of each year are too few to enable us to strike an average confidently.

The details of an insurance policy must be scrutinized in the same way. An amateur speculator of small means might take a less premium than a man of substance; but would he be able to pay the loss, and if not, who would insure the insurer? The difference between the rates charged by public companies and

private underwriters in London sometimes amounted to 5 per cent. of the sum insured.¹ A great deal depended on the place where the insurance was made. The London underwriters charged far more than those of Philadelphia or Boston for insuring voyages between two ports in America, because they could not satisfy themselves that the ships were seaworthy; they particularly disliked the complicated and uncertain itineraries of North American traders, because they had not enough information to judge the risk.² It is therefore important to distinguish between the rates given on these voyages in England and America. We must also be certain what was the sum to be paid in case of a loss; the Dutch underwriters only paid 96 per cent. of the sum insured, the English 98.³ Above all it is often difficult and always necessary to know what was being insured against. The premium often depended on the likelihood of an immediate convoy; for example, at the end of the war of 1744 the London insurers usually underwrote a ship bound outward for Barbados at 15 guineas, to return 7 if she chanced to take convoy for the whole voyage; but when a convoy was appointed to go soon, the rate was 12 guineas, to return 4. The premium with convoy did not vary, but the premium without convoy depended on the likelihood that a convoy would be taken.⁴

The rates of wages in the North American ships are equally deceptive, for the payment in money was not the most important part of the sailor's earnings. Each man had the 'privilege' of shipping on his own account a certain quantity of goods without paying freight; and the pre-eminence of the captain over the other sailors was marked rather by his greater privilege than by higher wages. (Whether the officers and men found the capital for these adventures may well be doubted; probably the system accounts for the commonness of small loans upon bottomry.)

For all these reasons, whatever statistics I offer to the reader are put forward with very little dependence on their exactness, and should be received in the same spirit.

¹ Lascelles and Maxwell to Florentius Vassall, Feb. 4, 1743/4, MSS. of Messrs. Wilkinson & Gaviller, vol. ii; to Samuel McCall, Feb. 4, 1743/4, and May 10, 1744, *ibid.*; to Jacob Allin, May 31, 1746, vol. iii; to J. and A. Harvie, April 1, 1757, vol. viii.

² Lascelles and Maxwell to D. and A. Lynch, Nov. 30, 1743, W. & G. ii; to Samuel McCall, Feb. 4, 1743/4, *ibid.*

³ Lascelles and Maxwell to Samuel McCall, May 1, 1747, W. & G. iii.

⁴ Lascelles and Maxwell to Thomas Stevenson, Jan. 27, 1747/8, W. & G. iii.

§ i. *The Volume of Trade in War-time*

The wars affected the English colonies much less than the French. In spite of alarms and even dangers, the navy was able to preserve them from invasion, and their trade from catastrophic alterations. Some branches of it even prospered more than in peace; but the planters could not altogether escape loss and discomfort.

Less shipping reached their ports. There are not many figures to prove this, but if there were none, it could be inferred from several things—the captures at sea, the ships taken up for the service of the Government, and the prevalence of the Flag of Truce trade in North America.¹ The statistics of the tonnage duty at Barbados prove a considerable fall in the number and size of the vessels which traded there during the Seven Years War, but on the other hand a paper of figures in the collection of George Chalmers shows an increase for the same period in the shipping which left England for the West Indies.² The

¹ H. Lascelles and son to Francis March, Sept. 13, 1740, W. & G. i; John Reynell to Samuel Dicker, Oct. 29, 1740, Reynell Letter-book, H.S.P.; Thomas Clifford to J. and T. Tipping, Oct. 6 and Nov. 16, 1759, Clifford Correspondence, xxvii. 35, 41, H.S.P.

² I give the figures for the sake of comparison:

	(C.O. 28/32, FF 25)		(C.O. 318/1)		
	<i>Barbados number of vessels</i>	<i>Average Tonnage</i>	<i>English West India Trade</i>		
			<i>Ships</i>	<i>Tons</i>	
		(1745-9)	21·010		
1751	511			263	37,955
1752	574	(1749-53)	34·491	309	44,599
1753	608			315	43,125
1754	650	(1753-6)	35·206	301	43,718
1755	604			255	34,394
1756	446			361	47,007
1757	292	(1756-9)	20·740	376	53,886
1758	230			397	59,704
1759	302			342	52,894
1760	247	(1759-60)	21·460	403	57,089
1761	} No figures			332	53,594
1762				419	72,893
1763				451	74,479
1764				372	64,862
1765				373	62,573

The estimated tonnage at Barbados is no doubt far too low. No tax was more consistently evaded by under-declaration than a tonnage duty; but the amount of the fraud may be supposed constant. The average tonnage in the trade from

contradiction can be reconciled. In the first place, one paper shows the ships which left England, the other those which reached Barbados; there might well be some loss on the way. Secondly, Chalmers's figures cover all the West Indies, including the conquered colonies, which gave employment to many ships in the later years of the war; probably they also include store-ships in the Government service. Lastly, the trade from England kept up better than any other in war-time because it was the only one to be properly protected by convoys. As these ships usually went out half-empty and carried no lumber but hoops, no provisions but some beans and oats, they had little to do with the plenty or scarcity of plantation necessaries in the islands. That was affected by the losses of North American shipping, which were heavy.

One branch of the English trade, however, furnished an article which entered into the costs of production in the islands. This was the slave-trade. Here again there are contradictions in such figures as exist. The shipping which sailed from England to Africa fell in the war of 1739, but the number of negroes imported into Jamaica increased. Jamaica was only one market out of many, and perhaps it was the most frequented in the war with Spain because the slave-trade to the Spanish colonies was expected to be brisk, especially after Vernon's conquest at Portobello.¹ The re-export of negroes did not prove very great until the last years of the war, but the traders may have expected something better, and once their ships were at Jamaica they could go no farther but must sell, so that the planters benefited by their mistake.² On the other hand, the captains in this trade did not willingly go on to Jamaica if they could decently stop in the Windward Islands. Besides the additional risk of capture, there was the ordinary danger of disease, suicide, and revolt among the negroes, who were often more exasperated or dejected when they passed land without stopping, than when they were first put on board ship.³ These two considerations probably

England seems to have gone up on the whole. A large ship was thought more profitable in war-time, a middling one in peace (Lascelles and Daling to Philip Gibbes, Sept. 12, 1765, W. & G. x; to Nathan Lucas, Nov. 14, 1768, vol. xi).

¹ H. Lascelles and son to Richard Morecroft, March 28, 1740, W. & G. i; Henry Laurens to John Knight, Dec. 21, 1756, Laurens Letter-book, ii. 359. (I am in debt to the kindness of Miss Elizabeth Donnan, who lent me her transcript of these letter-books.)

² For table see opposite.

³ For note 3 see opposite.

cancelled each other out, and a third explanation of the figures is possible; the ships may well have carried more slaves to the ton in war than in peace. The charges and risks were high, but no higher for a large cargo than for a small one, and there was less than ordinary danger of arriving at an overstocked market; those are just the circumstances to cause overcrowding in such a trade.

Although the plenty of necessaries did not depend on the arrival of any other ships from Europe, they were still needed to carry off the crops. The production of the English sugar colonies does not seem to have been affected by the war. It was rather the weather which caused yearly fluctuations of the size of crops. The small islands were so fully cultivated that they could hardly yield more. Jamaica alone had room for new plantations, and seems to have increased its crop almost steadily

	<i>Slaves imported to Jamaica</i>	<i>Re-exported</i>	<i>Slave ships leaving England</i>	<i>Tons</i>
	(C.O. 137/25, X 41, and 137/28, Y 54)		(T 64/274)	
1735			67	6,250
1736			101	9,019
1737			104	9,959
1738			114	10,029
1739	3,008	115 last half	95	8,585
1740	5,621	495	62	4,244
1741	4,792	562	53	4,785
1742	4,938	792	60	5,465
1743	8,540	1,368	71	6,532
1744	8,755	1,331	52	4,201
1745	3,843	1,344	32	3,081
1746	4,703	1,502	60	5,820
1747	10,898	3,378	68	6,365
1748	10,483	2,426	92	9,906
1749	15,296		85	8,418
1750			85	7,906
1751			89	10,073
1752			104	11,361
1753	6,758	2,336 (Sept. 25, 1752, to	125	11,642
1754	8,843	Sept. 25, 1754)	112	10,794

There are some slightly different figures for 1730 to 1746 in T 70/1205, A 10. Those in T 64/274 show that the slave-trade of London declined more in the war than those of Bristol and Liverpool, especially the latter. Liverpool had a great advantage over other colonial ports in war-time, because the channels of its trade were much less frequented by French privateers (see the quotation from *Williamson's Liverpool Memorandum Book*, quoted by Gomer Williams, *Liverpool Privateers*, pp. 37-8).

³ Henry Lascelles to Richard Morecroft, April 20 and Oct. 27, 1741, W. & G. i; Lascelles and Maxwell to Gedney Clarke, vol. iii; to Anthony Lynch, June 17, *ibid.*

through peace and war. Whitworth's figures show a slight drop in all the figures during the war of 1739. This was probably caused by a run of bad crops, the captures at sea, and perhaps the deliberate policy of restriction which some critics accused the planters of pursuing at this time. The price of sugar satisfied them after the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, and the imports of West India produce into Great Britain rose again. This rise continued throughout the Seven Years War and the years which followed it. To judge by other standards—rates of freight and insurance—the war of 1744 was no more dangerous to the sugar trade than the Seven Years War; since the latter did not prevent production from rising, it is not very likely that the former was the cause of the fall which happened at the same time.¹

¹ These are the figures calculated from Whitworth's tables (*State of the Trade of Great Britain*, 1776). It should be remembered that they represent fluctuations of quantity, not of value, because the valuations of goods in the Custom House statistics were not altered in this period.

Average value of imports into Great Britain from

	1729-38 (peace)	1739-48 (war)	1749-55 (peace)	1756-63 (war)	1764-70 (peace)
	£	£	£	£	£
Antigua	220,782	194,747	233,511	242,059	234,801
Barbados	237,266	203,698	224,337	227,190	280,335
Montserrat	65,939	54,053	62,228	65,272	72,506
Nevis	66,352	45,470	49,645	57,808	66,949
St. Christophers	256,797	217,178	238,648	260,091	279,920
Jamaica	550,877	542,648	760,290	968,385	1,185,979
West Indies generally	8,259	4,165
Spanish West Indies	38,985	6,563	35,981
TOTAL	1,445,257	1,268,522	1,568,659	1,820,805	2,156,471

In these figures I have included 1748 and 1763 as years of war, because, though peace was signed half-way through the former and at the beginning of the latter, the canes were planted and the goods ordered from England in war-time. The figures from Jamaica, which show the largest increase, are somewhat equivocal. They certainly include the goods imported through the colony from the Spanish West Indies. (Those classified as 'Spanish West Indies' probably represent little before 1739 besides the Annual Ships of the South Sea Company.) There is no guessing the amount of the Spanish goods imported from Jamaica; presumably it was larger in the second period than the first, because this trade flourished more in the war of 1739 than in the peace before it. It was probably smaller in the last period than in the fourth, because there are evidences of a stop in the trade after the Peace of Paris. Probably we need not allow for a very serious error in the Jamaica figures, in order to discover the amount of the island's own produce. Far the most important article in the Spanish trade of Jamaica was bullion, which was not included in any of Whitworth's tables. The class 'West Indies generally',

The volume of the exports from Great Britain to the West Indies increased considerably in this time. This may appear surprising when that of the imports altered so little, but it is easily explained. The prices of West India produce improved permanently after the turning-point of the thirties, and the planters could afford to buy more though the size of their crops (which is all that the figures represent) remained nearly the same. Very likely they bought even more than they could afford; the inventories in the Jamaica Record Office show a steady increase of luxury, and the islands were running deeper and deeper into debt with the London factors. The wars appear to have stimulated exports to the West Indies, which fell back a little after each peace; probably this can be accounted for by the exports of naval and military stores in war-time.¹

§ ii. *The Sugar Market in War-time*

The price of sugars was rising in England after the thirties. The production of the English colonies was not increasing so fast as the demand in the home market. People who had used brown sugar began to use white, and as there was some wastage in refining, more raw sugar was needed than before. The sugar-bakers had not the art of keeping their products good in cold weather, and were therefore obliged to refine in winter, even at a loss, in order to keep their sugar-houses warm. This spread the demand for raw sugar over the year, and perhaps increased

which disappears from 1750 to 1762, presents another difficulty: does it represent English or foreign West Indies, or both? Since the increase of exports in the third period is pretty evenly distributed among all the colonies, perhaps this indiscriminate category was so too. (See next note.)

¹ Average value of exports from Great Britain for

	1729-38	1739-48	1749-55	1756-63	1764-70
	£	£	£	£	£
Antigua	31,026	44,586	75,243	124,302	124,181
Barbados	64,346	91,793	167,592	183,997	181,749
Montserrat	4,476	5,011	10,684	16,355	19,907
Nevis	5,472	2,640	10,667	15,692	13,330
St. Christophers	23,220	27,333	70,110	110,806	109,108
Jamaica	140,627	218,771	321,889	479,071	463,426
West Indies generally	161,465	322,787	49,335	4,947	1,021
Spanish West Indies	54,353	388	5,261
TOTAL	484,985	713,309	705,520	935,170	917,983

For the interpretation of these figures, see the preceding note.

it altogether.¹ When the price was too high, especially in war-time, things went the other way; the middle classes used brown instead of white, and the poor ate molasses instead of brown sugar.² The changes of price were thereby attenuated, but they were still very considerable. The bare possibility of a war or a peace was enough to make them jump up and down. For example, they rose 3 shillings the hundredweight in two days when the French King declared war in 1744, and fell 10 shillings in a short time on the signature of the preliminary treaty at Aix-la-Chapelle; later in 1748 they came down again, so that the whole fall was over 15 shillings. They were more indifferent to the alarms of 1755, because the crops were so large as to keep the prices down in spite of everything; but the Spanish war of 1762 caused them to rise 6 shillings.³

These changes were considerable, for the average price of brown sugar in peace was not much more than 30 shillings the hundredweight. They were partly due to speculation. The price of brown sugar did not by any means keep pace with the charges and risks of production and importation; sometimes it rose above them, sometimes fell below. Other circumstances such as hurricanes or droughts affected it by reducing the crops. For instance, it seems to have touched the highest point of the war in the winter of 1745; the Jamaica crop was very much diminished in that year by a hurricane. The price rose again in the winter of 1747-8, and that time there had been a hurricane at St. Kitts. All this time the insurance premiums and the freights remained pretty steady. A more remarkable proof is furnished by the prices of 1759. The crops of all the islands except Jamaica were considerably smaller than usual. The insurance, for example from Jamaica to London, had fallen from 30 to 12 guineas since the beginning of 1758; yet the prices rose higher than they had done for decades. Barbados brown muscovado fetched 53 shillings, and white clayed sugar 84; a year later they were at 30 and 53 shillings respectively, and the insurance was a little higher.

The markets were affected in these years by the sale of prize

¹ Lascelles and Maxwell to Benjamin Charnock, Jan. 16, 1753, W. & G. v; to Jonathan Blenman, March 14, *ibid.*

² Lascelles and Maxwell to John Frere, May 20, 1747, W. & G. iii; to William Bryant, Nov. 20, 1747, *ibid.*

³ See the correspondence of Lascelles and Maxwell, *passim*, for the years 1744, 1748, 1755-6, and 1762-3.

goods, and by two unusual circumstances—a re-exportation to Europe and the conquest of a French sugar colony. The English re-export trade in sugar had fallen off and lost its importance since about 1730. In those days the pamphleteers used to recommend a war with France by arguing that if we destroyed the French trade and settlements in the West Indies, we should recover our position in the world market for sugar.¹ The history of the wars does little to bear out this calculation. The few years of this period in which the re-exportation rose high are almost equally distributed between war and peace.² The most remarkable are 1743, 1756, and 1759. In the first of these we were at peace with France and the cause was the failure of crops in the foreign colonies. In the second, the capture of French sugars at sea may have played a part. The last is the nearest to an unequivocal proof that we could oblige Europe to buy our sugars by holding up those of the enemy, for everybody recognized that the scarcity abroad was caused by the detention of the French West India produce in neutral ships. This could only continue while the appeals remained unheard; the acquitted and condemned cargoes were alike exported abroad, and the shortage came to an end.³

The introduction of prize goods into a protected market created a serious difficulty for the legislatures. On the one hand they desired to encourage the captors by giving them the greatest possible liberty to dispose of their prizes; but collusive seizures and smuggling flourished under the cover of prizes, and the producers of similar goods within the Empire struggled hard to keep up such monopoly as the laws allowed them. There was also the interest of the consumer to be considered; even the planter was thankful for a cheap supply of prize European goods, while he disliked the competition of prize sugars with his own.

The privateering interest and the consumers had their own

¹ *An Essay on the Causes of the Decline of the Foreign Trade* (Overstone's *Select Collection*), p. 281; *The Present Ruinous Land War proved to be a H—r War* (London, 1745), p. 23.

² The re-export of brown sugar rose above 100,000 cwt. in 1743, 1748, 1749, 1750, 1755, and 1756; also, I think, in 1758 and 1759, but the figures in T 64/274 stop in 1757.

³ *Considerations relating to a New Duty on Sugar* (2nd ed., 1746), p. 26; Lascelles and Maxwell to Conrade Adams, Sept. 16, 1743, W. & G. ii; to T. Stevenson and sons, Jan. 20, 1756, vol. vii; Aug. 23, 1756, vol. viii; to J. and A. Harvie, April 13, 1756, vol. vii; June 29 and Aug. 12, 1758, vol. viii; to John Frere, Oct. 29, 1758, and July 7, 1759, *ibid.*

way in the reign of Queen Anne. Foreign colonial produce imported into England as prize appears to have paid duty as if it were of English growth.¹ However, an Act of 1710 imposed upon it the usual foreign duty, by providing that it should enter the English market as if imported in the ordinary course of trade.² If it was brought into the colonies, it should pay such duty there as the local legislature should levy; at this time very few of the islands taxed the produce of their foreign competitors as they began to do after the Treaty of Utrecht. A year later the privateers received a favour at the expense of the planters; prize goods were put once more on the same foot as the produce of the English colonies, and permitted to pay duty as such. This seems to be no more than had been granted before 1710, but it was now confirmed by Act of Parliament.³ Meanwhile the planter as consumer had benefited by these Acts; prize European goods might be brought into the colonies, first on payment of the duties on importation into England minus the drawbacks, and finally in effect duty free.⁴

These Acts had lapsed with the war, like most of the others which dealt with prizes. It therefore needed a new law to exempt certain prize goods from exclusion or very heavy duties.⁵ That of 1741 appears to have favoured the captors. Prize colonial produce might once more be imported into the English market from the English colonies, and pay duty as if it were of their own growth, on production of a certificate of condemnation.⁶ There does not seem to have been any need to re-export it. The captors, however, were not so well off as they might appear to be; before their prizes could reach the English market they had to find their way into that of the colonies, and to encounter several kinds of duties. First there were those of the Molasses Act, which taxed heavily all kinds of foreign West

¹ So the preamble of 10 Anne, c. 22, recites; see also *Tudor and Stuart Proclamations*, no. 4356.

² 9 Anne, c. 27. This clause is probably designed to get over the Navigation Acts, which forbade the importation of certain goods unless they came directly from their place of growth or usual shipment. Prize goods imported from the English colonies might else have been excluded. An act of the same kind was passed in 1741 to enable prize quicksilver to be imported (15 Geo. II, c. 19).

³ 10 Anne, c. 22.

⁴ 6 Anne, c. 37, 9 Anne, c. 27, and 10 Anne, c. 22; *C.S.P. Col. 1710-11* and *1712-14*, *passim* (the index should be consulted, s.v. 'Prize-goods').

⁵ H. Lascelles and son to Turner and Cowley, Sept. 19 and Oct. 5, 1740, W. & G. i.

⁶ 15 Geo. II, c. 31.

India produce imported into the English dominions. This was not a very severe obstruction, because the Act was not always complied with, nor the duties always paid. There was some difference, however, in this respect between the Northern Colonies and the Sugar Islands. The interest of the latter was to oblige the captors to pay these duties, and the importers of prize goods sometimes had to comply.¹ In New York the Commodore refused to pay them; the Vice-Admiralty judge gave a decision in his favour, on the ground that prize sugars should be accounted as English from the moment of their condemnation.² Yet there were some colonies in North America where these duties were exacted.³

The colonies also had imposts of their own, to which prize goods were subject like all others. Those of North America were only laid for revenue, but the legislatures of the sugar colonies had for some time protected their planters against foreign imports by very heavy taxes.⁴ The English Act of 1710 which authorized the imposition of these duties on prize goods was presumably not in force, but there was so little doubt of their being payable that the appeals against them were never prosecuted.⁵ The Assemblies of some islands often let the captors off the duties on such articles as prize wine and brandy; but that of Jamaica clung to the policy of making prize goods pay the ordinary duties, and even thought of a special tax on prizes. In the end, however, it relented so far as to let the captors re-export their prize goods without paying anything.⁶

Parliament was less tender to the privateering interest in the Seven Years War. It allowed prize goods to pass through England free of duty, but obliged the importers to pay most of the ordinary duties on whatever stayed to be consumed in the country. Thus prize sugars were subjected to the heavy protective taxes which were laid on foreign sugars. They could not

¹ Lascelles and Maxwell to Gedney Clarke, junior, Feb. 10 and May 7, 1757, Oct. 9, 1758, and Jan. 6, 1759, W. & G. viii.

² Hough, *Reports of Cases in the Vice-Admiralty of New York*, p. 23; Clinton to Newcastle, Oct. 9, 1744, *N.Y. Col. Doc.* vi. 260.

³ Account of the duties paid, 1734-49, in T 70/1205.

⁴ *V. supra*, pp. 399-402.

⁵ Lascelles and Maxwell to John Fairchild, Oct. 30, 1747, W. & G. iii.

⁶ Antigua Assembly Minutes, July 11 and 24, 1744, C.O. 9/16; see the Assembly Minutes of St. Kitts, 1744 and 1745, *passim*, C.O. 241/5; *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica*, iv. 7, 8, 17; see also the Act of Oct. 15, 1756, C.O. 139/18, and the Board of Trade's comments on it, C.O. 138/22, pp. 207-27.

even escape it by paying the Molasses Act duties in the colonies, to which they were liable as well.¹ In this way prize sugars were kept out of the English market, unless the colonists started them into English casks and sent them home as English plantation produce; the island legislatures tried to guard against this abuse. Though, however, the planters kept the English market to themselves in this war, they could not for ever prevent the world price from finding its own level. The prize sugars which could not advantageously be sold for consumption in England were sent abroad, undersold English produce in the neutral markets, and thus interfered with the re-exportation of English sugars.² In the Seven Years War the legislature of Jamaica passed a strange Act which was presumably meant to prevent this; it obliged all prize goods, whether acquitted or condemned in the Jamaica court, to be exported first to England.³

On the other hand the West India islands sometimes received a cheap supply of European merchandise from a French or Spanish vessel captured on her way out. The prices of dry goods at Barbados were lowered in this way twice in the war of 1744, to the disadvantage of the merchants who imported from England. At the beginning of the hostilities against France in 1755, the Leeward Islands were stocked with negroes in the same way, and even the Jamaica market was probably affected, as the low prices at Barbados and Antigua drove more ships down there than usually went.⁴

Prize goods could not be entirely prevented from affecting the economy of the Empire, especially in North America where the Acts of Parliament were slightly observed. Merchants sometimes reported that the market for English produce or even for smuggled French produce was lowered by the sales of prizes (these complaints were commonest in 1756, before the Act of 30 George II was passed or in force).⁵ Prize goods often affected

¹ 30 Geo. II, c. 18; Lascelles and Maxwell to Gedney Clarke, June 2, 1759, W. & G. viii.

² Lascelles and Maxwell to T. Stevenson and sons, Aug. 23, 1756, W. & G. viii; Waddell Cunningham to Halliday and Dunbar, Oct. 13, 1756, Letter-book of Messrs. Greg and Cunningham, p. 133, N.Y.H.S.

³ See the Board of Trade's report, Jan. 27, 1762, C.O. 138/22, pp. 207-27.

⁴ Lascelles and Maxwell to John Harvie, May 29, 1744, and March 16, 1744/5, W. & G. ii; to W. and H. Hasell, Aug. 6, 1748, vol. iii; to J. and A. Harvie, Jan. 31, 1756, vol. vii.

⁵ There seems to have been a leakage in Philadelphia for some years after the Act was passed. The prize goods were landed without paying the duty, upon a

the rates of exchange between England and the colonies. The colonial merchants were no longer puzzled for a method of remitting home to pay their debts; they exported prize goods—whether to England or Europe is no matter—instead of drawing bills.¹

The war affected the price of English sugars in other ways. The conquests of Guadeloupe and Martinique let into the market a flood of French sugars, especially whites half-refined on the plantations. This was one of the principal reasons for the fall of the price in 1760. Messrs. Lascelles and Maxwell complained that they could not sell a correspondent's inferior clayed sugar from Barbados at any price.

'The sugar-bakers could not be prevailed on to take them as they have been supplied with Guadeloupe clays at very low prices. . . . Had it not been for the unlucky acquisition of Guadeloupe, sugars must have been as high now, as at any time since the war, but from the large importations from thence, clays are in no request, and brown sugars quite unsaleable, and the small demand we have is only for fine muscovados.'

'Several cargoes of Guadeloupe sugars have lately been sold, and first whites, superior in colour to any that came from Barbadoes, have gone so low as 52/9 p̄ Cwt, and such last year sold once as high as 84/- p̄ Cwt, and muscovadoes have sold as low as 30/- p̄ Cwt and under, and once last year sold as high as 45/- p̄ Cwt.'

Guadeloupe sugars soon lost their reputation.

'Indeed we have applied to almost all the sugar bakers in town, and as they have formerly worked Guadeloupe sugars, at great loss, on account of their foulness, they do not chuse to work any more.'²

The island poured greater quantities of sugar, good or bad, every year upon the market, and when the news of the reduction of Martinique reached London in 1762, the sugar market fell three shillings.³

promise to re-export them, which was not performed. The Collector of the port received orders to stop this in 1760; the market for prize sugars was lowered by this reform (Thomas Clifford, Philadelphia, to Isaac Cox, July 26 and Dec. 9, 1760, Clifford Correspondence, xxvii. 99, 130, H.S.P.).

¹ Loudoun to Pitt, April 25, 1757, C.O. 5/48.

² Lascelles and Maxwell to Thomas Stevenson, June 28, 1760; to T. Stevenson and sons, July 18; to Thomas Stevenson, junior, Sept. 13, W. & G. ix.

³ Lascelles and Maxwell to Thomas Stevenson, Aug. 6, 1762, W. & G. ix. The average importation from Guadeloupe in the years 1759-63 was £380,964; that of Martinique, 1762-3, was £316,293; that of Havana (partly sugars) in 1763 was £249,387. A comparison of these figures with those given on p. 474 will show what an impression the conquests must have made on the sugar-market.

The West India interest tried to protect itself against this competition by raising a doubt whether the produce of a colony so conquered could count as English. The Treasury wished to honour Barrington's capitulation by admitting Guadeloupe sugars at the same duties as English; but the planters and merchants questioned whether the island could be deemed an English dominion until it had been annexed to the Crown by Act of Parliament. The Treasury consulted the Law Officers, who supported it; so in spite of a contrary opinion of Hume Campbell, the Guadeloupe produce was entered as English.¹

It is difficult to judge exactly the effect of these various circumstances and policies upon the sugar market. It must be taken as roughly summed up by the history of the prices themselves, and even that is hard to ascertain. If, however, we try to strike an average from what figures we possess, we may say that the price of Barbados muscovado sugar in the 1730's was about a guinea per hundredweight; during the Spanish war down to 1744 about 32 shillings; during the French war which followed, about 38 shillings. It fell back at the peace but advanced a great deal in the last years before the Seven Years War; we might strike an average for the whole period of peace at 34 shillings. It is hardest of all to name a figure for the Seven Years War itself, because the fluctuations were unusually violent; we have to take into account the high price of 52 shillings in August 1759 and the low one of 30 shillings in August 1760.² Perhaps 40 shillings would be a fair estimate. These figures show less variation than the Amsterdam prices, such as we have them. That is not surprising, for the English market differed from the free markets of the world in several ways. The prices fell less in peace because the market was protected and the production little more than enough to supply the demand; they rose less in war because the sugar convoys were protected by the most powerful navy in the world, which was able to intercept the produce of the French colonies on its way to neutral countries. It would, however, be a waste of time to theorize very subtly about these statistics, for none of them is much better than guesswork.³

¹ Lascelles and Maxwell to Gedney Clarke, June 19, Aug. 3 and 31, 1759, W. & G. viii.

² There is a further difficulty because the figures on which I most rely are deficient for the later years of the war.

³ I give them here for purposes of comparison:

§ iii. *The Market for By-Products in War-time*

Since every sugar-plantation and refinery must make some molasses, the price of molasses and rum was almost as important to the planters as that of the sugar itself. Both these articles were the objects of keen speculation in North America, and the markets there and in the islands fluctuated widely in peace as well as war. Hurricanes, short crops, or sudden demands often raised the price very much in peace; but it kept up a higher average in war. For example, molasses only once got to two shillings a gallon in Philadelphia between 1728 and 1738, according to the prices current of the *American Weekly Mercury*; it never fell below that price between January 1742 and March 1743, and returned above it for another long spell after November 1744. The prices in the islands do not always seem to have kept pace with those of the North American ports; for instance, rum was exceptionally low at 1s. 8d. the gallon in Barbados in the spring of 1757 and 1758, while it was fetching high prices at Philadelphia and New York. In the year 1759, however, when prices broke records all over the world, there was more correspondence between the islands and the continent. Rum was at 4 shillings in Barbados in October (the average price was 2 shillings); at 3s. 6d. in Antigua most of the winter; nearly 6 shillings in New York and Philadelphia, where it seems to have been about 3 shillings upon an average in ordinary times.

Many circumstances entered into the determination of these prices. In the first place, they seem to have moved steadily upwards, war or peace, like those of sugars in the London market. The thirties were the turning-point for rum and molasses as well as sugar. It would be a mistake to ascribe all this to the Molasses Act which was not obeyed, or the direct exportation to Europe which was hardly ever used.¹ The

	<i>London</i>	<i>Amsterdam</i>
1730-8	22 shillings (1735-8)	3 $\frac{3}{4}$ florins
1739-43	32 „	6 „
1744-8	38 „	8 „
1749-55	34 „	5 $\frac{1}{2}$ „
1756-62	40 „	8 $\frac{1}{2}$ „

The Amsterdam figures are taken from the lists which a certain Mr. Collow, of Broad Street Buildings, supplied to Chalmers on Oct. 23, 1791 (C.O. 318/1). I do not know who was this Mr. Collow, or how he came by his information. See also J. J. Reesse, *De Suikerhandel van Amsterdam* (1908), vol. i, Appendix D.

¹ *V. supra*, pp. 79-82.