

**REPORT OF A COMMITTEE  
OF THE CITIZENS OPPOSED  
TO A FURTHER INCREASE OF  
DUTIES ON IMPORTATIONS**

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Report of a Committee of the citizens opposed to a further increase of duties on importations by  
Various

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**VARIOUS**

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TO A FURTHER INCREASE OF  
DUTIES ON IMPORTATIONS**



# **REPORT**

OF

**A COMMITTEE OF THE CITIZENS**

OF

**BOSTON AND VICINITY,**

OPPOSED TO

**A FURTHER INCREASE OF DUTIES**

ON

**IMPORTATIONS.**

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**BOSTON :**

FROM THE PRESS OF NATHAN HALE.

No. 6, Congress Street.

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1827.



*At an adjourned meeting of the Citizens of Boston, assembled to take into consideration the proposed increase of duties, especially upon Woollen Goods, the Committee heretofore appointed, having had the subject under consideration, ask leave to submit the following*

## **REPORT:**

THAT they have had various meetings upon the subject referred to them, and, as far as their means of information would permit, have collected a variety of facts, and taken such views of the subject, as appeared to them best calculated to illustrate the impolicy and injustice of any further increase of the existing burthensome duties on imported articles, and especially the injurious consequences to the community at large, of farther duties on imported Woollen Goods. These facts, views and illustrations are embodied in the form of a more extended report, which is herewith submitted. Your Committee are aware of the peculiarly difficult position, in which this question is now placed, by the accidental, if not designed connexion of this subject, under the specious name of the American System, with certain controverted political questions, between which and that system, your Committee believe there is no natural or necessary relation. On this ground, and considering how widely many of the citizens of the United States are divided upon those questions, and the injurious influence which party zeal and political prejudice are likely to exert upon a question which ought to be dispassionately considered and decided upon its own merits, your Committee have hesitated in deciding whether it is expedient at the present time to bring the subject before the public. But considering the importance at all times of establishing just and sound principles of general policy, of counteracting those erroneous impressions, which might be made by misrepresentations often repeated and never questioned or corrected, of endeavouring to enlighten the public mind to the true state of the question, and as far as can be done by collecting and presenting useful information, to give a right tone to public opinion and a right direction to public measures, without regard to the question, what men shall preside or what party shall predominate in the councils of the nation; and considering also the importance of shewing that the general voice of New England is not in favour of the restrictive and prohibitory system, your Committee

have thought it advisable at least, that a full, deliberate and dispassionate exhibition of the views of those opposed to that system, should be brought before the public, at the present time ; and that a temperate Memorial, expressive of these views, should be laid before Congress at the ensuing season. They have therefore prepared the draft of a Memorial for that purpose, which is herewith submitted. In conclusion, they respectfully recommend the adoption of the following Resolutions :

*Resolved*, That in the present state of the Agriculture, Manufactures and Commerce of the United States, it would be unjust, impolitic, and inconsistent with the best interests of the community, to impose further and higher duties upon imported articles generally, and more particularly upon imported Woollen Goods.

*Resolved*, That a Memorial to Congress, expressive of these views, be submitted to those citizens who concur in them, for their signature ; and that the Committee heretofore appointed, be requested to circulate such Memorial, and, to cause the same, when signed, to be presented.

*Resolved*, That the more extended Report herewith presented, be printed under the direction of the same Committee, for the use of the members of this meeting, and for the information of the citizens generally, and that the Committee cause the same to be distributed in such manner as they may judge best calculated to promote the views of this meeting.

Which is respectfully submitted by the Committee.

NATHANIEL GODDARD,	}	COMMITTEE.
LEMUEL SHAW,		
ISAAC WINSLOW,		
WILLIAM GODDARD,		
ENOCH SILSBY,		
THOMAS W. WARD,		
EDWARD CRUFT,		
LOT WHEELWRIGHT,		
HENRY LEE,		
R. D. SHEPHERD,		
SAMUEL SWETT,		
WILLIAM FOSTER,		
DANIEL P. PARKER,		
JOSEPH BAKER,		
SAMUEL C. GRAY,		

*This Report was unanimously adopted by the meeting.*

*Voted*, That the Committee be requested to carry the above Resolutions into effect, and to correspond with gentlemen in other parts of the country, inviting their co-operation.

NATHANIEL GODDARD, *Chairman.*

WILLIAM HALES, *Secretary.*

*Boston, November 30, 1827.*

## REPORT.

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Your Committee beg leave to report, that in the duty assigned them they have thought proper to confine their attention, (as the best means of accomplishing the end of their appointment,) to an examination of the claims of the Manufacturers, to the contemplated increase of the duties on woollens, and the effects which may be expected to follow, on the attainment of that object. We are not unmindful, that what we are about to say, may lay us open to those charges, which are constantly made, either directly or by implication, against all the opponents of the prohibitory system, as enemies to domestic industry,\* hostile to the "American System," as influenced by a spirit of faction towards the government—and †"united with others in endeavours to defeat the re-election of the present chief Magistrate." We shall not however be deterred on that account, from expressing our views on this subject, in the hope, if we do nothing more, of rescuing ourselves from the imputation of being classed among the supporters of an unwise and unjust policy. We deny however in the most distinct and unreserved manner any such motives, which may be attributed to us. The subject we are about to discuss, has in reality no connection whatever, with the question to which we have alluded, and we regret, that party men for purposes of their own, and in utter disregard to the interests of their immediate constituents, and still more so, to the national peace and welfare, should have mingled them together. The success or failure of the candidate for the Presidency, may be of great moment to the country, and still greater, to those partizans whose political fortunes are depending on that event; but to the nation at large, the evil or the good, which may arise out of the choice of the one, or the rejection of the other, can only be of a temporary and limited importance compared with the wise and just disposition of a question on which our whole foreign and domestic policy turns, and which may, in its consequences, affect the stability and happiness of the union, for ages to come. We know there are many, who, agreeing with us, in our general views of the subject, will say we over-rate its impor-

\* Boston Circular Committee Woollen Manufacturers. Nov. 11th, 1826.

† Clay's Letter to Maysville Committee. July 4th, 1827.



tance, but they come to this conclusion we think, because they will not examine the nature and present state of the question, and its future consequences.

We deny also, any thing like hostility to the manufacturing interests. It would indeed evince a most extraordinary degree of folly, if any one in this quarter, should entertain such a sentiment towards an interest, which in all its branches involves such a vast amount of capital and labour, as to affect the welfare of every man in the community, whatever may be his condition, or circumstances; and it would be still more absurd to imagine such feelings should exist, in a committee, part of whom are themselves manufacturers, and they again representing an assembly containing some of the most wealthy and intelligent of that class. It is not then so much a question of being friendly or unfriendly to manufactures, as a question of resisting absurd and unjust expedients for promoting them. We not only disavow all unfriendly feelings to manufactures, but we profess not to yield to the most zealous of their advocates, in an estimate of the benefits which may be anticipated from their extension and success. We consider them as furnishing one of the great staple employments for the skill, capital and labour of New England, standing at this moment second in importance to agriculture, but prospectively of still greater consequence; and of all the various branches of them, we deem that of woollens the most advantageous, first, because of its magnitude—again, because in comparison with cottons and many others, it depends more on manual labour, of which compared with other sections of the country we have a superfluity. Still more, as it promotes the growth of a staple, peculiarly suited to the soil of New England. It is on that very account, we are desirous of seeing this manufacture placed on a solid and permanent footing—to see it extend and flourish, not however by legislative contrivances, but by that increase of skill and capital, which we are fast attaining, and the want of which, as we conceive, now constitutes the only obstacle to its success, under a lower duty than it now enjoys. We repeat, we desire most earnestly, that woollen and all other manufactures may succeed, not by violent unwholesome stimulants, which serve rather to exhaust, than nourish them, not by a system of excessive and unjust taxation, which many of the most intelligent manufacturers themselves neither think just nor necessary, but by such reasonable encouragement as will be cheerfully borne, in those sections of the country not immediately benefitted by them. We are anxious to see manufactures placed on that ground, which will cause them to be held in equal favour, with all the other great branches of industry, and like them to rest on the skill and industry of those who are engaged in those pursuits, and not on governmental bounties, which impose heavy burdens on one portion of the nation, for the benefit of another, and which will serve to make the very name of *domestic manufactures*, hateful to those on whom we must chiefly depend for their consumption, and support.

This then is a question of national policy, and stands disconnected in our minds, from all considerations of parties. It has no relation to the great question, which now divides the country, and must be argued and settled on its own merits, without reference to any thing but the general welfare.

It is, as all must admit, a question of great moment in itself, more especially to the poor and middling ranks, as affecting essentially the cost of one of the first necessities of life—*next in value and importance to bread itself*; but of far greater consequence, as leading to the adoption and establishment of a system of restrictions, and prohibitions, not only at variance with that liberal and sound policy, coeval with our national existence, and under which we flourished in the most unexampled degree, but wholly inconsistent with the principles of our free constitution.

The avowed object of the woollen manufacturers as evinced in their memorials and other publications, and as still more forcibly manifested in the tariff which passed the House of Representatives, the last Session of Congress, is to protect themselves by a tax of from 38 per cent to 139 per cent, on the nation at large, against all foreign competition. The injustice of such pretensions, is so obvious, that it seems needless to comment on them; and the woollen manufacturers themselves were so much alive to this in other cases, that with an inconsistency frequently exhibited by men, eager in pursuit of their own interests, and regardless of those of all others, that at the very moment, they were calling for this enormous duty in their own favour, they resisted a small addition on hemp and iron, articles more necessary to the national security, than their own, and which, with the required increase, would then have stood at less rates of duties, than woollens now enjoy. This fact is on record, and has been remarked upon, at various meetings, held for the promotion of manufactures, since the adjournment of congress, and by men, who were themselves friendly to further protecting duties.

We believe the wool-growers themselves, whose interests the manufacturers affect so much anxiety to promote, have no better reason to be satisfied with their treatment; at least, that portion of them, who are acquainted with the views and proceedings, of their representatives in Congress.

That the interests of the sheep farmer were abandoned, has been asserted by Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Stevenson, and other members of Congress, some of whom were friendly to further protecting duties, and this has been confirmed by the public declarations of some of the most intelligent men extensively engaged in that branch of agriculture, and indeed, must be apparent to every one who examines the provisions of the Woollen Bill.

It must not however be understood, that we advocate more duties on Wool or any other articles; our object is to show the exclusive spirit which governs the movements of the woollen manufacturers.

The language they hold while seeking to obtain the aid of other manufacturers, is, "prohibit all articles which can be procured at home;" but the application of this principle, they would confine to their own benefit.

We are aware, that the woollen manufacturers have had the address to identify in appearance, their interests with those of the manufacturing classes generally; but those who have attended to their proceedings as well as professions, must, we think, be convinced, that it is as much for the advantage of all other manufacturers, to resist the pretensions of this favoured body, as it is for the farmer, merchant, mechanic, labourer and citizens generally, whose interests will all be deeply injured, by yielding to their demands.

The supporters and partizans of the prohibitory policy have, as it is well known, endeavoured to prepossess the public mind in their favour, by circulating a great number of publications, and filling, for twelve months past, nearly all the newspapers of New England, with the most exaggerated statements, and plausible arguments, read and repeated, in town and county meetings, in conventions, in congress and elsewhere, and urged, we must say with a zeal and violence, uncommon in men conscious of a just cause,—while on the other hand, very little has been done in this quarter, to place the merits of the case fairly before the public, disembarrassed of those fallacies and misrepresentations, with which its artful advocates have surrounded it.

Your Committee have read with much attention, those memorials, speeches, essays and other publications on the subject which appeared most worthy of notice, and submit their remarks on such statements and arguments, as have the strongest bearing on the question, and on which the Woollen Manufacturers themselves, appear chiefly to rely, for the support of their extravagant, and as appears to us, unjust demands.

**SECTION 1.** The American woollen manufacturers contend, that the British manufacturers, with the advantage of larger capitals, more perfect machinery, lower price of labour and materials, and a greater experience and skill, are enabled to undersell them, notwithstanding the protecting charges of 57 per cent which they now enjoy against foreign importations; and they in consequence, ask for a further increase of duty, which would carry the rate to an average perhaps of 80 per cent, and make the whole protecting charges 99 per cent. If what is here alleged be true, to the extent they would have us infer, there cannot be imagined any stronger arguments, against engaging in a competition so entirely hopeless; and the manufacturers who must generally have been as well acquainted with all these circumstances ten years ago, as they now are, have shewn an unwarrantable degree of improvidence, in extending their business from ten millions to forty millions of dollars, as they assert they have done, since 1816.