

Wednesday, April 11, 1733.

On Monday last, at a Meeting of the Common-Council of this City, the Right Honourable the LORD MAYOR was pleas'd to introduce the Business of the Day in the following Words: *Barbet*

GENTLEMEN,

THERE is a Bill depending in the House of Commons, (a Copy of which I have procur'd) laying an Inland Duty on Tobacco; which Duty, it is universally agreed, will prove extremely detrimental to the Trade and Commerce of this Great City, as well as to That of the whole Nation. And as the High Station which I have the Honour to be in, obliges me to be watchful over every Thing that may affect the Interest of my Fellow-Citizens, I should think Myself wanting in my Duty, if I neglected to call you together on this Extraordinary Occasion, that you might have an Opportunity to deliberate on an Affair of such Importance, wherein our Liberty and our Property are so essentially concerned.

And the Bill being read, the following Petition was agreed to unanimously, viz.

To the Honourable the COMMONS of *Great Britain* in
Parliament assembled,

*The Humble Petition of the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Commons of the City of
LONDON, in Common Council assembled,*

SHEWETH,

THAT your Petitioners observe, in the Votes of this Honourable House, that a Bill has been brought in, pursuant to the Resolutions of the Sixteenth Day of *March*, for Repealing several Subsidies and an Impost now payable on Tobacco of the *British* Plantations, and for granting an Inland Duty in lieu thereof.

THAT they presume therefore in all Humility, by a respectful Application to this House, to express, as they have already done, in some Measure, by their Instructions to their Members, the Universal Sense of the City of *London*, concerning any further Extension of the Laws of Excise.

THAT the Burthen of Taxes already imposed on every Branch of Trade, however cheerfully born, is severely felt; but that your Petitioners apprehend this Burthen will grow too heavy to be born, if it be increas'd by such vexatious and oppressive Methods of levying and collecting the Duties, as they are assured, by melancholy Experience, that the Nature of all Excises must necessarily produce.

THAT the Merchants, Tradesmen and Manufacturers of this Kingdom, have supported themselves under the Pressure of the Excise-Laws now in Force, by the comfortable and reasonable Expectation, that Laws, which nothing but publick Necessity could be a Motive to enact, would be repealed, in Favour of the Trade of the Nation, and of the Liberty of the Subject, whenever that Motive should be removed; as your Petitioners presume it effectually is, by an undisturbed Tranquility at Home, and a general Peace so firmly establish'd Abroad.

THAT if this Expectation be entirely taken away, if the Excise-Laws, instead of being repeal'd, are extended to other Species of Merchandize, not yet Excised, and a Door open'd for extending them to all, your Petitioners cannot in Justice to themselves, to the Merchants, Tradesmen, and Manufacturers of the whole Kingdom, and to the general Interest of their Country, conceal their Apprehension that the most fatal Blow which ever was given, will be given on this Occasion to the Trade and Navigation of *Great Britain*; that that great Spring from which the Wealth and Prosperity of the Publick flows, will be obstructed, the Mercantile Part of the Nation will become not only less able to Trade to Advantage, but unwilling to Trade at all; for no Person who can enjoy all the Privileges of a *British* Subject out of Trade, even with a small Fortune, will voluntarily renounce some of the most valuable of those Privileges, by subjecting himself to the Laws of Excise.

THAT your Petitioners are able to shew that these their Apprehensions are founded both in Experience, and in Reason; and therefore your Petitioners most humbly pray, that this Honourable House will be pleas'd to hear them by their Counsel against the said Bill.

