

Chesterfield Gazette.

Saturday 5th. April 1828

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House of Commons.

Lead Mines.

Lord W. Paulett presented a petition from certain owners of lead mines in Durham, complaining of the late reduction of the importation of foreign ores. Duty on the raw material is 10 shillings per ton, while that on the manufactured is 40 shillings per ton. They therefore prayed Parliament to give them relief.

Mr. Secretary Huskisson admitted the statement to be correct, but he regretted that he could not interfere. The alteration made in the duties laid on the importation of ore in the unmanufactured state, was done with a view to give relief to the trade and manufacturers of this country. In 1825, the speculations in this article were very great; prices got in consequence extravagantly high, and the consequence was, a great depression in prices followed. With excessive speculations were carried on, excessive depreciation must, of necessity, be expected. If he was disposed to alter the law, other portions of the commercial interest would feel jealous, and expect similar attentions, which would produce mischievous effects. The arrangements had been made with a view of encouraging the manufacturers.

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House of Commons.

Foreign Lead and Lead Ore.

Lord Lowther presented a petition from a most respectable class of persons connected with the lead mines situate at Alston-Moor, in the County of Cumberland, complaining of the depreciation in the value of British lead, in consequence of the low rate of duty payable on the importation of foreign lead ore. He knew it had been said that the introduction of foreign lead ore into this country was a benefit rather than a disadvantage, because the ore so imported was manufactured here; but, in point of fact, the foreign ore was really a manufactured article. Before it was introduced here, it went through the various processes of washing, etc., and was ready to be put into the furnace. So far was it manufactured, that 400 tons of foreign lead ore would make 300 tons of pure lead, and a very inconsiderable number of persons was employed in the smelting. He was aware that the importation of foreign ore was not the only cause of the depreciation complained off; it might be in some degree be attributed to the general stagnation of trade, but the petitioners believed that the chief cause was the admission of foreign ore at a low rate.

Mr. C. Grant said, His Noble Friend himself had the candour to allow that other causes than the importation of foreign ores had led to the distress complained off; and indeed there were other causes, sufficiently obvious, which abundantly accounted for it. Circumstances which affected other speculations would also affect that of lead mining, and would cause a depreciation in the value of the article. One real cause, however, of the depreciation was, that other countries were now capable of supplying neighbouring states. This country used to supply many parts of Europe with lead, which now drew their supplies from Spain; France, Italy, and Holland, who formerly received their supplies from England, for the last few years had it from Spain. But still, notwithstanding this competition, England continued annually to export 14,000 tons of lead. Now, when it was recollected that this country produced 40,000 tons of lead yearly, and exported 14,000 tons, while only 5,000 tons were imported, surely they could not say that the trade was in such a very deplorable state. Under all the circumstances, it appeared to him that the complaint of the petitioners was founded in misconception.

After a few words from Mr. P. Thompson, Mr. Warburton, Lord Lowther, and Mr. Hume, the petition was laid on the table, and ordered to be printed.

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Explosion in a Coal Mine.

On March the 27th., says a letter from Liege, at seven o'clock in the evening, an explosion threw down a whole gallery in the coal mine of M. Coquerel, at Seraing (Belgium). 71 miners were at work; 39 of them were killed, 8 others were suffocated, and 24 escaped, being in a part of the mine to which the explosion did not extend. The explosion was heard half a league from Seraing, and the flame from the mine rose from the air-shaft 8 or 10 feet. The suffocated people were found much swollen, but their bodies were entire. Notwithstanding the violence, the injury done to the mine is not so great as was apprehended. The air-shaft is injured towards the bottom, and the lower ladders are in a bad state. The iron carts used for transporting the coals from the distant parts of the mine have been flattened and bent in all manner of shapes. Two horses were killed, and so swollen that their collars were burst. The cause of the explosion is not known.

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No Headline.

The rich iron mine at La Voulte, in the Department of Ardeche, in France, which has been long unworked, is again rendered productive by the introduction of English machinery, under the superintendence of English engineers.