The Case of the Clothiers, Weavers, Hofters, Merchants, Drapers, Mercers, and other Dealers in the Woolen Manufactures; with Relation to the Bill now depending, for the Transfering the Collection of the Duty of Aulnage from the Cufftome-house to the Crown for the same.

The Office of Aulnage was Confirmed for the Measuring, Weighing, and Searching of Cloth; And to the intent that the Dealers therein might not be deceived, the Seal was put on, to signify the Goodness thereof, and the Duty paid in Consideration of the performance of that Service.

The Office of Aulnage was granted to the Crown, in consideration of the Refusing Forritures, that were grievous to the Dealers in Cloth.

The Office of Aulnage is now become altogether unnecessary, and no way Answering the End of its last Constitution, and is therefore Canceled by the following Articles.

1. That Duties are very Chargeable in the Collecting, as appears by Accounts delivered by the Farmers of the said Duties, to the Committee appointed by the House of Commons by which Avenues they do return, That they Collect in one year, from the 25 of December, 87, to the 25 December 88.

2. Besides the Duty on Strocks, Blankets, and Bags.

By Accounts lately delivered by the Farmers to the said Committee, it does appear that they made clear of all Charges, from the 25 of March 86, to 25 March 87, (taking the mean proportion) per annum.

So that the Charge in Collecting, comes to per annum, above.

The Rent that is now paid by the Farmers to the Duchy of Richmond, who has the Grant from the Crown, is per annum.

The Fine that was paid for a Lease of Twenty one years, was 9000 l., which being reduced to a Yearly Rent, comes to per annum.

Rent and Fine comes to per annum.

Out of which a Small Rent (by the Patent) is Reverted to the Crown.

...The manner of Collecting the Duties is very Grievous to all the Dealers in the Woolen Manufactures. All that is paid in for the Payment of a Half Crown or Penny Duty are forced to carry their Goods to several Officers for great distance from their Habitations to be Sealed, by which means their Goods are much damaged, and their Owners Einipped of their Marks and times left, which is much more Grievous than the payment of the Duty.

That in other places they are forced to pay for Seals many Miles, and many times the Aulngers not having Seals, the Cloths for want thereof have been sent up to London, or other places, where they have been Seized, and the Clothiers put to great Charge and Trouble to have them again.

That they make frequent Searches at the Drapers, Dyers, Pfullers, &c. And if by any accident the Seals be dropped off, at it is well known they Seize and carry away what they find Dropped.

That they make frequent Searches at the Irons, Search-Weegens, or Hofters upon the Road, Search-Weegens, Black-Weegens, Hill, Cufftome-house Keys, Merchants and Factors, Shops and Warehouses, and where else they pleaseth, Seize and carry away what they find Dropped.

That they enter into and Search all Retailers Shops, and Warehouses, seize all their Goods, destroy all their Marks, Seize and carry away either whole Pieces or Remnants of Unsealed, although they have been Sealed; the being such an extraordinary Grievance, the Retailers have been forced to Yearly Contributions to be freed from so great an Inconvenience.

That Goods Seized are profusely Compounded for or sale carried to the Anlgers Houses or Colleges, where the Owners are forced to attend and Complaited, at what Rates those Anlgers plead; or if they refuse, then are their Goods returned into the Exchanges, or Permitted to the Crown, where they may, but for them; which, besides being in most cases without the Dignity, forces the Complainants to suffer the loss of their Goods, many times untold, rather then be at so great a Charge and Trouble to obtain them again.

That although it has been made appear that the Goods have been Seized wrongfully, yet have they refused to deliver them again, until certain Fees, as they protest is due, for Porteridge, Warehouse Room, &c. be allowed.

Thus are all the Dealers in the Woolen Manufactures oppressed, and all this for a Small and Inconsiderable Duty, not amounting to Five Shillings for a hundred pound value.

Thus are the Wickets of Trade clogged with an unnecessary Office, and Transferable Officers, who under the specious pretences of Collecting and Increasing the Revenue of the Crown, have been, and still are very indefatigable, to Collect and increase their own Profits and Gain at the expense of the many thousand Labourers Subject.

For Remedy of all which Misdemeanour it has been proposed, That the Office and Seal should be wholly taken away, and that the Duties should be made payable at the Cufftome-house for such Manufacturers only as are Exported.

For which purpose a Bill has been Four several times before the Parliament in former Sessions.

A Bill for the same purpose is now depending, and if the Rates that are now inserted in this Bill, had been Collected, at the Cufftome-house in three years in which the Anlgers were found, That they made clear of all Charges 2300 l., it would have proceeded near 800 l. per annum, as by Accounts abstracted out of the Cufftome-house Books is most plainly to be demonstrated.

The Rates that are inserted in this Bill amount to about 3000 l. per annum; more then the Rates that were inserted in the Bill that was depending in the last Sessions, and comes to about 500 l. per annum more than the Anlgers made clear of all Charges in those years when their Excitations were very great.

It is therefore humbly hoped this Bill will not be passed into a Law, and the Dealers into Woolen Manufactures thereby delivered from the Burdens and Oppressions they have for a long time laboured under.