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Translation of an EDICT to explain and renew those formerly issued concerning the Transit and Importation of English Merchandizes, and the Trade with England in general. Berlin, May 11, 1774.

WE Frederic, by the Grace of God, King of Prussia, Margrave of Brandenburg, &c. &c. &c. Whereas it has been reported to us from different Places, that, in regard to the Trade with the Subjects of Great Britain, and the Merchandizes imported from Great Britain, or that pass through our Dominions, the Officers of our Customs have been frequently led into Error, in executing the Ordinances and Edicts of the late King our Father, of glorious Memory, by not attending to the Difference which ought to be observed between the several Countries and Provinces, but have indiscriminately applied that which ought to take Place only with regard to one Province, to other Provinces where the same Measures could not but be prejudicial to the Trade in general, and to that of the Transit in particular.

We have judged it necessary to declare and to explain by the present Ordinance the former Edicts in such Manner that all Persons may know how to conduct themselves; and that for the future all Error, or Mistake in the collecting of the Taxes and Customs may be avoided.

And we are the more disposed thereunto, as our most earnest Desire and Intention is not only to keep up the mutual Commerce, which has hitherto subsisted with Great Britain, but also to extend and facilitate it by every possible Means.

For these Reasons we will and ordain by these Presents,

I.

With regard to the Transit and Passage of all English Merchandizes, without Exception, which pass through our Dominions on the Rivers towards the different Parts of Germany, Poland, Bohemia, and all the neighbouring Provinces, the Duties of Transit shall not be paid for the future, neither on the Elbe, nor by Land, when the Merchandizes pass through the Country of Halberstadt, Magdebourg, and through other Places, after the Rates of the Ordinance of the Year 1752, that is to say, at the Rate of 33 per Cent. but hereafter the Payment shall be made, without having any Regard to the Value of the Merchandizes, solely according to their Weight; that is to say, for every Quintal of 110 Pounds Weight a Tax of Six good Groschen, if such Merchandizes are going to Saxony; and only the Half of this light Impost, whenever it shall be proved that the Consignment is made directly for the Empire without touching the Provinces of Upper Saxony.

As for the Transit with regard to Silesia, where according to the Constitutions of this Province it is regulated on the Foot of 8 per Cent. for all Foreign Merchants whatsoever who trade with Poland, there shall be no Innovation therein, and Things shall remain with respect to all German, Polish, Dutch and other Merchants, on the antient Foot. But in Favour of English Merchants, who shall use the Route that leads through Breslaw into Poland, these Duties of Transit shall be reduced to the Half, and they shall be obliged to pay only at the Rate of 4 per Cent. With respect to the different Provinces of Mark and Pomerania, they shall remain exempt from this present Regulation; since hitherto the English Consignments have not been made through these Pro-

vinces, and could not have been made on account of their natural Situation. But as the principal Trade of Great Britain in Poland is directed by Dantzick and the Vistula,

We order in the strictest Manner, that English Merchandizes, which arrive in this Manner by Sea in order to enter into Poland, of what Kind or Quality soever, except only Tobacco and Salt, shall absolutely pay no Transit Duty, nor shall be burdened with any other Impost, except those to which they have been subjected heretofore.

With regard to all our Provinces in Westphalia, to wit, the Duchies of Cleves and Gueldres, the Principalities of Minden, East Friesland, and Meurs; the Counties of Mark, Ravensberg, Tecklenbourg, and Lingen, English Merchandizes shall not be subject therein to the least Duty for the Transit, but shall be exempt therefrom both at their coming in and going out, even though the Interests of Commerce, or other Circumstances should make it necessary to levy these Duties upon other Merchandizes, whatever they may be, not coming from Great Britain or her Colonies.

II.

With regard to the ordinary Duties, which, as is well known, are not burthensome in our Provinces and Dominions;

We order that British Subjects in the Commerce of their National Merchandizes, which they shall import into or convey through them, shall not be treated with more Rigour than our own Subjects, with whom they shall in this Respect enjoy like Advantages; provided that such English Contractors, as furnish our Tobacco Company with the necessary Quantities of Virginia and Maryland Tobacco, shall be entirely free; reserving nevertheless to ourselves, as Circumstances shall require, the Right of subjecting to the Duties the Dutch, Hamburg, and other Merchants, when they shall trade in Tobacco on their own Account.

As to what concerns in particular the Custom-house of Fordan upon the Vistula, the same Rules shall be observed with Regard to English Merchandizes as are established by the Regulation of the Rates and Tariff of Poland; and our Officers shall be particularly attentive, and careful, that the Merchandizes shall not be taxed above their real Value, but conformably to Truth, and with the greatest Accuracy.

III.

In relation to such English Merchandizes, as are permitted to be imported for internal Consumption, they consist either in perishable Commodities, or in raw Materials, or Goods manufactured.

As to the first, to wit, salted or dried Provisions, English Beer, Tea, Coffee, Sugar in Canes, Rice, and Oil, which the English Ships import in large Quantities, also Whale-Oil, and other Merchandizes of this Kind, the English Proprietors, or their Factors and Consigners, shall absolutely pay no more Excise than our own Subjects who are most privileged in Trade; provided nevertheless that this do not prejudice the Right of Burghership of our maritime Towns, and that the Equality be solely attach'd to the Merchandizes.

It shall be the same with regard to the Merchandizes of the second Class, as Pewter, Lead, Iron, Flax, Horses, Indigo, Gum, Logwood, and other Ingredients for Dying. Declaring moreover, that in regard to the Tobacco and Salt, which the English Proprietors shall sell for the Use of our Contractors, they shall be exempt from all Excise, as they are of Customs.