

Thursday 14th April 1783.

The Committee completed their first Report, which is as follows.

The first Report of the Committee appointed to inspect & enquire into the Mode & execution of the Business as now carried on in the different departments of the Bank.

To the Governor, Deputy Governor and
Committee of Treasury.

In pursuance of the Resolution of the Court of Directors of the 13th March last ordering us "to report to the Committee of Treasury to be laid before the Court our proceedings & observations on the Manner in which the Business is conducted in the several Offices in the Bank."

We report, That immediately after our appointment, we proceeded to the Execution of the powers delegated to us, by applying ourselves to acquire a general knowledge of the Mode of conducting the business of the House, beginning with those Offices which lie within the department of the Chief Cashier.

It was our intention in the first instance to have formed reports on the proceedings in each

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of those Offices, but in the course of our Enquiries, &
before we had obtained sufficient information for
that purpose, an Object presented itself to us of such
magnitude as to determine us to submit it to Your
consideration without delay.

The Object we point at is the State of insecurity
in which all Bills & Notes passing through this
House are suffer'd to remain: First in the Discount
Office; & afterwards in the Bill Office where they are
dispos'd in drawers to lie till due.

From the information of M^r Rogers & M^r Gooch, the
2 Chief, & of one of the subordinate Clerks in the
Discount Office, we learn, that all Bills or Notes
brought in to be discounted, pass progressively
through the hands of 5 different Clerks, who either
compute, or enter the particulars of the Bills in
different books: this operation takes up a considerable
space of time, & frequently occasions the business of
the Office to continue, till very late at night before it
is finished. Those Bills that cannot be entered
& delivered to the Bill Office before 5 o'clock, are
locked up in the Discount Office all night; as are
also on every Wednesday all the Notes brought in
that day, & which remain in the Office, till they
shall have passed the Court on Thursday. —
These Bills & Notes generally amount to a very

large Sum; & yet it appears, to have been the uniform custom to leave them, to the care of such single Clerk in the Office as may be last in waiting, who is always one of the Juniors. This Clerk is requir'd to place them, in an Iron Chest, standing in a Closet in the Discount Office, which we find, on examination, to be a small, weak, & very insecure repository; situated moreover in a remote corner of the House, & thereby liable to greater risk: the key of this Closet is put into a common drawer in the Office, to which every Clerk has a key; & the key of the Office itself, is left by the last Clerk who retires, at the Gate Porter's Lodge. It is true the key of the Iron Chest, is carried by the same Clerk to the Chief or Deputy Accountant's Apartments: but We are informed is frequently delivered to a Servant, who returns it next morning, to the first Clerk that comes to the Discount Office; for the purpose of taking out the Bills, in order to their being delivered over to the Bill Office. Thus it appears, That Bills & Notes to a very large amount, do frequently remain in the sole custody of a junior Clerk of the Discount Office: That the repository, in which they

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are supposed to be placed by him, is weak, insecure, & ill situated: That the key of it is afterwards disposed of in a loose & careless manner: and That the Clerk who locks up the Bills at night, is not the Person who receives the key the next morning: a circumstance that effectually prevents his being answerable for the contents of the Chest.

From the Discount Office all Bills & Notes discounted are delivered to the Bill Office: & here likewise we find a subject for our animadversion at least as important as the former.

From the information of Mr. Church, Mr. Mayon, & Mr. Bourne, the 3 Chief, & of Mr. Holland, one of the subordinate Clerks in the Bill Office, we learn, that it is now the custom in that Office, to take out every morning at 9 o'clock, from the Iron Safe in the Court Room; the Chests, of discounted Bills, & of those paid in on the sundry or Drawing Acc^{ts}; both these are immediately unlocked, & all the Bills & Notes contained in them left exposed through the whole course of the day, not only to every Clerk in that Office (who is allowed to have free access to them); but also to many others who transact business near the place; & even

to Persons unconnected with the Bank, whose occasions frequently require their being admitted into the Bill Office.

It seems exceedingly improper, that the immense concerns usually deposited in the Bill Office, should be unnecessarily exposed for a single moment; much more that they should continue exposed throughout the whole day, & equally so that they should be intrusted to the care of one person when nothing prevents their being placed in the custody of two. We conceive ourselves justified in saying, unnecessarily exposed, because the business of the Office, appears to us, to require, that the Clerks should have in their possession, at one time, those Bills only which fall due, within the two, or at most the three following days; for the purpose of examining, laying them out in Watks, & sending them for payment. The other purposes for which the Clerks may have occasion to refer to the Bills themselves, are so few, & occur so seldom, as in our Opinion not to render necessary, their being left open in so public an Office, for any length of time.

The bare recital of these Facts, collected from the examination of the different Clerks (&

which appear much stronger in the Minutes of⁷²
our proceedings than we have here stated); —
sufficiently evinces the necessity of altering the
present mode with respect to this very important
Object.

To form a plan that may put so very large
a property in a State of Security; without at
the same time impeding the established course of
business; has engaged much of our attention: &
that we might be the better enabled to offer such
an one to Your consideration as we hope & trust
may prove effectual, We consulted the Chief Cashier,
& several of the Principal Clerks in these Offices,
with a view to discover, whether any solid objections
lay against what we thought so essentially
necessary.

To attain then this very desirable end at least
as far as the nature of the Subject will allow;
We submit it as our Opinion, That a strong
Closet or Safe be provided, contiguous to & opening
only into the Bill Office; divided into 2 compart-
ments for containing all Bills & Notes not in
course of payment; as well those discounted,

as those paid in on sundry Accounts: That each of these Compartments be subdivided into the requisite number of drawers, for containing the Bills in the order they fall due according to the days of the month, in the manner now practis'd for discounted Bills. That in these drawers all Bills that have more than two or three days to run do constantly remain: & that to this Safe there be 2 Locks, the key of one to remain with one of the 3 Chief Clerks of the Bill Office; the key of the other with a Cashier, or any other Officer that may be thought more proper. That every morning after the Chief Clerks of the Bill Office, shall have received all the Bills & Notes from the Discount Office, & sorted & entered them, according to the days they fall due; one of them do apply to the Cashier who may be in possession of the key, to go with him to the Safe to assist in opening it; & to attend, while he deposits each parcel of Bills in the drawer to which it belongs: & at the same time that he take out the Bills, of the day which comes next in course, for

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the Clerks to lay them out in Walks ready for the
Out-Tellers the next day. That whenever there
shall be occasion to have recourse to the Bills;
which can seldom happen, one of the 3 Chiefs of
the Bill Office be required to call the Cashier
to attend the taking out any Bill. And that
access be allowed to the Safe only in the presence
of one of these Chief Clerks. That a part of this
Safe be so contrived, as to open with a separate
door, (likewise secured by 2 different Locks) to
be allotted to the use of the Discount Office, for
the reception of such Bills & Notes discounted
as cannot be delivered in time to the Bill Office.
That these Bills & Notes be locked up therein
every night by such 2 Clerks of the Discount
Office as may hereafter be determined on, with
orders to lodge the keys at any two places judged
convenient.

By this Mode of securing the Bills & Notes,
the general precaution established in the Banks
of locking up all property under at least 2 keys,
will be complied with: & We cannot discover,
that the Business will be in the least impeded.

by it; if a few Regulations be adopted in the
 Mode of transacting the business in both Offices,
 such as we shall have occasion to submit to
 Your consideration at a future Opportunity.
 If the Safe, proposed, be so constructed as to
 admit of a Space in front sufficiently large for
 2 Persons to work at a desk; it will enable the
 Chief Clerks, to sort out & enter the Bills in a
 retired situation: a conveniency now much
 wanted in this Office.

(Signed) S. Bosanquet.
 Bank of England Thomas Dea.
 14th April 1783. Benj. Winthrop.

Adjourn'd to 15th April 1783.