

State of the Nation

Special

March 1825

News from the Spice Islands

Though it has long been public knowledge that the Spice Islands exist, and that engagements have been fought with the French Navy around them, the public -ignorant of matters concerning the Wastes to a large part – has generally assumed that the Spice Islands were only reachable with those with a talent for walking in the Wastes (or sailing in this case).

However, Commissioner Brown of the Wasteland Commission has recently appeared before the Lords at the behest of the First Sea Lord and answered questions regarding this matter, with specific reference to the recent trip to the Islands by members of the wasteland Commission led by Lord Cobham. It would seem apparent that the First Sea Lord and, indeed, much of the admiralty was well aware of the answers to these questions already, however the session served as a means of relating the information to the public and, indeed, both the Lords and Commons, both of which bodies seemed to be, for the most part, ignorant of the situation.

In the course of the discourse it became apparent that navigable channels exist between London and the Spice Isles and, indeed, between other known Realms and said Islands. Though far from safe, these channels require skilled British seamanship to navigate rather than some rather erratic and badly understood talent one is borne with. As an upshot of this is has become clearly apparent that the navy is once again of vital importance to the Nation, rather than the slightly redundant White Elephant it had

become -a navy is not all that important if hardly anyone can sail anywhere.

Commissioner Brown and the First sea Lord were both called to speak before the commons, where it became apparent that while the 'channels' to the Islands were known to the King and to the Cabinet, they had otherwise been kept most secret. Detailed cross examination by the Rt. Hon. Thomas Paine (Chartist) also revealed that Portsmouth was both connected to London by a sea route, and was being used as a secret naval base.

Needless to say, reactions from both houses were mixed.

As an upshot of these revelations, there have been several immediate developments:

Naval funding has dramatically increased and the navy seems likely to receive the high level of ritual support it used to, rather than the rather weak levels it had been receiving.

People of power across the land have been celebrating the fact that the monopoly on exploration held by the commission has been broken. Perhaps.

The East India Company has dispatched merchantmen (which it seemed to have ready) to Portsmouth, with the help of the admiralty, and is seeking an official monopoly on trade with the islands. Apparently one of their number in the commission, Lord North - who is either a fiend who exploited his position in the Commission for personal gain, or a true and right Englishman who understands that trade is the lifeblood of the nation, depending on whom one asks - has secured trade with the Islands through the island of Ambron on the promise that all trade with the East India company will pass through that Island.

The Aztecs are demanding maps of the channels such that they can trade there also. No official response has yet been given.

There is some general outcry, suggesting that maps of these channels should be generally released such that any entrepreneurial Englishman can go and make some money for his country. As yet, the government stance has been the maps are of military significance and they have only been released to the (politically powerful) East India Company.

The Navy has secured harbourage and trade rights with the Bandar Islands -which is where the nutmeg comes from, and the most important and valuable trade site. It has also started to use its newfound finds to bring a lot of decommissioned ships and beached officers back into service.