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# XX.11 On the freedom of commerce

- The Spirit of Law - Book XX. On laws in their relationship with commerce, considered in its nature and its distinctions -

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Freedom of commerce is not an opening granted to dealers to do what they wish ; that would rather be its servitude. What impedes the merchant does not necessarily impede commerce. It is in lands of liberty that the dealer finds contradictions without number, and he is never less thwarted by the laws than in lands of servitude.

England forbids the export of her wools ; she wants coal brought by sea to the capital ; she does not allow the export of her horses unless they are gelded ; her colonies' vessels that trade in Europe must drop anchor in England. [1] She impedes the dealer, but it is to the benefit of commerce.

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[1] Navigation Act of 1660. It was only in time of war that Boston and Philadelphia sent their vessels bearing their commodities directly to the Mediterranean.