

'The state of the Mint in relation to the Queens Assay Master'.

Author: Isaac Newton

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The state of the Mint in relation to the Queens AssayMaster.

The Warden & Comptroller are a cheque upon the Master in behalf of the Queen & her people & the Master has covenanted with her Majesty that they shall assist him in seeing that the coynage be well performed. And if either of them dies the rest of the Officers go on with the coynage & a new Officer is appointed with convenient speed. And if the Master dies the rest go on to coin & deliver what he has received **{illeg}** & a new Master is appointed with convenient speed & empoured by a signe mannual to receive new bullion untill an indenture can be prepared. For it has been a Maxim in the Mint ever since I remember, that the Mint never stands still.

The Queens Assaymaster is no cheque upon the Officers of the Mint but they are a cheque upon him. For he has no Trial piece of his own but performs his assays by the Wardens trial piece in the presence of the Warden Master & Comptroller who are to see that his Assays be done with skill & fidelity. The Warden & Comptroller are present in behalf of the Queen & her people & the Master in his own behalf & the Assaymaster is only a manual Operator & by Act of Parliament ought to be an indifferent person between both parties, & to attend weekly for determining all controversies which may arise between the Merchants & the Master about the valuation of the Bullion imported. He is also to try the new money before delivery in the presence of the said officers. And this is all the duty imposed on him by the Crown.

The Master receives the Merchants bullion by his own Assays made by his own Trial piece & is allowed 60^l per annum for an Assayer. But it is long since grown into custome for the Master to trust the Queens Assaymaster. And this seems to have been done partly because 7-^{li} is too little to maintain a responsible creditable Assayer, & partly for avoiding dispute with the Merchant who may reckon the Assays of the Queens Assayer more satisfactory.

Since the last trial of the Pix there has not been any dispute between the Merchant & the Master. They all acquiesce in his Assays, & are allowed & desired to see the Assays as often as they please. But if any Merchant should complain & demand a **{legal}** trial by the Queens sworn Assaymaster, the receipt of Bullion for feate of undue preference must stop till the assay be performed.

So then it was very proper for the Lord High Treasurer to refer to the Officers of her Majestys Mint the examination or trial of the candidates for the Assaymasters place, they being legal judges of the truth & fidelity of all his assays & the approbation of both parties between whom he is to be an indifferent person, being included in their Report.

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When Mr Brattel & Mr Oadham had a comparative Trial.

Report of the Officers.

The Warden & Comptroller are cheques upon the Master & all three are cheques upon the Queens Assaymaster. And this Assaymaster is only a manual operator who is to perform all his Assays in the presence of the said three Officers with skill & fidelity, they being judges thereof, the Warden & Comptroller in behalf of the Queen & her people & the Master in his own behalf And therefore it was very right in the Lord High Treasurer to refer the Petitioners for the Assaymasters place to a trial before the said Officers & their report is the joynt report of both parties between whom the Assaymaster is to act as an indifferent person. For by the statute of Hen VI c he ought to be an indifferent person between the Master & the Merchants & to attend weekly for dedicing all controversies between them about the valuation of their bullion. But no such controversies have arisen since the death of the late Assaymaster, the Merchants being satisfied with the Masters Assays, & being allowed & invited to see them himself whenever he pleases. By which means his credit of the Mint at present is very good. And for preserving the same & thereby encouraging the coinage & avoyding the trouble of controversies with Importers its the interest as well as the duty of the Officers of the Mint to give their opinion faithfully in favour of the best Assayers.
