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RUSSIAN EMPIRE'S TIMBER TRADE POLICY IN NARVA DURING 1720s–1750s

**ПОЛИТИКА РОССИЙСКОЙ ИМПЕРИИ В СФЕРЕ ТОРГОВЛИ ЛЕСОМ
В НАРВЕ В 1720–1750-е гг.**

Аннотация: В статье анализируется политика российского правительства в первой половине XVIII в. относительно рубки и экспорта леса, в частности, в связи с торговлей в Нарве. Кроме того, мы рассматриваем, кто конкретно из нарвских купцов занимался торговлей лесом и каков был вклад каждого из них. После того, как в начале XVIII в. территория современной Эстонии была завоевана российским государством, власти стремились развивать торговлю Санкт-Петербурга. С целью исключить конкуренцию других городов был издан указ «О трактах» (1721), который ограничил «хинтерланд» портовых городов, в том числе и эстонских. Доставлять товары для экспорта в Нарву можно было только из Псковской провинции. Власти разрешили нарвским купцам рубить росший по берегам р. Луги и её притоков сосновый и еловый лес и вывозить его за границу. Поскольку «хинтерланд» Нарвы был сильно ограничен, торговля лесом в Нарве достигла обширных масштабов. Поэтому в 1736 г. был введён лимит на рубку и экспорт леса (с целью сохранения лесов, пригодных для кораблестроения). Однако интенсивность вырубki осталась довольно высокой, и через десять лет нарвляне вырубили почти все леса, росшие вдоль берегов Луги. Поэтому в 1745 г. сенат аннулировал разрешение на рубку леса в этом районе, заменив его разрешением на рубку в Самерской волости. Тем не менее нарвские купцы продолжили превышать установленные нормы и рубить лес в запрещённых местах. В итоге власти в 1754 г. наложили запрет на экспорт леса из Нарвы.

Keywords / Ключевые слова: Estonia, Russia, Narva, Saint Petersburg, Novgorodskaja guberniia, the Narva river, the Luga river, forests, felling of trees, timber, trade, timber traders, sawmills, forest protection, government institutions, magistrates / Эстония, Россия, Нарва, Санкт-Петербург, Новгородская губерния, река Нарва, река Луга, лес, рубка, торговля, торговцы лесом, лесопильные мельницы, охрана лесов, органы государственной власти, магистраты

The founding of Russian Empire's new capital Saint Petersburg in 1703 and the conquering of Narva in 1704 led to the change of the importance of Narva in the trade between Russia and Western Europe. By founding Saint Petersburg, Peter I aimed to direct Russian foreign trade from the White Sea to the Baltic Sea. A number of ukases¹ were issued to divert traders from Arkhangelsk to Saint Petersburg and to forbid the transport of certain goods to Arkhangelsk. At the same time, the advantages of Saint Petersburg and the Baltic Sea in general were shorter routes and better climatic conditions. Travelling to

¹ English equivalents are edicts and decrees.

Arkhangelsk and back may have taken up to four months. Ships from Western Europe may have visited Saint Petersburg two times a year and ships from ports on the shores of Baltic Sea even three times a year. At the same time, Arkhangelsk could be visited only once a year.²

The new authorities wanted to develop trade in Saint Petersburg and, therefore, a number of ukases were issued to limit the trading activities of other towns, including Narva. The hinterland of Narva was reduced and only traders from Pskov were allowed to travel there. Nevertheless, trading in Narva was kept afloat as ships from Western Europe continued to travel there. Trading in Narva continued to develop and by the end of the 1730s, it achieved fourth place in Russian foreign trade after Saint Petersburg, Riga and Arkhangelsk.³ The middle of the century saw a sharp decline of ships sailing to Narva. This was especially the case for ships departing beyond the Sound. When in 1755, 170 ships set sail from Narva and sailed through the Sound, the corresponding numbers in 1756 and 1757 were 27 and 20 respectively.⁴ Such a decline was related to the export prohibition of an important trade article of the town — timber materials.

The timber trade under Swedish rule was addressed in the works of Arnold Soom,⁵ Helmut Piirimäe⁶ and Enn Küng.⁷ Alexei Semionov⁸ also touched upon the timber trade topic of eighteenth-century Narva, but he mostly focused on Saint Petersburg and Arkhangelsk and the timber trade in Narva remained in the background in his work. Pavel Kosakevich has published excerpts of ukases related to the timber trade in his study and has discussed the prohibition of timber export.⁹ At the same time, he does not present

² Georgii Nekrasov, *Vneshniaia torgovlia Rossii cherez Revel'skii port v 1721–1756 gg.* [The international trade of Russia through the port of Revel] (Moscow: Nauka, 1984), 38,70; Viktor Zakharov, *Zapadnoevropeiskie kuptsy v Rossiiskoi torgovle XVIII veka* [West-European merchants in Russian trade of the eighteenth century] (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1996), 104.

³ Andrei Shipilov, *Torgovlia, transport i sviaz' v Rossii v pervoi poloviny XVIII veka* [Trade, transport, and communication in Russia in the first half of the eighteenth century] (Voronezh, VGPU, 2008), 15.

⁴ Nina Ellinger Bang and Knud Korst, eds., *Tabeller over Skibsfart og Varetransport Gennem Øresund 1661–1783 og gennem Storrebaelt 1701–1748* [The tables on maritime shipping and transport of goods via the Øresund in 1661–1783 and via Storrebaelt 1701–1748], vol. 1, *Tabeller over Skibsfarten* [Tables on maritime shipping] (København: Gyldendalske Boghandel Nordisk Forlag — Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1930), 150–195 and 95–105.

⁵ Arnold Soom, “Narva metsakaubandus ja metsatööstus XVII sajandi lõpul” [„The timber trade and timber industry of Narva at the end of the seventeenth century“], *Ajalooline Ajakiri*, no. 2 (1940): 57–72.

⁶ Helmut Piirimäe, “Sostav, ob”em i raspredelenie russkogo vyvoza v 1661-1700 godakh cherez Shvedskie vladeniia v Pribaltike na primere torgovli g. Narvy” [„Specification, volume, and distribution of Russian export during Swedish rule in the Baltic in 1661-1700 on the example of the trade of Narva“], in *Skandinavskii sbornik*, vol. V, ed. G. Mosberg (Tallinn: Ëstonskoe gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1962), 34–93.

⁷ Enn Küng, “Manufaktuuriettevõtlastest ja veskitest Narva jõel 17. saj. II poolel” [“Plants and mills in the Narva-Luuga watershed in the second half of the seventeenth century”], *Tuna*, no. 3 (2009): 12–33; Enn Küng, „Russkaia torgovlia lesom v Narve v kontse 17 veka“ [“The Russian timber trade in Narva at the end of the seventeenth century”], in *Sudby slavianstva i ekbo Griunvalda. Vybor puti russkimi zemliami i narodami Vostochnoi Evropy v Srednie veka i rannee Novoe vremia (k 600-letiiu bitny pri Griunvalde / Tannenberge)*, ed. Alexander Filiushkin (St. Petersburg: Liubavich, 2010), 161–166.

⁸ Alexei Semionov, *Izuchenie istoricheskikh svedenii o rossiiskoi torgovle i promyshlennosti* [The study of historical data on Russian trade and industry] (St. Petersburg: Tipografia I. Glazunova i Ko, 1859).

⁹ Pavel Kozakevich, *Gorod Narva s morskim ego reidom i rekoiu Narovoiu* [The City of Narva with its marine road and the river Narva] (St. Petersburg: Tipografia Morskogo ministerstva v Glavnom Admiralteistve, 1878).

statistical data on the timber trade in Narva nor on the receipt of customs duties. Jake Knoppers¹⁰ has studied the export of timber from Narva to the towns of the Netherlands and has presented plenty of statistical data and has analysed it in an international context; however, his work lacks data on ship transport between Narva and other Russian-owned trading towns and the towns in the Netherlands. Among contemporary Estonian authors, Mati Laur¹¹ and the author of this article¹² have somewhat discussed the timber trade in Narva.

The purpose of this article is to analyse the policy of the Russian government concerning timber felling and export of timber and its implementation in Narva in greater detail. Furthermore, the article will scrutinize who were the Narva traders involved in the timber trade, what were their shares in the timber trade and how large were the customs duties received from timber export. The study focuses on the period from year 1720 to the middle of the 1750s.

The sources include the archival fonds of Narva Magistrate and Narva Customs Office in the National Archives of Estonia (Tartu).¹³ The archival fond of Narva Magistrate is used for storing various ukases issued by the central government to the Narva Town Council concerning not only the timber trade, but also materials on the town's income arising from the timber trade. The materials of Narva Customs Office include ukases issued by the Czar, Senate, Collegium of Commerce and Admiralty Board concerning the timber trade and correspondence of the garrison office to the customs office. The ukases of the Czar and the Senate concerning the timber trade and timber export tariffs have also been published in the complete collection of the laws of the Russian Empire.¹⁴ In addition, Mikhail Chulkov has published ukases of the Russian Collegium of Commerce concerning the Narva timber trade.¹⁵ The majority of timber exported from Narva was sent to Western Europe, *i.e.*, through the Danish straits. Therefore, the materials of the customs office at the Sound published by Nina Ellinger Bang and Knud Korst are also important for this article.¹⁶ The materials of the Sound toll

¹⁰ Jake Knoppers, *Dutch Trade with Russia from the Time of Peter I to Alexander I. A Quantitative Study in Eighteenth Century Shipping*, 3 vols. (Montreal: Interuniversity Centre for European Studies, 1976).

¹¹ Mati Laur, *Eesti ala valitsemine 18. sajandil (1710–1783)* [*The governance of the territory of Estonia in the eighteenth century (1710–1783)*] (Tartu: Eesti Ajalooarhiiv, 2000); Mati Laur, Tõnu Tannberg and Helmut Piirimäe, *Eesti Ajalugu IV: Põhjasõjast pärisorjuse kaotamiseni* [*History of Estonia IV: from the Great Northern War to the abolition of serfdom*] (Tartu: Ilmamaa, 2003).

¹² Vadim Svjatkovski, “Vene tsaaririigi seadusandlus Narva kaubanduse küsimuses 1704–1766” [Legislation of the Tsardom of Russia in the Narva Trade Question 1704–1766] (Master thesis, Tallinna Ülikool, 2016).

¹³ National Archives of Estonia — *Rahvusarhiiv* (Tartu) (RA, EAA), fund (fond) 1646; RA, EAA, f. 644.

¹⁴ *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii. Sobranie pervoe: s 1649 po 12 dekabria 1825 g.* [*Complete collection of laws of the Russian Empire. The first collection: since 1649 to December 12, 1825*] (PSZ), 45 vols. (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia II Otd. Ego Imp. Vel. Kantseliarii, 1830).

¹⁵ Mikhail Chulkov, *Istoricheskoe opisanie rossiiskoi kommertsii pri vsekh portakh i granitsakh ot drevnikh vremen do nyne nastoiashchago i vsekh preimushchestvennykh uzakonenii po onoi gosudaria imperatora Petra Velikago i nyne blagopoluchno tsarstvuiushchei gosudaryni imperatritsy Ekateriny Velikiia* [*Historical description of Russian commerce Historical description of Russian commerce at all ports and borders...*], vol. 5, book 2 (Moscow: Universitetskaiia tipografiia, u N. Novikova, 1786).

¹⁶ Bang og Korst, *Tabeller over Skibsfart og Varetransport...* [*The tables on maritime shipping and transport...*], 150–195.

were thoroughly studied under the supervision of Jan Willem Veluwenkamp and Siem van der Woude from 2009 to 2017. As a result of several years of work a digital data base “Sonttolregisters online” (short: STR online) was compiled. The data base includes practically all data, which are in the books of Sound toll taking.¹⁷

Attitude of the Russian authorities to timber felling and its regulation in the first half of the eighteenth century

The first attempts to export timber from Russia were performed in the first half of the seventeenth century when the Russian authorities issued a timber export permit in 1631 to the Dutch. Later, the Dutch were given also other felling permits.¹⁸ This felling permit was issued for them only for Arkhangelsk, but timber felled in Russia was also exported from Swedish-owned Narva at the end of the seventeenth century. By the second half of seventeenth century, the exports from Narva included timber and products obtained by the treatment of timber: potash and tar. With regards to timber materials, the export of larger amounts of timber started only during the 1670s and the majority of the materials was sent to the Netherlands, amounting to 71% of the timber export of Narva. 15% of the timber was exported to England and Lübeck. The majority of the exported timber originated from Russia; whereby its export increased in spite of the prohibition to export it to Swedish territory. At the same time, ship-building accelerated in Western Europe at the end of the seventeenth century and this increased the demand for larger amounts of timber imported from Russia.¹⁹ Due to the Great Northern War (1700–1721), the timber trade in Narva halted for more than a decade and was restored only at the end of the second decade of the eighteenth century.

Although the Great Northern War stopped the timber export from Narva; the timber trade and export from Russia were still partially permitted during the first years of the eighteenth century as this allowed customs revenue to enter the state treasury. The authorities even issued special ukases which prohibited local authorities from hindering the export of timber products and materials. For example, Peter the Great ordered on 16th March 1717 the governor of Riga, Mikhail Golitsyn, to allow the Riga traders to export potash, tar and spars originating from Poland and elsewhere and to act just like what had been allowed during the Swedish rule.²⁰ Export duties of timber and timber materials were collected in Russia according to the new commercial regulations of

¹⁷ Sound toll registers online, <http://www.soundtoll.nl/index.php/nl/welkom> (accessed April 20, 2021).

¹⁸ *Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo Istoricheskogo Obschtschestva* [Collection of the Imperial Russian Historical Society] (RIO), vol. 116 (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk, 1902), 244; Mikhail Belov, “Rossiia i Gollandiia v poslednei chetverti XVII veka” [“Russian and the Netherlands in the last quarter of the seventeenth century”], in *Mezhdunarodnye sviazi Rossii v XVII–XVIII vekakh. (Ekonomika, poliitika i kul'tura)*, ed. Liubomir Beskrovnyi (Moscow: Nauka, 1966), 72.

¹⁹ Piirimäe, “Sostav, ob’em i raspredelenie russkogo vyvoza...” [“Specification, volume, and distribution of Russian export”], 74–78; Soom, “Narva metsakaubandus ja metsatööstus...” [“The timber trade and timber Industry”], 61–63; Kung, “Manufaktuuriettevõtlustest ja veskitest” [“Manufactory enterprises and mills”], 20–21, 33.

²⁰ *Sbornik materialov i statei po istorii Pribaltiiskogo kraia* [The collection of materials and articles on the history of the Baltic region], vol. 3, no. 96, ed. Evgraf Cheshikhin (Riga: A. Lipinski, 1880), 435–436.

1667.²¹ Already in 1719, the export duties of spars were raised by adding an additional customs duty (*pribavochnuiu poshlinu*) based on the diameter of the spar with 1/8 of a thaler for the thinnest up to 35 thalers for the thickest. However, these duties applied to inland Russian towns and did not apply to areas conquered from Sweden, including Narva, where previous customs tariffs were valid.²²

In spite of the permission to export timber, the authorities took a number of steps to limit timber felling quotas and to prohibit the felling of timber suitable for ship-building. The ukase from 1703 ordered to record all forests which were positioned 50 versts²³ from the banks of major rivers and 20 versts from tributaries. The same ukase prohibited the felling of oaks, pines, elms, and larches which were thicker than 12 vershoks²⁴ at felling height. Illegal felling of oak and larger amounts of forest wood was a capital offence; the illegal felling of other trees resulted in a fine of 10 roubles per each felled tree.²⁵ In 1705, the sanctions were relieved: capital punishment now only applied to felling of trees under protection. Forced labour followed the felling of an oak. The fine for felling a tree elsewhere was still 10 roubles.²⁶ However, violations of ukases continued, and the authorities continued to issue ukases prohibiting the felling of trees suitable for ship-building. The ukase from 1715 prohibited the felling of oaks, elms, pines, ashes and lindens in Ingria. A violation of the ukase was to be punished by a fine and corporal punishment. In addition, it became the task of the Ingrian District Administrator (*landrat*) to oblige the landlords to record all the forests they owned.²⁷ The ukase issued on 17th June 1719 repeated the prohibition of felling of trees suitable for ship-building which were thicker than 12 vershoks and were located 50 versts from major rivers and 20 versts from tributaries.²⁸ The fine for illegal felling was 15 roubles for an oak and 10 roubles for other tree species. The punishments for large-scale felling were the tearing of nostrils²⁹ and forced labour. If someone wanted to fell the trees for their own livelihood, then the Admiralty Board should be approached for permission. Only those trees not suitable for ship-building, could be felled within the limits of the permit. It becomes evident from the ukase that the supervision of forests and their maintenance was the task of the Admiralty. The latter was obliged to assign forest supervisors whose task was to mark the trees for

²¹ *Sobranie gosudarstvennykh gramot i dogovorov, khraniashchikhsia v Gosudarstvennoi kollegii inostrannykh del* [Collection of state certificates and treaties, stored in the state collegium of foreign affairs], part 4, ed. Nikolai Rumiantsev and Alexei Malinovskii (Moscow: Tipografiia Selivanovskogo, 1826), no. 55 (07.05.1667), 192, 198; PSZ, vol. 3, no. 1583 (12.05.1697).

²² PSZ, vol. 5, no. 3428 (01.10.1719).

²³ One verst equalled about 1.06 kilometres. 50 and 20 versts corresponded to 53.34 and 21.34 kilometres, respectively.

²⁴ One vershok equalled about 4.44 centimetres. 12 vershoks corresponded to 53.34 centimetres.

²⁵ PSZ, vol. 4, no. 1950 (19.11.1703).

²⁶ In addition to the peasants' right to fell trees required for the making of sledges, carriages and their axes, they were allowed to fell trees suitable for ship-building in dedicated forests. PSZ, vol.4, no. 2017 (19.01.1705).

²⁷ PSZ, vol. 5, no. 2895 (25.03.1715).

²⁸ Oak, pine, maple and elm.

²⁹ *'Vyrezav nozdri ssylat' na katorgu.'*

falling.³⁰ The abovementioned ukases show that the government's attitude towards forest felling changed in less than 20 years. The initial strict regulations, which almost completely forbade the felling of trees suitable for ship-building by threats of capital punishment, were replaced with less strict regulations, which permitted to fell trees for ship-building under certain special conditions. Under wartime conditions, when ship-building developed quickly in Russia, including the Baltic Sea region, the authorities considered it necessary to maintain the trees needed for the battle fleet. Nevertheless, the ukases were continuously violated as the same timber species were needed in households. Soon it was discovered that not all trees under protection were suitable for ship-building. These reasons together with numerous petitions led to gradual concessions by the authorities.

Although the felling of oak trees became again forbidden in areas near Saint Petersburg in 1720, lindens could be felled all over the country from the beginning of the following year. The ukase from 23rd February 1721 permitted Russian and foreign traders to fell spars in dedicated areas in the Novgorod province and to export them through the ports on the Baltic Sea (excluding Riga) and to pay customs using thalers. The dimensions of the spars needed to be the following: length up to 65 feet,³¹ at the height of 3 fathoms³² the width up to 20 inches³³ and the width of the upper part up to 12 inches. Every tenth tree was to be given to the Admiralty.³⁴ During the next few years, the authorities collected spars from ports on the Baltic Sea and sent them to the Admiralty. The traders in Riga were paid a certain amount for them, but this did not apply to Narva.³⁵ At the same time, additional measures were taken to protect the forests. The inscribed ukase from 17th January 1722 obliged the Admiralty Board to assign forest supervisors to all areas with forests suitable for ship-building. To fulfil the Czar's ukase, the Admiralty Board issued instructions to forest supervisors, based on previous ukases, on 14th April 1722. Its first and second clause ordered all governors and voivodes to write down all forests under protection and to forward the prepared documents to the Admiralty Board. The appointed persons—preferably noblemen—were to be issued a stamp which was for marking all trees which could be felled. The sixth clause obliged the supervisors to monitor the illegal felling of trees in forests under state protection and to inform the Admiralty Board immediately of illegal felling. The seventh clause confirmed yet again the areas in which the felling of trees was prohibited. The eighth, ninth and tenth clause explained the conditions for felling trees under protection. The last or the twelfth clause stipulated the punishments for illegal felling. These were the same as stipulated by the ukase from 17th June 1719.³⁶ Parallel to the establishing of forest supervisors, the positions

³⁰ RA, EAA, f. 1646, inventory (nimistu) 1, file (säilik) 40, folio (lehed) 61–62.

³¹ One foot equalled about 0.30 metres. 65 feet corresponded to 19.81 metres.

³² One fathom equalled about 2.13 metres and three fathoms corresponded to about 6.40 metres.

³³ One inch equalled 2.54 centimetres. 20 inches corresponded to 50.8 centimetres.

³⁴ PSZ, vol. 6, no. 3646 (22.09.1720), no. 3719 (26.01.1721), and no. 3744 (23.02.1721).

³⁵ Evgeniia M. Lupanova, "Èkonomicheskaia politika v sfere ekspluatatsii lesov v Pribaltike v pervoi polovine XVIII v." ["Economic policy in the field of forest exploitation in the Baltic States of the first half of the eighteenth century"], *Vestnik Kemerovskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*, no. 21(3) (2019): 616.

³⁶ PSZ, vol. 6, no. 3905 (09.02.1722) and no. 3967 (14.04.1722).

of forest managers (*val'dmeister*) and inferior forest managers (*unterval'dmeister*) were created in Saint Petersburg, Novgorod, Moscow and other cities on 6th April 1722. Forest managers were subordinate to higher forest managers (*oberval'dmeister*) and the whole institution was subordinated to the Admiralty Board.³⁷

Timber Felling Permits of Narvians

Forest export from Narva began in the first years after the inhabitants returned to their hometown in 1714. A query by Narva's Commandant (*komendant*) Mikhail Sukhotin reveals that in 1718³⁸ a peasant named Grigorii Mikhailov from the Lozhgolovo village in the Samro district (*Samerskaia volost'*) rafted 114 logs with lengths of four and a half fathoms³⁹ from the Luga River headwaters to Narva and sold them to the Narva citizen William Kettlewell. In spring of the same year, G. Mikhailov together with his co-villagers and peasant Vasilii Lavrent'ev from the Porkhovo village (*derevni Porkhova*) in Iamburg uezd brought from the headwaters of Luga River and Narva River to the mouth of the Narva River a total of 1,500 logs four to five fathoms long,⁴⁰ 10,000 battens, 100 rough-hewn boards, 100 stumps and 24 thick spars with a diameter of 12 vershoks and 7 vershoks at the top.⁴¹ They sold the goods to the Narva tradesman Jürgen Steffens. In June, the abovementioned peasants delivered to J. Steffens various timber materials from the districts of Novgorod uezd as well as from the Samro district with the total value of 198 roubles.⁴² About a month later, V. Lavrent'ev delivered to J. Steffens one hundred hewn boards with lengths of four and five fathoms. According to the agreement, J. Steffens was to pay the customs duty for the material. Therefore, the peasants did not declare the goods to the customs, which led to their arrest and interrogation. Commandant Sukhotin wanted to know whether J. Steffens had paid the prescribed customs duties.⁴³

As it becomes evident from Sukhotin's letter to the Narva Magistrate on the 5th November 1720, the Narvians asked for felling permits. In his letter, Sukhotin drew the attention of the Magistrate to the ukases of 1719 and 20th July 1720, which prohibited felling.⁴⁴ However, in 1721, the opinion of the authorities changed and, proceeding from the interest of the state treasury and aiming to stimulate trading in Narva, the citizens of Narva were allowed to export timber starting from 26th January 1721. The dimensions of the approved trees were the following: length 18–30 feet and thickness 8–10 vershoks. The felling area for Narvians were the counties of Staraiia Russa, Novgorod

³⁷ PSZ, vol. 6, no. 3941 (06.04.1722).

³⁸ In Russian text the year was 1716.

³⁹ 8.53 and 12.8 meters, respectively.

⁴⁰ 8.53 and 10.67 metres, respectively.

⁴¹ 53.34 and 31.11 centimetres, respectively.

⁴² 1000 beams, 4000 battens and 100 square cords of timber.

⁴³ RA, EAA, f. 1646, inv. 1, file 40, fol. 20–21.

⁴⁴ RA, EAA, f. 1646, inv.1, file 40, fol. 89.

and Iamburg. Narvians were prohibited to fell spars with lengths between 65–96 feet, diameter of 20–25 inches and diameter of 12–14 inches in the upper part.⁴⁵ In spite of the prohibition from 13th March 1722 on the felling of trees which could be used as spars, the citizens of Narva were confirmed to be granted a timber felling permit. Whereby the dimensions of trees remained the same.⁴⁶ The felled trees were rafted to the mouth of the Narva River via the Pliussa (spelled *Pljussa* in Estonian, *Плюсса* in Russian) River or Luga and Rosson' River.⁴⁷ On 26th November 1722, the Admiralty Board forbade the felling of forest seven versts from the shore between Narva and Saint Petersburg.⁴⁸



Map 1. The mouth of the Narva River. The trees felled along the banks of the Luga River was rafted to the mouth of the Narva River via Rosson' River, where it was loaded onto ships. (RA, EAA, f. 1646, inv. 1, file 2664)

In order to stimulate the town's trade, the ukase from 1723 allowed the felling of spars which grew on the banks of the Luga River and Pliussa River and which were

⁴⁵ 5.48–9.14 metres and 35.56 and 44.45 centimetres, respectively.

⁴⁶ PSZ, vol. 6, no. 3918 (13.03.1722).

⁴⁷ Kozakevich, *Gorod Narva s morskim ego reidom...* [The City of Narva with its marine road...], 32.

⁴⁸ Chulkov, *Istoricheskoe opisaniye rossijskoi kommertsii...* [The historical description of Russian commerce...], vol. 4, book 1, 527–528.

higher than 65 feet, had a diameter of 20 inches at three feet high and had a diameter of up to 12 inches in the upper part.⁴⁹ The tariffs from 31st January 1724 prescribed higher export duties for the export of spars with a diameter of 20–30 inches. Narva timber traders led by Andreas Arps referred to the abovementioned measures and asked also for permission to export spars with diameter 20–30 inches. The Senate's ukase from 13th July 1731 gave Narva traders the right to export such spars on the condition that every tenth spar was given to the Collegium of Commerce and customs duties paid according to the tariff of 1724. This became evident from the ukase sent to the Narva customs administrator Lucas Hermann Willers and inspector Stepan Korovin on 19th July 1731.⁵⁰

As J. Knoppers claims, forest was one of the main export articles of the Russian state and the whole Baltic Sea region. Up to 50% of the timber materials exported from the Russian ports on the Baltic Sea (excluding Vyborg and Fredrikshamn) until the middle of the eighteenth century were exported from Narva through the Danish straits. The share of trade through Narva was at a peak during the 1720s, when it amounted to 94%. The following years saw the persistent decline of Narva's share. While during the 1740s, Narva exported 77.62% of timber, in 1755 it fell to 55.61% due to prohibition of timber export. During the 1760s, when export was allowed once again, Narva's share did not reach even 40%. In comparison with Narva, the figures of Saint Petersburg, Riga and other ports in Estonia and Livonia were minimal; however, their share increased over time while the share of Narva decreased.⁵¹

Limitations on Timber Export

The timber trade in Narva soared so fast that the government establishments started setting limitations in the middle of the 1730s. On the one hand, the authorities wanted to sustain forests suitable for ship-building, on the other hand, the timber export increased the price of timber materials in Narva and this hindered the provision of building materials. As can be seen from Table 1, timber export from Narva increased 66% at least during 1728–1731.⁵²

⁴⁹ PSZ, vol. 7, no. 4242 (05.05.1723) and no. 4315 (30.09.1723).

⁵⁰ RA, EAA, f. 644, inv.1, file 2. fol. 367–368.

⁵¹ Knoppers, *Dutch trade with Russia...*, 175–176 (Knoppers used the Sound Toll registers. However, these group Vyborg and Fredrikshamn into the same group with Finnish ports. The share of Vyborg and Fredrikshamn was 25% of the timber export during the 1720s and it increased in time. If these towns would have been grouped into the same group with other Russian ports on the Baltic Sea, the share of Narva would have been lower).

⁵² PSZ, vol. 8, no. 6029 (20.04.1732).

Table 1. Timber export 1728–1731

Year	Quantity of logs	Quantity of battens
1728	113,021	164,433
1729	87,329	122,412
1730	128,643	129,358
1731	169,511	248,144

Source: PSZ, vol. 8, no. 6029 (20.04.1732)

The motive for the limitations was a complaint by sawmill owners Anna Regina Cramer and Carl Peter Rieck that Narva traders felled trees on the banks of the Pliussa River in Novgorod province in spite of the fact that the forest was meant for Narva's fortification and construction works and for sawmills. The matter was investigated and on 20th July 1734, the Senate obliged the Collegium of Commerce to examine the amounts of timber exported from Narva during 1721–1734. The Admiralty Board sent Lieutenant Koshelev to investigate which forests grew on the banks of the Pliussa and Luga Rivers and how much had been felled. All felling was forbidden while the investigation was in progress. According to investigation reports prepared by the Collegium of Commerce and office of the Narva garrison, a total of 1,020,994 beams and spars were exported abroad during the years 1728–1734 and a total of 1,126,183 trees were felled during 1722–1734. Whereas the number of trees felled on the banks of the Luga River and Pliussa River and prepared for rafting to Narva was 3,566,000. The number of unfelled trees according to Koshelev was 3,708,768.⁵³ Only in 1731, 235,211 timber items and 2,666 square cords of firewood were rafted on the Luga River and Rosson' River to the mouth of Narva River (see Table 2).⁵⁴

Table 2. Timber rafted to the mouth of the Narva River via Luga River and Rosson' River in 1731

Type of forest and timber	Pieces
Spars	684
Yard	1,919
Pine beams	107,786
Fir beams	8,810
Battens	102,970
Different types of pine and fir (mixed timber)	13,042
Total	235,211
Firewood	2,666 square cords

Source: RA, EAA, f. 644, inv.1, file 6, fol. 97–98

⁵³ At the same time, it becomes evident from the report by the Narva commandant Alexander Golenishchev-Kutuzov that forests had been felled up to 100 versts from Narva. (Chulkov, *Istoricheskoe opisanie rossiiskoi komertsii...* [The historical description of Russian commerce...], vol. 5, book 2, 147–148, 161).

⁵⁴ RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 6, fol. 97–98.

Proceeding from the manifest of the preservation of forests from 11th March 1732⁵⁵, the War Collegium recommended the Senate to prohibit the citizens of Narva from felling forest on the Pliussa River in Novgorod Province. The recommendation was implemented on 28th August 1735. An ukase by Anna of Russia forbade the forest felling on the Pliussa River without the permission of the Admiralty Board. An exception was made to the owners of sawmills; however, they were allowed to fell only as much timber as they could saw in a year.⁵⁶

The Senate's ukase from 12th February 1736 allowed the sawmill owners to fell 10,000 trees that year. In order to avoid overfelling, the Admiralty Board and Collegium of Commerce were to perform a test to show how much timber each sawmill could saw.⁵⁷ Empress Anne of Russia ukase from 14th May of the same year and Senate's ukase from 21st May allowed Anna Regina Cramer to fell 27,000 trees a year on the banks of the Narva River and Pliussa River. Export of unsawn timber was prohibited to her and other sawmill owners. The same ukase gave Narva timber traders, whose number was limited to 29 persons by reference to an alleged regulation from 1687, the right to fell 72,000 pines and 50,000 firs in a year on the banks of the Luga River and its tributaries. Spars could not be felled. As there was no timber-sawing in the sawmill of Anna Cramer from June 1735 to May 1736, she was exempted from the rent for the year 1735.⁵⁸

Despite the fact that the forest growing on the banks of the Narva River and Pliussa River was given over for felling to the owners of sawmills, Narva timber traders continued felling on the banks of the Narva River. Forest felling and sales were allowed to the landlords of the Governorate of Estland during the Swedish rule in 1664. They were allowed to raft felled trees on the Narva River. By taking advantage of the abovementioned allowance, Narva traders began felling forest on the Estonian side of the Narva River again in 1736. Under the lead of Carl Georg Schwartz, trees were bought from the forests belonging to the landlords in the Governorate of Estland. The Senate issued an ukase on 2nd April 1736 to Narva Garrison Office which gave permission for the rafting of the abovementioned timber on the Narva River. Such a decision was opposed by the owners of the sawmills. With reference to the resolution from 14th May 1736, Anna Cramer submitted a petition to the Narva Garrison Office and asked to prohibit felling to timber traders for the purposes of export from the Governorate of Estland. Schwartz and partners explained to the office that no trees have been felled in prohibited areas and asked for permission to continue rafting them in the year 1737. The Garrison Office sent

⁵⁵ The first clause of the manifest confirmed that trees suitable for ship-building could be felled on the Luga and Pliussa rivers only upon the permit of the Admiralty Board, the governors, the voivodes and forest supervisors: PSZ, vol. 8, no. 6049 (11.03.1732).

⁵⁶ Chulkov, *Istoricheskoe opisanie rossijskoi kommertsii...* [*The historical description of Russian commerce...*], vol. 5, book 5, 144–149, 156.

⁵⁷ Chulkov, *Istoricheskoe opisanie rossijskoi kommertsii...* [*The historical description of Russian commerce...*], vol. 5, book 2, 192.

⁵⁸ PSZ, vol. 9, no. 6967 (21.05.1736); Chulkov, *Istoricheskoe opisanie rossijskoi kommertsii...* [*The historical description of Russian commerce...*], vol. 5, book 2, 197; Pavel Kozakevich, "Gorod Narva s morskim ego reidom i rekoju Narvoiu" ["The City of Narva with its marine road and the river Narva"], *Morskoi sbornik*, vol. 167, no. 7 (1878): 65–98 (93).

Lieutenant Harlamov to inspect the trees and Harlamov reported that 8,000 trees had been felled and prepared on the banks of Lake Peipus and 6,310 trees had been prepared on the banks of the Narva River for rafting on the Narva River. Harlamov failed to identify the number of trees felled. The Garrison Office asked for a Senate resolution whether to allow rafting of timber on the Narva River in the year 1737. Burgomaster of justice (*instits-biurgermeister*) Ernst Friedrich Krompein, who supported the Narva timber traders, explained in the Senate that ships came to pick up the timber and export prohibition would have caused great losses to the traders. The Senate's ukase from 11th May 1737 allowed rafting the trees that had already been felled on the Narva River. Henceforward the felling of forest was forbidden for Narva traders in the Governorate of Estland.⁵⁹ As the Narva traders did not succeed in transporting trees bought from the landlords of the Governorate of Estland during 1737, the landlords asked for permission to raft the trees on the Narva River during 1738 to deliver them to Narva traders. The matter was discussed in the Senate, from where it was sent to the Empress's office on 7th July 1738. Based on the Empress's resolution, the Senate sent an ukase on 27th July 1738 to Narva Garrison Office with the order to deliver the trees to the traders. The trees were to be included in the limit of the year 1738. If the permitted number of trees had already been felled during 1738, then the trees felled in the Governorate of Estland were to be counted towards the limit of the year 1739.⁶⁰ In spite of the prohibition, the landlords of the Governorate of Estland continued to sell forest to the Narva traders. The felled trees were rafted from Narva waterfalls to the mouth of the river for loading onto ships. Narva Garrison Office's reply to the Narva port customs authority shows that also this time the timber purchase was organised by Carl Georg Schwartz.⁶¹ (See Table 3.)

Table 3. Pine beams felled on the banks of the Narva River and sold to Narva timber traders in 1738

Trader	Pieces
Carl Georg Schwartz and Joachim Johann Sutthoff	7,963
Hans Otto Sutthoff	524
Lorenz Cramer	617
Total	9,104

Source: RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 7, fol. 86

The ukases of 1737 and 1738 reduced significantly the privileges given to the landlords in 1664 and confirmed by the Russian authorities. Now they were allowed to sell forest timber only to the owners of sawmills or traders originating from the Governorate of Estland. By reserving the forest growing in the Narva River's basin for the construction

⁵⁹ PSZ, vol. 10, no. 7247 (11.05.1737).

⁶⁰ RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 6, fol. 136. Naturally, the office was asked to inspect the trees, to count them and to measure their diameter at felling height.

⁶¹ RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 7, fol. 86.

and fortification works of Narva, the Narva timber traders were not allowed to fell trees in the Narva River basin. This resulted in an oligopolistic situation in which the sawmill owners dictated the price to the forest owners. Certainly, the landlords wanted to escape such a situation and to determine the price themselves. This was also the reason why the landlords continuously violated the prohibiting ukases issued by the Senate.

The number of timber traders was limited to 29 persons in the middle of the 1730s, which was again confirmed in 1740.⁶² Four traders were included in the number of timber traders in 1739–1740 by the Senate's ukase. The Senate's ukase gave them permission to trade with timber and a part of what was already allocated to Narva traders had to be re-allocated to them. Two of them had already started felling trees for export. The ukase ordered the Narva Garrison Office to allow the forwarding of these trees from the forest and to export them to prevent becoming unsuitable for use. The exported timber was to be included within the limit of year 1740. The Office was to monitor together with the port customs authority that the traders would not exceed the annual limit. If someone was to exceed the limit, then the Narva Commandant was to investigate the matter and to send the materials to the Admiralty Board and Senate for decision-making.⁶³

Table 4. Narva timber traders and limits assigned to them in 1739

	Pine, psc	Fir, psc
Annual limit	72,000	50,000
Gerhard Hinrich Arps	3,983	2,767
Carl Georg Schwartz	3,688	2,562
Sebastian Wibbelmann	3,688	2,562
Hans Otto Sutthoff	3,688	2,562
Hermann Johann Strahlborn	3,688	2,562
Hermann Peter Knoop	3,393	2,357
Lorenz Cramer	3,393	2,357
Friedrich Cramer	3 393	2,357
Carl Rautell	3,393	2,357
Joachim Johann Sutthoff	3,393	2,357
Carl Törne	3,393	2,357
Peter Götte	3,393	2,357
Jürgen Heinrich Arps	2,610	1,815
Johann Hermann Königfels	2,610	1,815
Carl Danckwardt	4,383	3,047

⁶² PSZ, vol. 10, no. 7613 (05. 07. 1738); RA, EAA, f. 1646. inv. 1, file 847, fol. 20.

⁶³ RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 7, fol. 100–101; RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 8, no. 39.

Peter Johann Nath	2,030	1,400
Peter Wilhelm Sutthoff	2,030	1,400
Johann Hinrich Holst	3,794	2,636
Christoph Friedrich Lesnau	2,613	1,817
Johann Plomann's widow ⁶⁴	2,361	1,639
Jonas Kiölberg's widow ⁶⁵	2,361	1,639
Thomas Mönning's widow ⁶⁶	2,361	1,639
Samuel Bernhard Linberg's widow ⁶⁷	2,361	1,639
Total	72,000	50,000

Source: RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 7, fol. 82–83

Table 5. Narva timber traders and limits assigned to them in 1740

Traders	Pine, psc	Fir, psc
Gerhard Hinrich Arps, Peter Götte, Jürgen Heinrich Arps, Thomas Mönning's widow (Anna Helena Arps)	9,000	9,000
Carl Georg Schwartz, Joachim Johann Sutthoff	2,700	6,600
Sebastian Wibbelmann, Samuel Bernhard Linberg's widow (Friedericka Wolff)	1,800	6,200
Hans Otto Sutthoff	1,000	1,900
Hermann Johann Strahlborn	1,600	3,000
Hermann Peter Knoop	2,350	3,200
Lorenz Cramer	1,000	2,900
Friedrich Cramer	1,000	1,900
Carl Rautell	1,800	2,100
Johann Plomann's widow (Anna Wichmuth Gnospelius) and Carl Törne	3,052	5,913
Johann Hermann Königfels	1,050	2,850
Jacob Johann Götte, Carl Danckwardt, Peter Johann Nath, Peter Wilhelm Sutthoff, Johann Hinrich Holst, Christoph Friedrich Lesnau, Jacob Seideler, Jean Nicolaus Brasch, Heinrich Benedict Balemann, Johann Balthasar Mende (*each)	1,800*	2,100*
Carl Friedrich Wolff	1,400	1,600
Jonas Kiölberg's widow (Anna Regina Reyer)	1,800	2,000
Total	47,552	70,163
Primarily foreseen annual limit	72,000	50,000

Source: RA, EAA, f. 644, inv.1, file 8, no. 33

⁶⁴ 'Vdovõ Plomanovoi.' According to Erpenbeck it was Anna Wichmuth Gnospelius (1683–1755). (Dirk-Gerd Erpenbeck, *Narvaer Bürger- und Einwohnerbuch. 1704–1840* [The book of citizens and residents of Narva 1704–1840], Quellen und Darstellungen zur Personengeschichte des östlichen Europa 3 (Herne: AGoFF, 2014), 66).

⁶⁵ 'Vdovy Kälberkhovoi.' According to Erpenbeck it was Anna Regina Reyer: Erpenbeck, *Narvaer Bürger...* [The book of citizens...], 65.

⁶⁶ 'Vdovy Meningovoi.' According to Erpenbeck it was Anna Helena Arps: Erpenbeck, *Narvaer Bürger...* [The book of citizens...], 56.

⁶⁷ 'Vdovy Limberkhovoi.' According to Erpenbeck it was Friedericka Wolff: Erpenbeck, *Narvaer Bürger...* [The book of citizens...], 88.

Table 5 shows that Narva forest traders operated both individually and in cooperation. Some of them operated even within family circles.⁶⁸ As of 1740, the largest alliance of traders was formed by Jacob Johann Götte and traders allied with him. 18,000 pine and 21,000 fir trees and materials made thereof were rafted to Jacob Johann Götte and his companions. Their share in the export of timber and timber materials from Narva amounted to 37.85% of the total of pine forests and 29.93% of fir forests. The share of traders who allied with Gerhard Hinrich Arps remained more modest and amounted to 18,000 trees, 18.92% and 12.82% respectively. The share of Johann Plomann's widow and Carl Törne was even smaller. The 3,052 pine and 5,913 fir trees sent to them amounted to 6.41% and 8.42%, respectively. Traders Carl Georg Schwartz and Joachim Johann Sutthoff succeeded in passing the control point with 2,700 pine and 6,600 fir trees which amounted to 5.67 and 9.40%. The share of Sebastian Wibbelmann and Samuel Bernhard Linberg's widow was 3.78% and 8.83%, respectively.

The companies of the forest traders accounted for 72.66% of all pine and 69.42% of all fir trees passing through the control point during the year 1740. The most powerful forest trader operating individually in 1740 was Hermann Peter Knoop, whose share amounted to 4.94% and 4.56%, respectively, of pine and fir trees passing the control point. The share of other timber traders remained lower, and the share of no other individual exceeded 4%. However, when we look at Tables 4 and 5, it becomes evident that the limits of traders were not identical every year. The limits were changed annually depending on the amounts of trees felled and exported during the previous year. For example, the limit of Carl Rautel in 1739 was 3,393 pine and 2,357 fir logs,⁶⁹ in 1740, he was allowed only 1,800 pine and 2,100 fir trees.⁷⁰

When the customs records of 1737 prepared by Narva port customs authority were checked and analysed, the Collegium of Commerce suspected that the Narva timber traders and sawmill owners had exceeded the export limits.⁷¹ When considering that each log can be cut into four boards, it was discovered that 36,466 logs were used for cutting boards, which exceeds the limit by 27,033 trees.

⁶⁸ Gerhard Hinrich Arps was the father of Jürgen Heinrich Arps, Anna Helena Arps and Hedwig Medea Arps, the wife of Peter Götte: Erpenbeck, *Narvaer Bürger...* [*The book of citizens...*], 90.

⁶⁹ See Table 4.

⁷⁰ See Table 5.

⁷¹ See Table 6.

Table 6. Timber export from Narva in 1737

Timber type	Pieces
Beams	139 587
Boards	145 787
Number of logs used for sawing boards	36 446
Thus total exported (in beams)	176 033
Annual export limit (in beams and boards)	149 000
Timber norm excess for the year 1737	27 033
Battens	155 779
Spars	95

Source: RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 7, fol. 112

The Collegium of Commerce asked for notices (*izvestie*) from the customs authority on whether the number of trees used for sawing boards and beams had complied with the limits or were the limits exceeded and, if so, then by how much were the limits exceeded.⁷²

The authorities continued to suspect the exceeding of annual limits in Narva during the following years. The expedition of shipyards and constructions⁷³ established at the Admiralty Board analysed the 1738 reports presented by Narva port. It was discovered that on that year, 190⁷⁴ Dutch ships (*Fleits*) with ballast arrived in Narva port and they were loaded with beams and battens. According to the Board's calculations, each of these ships, regardless of their size, was capable of holding 1,200–1,400 beams, not taking into account the battens and firewood. When the calculations were based on the minimum number of 1,200 beams, it was concluded that more than 228,000 beams were transported abroad. The Board suspected that the export of timber from Narva exceeded the limits stipulated by the ukases was at least threefold. In a regulation from 16th April 1739 sent to the lance-corporal of the naval regiments (*morskikh polkov*) Elesar Chulkov, the Admiralty Board ordered the Narva Garrison Office to inform about the amounts of timber rafted to Narva port and how many pine and fir beams and battens were loaded on each ship.⁷⁵ The Admiralty Board ordered shipwright (*korabel'nyi master*) Ivan Ramburch to Narva with the task to check the compliance of timber export to limits. When the latter contacted Narva customs authority, he demanded a report about the number, type, size and capacity

⁷² RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 7, fol. 112.

⁷³ *Ekspeditsiia nad verfiami i stroeniiami*. Another name for the Sarvaierskaia expedition. The institution was established in 1732 and was responsible for shipyards and ship-building, also forest protection and felling. Also, the office of the forest supervisors was subordinate to the expedition. (Nikolai Petrukhintsev, *Tsarstvovanie Anny Ioannovny. Formirovanie vnutripoliticheskogo kursa i sud'by armii i flota 1730–1735 g.* [The reign of Anna of Russia. Forming a domestic policy course and the fate of the army and the naval fleet in 1730–1735] (St. Petersburg: Aleteiia, 2001), 259–260.

⁷⁴ A total of 192 ships left Narva in 1738: Bang og Korst, *Tabeller over Skibsfart...* [The tables on maritime shipping...], 44–110.

⁷⁵ RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 7, fol. 84.

of ships arriving to Narva during 1739. Furthermore, Ramburch inquired about the number and dimensions of logs and battens loaded on ships according to their types. In addition, he asked how the annual limit had been calculated: either at passing through the control point or at the loading of ships.⁷⁶

In addition, the Admiralty Board informed the Senate on 17th May 1739 about the exceeding of the limits of Narva timber traders and sawmill owners Simon Brunberch⁷⁷ and Friedrich Cramer. The Senate ordered a special commission to be formed to investigate the matter. The members of the commission should have been the Commandant of Narva brigadier Taras Shatilov (foreman), advisor to expedition of shipyards and constructions shipwright major Ivan Ramburch and a Captain of the Ingrian regiment Abram (?) Artsybushev. The Collegium of Commerce appointed Afanasii Ershov, the Narva port customs manager, as a member of the commission and ordered him to issue necessary information, documents and books to the investigating Commandant. Ramburch was obliged to monitor compliance with the export limit set to the Narva timber traders; however, he was not allowed to hinder forest export. The materials of the investigation were to be sent to the Admiralty Board for decision-making and the results of the work should have been reported to the Senate. On 21st September 1739, Ershov was withdrawn from the commission and inspector of the port customs authority, Friedrich Otto Ladau, was appointed to his place.⁷⁸

The commission investigating the excessive felling of timber by Narva traders, or timber commission, was established as part of the expedition of shipyards and constructions under the jurisdiction of the Admiralty Board. According to the first clause of the instructions given to Captain Artsybushev and order of the Admiralty Board issued on 22nd June, the timber commission received the right to demand necessary information (*vedomosti*) from the Narva Garrison Office and Narva port customs authority. On 25th June, the timber commission requested information from the customs authority: what were the amounts of pine and fir trees, firewood and battens rafted during 1737–1739; what were the dimensions of the trees and whether the rafted amount exceeded the limitations. In addition, the customs authority was to inform how much of the abovementioned timber was exported (by species), and how much sawn timber and with

⁷⁶ In order to check the Narva timber export more thoroughly, Ramburch wanted to know how many fir and pine trees had been prepared for export by species and what were the dimensions of the trees. He also wanted to know the proportion of windfalls and dead trees: RA, EAA, f. 644, inv.1, file 7, fol. 102.

⁷⁷ Simon Jacob Richard Brumberg, timber trader from Saint Petersburg and the co-owner of the sawmill on the island of Kreenholm. See Erpenbeck, *Narvaer Bürger... [The book of citizens...]*, 107.

⁷⁸ RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 7, fol. 121, 184.

what dimensions were exported and by whom.⁷⁹ The timber commission requested detailed information about the export of July already in August. The customs authority was to send information each month.⁸⁰

In conjunction with the activities of Ramburch and Artsybushev, the representatives of Narva timber traders Hermann Johann Strahlborn and Hermann Peter Knoop sent an application to Narva Garrison Office, requesting permission to export timber and timber materials prepared for the year 1739. Narvians had ordered ships from the Netherlands and these were already arriving in Narva. The office turned to the Admiralty Board for instructions, who in turn reported to the Senate, asking for a respective ukase. The traders were backed by the Narva Town Council who also submitted a report to the Senate. The Senate ordered the Narva Garrison Office in an ukase sent on 25th August to allow the Narva traders to export the timber they had in their possession. Additionally, this time the Senate decided that all the timber and timber materials which had passed the control point in untreated form during 1739, was to be counted towards the limit. When the fulfilment of the annual norm was being checked, the port customs authority was to proceed according to the notes made in the control points. Timber which had already passed the control points and had been treated at the moment of issuing the ukase, was not to be counted towards the limit. Dead forest timber and windfalls (*valezshnik*) also did not count towards the limit. It was allowed to export the trees left unexported during the previous years, if these trees had passed the control points within the annual limits. Naturally, the port customs authority had to report to the timber commission about the amounts of timber exported with ships from the Netherlands, who from among the Narvians sold the timber and what were the amounts. Further, the customs authority had to monitor the fulfilling of the annual limit and to prevent the export of raw timber labelled as dead timber or windfall.⁸¹ Dead timber and windfalls were to be marked separately. The Senate's ukase also declared that henceforth all the timber that had passed the control point had to be counted towards the annual limit.⁸²

On 11th September 1739, the timber commission presented to the Admiralty Board a report based on the information from the port customs authority. It was learned from the report⁸³ that during 1737–1739, the control points on the Luga River and Rosson' River saw the passing of 249,446 pine trees. Therefore, 33, 446 pine trees above the limit

⁷⁹ The timber commission also investigated how much each sawmill owner received for export and for board-making according to timber: RA, EAA, f. 644, inv.1, file 7, fol. 129, 143.

⁸⁰ RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 7, fol. 154.

⁸¹ 'Pod vidom sukbogo i valezshnika.'

⁸² RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 7, fol. 165–166 and 168.

⁸³ See Table 7.

were rafted to the mouth of the Narva River. This led to the timber commission's conclusion that the traders had exceeded the felling limit. The report's copy was sent from the Admiralty Board to the Senate.

Table 7. Commission's data on excess felling on the banks of the Luga River

Timber type	Pieces	Excess
Pine	249,446	33,446
Fir	112,276	
Included into the timber norm for the year 1740: timber, felled by Heinrich Benedict Balemann and Johann Balthasar Mende	8,617	

Source: RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file7, fol. 189–190

The Senate, in turn, sent a notification (*spravka*) about the exceeding of felling limits to the Collegium of Commerce. Thereafter, the Collegium of Commerce ordered the port customs authority to proceed from the ukase of 1736 in matters of timber export and to prevent excessive timber export and requested information on who had given permission to pass the excessive 33,446 pine trees through the control points. The Collegium threatened to fine the customs managers if they allowed the export of anything above the annual limit.⁸⁴ The timber commission continued to request reports on timber export from the port customs authority, Garrison Office, Magistrate and the traders. This rendered the work of officials and traders difficult, wasting time and hindered trading activities. In addition, the timber commission started threatening the officials. For example, on 15th November 1739, the timber commission requested information from Narva port customs authority about the amount of timber left unexported on the banks of the Rosson' River, to whom the timber belonged and what were the dimensions. Port customs authority recommended the timber commission to ask for the information from the Narva timber traders and the Town Council. On 20th November, the timber commission requested information and on 22nd November, threatened to arrest all officials of the customs authority until the necessary information had been presented.⁸⁵

Representatives of the Narva traders, Peter Götte and Joachim Jochann Sutthoff submitted an appeal to the Senate, accusing the timber commission of hindering trading activities. The Senate asked for a report about the activities of the timber commission from

⁸⁴ RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 7, fol. 189–190.

⁸⁵ RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 7, fol. 193.

the Admiralty Board. The Senate heard both parties on 16th October 1739, but made a decision only in November. On 12th November, the Senate sent an ukase to the Collegium of Commerce informing that the Admiralty Board was ordered to recall the timber commission members shipwright Ivan Ramburch and Captain Abram (?) Artsybushev back to Saint Petersburg and the timber commission was prohibited to demand reports from the Town Council about the export of each timber trader as it rendered work difficult and wasted time. The Senate referred to the notifications sent by Artsybushev and Ramburch to the Admiralty Board, from where they were sent to the Senate. When analysing a copy of the timber commission's report to the Admiralty Board, the Senate came to the conclusion that the Narva timber traders had not felled more timber than allowed by the ukases; they had even felled 4,332 trees less. Instead of fir trees, 38,185 pine trees were felled and exported during the three years. The Narva tradesman were not guilty as the trees were felled by employees on plots specified by forest-supervisors.⁸⁶ These 38,185 pine trees were to be counted towards the limit of the year 1740 and they were ordered to fell 38,185 pine trees less during the year 1740. However, additional fir trees could be felled, but the forest-supervisors were to monitor that no excessive felling took place; the Narva Garrison Office and port customs authority were to check compliance with export limits. The Admiralty Board was obliged to investigate why the forest-supervisors allowed the felling of excessive number of pine trees. The culprits were to be fined. In an order sent to the Narva port customs authority on 20th November 1739, the Collegium of Commerce notified the customs authority about the Senate's decision and order to the Narva Garrison Office and port customs authority to prepare an overview about the amounts of untreated and dead forest felled and windfall collected⁸⁷ and exported abroad during the years 1737–1739 and to send such an overview to the Senate. The Collegium of Commerce did order the customs authority to fulfil such an order.⁸⁸

The representatives of the Narva timber traders, Hermann Johann Strahlborn and Hermann Peter Knoop submitted an application in which they requested to export the abovementioned 38,185 pine trees. On 29th February 1740, the Senate issued an ukase which confirmed the ukase from November 1739. The Narva Garrison Office was ordered to allow the export of the abovementioned trees by the traders. The Senate specified that these 38,185 pine trees shall be counted towards the limits of the years 1740 and 1741.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ *'Po otvodu lesnykh nadzirately.'*

⁸⁷ *'Iz lesu vybrano.'*

⁸⁸ RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 7, fol. 195–196.

⁸⁹ *'Zachest' v dva goda.'*

In addition, the Senate reduced the fir export limit according to the number of pines.⁹⁰ The Narva Garrison Office shared the annual limit between the traders by sending the ukase to the Narva port customs authority.⁹¹

The Timber Trade during the 1740s

Forest felling on the banks of the Luga River had been intensive; this led the government to take new steps to protect the forests in the middle of the 1740s. Table 8 shows that according to the data of the Collegium of Commerce, Narva was used to exporting large amounts of timber materials. The number of only logs and beams exported abroad was 1,059,244, *i.e.*, 132,406 each year, which refers to the exceeding of the export limits.

Table 8. Timber export from Narva. 1736–1744

Timber type	Pieces
Logs and beams	1,059,244
Windfall	75,422
Clean and semi-clean boards and planks	696,231
Saw beams and saw fine beams	66,409
Spars	324
Battens	1,897,196
Firewood (in square cords)	29,378

Source: Chulkov, *Istoricheskoe opisanie rossijskoi kommertsii...* [*The historical description of Russian commerce...*], vol. 5, book 2, 211

Due to extensive timber felling, the Admiralty Board and Collegium of Commerce were given the task to prepare proposals for the re-arrangement of the Narva timber trade. By referring to a written statement by the head forest manager, the Board and the Collegium claimed that a total of 2,396,000 trees grew on the banks of the Luga River and Pliussa River at the beginning of the year 1740, which was to be reduced by felling to 1,471,000 trees at the end of 1744. In order to preserve the forest, the felling limit had to be reduced so that the trees would last for 30 years. According to the calculations by the Board and the Collegium, only 49,313 trees could be felled on the banks of both rivers each year. Even this was possible only in the region of the Pliussa River as the

⁹⁰ ‘*Takogo chisla elovogo lesu poka tot zacet ne ispolnitsa za more ne vypuskat.*’ RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 8, no. 28 (copy).

⁹¹ RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 8, no. 28 (copy) and no. 33.

forest on the banks of the Luga River had already been felled. The Board and the Collegium made a proposition to the Senate to prohibit forest felling on the Luga River and to allow the felling of trees in the district of Samro. Likewise, the Board and the Collegium suggested to lower the annual limit of sawmill owners by one third on the Pliussa River by allowing them to fell forest in the district of Samro. In addition, the Board and the Collegium recommended to limit the export of battens and firewood by allowing up to 50 battens and 5 square cords of firewood per ship. To prevent excessive felling of trees, the timber traders and sawmill owners had to be given an order to request for felling permit early from the forest supervisors. The head forest managers had to issue felling tickets to the traders or their representatives and to monitor the adherence to the felling limit. The Senate agreed with the propositions of the Admiralty Board and the Collegium of Commerce and by an ukase of 27th August 1745, annulled the felling permit of Narva traders on the Luga River by replacing it with a felling permit in the district of Samro on the banks of Lake Peipus and Lake Pskov and rivers discharging into them. The Narva River was to be used for rafting the felled trees.⁹² However, the felling limit of the timber traders remained the same as given by the ukase by Anna of Russia in 1736: 122,000 trees per year. However, the Admiralty Board reported to the Senate during the next year that if felling continued with the same speed, the forest of the district of Samro would be destroyed within 18 years. For the first time in 25 years, the governmental establishments came to the idea to replace timber with some other trade article for the Narvians. The Collegium of Commerce was given an order to investigate its feasibility in February 1746. The same order was given to the Collegium of Commerce again in March 1749.⁹³

In an ukase sent to the Narva Garrison Office on 28th October 1745, the Senate specified the ukase from 27th August. The owners of the sawmills were given the right to fell 21,000 trees per year in the uezd of Gdov between the Zhelcha River and Lake Pskov. The timber traders were also to fell in same uezd, to which the district of Samro had been probably added by this time.⁹⁴ Henceforth, dead forest and windfalls were to be counted towards the annual limit and, as a result, the annual felling amounts had to decrease.⁹⁵ Moreover, the previous decision to establish a control point on the Narva

⁹² Chulkov, *Istoricheskoe opisaniie rossiiskoi kommersii...* [*The historical description of Russian commerce...*], vol. 5, book 2, 210–222; The ukases from 13th December 1745 and 10th January 1746 allowed the traders to raft timber on the Pliussa River, not to fell timber. Therefore, the timber traders were not allowed to fell timber on the banks of this river: RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 16, no. 48; PSZ, vol. 13, no. 9955 (12.03.1752).

⁹³ Chulkov, *Istoricheskoe opisaniie rossiiskoi kommersii...* [*The historical description of Russian commerce...*], vol. 5, book 2, 222; PSZ, vol. 13, no. 9584, 10.03.1749.

⁹⁴ RA, EAA, f. 644, inv.1, file 16, no. 47, paragraphs 1–2.

⁹⁵ RA, EAA, f. 644, inv.1, file 16, no. 47, paragraph 8.

River at the mouth of the Pliussa River was approved. Naval Regiment's ensign Lazar' Beleutov was appointed to the control point. Felling tickets or passes had to include the timber amounts and felling sites and copies of the tickets sent to the officer in the control point.⁹⁶

The felling tickets had to be presented at control points while rafting and the representatives of the Narva Garrison Office serving in the final control point had to collect the felling tickets. On 20th March 1749, the Novgorod Governorate Office requested the Narva Garrison Office to collect⁹⁷ all timber felling tickets⁹⁸ issued by the Novgorod uezd forest supervisor Tyrkov to Narva timber traders and contractors and to investigate together with Narva port customs authority how much timber was permitted to Narva and how many trees had been left unrafted on the banks of the rivers. The Garrison Office requested responding information from the customs authority.⁹⁹ Narva port customs authority forwarded the Garrison Office's request to the internal customs officials on the 4th April 1749. On 8th April 1749, a customs official replied that he did not have the felling tickets as these were collected from the timber traders at the Pliussa River control point by Lazar' Beleutov appointed by the Admiralty. An internal customs official¹⁰⁰ added a table, which included amounts of timber that were allowed to be rafted and for whom the timber was rafted during 1748.¹⁰¹ It is evident from Table 9 that similar to year 1740, the Narvians operated both independently and in cooperation with other traders. The majority of the trees passing the control point went to the associations of traders. The largest portion was held by the association consisting of the traders Gerhard Hinrich Arps, Peter Götte, Jürgen Heinrich Arps and Jean Nicolaus Brasch, *i.e.*, 14,200 pine and fir trees which amounted to 19.03% of the rafted trees. Joachim Johann Sutthoff and Anna Regina Reyer, the widow of Jonas Kiölberg, total amounted to 10,874 trees, 14.56%. In the year 1748, 11.89% of the trees were rafted through the control point under the names of Hans Otto Sutthoff and Carl Rautell, while sawmill owners Simon Brumberg and Werner Wulffert total amounted to 30,327 trees or 42.60%. The share of other sawmill owners was smaller.

⁹⁶ RA, EAA, f. 644, inv.1, file 16, no. 47, paragraph 9.

⁹⁷ 'Otobrat'.

⁹⁸ 'O rubke lesov bilety.'

⁹⁹ RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 19, no. 24.

¹⁰⁰ 'Vnutrennii sbor.'

¹⁰¹ RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 19, no. 24.

Table 9. Timber rafted to the timber traders of Narva in 1748

Timber trader	For sawmills					For sawmills from Gdov county					
	Pine				Fir	Pine					
	3 and 3,5 fathoms	5 fathoms	4 fathoms	Total	3 and 3,5 fathoms	3 fathoms	2 fathoms	Total			
Simon Jacob Richard Brumberg and Werner Wulfert	13 893	3000	3000	19 893	8 729	1 245	460	1 705			
Joala sawmill of countess Anna Devier	16 135	502	1 128	17 765	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Friedrich Cramer	16 250	—	750	17 000	1 101	—	—	—	—	—	
Sawwindmill of Peter Götte	1 800	500	500	2 800	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Carl Peter Rieck	2 200	—	—	2 200	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Total sum	50 278	4 002	5 378	59 658	9 830	1 245	460	1 705			
Timber permitted to Narva for export from Samerski district											
	Pine					Fire					
	6 fathoms	5 fathoms	4 fathoms	3 fathoms	Total	6 fathoms	5 fathoms	4 fathoms	3 fathoms	total	
Friedrich Cramer	150	171	569	1 392	2 282						
Johann Hermann Königfels	600	262	789	1 865	3 576		140	420	1 470	2 030	
Hans Otto Sutthoff and Carl Rautell	1 234	406	1 189	3 598	6 427	246	80	240	1 867	2 453	
Gerhard Hinrich Arps, Peter Götte, Jürgen Heinrich Arps and Jean Nicolaus Brasch	2 975	725	2 175	6 825	12 700	300	70	210	920	1 500	
Peter Wilhelm Sutthoff and Johann Hinrich Holst	400	300	900	3 730	5 330		50	150	750	950	
Johann Balthasar Mende		180	540	1 080	1 800						
Joachim Johann Sutthoff and Jonas Kiölbergi lesk	950	245	735	4 044	6 874	—	—	—	4 000	4 000	
Sebastian Wibbelmann and Carl Friedrich Wolff	330	160	480	3 163	4 133	—	—	—	1 380	1 380	
Peter Johann Nath	182	75	225	820	1 362	—	—	—	300	300	
Jacob Seideler		200	600	3 200	4 000	—	—	—	3 300	3 300	
Carl Törne	775	125	375	1 625	2 900	—	—	—	500	500	
Lorenz Cramer	500	100	300	2 100	3 000	—	—	—	—	—	
Heinrich Benedict Balemann	500	65	195	890	1 650	—	—	—	—	—	
Hermann Peter Knoop	810	150	450	900	2 310	—	—	—	—	—	
Total sum	9 406	3 164	9 522	36 132	58 224	546	340	1 020	14 487	16 393	
	Timber permitted to Narva for export from Samerski district (dead timber and windfall)				was rafted on behalf of the crown	Firewood	—	—	—	—	
	5 fathoms	3 fathoms	Total	9 fathoms	in fathoms	—	—	—	—	—	
Johann Hermann Königfels	16	258	274			—	—	—	—	—	
Pimen Belousov kroonuhangele	—	—	—	96	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Peter Wilhelm Sutthoff and Johann Hinrich Holst	—	—	—		30	—	—	—	—	—	
Total sum	16	258	274	96	30	—	—	—	—	—	

Source: RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 19, no. 24

The traders and landlords continuously violated the prohibition and felled timber for export on the banks of the Pliussa River. Sawmill owners, led by Simon Jacob Richard Brumberg and Grigorii Oslopov, submitted a complaint to the Admiralty Board in 1751, accusing the Narva traders of felling 100,000 trees in the Pliussa River basin. In addition, the sawmill owners complained that landlord Vasiliï Tatishchev's enforcer stole logs meant for the sawmills and hewed them into beams, when the sawmill owners had already paid the peasants for the logs. By using his felling right, V. Tatishchev felled trees on the banks of the Pliussa River and sold them to the timber traders. Moreover, other landlords of the Novgorod uezd followed the example of Tatishchev, thus damaging the sawmill owners. The landlords replied to the forest supervisors that the trees had been felled for the sawmills, but actually they had been hewn into beams on the banks of the Pliussa River

and then exported. On 12th April 1751, the Narva Garrison Office sent Captain Adam (?) Brill to the Pliussa River to investigate the matter; according to Brill's report, V. Tatishchev stole at night the timber felled for sawmills and sold it to traders. In addition, he found a total of 94,500 felled trees near the headwaters of the Pliussa River and its tributary Liuta in the possession of V. Tatishchev, Flor Nepliuev and other landlords.¹⁰²

Table 10. Forest felled by Narva traders on the banks of the Pliussa river in 1751

Timber type	Pieces
Timber felled on the premises of Vassili Tatishchev, Flor Nepliuev and others	94,500
Timber felled by Flor Nepliuev on the banks of the river Luga	Ca 30,000
Battens	Ca 400,000
Quantity of allowed battens (per ship)	50
Firewood (in square cords)	Ca 4,000
Quantity of firewood allowed per ship (in square cords)	5
Beams	Up to 400,000

Source: Chulkov, *Istoricheskoe opisanie rossiiskoi kommertsii...* [*The historical description of Russian commerce...*], vol. 5, book 2, 260–264.

The latter also set the forest on fire to damage it and to export it later as dead forest. Flor Nepliuev had also felled trees on the banks of the Luga River, thus violating the ukase from 27th August 1745, which prohibited timber felling there. Furthermore, the timber traders had exceeded the limit of felling as the number of battens prepared for export amounted to 400,000, notwithstanding logs and other timber. Brumberg and Oslopov asked the Senate to prohibit timber felling on the banks of the Pliussa River for the Narva traders and to prohibit the rafting of trees felled in the district of Samro on the Pliussa River. Representative of the Narva traders, Jakob Heinrich Lidars,¹⁰³ filed an objection and asked for a copy of the Brumberg and Oslopov complaint to answer the accusations. Therefore, the Senate granted the complaint of the sawmill owners only partially. In order to stop large-scale forest felling, the Senate issued an ukase on 18th June 1751, prohibiting the felling of forest on the rivers of Pliussa and Luga and selling it to Narva timber traders with the threat of a large fine and confiscation of the timber. The Admiralty Board was

¹⁰² See Table 10.

¹⁰³ Jakob Gindrich Lidars.

obliged to send to Narva a field officer whose task was to investigate who had hewed the trees and, if necessary, to confiscate the timber held by Narva timber traders.¹⁰⁴

The Admiralty Board appointed admiralty Captain Kostomarov to fulfil this task. When the latter arrived in Narva, the sawmill owners led by Brumberg and Oslopov turned to him with the request to ride quickly to the forests to inspect the trees illegally felled by the traders. In addition, the sawmill owners asked in a request sent to the Admiralty Board to prohibit the rafting of trees felled in the district of Samro on the Pliussa river. Kostomarov demanded from the Narva port customs authority the notices necessary for performing the inspection several times and requested a representative of the customs authority to take part in the inspections. The customs authority refused to meet the demands as there was no order from the Collegium of Commerce. At the same time, part of the timber belonging to the timber traders located at the mouth of the Narva River and Rosson' River was loaded on ships and exported abroad. When Kostomarov together with the Town Council, customs authority and representatives of the timber traders reached the coast to mark down all the goods located there, the sawmill owners refused to participate. According to their words, the traders had removed the majority of the illegally felled trees out of the forests and it was impossible to prove that the materials that had been on the coast, had been felled in the Pliussa River basin. At the beginning of 1752, sawmill owners Oslopov and Brumberg informed Kostomarov of illegal felling in the Pliussa River basin. In his report to the Admiralty Board, Kostomarov informed about a ride to the uezd of Gdov where he marked down 391 freshly hewn beams on the banks of the Troia River (one of the Pliussa's tributaries). In addition, Kostomarov's report referred to the notifications by Lazar' Beleutov and Narva port customs authority about the exceeding of felling limits.¹⁰⁵ According to the limits,¹⁰⁶ 177 ships could have been used to export 8,850 battens and 885 square cords of timber. Table 11 shows that the traders exceeded the limit set for battens almost tenfold. In addition, 4,952 square cords of timber and 224,021 battens had been stored for export during 1752, which would have lasted for 25 years, when limits are taken into account. 73,633 additional beams originated from the Pliussa River basin. Landlords Flor Nepliev and V. Tatishchev had felled dried and burned trees in the Novgorod Governorate and sold them to the Narva traders.

¹⁰⁴ Chulkov, *Istoricheskoe opisanie rossiiskoi kommertsii...* [*The historical description of Russian commerce...*], vol. 5, book 2, 252–270.

¹⁰⁵ See Table 11.

¹⁰⁶ The limit allowed to load 50 beams and 5 square cord of timber on one boat.

Table 11. Exported timber materials exceeding the limits in 1751

Type	Prepared in 1751 (pieces)	Exported in 1751 (pieces)	Remaining pieces from stored in 1752
Beams	191,530 (incl. 73,633 burnt)	140,703	—
Beams marked by Kostomarov on the banks of the river Troja	391	—	—
Logs (for sawmills)	26,297	—	—
Battens	Data of Beleutov	—	75,756
	Data of customs office	—	69,640
Firewood (in square cords)	—	1,828	4,952

Source: RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 21, no. 25

The timber traders led by Arps and Königsfels submitted an opposing request to the Collegium by asking not to satisfy the request of the sawmill owners. Landlords Nepliev and Tatishchev also submitted their requests to the Senate. This shows that the landlords were not content with the low prices of timber offered by the sawmill owners. The landlords also asked for permission to sell the forest they had in possession to the Narva timber traders or to oblige the sawmill owners to pay the correct price. In essence, landlords Nepliev and Tatishchev wanted to free themselves from the monopolistic right of sawmill owners to fell trees in the Pliussa River basin or to dictate a price to the sawmill owners. An ukase sent by the Senate to the Narva Garrison Office on 13th March confirmed the timber felling prohibition on the Pliussa River and Narva River to the traders. This time, the rafting of timber felled in the district of Samro was prohibited on the Pliussa River. The ukase stipulated confiscation and a fine for illegal felling of trees. The Senate did not satisfy the request of the landlords and obliged them to keep alert not to sell their forest at a low price.¹⁰⁷ The Senate also prohibited felling of battens until already felled items had been exported.¹⁰⁸

The timber traders led by Johann Balthasar Mende protested and claimed that in the winter of 1751–1752, they transported timber felled in the district of Samro on the tributaries of the Pliussa River. To perform it, they had received a loan from Western Europe and ordered ships from there. They had concluded contracts with contractors for

¹⁰⁷ RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 21, no. 25; PSZ, vol. 13, no. 9955 (12.03.1752).

¹⁰⁸ RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 21, no. 35.

felling trees according to felling tickets and paid for the work with money. In his request, Mende asked for permission for the Narva traders to raft the trees felled during the winter on the Pliussa River and added that if it was not allowed, the ships would have to return empty and they would sustain great damage and go bankrupt.¹⁰⁹ The Senate gave in and ordered on 24th March 1752 the Narva Garrison Office to send an officer to check the origin of the mentioned timber and, if it had been felled in the district of Samro, then to give the Narva traders the one-time right to raft the wood on the Pliussa River, prohibiting them from doing so after. If it became evident that the trees had been felled on the banks of the Pliussa River, then the officer was to confiscate the timber and to raft it to Narva, where the customs authority was to sell the timber for export on behalf of the crown.¹¹⁰

Even after the ukase of 12th March 1752, the timber traders continued to fell trees on the banks of the Pliussa river. For example, the Narva Garrison Office received a report on 11th June 1753 from Matvei Hvostov from the Narva Garrison Regiment who was sent to search,¹¹¹ check¹¹² and overlook the trees felled by Narva traders on the banks of the Pliussa River. Hvostov notified that in addition to the trees confiscated earlier and sold to Wilhelm Lorentz Sutthoff, he found another 187 trees, which were located 8 versts from the Pliussa River in the Belskii pogost of Novgorod uezd¹¹³ in forests belonging to various landlords. According to Hvostov's report, the trees had been felled and hewn into beams the previous year, but their condition still allowed them to be exported. Hvostov did not succeed in finding out who had felled the trees and on whose order it was done. The Garrison Office decided on 12th June 1753 to confiscate the abovementioned beams and to sell them to the Narva traders for export. On 12th June 1753, the Garrison Office informed the Narva customs authority about it and obliged the latter to inform to whom the beams would be sold and at what price.¹¹⁴ Thereupon the Narva customs authority demanded in a report sent to the Narva Garrison Office on 22nd June 1753 that the Garrison Office should inform the customs authority about the dimensions (length and diameter) of the confiscated beams. The Garrison Office ordered Hvostov to inform the dimensions of the timber. In their reply, the port Garrison Office again demanded information from the port customs authority about who would buy the timber and at what price. Only after receiving the report from the port customs authority, the Office could

¹⁰⁹ He also claimed that the timber traders have not violated the ukases and asked for permission to raft trees on the Pliussa River: RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 21, no. 32.

¹¹⁰ On 30th March, the Garrison Office informed the Narva port authority that lieutenant of the Narva Garrison Regiment Matvei Hvostov had been sent to inspect the origin of the trees: RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 21, no. 32.

¹¹¹ 'Obyskat'.

¹¹² 'Osvidetel'stvovat'.

¹¹³ 'V Novgorodskom uezde v Bel'skom pogoste.'

¹¹⁴ RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 22, no. 61.

order Hvostov to issue these beams to the trader who bought them.¹¹⁵ On 4th March on the same year, the Narva Garrison Office informed the Narva customs authority that Hvostov had been ordered to hand over to trader Wilhelm Lorentz Sutthoff or his representative 450 trees¹¹⁶ that had been confiscated earlier and which were meant for hewing into beams and which were located on the frozen Pliussa River and in forests on the banks of the river. After fulfilling the order, Hvostov submitted a report to the Garrison Office. According to the report, he had given the confiscated trees, which were to be hewn into beams and which had been felled in the uezd of Novgorod, to Sutthoff's employee Grigorii Samuilov, who accepted 420 trees, but rejected 30 trees as unsatisfactory. The Garrison Office sent the Narva customs authority an order to collect the prescribed customs duty for the trees.¹¹⁷

The exceeding of limits, violation of prohibition and the government's aim to preserve forests for national construction works lead in 1754 to the decision to prohibit the export of timber in the Russian Empire from Narva, Vyborg, Pärnu and Riga starting from the year 1755. It was only allowed to export timber necessary for cooking for the ship's crew and the repair of ships. It was also allowed for each ship to take along 50 three to four fathoms long and two inches thick boards and 30 battens. The customs officials were ordered to monitor that the timber was not exported under the guise of repairs. It became evident from the ukase that the traders and sawmills owners had entered into agreements with traders from Western Europe and with peasants and landlords to export timber. Therefore, they were still allowed to export timber within the limits stipulated by previous ukases or 120,000 unsawn logs and 63,000 boards and thin beams. They were also allowed to export during 1755 and the following years the amount they did not succeed in exporting in 1754, but the amount of timber could not exceed the annual limit. From then onwards, the Narva traders were to deliver timber for local use or to the construction works of the ports of Saint Petersburg, Kronstadt, Tallinn and Paldiski, but not for export.¹¹⁸ Thereby, the Senate did not allow the traders to enter into new timber agreements with partners in Western Europe and the traders were not allowed to fell trees for export. Already concluded agreements had to be annulled.¹¹⁹ The fourth clause of the ukase from 1754 allowed the rafting of timber felled in Polish-owned Belarus on the

¹¹⁵ On 30th September, Hvostov informed that the dimensions were the following: 18 of the beams had the length of four (Dutch) fathoms, 69 beams had the length of three fathoms and three fathoms and one ell (6.82 metres) and 100 beams had the length of three fathoms. The diameter of the trees at felling height was seven to nine verzhoks (about 40 centimeter): RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 22, no. 98.

¹¹⁶ *'Brusovye lesa.'*

¹¹⁷ The trees were measured with Dutch units: 3 six fathoms, 23 five fathoms, 50 four fathoms, 105 three fathoms and one ell and 239 three fathoms: RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 22, no. 90.

¹¹⁸ PSZ, vol. 14, no. 10292 (7.09.1754). Here it should be noted the Admiralty Board made a proposition to the Senate to allow timber export from Pärnu within the limits: up to 10,000 trees, out of which 7,000 were sawn and 3,000 were not sawn, but the proposition was not favoured by the Senate and timber export from Pärnu was also prohibited: PSZ, vol. 14, no. 10292 (7.09.1754).

¹¹⁹ PSZ, vol. 14, no. 10248 (22.06.1754).

Velikaia River and on Lake Pskov and Lake Peipus to Narva for exporting. Here, the customs authority was to monitor if the forest timber felled in the Russian Empire was not exported under the guise of Polish forest.¹²⁰

As the exceeding of felling limits was one of the reasons for the prohibition of timber export, the question arises to what extent were the limits exceeded. According to the Senate's decision from 1739, the timber and timber materials that had been allowed through the control points was to be counted towards the annual limit.¹²¹ When checking compliance with the annual limit, the port customs authority was to proceed from the notes made in the control points. The statistical data on the annual timber export in the archival fond of Narva Magistrate is incomplete, as some years are missing. The gaps can partially be filled using the register's database from the Sound toll. Despite expressing only the timber materials exported through the Danish straits, these can be used to evaluate the extent of the export from Narva as the majority of timber exported from Narva was transported to Western Europe.

Tables 12 and 13 show that the Narva traders generally exceeded the export limits. For example, in 1739, 163,720 timber logs were exported from Narva, 60% of which was transported westward through the Sound. But in 1740, the number of timber logs exported was already 112,269. The limit was exceeded also in 1742, when more than 135,000 timber logs were exported. Table 13 shows that the export limit may have been exceeded also in 1743 and 1745. In these years, 218,898 and 158,906 timber logs, respectively, were exported through the Sound. Both tables show that the limits were exceeded also during the first half of the 1750s. Table 12 shows that in 1750 and 1754, the number of timber logs exported from Narva was 153,967 and 147,641, respectively. The second half of the 1740s saw a decline in the export of timber logs. This is the result of the storms of 1747 and 1748. A total of 23 English and Dutch ships cast to the shore were destroyed in the storm on 24th August 1747 and were washed ashore. In 1748, a similar storm happened again.¹²² When comparing Tables 12 and 13, it becomes evident that according to the customs authority of the Sound, the number of logs and beams transported through the Sound was greater than the export according to the data from Narva. Here it must be kept in mind that in the accounting of the Sound, the final port visited for export counted as the port of export, while ships collected goods from several ports. The Sound toll registers do not make it clear whether the ship visited other ports while travelling to the Sound. The greater the distance of the original port from the Sound, the greater the chance of an error.¹²³

¹²⁰ PSZ, vol. 14, no. 10292 (7.09.1754).

¹²¹ RA, EAA, f. 644, inv. 1, file 7, fol. 165–166.

¹²² RA, EAA f. 644, inv. 1, file 18, no. 13; Heinrich Johann Hansen, *Geschichte der Stadt Narva [The history of the city Narva]* (Dorpat: H. Laakmann, 1858), 300.

¹²³ Artur Attman, *Den ryska marknaden i 1500-talets baltiska politik 1558–1595 [The Russian market in the Baltic politics in the sixteenth century]* (Lund: Lindstedt, 1944), 48–49; Werner Schjeltjens, “De invloed van ruimtelijke verandering op operationele strategieën in de vroeg-moderne Nederlandse scheepvaart: een case-study over

Table 12. Timber exported through Narva

year	18-24 foot	30 foot	total
1730	125,274	9,757	135,031 ¹²⁴
1731	159,189	10,427	169,616 ¹²⁵
1733	207,820	13,610	221,430
1736	80,190	4,411	84,601
1739	150,824	12,896	163,720
1740	101,826	10,443	112,269
1742	124,482	11,288	135,770
1746	99,229	6,147	105,376
1747	96,981	13,244	110,225
1748	45,047	3,327	48,374
1750	140,424	13,543	153,967
1754	136,191	11,450	147,641
1755	98,107	8,051	106,158

Source: RA, EAA, f. 1646, inv. 1, files 1123, 1125, 1127, 1134, 1137, 1140, 1144, 1146, 1148, 1149, 1150, 1153, 1155

Table 13. Timber exported from Narva through the Sound

year	timber items	year	timber items	year	timber items
1718	671	1731	155,951	1744	117,816
1719	6,075 (1580 ¹²⁶)	1732	214,758	1745	158,906
1720	16,397 (1797)	1733	213,186	1746	104,439
1721	57,840 (6,349) [400 ¹²⁷]	1734	208,664	1747	98,992
1722	49,988 (3,359)	1735	136,265	1748	60,139
1723	24,378 (13,080)	1736	81,412 (13,546)	1749	129,948 (492)
1724	67,655 (27,915)	1737	125,205 (2,035)	1750	154,264
1725	103,510 (40,023)	1738	178,764 (24,118)	1751	140,551
1726	84,559 (588).	1739	100,552 (149)	1752	161,707
1727	98,858	1740	83,313	1753	148,022
1728	111,241	1741	112,537 (35)	1754	142,834
1729	84,483	1742	136,521	1755	106,782
1730	128,344	1743	218,898		

Source: Soundtoll registers online, <http://www.soundtoll.nl/index.php/nl/welkom> (accessed April 20, 2021)

de Nederlandse scheepvaart in de Finse Golf en op Archangel, 1703–1740” [„The influence of spatial change on operational strategies in early-modern Dutch maritime shipping: a case-study on Dutch maritime shipping in the Gulf of Finland and on Archangel, 1703–1740”] (Proefschrift ter verkrijging van het doctoraat, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 2009), 94.

¹²⁴ 128 643, according to the Table 1.

¹²⁵ 169 511, according to the Table 1.

¹²⁶ ‘Füürebielcker’ (pine logs).

¹²⁷ ‘Smaa bilcker.’

According to the privileges of Narva, which the Russian authorities confirmed, the town had the right to one half of the portorium tax collected in the port, also the right for a pole, barrel and pier tax. But starting from 1724, the town was allocated half portorium tax not from all goods, but only from timber, salt, tobacco and French wine.¹²⁸ Thus, Narva was granted portorium from the export of timber and precisely from logs and beams. Table 14 shows that the portorium income from logs and beams exceeded the 50% of income granted to Narva by privileges. For example, in 1730, it was 57.74% and 55.64% in 1736. In 1746 it amounted to 68.14%. At the time of writing this article, the data for the years 1730, 1731, 1733, 1736, 1739, 1740, 1742, 1746–1748, 1750 and 1754 was available. There is no data for the other years. Therefore, the figures presented have been obtained by calculations, based on the assumption that the portorium tax for logs and beams was about 55 %.

Table 14. Town's income from timber export 1730–1754 in roubles

Year	Portorium tax received from timber	Portorium money with pile, barrel and pier tax
1730	4,525.39 (57.74%)	7836.74
1731	5,133.54 (52.10 %)	9853.18
1732	7,022 (?) (55%)	12,766.73
1733	7,486 (58.87%)	12,714.94
1734	6,589 (?) (55%)	11,980.63 ½
1735	4,483 (?) (55%)	8,150.85
1736	2,935.75 (55.64 %)	5,275.43 ¾
1737	4,349.75 (55%)	7,908.65-
1738	6,213 (?) (55%)	11,296.09
1739	5,825.66 (65,05%)	8,959.31
1740	4,009.9 (60.57%)	6,619.21 ½
1741	3,766 (?) (55%)	6,847.55
1742	4,933.56 (61.35%)	8,040.84
1743	6,868 (?) (55%)	12,487.06
1744	3,501 (?) (55%)	6,365.25 ½
1745	4,579 (?) (55%)	8,324.82 ½
1746	3,548.53 ½ (68.14%)	5,207.59 ½
1747	4,042.81 ½ (63.96%)	6,320.49 ½
1748	1,654.69 (55.33%)	2,990.25 ½
1749	3,998 (?) (55%)	7,269.85 ½
1750	5,401 (59.33 %)	9,112.33
1751	4,399 (?) (55%)	7,997.39 ½
1752	4,694 (?) (55%)	8,533.79
1753	4,509 (?) (55%)	8,199.02 ½
1754	4,770.73 ½ (58.88%)	8,101.19 ½
1755	3,652.97 ½ (56.13%)	6,507.49 ¼

Sources: years: 1730, 1731, 1736, 1739, 1740, 1742, 1746-1748, 1750, 1754 and 1755: RA, EAA, f. 1646, inv. 1, files 1123, 1125, 1127, 1134, 1137, 1140, 1144, 1146, 1148, 1149, 1150, 1153, 1155; year: 1737: RA, EAA, f. 1646, inv. 1 file, fol. 70, 87, 98, 110, 135; year: 1738: RA, EAA, f. 1646, inv. 1 file 158, fol. 37, 60, 64, 89, 95; years: 1732, 1734, 1735, 1741, 1743-1745, 1749 and 1751-1753: Svjatkovski, "Vene valitsuse tollipoliitika...", 56–57

¹²⁸ See more about the Russian customs policy in Vadim Svjatkovski, "Vene valitsuse tollipoliitika 18. sajandi esimesel poolel ja selle rakendamise Narvas" ["Customs policies of the Russian government in the first half of the eighteenth century and their implementation in Narva"], *Ajalooline Ajakiri*, no. 1 (167) (2019): 37–68.

Summary

The endeavours of the Russian government to preserve its forests during the observed period were not very consistent. The governing circles wanted to preserve the forests for the navy and various national constructions; thus, various felling limitations were enforced. During the Great Northern War, strict limitations were set to the felling of forest and trading. Timber export offered great income to the state treasury as customs duties; therefore, the authorities allowed traders to get involved in it. In the case of Narva, timber export was especially important as the town's commercial hinterland was limited by the ukases of the rulers. The government held consistently the course of supporting trade in Saint Petersburg and limiting that of Narva. This resulted in a controversial policy. The government continuously made exceptions when setting limitations or prohibitions or abandoned exceptions. The failure to make exceptions may have caused great financial harm to the traders and may have caused them to go bankrupt, which, in turn, had a negative effect on the inflow of customs duty. Likewise, the authorities were interested in maintaining good relations with the foreign traders.

Not every trader living in Narva could have been involved in the timber trade. The number of traders involved in the timber trade increased during the 1730s and in the middle of 1730s and in 1740, only 29 traders were allowed to participate in the timber trade. The traders operated individually or in cooperation. In 1736, a limit was set on the Narva timber traders, who were allowed to export up to 122,000 trees per year. The annual limit was allocated between the traders. The annual limit fluctuated based on the number of trees felled and exported by the trader during the previous year.

By the middle of 1740s, timber felling had become so wide-scale that large areas on the banks of the Luga river and its tributaries had been cleared of forest. The Senate wished to preserve the remaining forest in the area, therefore tasking the Admiralty Board and Collegium of Commerce with submitting proposals for the re-arrangement of the Narva timber trade. In turn, the Admiralty Board and Collegium of Commerce made a proposition to the Senate to annul the felling permit on the Luga River and replace it with a felling permit in the district of Samro. The Senate agreed: in the summer of 1745, felling of trees on the Luga River was prohibited and instead, Narva timber traders got the permit to fell the trees in the district of Samro and raft them to the mouth of the river Narva. However, the felling limit of the timber traders remained the same as given by the ukase issued in 1736, that is 122 000 trees per year.

Sawmill owners retained the permit to fell trees on Pliussa river; however their annual limit was lowered by one third in the area. As a compensation, they were allowed to fell

this amount in the district of Samro as well. Narva traders got a permit to raft their timber to Narva, however felling trees on the Pliussa river was severely prohibited for them. Nevertheless, they were continuously violating this prohibition and cut down trees on the Pliussa river. Likewise, they frequently exceeded the felling limits, gathering timber stock for several years in advance.

Despite these rearrangements, the Admiralty Board reported to the Senate already next year that the forest in the district of Samro would be destroyed within 18 years, were the felling to be continued in the same pace. Government establishments wanted to preserve the forest suitable for shipbuilding near Saint-Petersburg and in the governorates near the Baltic sea. In addition to shipbuilding, the forest was also necessary for fortification works and civilian building activities. The intensive felling of trees and export by the timber traders of Narva came into collision with the government's wishes and intentions. In addition to this, Narva timber traders continuously exceeded their limits and cut down trees in forbidden territories. Due to these reasons, the government reached a conclusion that felling trees for export by Narva timber traders should be completely forbidden. Timber export from Narva was prohibited by an ukase issued in September 1754, entering into force the next year. From 1755, the timber traders were only allowed to cut trees for local needs and for export to other Russian cities.

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