

LONDON, MARCH 5.  
HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 4.  
ARMY ESTIMATES.

Lord PALMERSTONE having presented several additional estimates, they were referred to the Committee of Supply; and on the motion of his Lordship the House resolved itself into the said Committee.

Lord PALMERSTONE then rose, in pursuance of his notice, to move the Resolutions respecting the Army Estimates. So perfectly aware was he of the difficulty of drawing the attention of the House to the complicated details on this subject, that it was his intention to limit his observations as much as possible. It was necessary, however, for him to point out to the Committee, that although the present estimates were framed on the general form of the last, yet that several alterations had been introduced in particular parts tending to render the whole less complicated and more intelligible. The particular expenditure of Ireland was contained in a separate column, and many articles of charge were placed under distinct heads, which were in the last estimates aggregated. He would now proceed to go through the various estimates in succession. The first was that which related to his Majesty's land forces; in which the Committee would perceive an increase of four hundred and seventy-two men, and a decrease in the charge of £184,000. This estimate was divided into several classes. The first was the household troops; the increase of the charge of which was £62. This was a small sum, but as it proceeded from a circumstance which affected the charge of the whole of the regular troops, he would explain it:—It was well known to those who were conversant with regimental details, that it had been the custom to stop a part of the pay of the drummers or trumpeters of every regiment for the purpose of increasing the pay of the drum-majors and trumpet-majors. It had been ascertained however, that this custom was not authorised by law; it was therefore discontinued. But as the pay of the drum-majors and trumpet-majors was thereby reduced to an equality with that of the privates, it had been thought expedient to give them pay equal to that of serjeants, and this was affected throughout the whole army at an expence of between 3 and £4,000. In the estimate of Dragoon Guards and Dragoons, the charge would be found to have decreased £34,090. This decrease arose chiefly from the transfer in Ireland of the whole charge of forage to the Commissariat Department, and also (as he had on a former occasion stated) from the arrangement by which the charge of bread had also been transferred to that department. The next class of the regular land forces was the Infantry of the Line. In this there was an increase in number of 627, and in charge of £28,745. This increase was attributable to the transfer from the Foreign Corps of the 97th Regiment, formerly composed principally of foreigners, but lately recruited so entirely in this country as to have become a complete British Regiment, and of the New-Brunswick Fencibles, raised originally in America and in the West-Indies, a provincial corps, but which had recently offered itself for general service. The next class was the unnumbered corps. It would be found to have decreased 352, in charge of £8,600. By the note of the last year it was resolved to reduce the Waggon Train, which had consisted of 12 troops, to seven. Three troops were immediately reduced, but the two others which were to be reduced, being in service with Lord Wellington, two of the home troops were sent out to replace them, in order that they might return for the purpose of reduction. Lord Wellington, however, represented in such strong terms the advantages which he derived from the services of this corps, that the whole four troops were permitted to remain.—There were consequently six troops of the Waggon Train, one at Cadix, and two at home. The estimate, therefore, for the Waggon Train, had not decreased so much as was anticipated; but the great decrease of charge on this general head of un-numbered corps, arose from the transfer of the New-Brunswick Fencibles to the Line, and from the total reduction of the Manx Fencibles. In the Miscellaneous Charges, which stood next in order in the estimates, there was a decrease in the charge of £185,000 which diminution arose from the difference amounting to £535,000 between effective and non-effective pay; of which difference £350,000 might be applied to defray the pay, clothing, &c. of men expected to be raised in the present year; the remainder occasioned the decrease in this estimate which he had already stated. He now proceeded to the estimate of the troops serving in the East-Indies, the increase of which was £280,000.—For this no aid would be required, and the estimate was placed among the rest only to allow the Committee to perceive at one view the whole military charges of the country, if that were to be defrayed by the public. The next estimate was of the regular embodied Militia. In this there was a decrease of 2000 in the number of men, and an increase of £20,000 in the charge. When the estimate of last year were made up, the regiments of Militia were incomplete, in consequence of the great volunteering into the Line. Three hundred thousand pounds had been deducted on that account. Since that period the ballot had nearly filled them up, and therefore in the present estimate only £155,000 had been deducted on account of the pay and clothing of non-effectives. In the estimate of Staff of Garrisons, there was an increased charge of £600,000. This arose from an increase on the Irish Staff of £37,000 and from an increase on the Foreign Staff of £36,000; counteracted by a decrease in the Home Staff of £16,000. In the estimate of Supernumerary Officers, there was an increase of £2000. In the estimate of allowances to the principal Officers of several public Departments, there was an increase of £1900. In the estimate of Half-pay and Allowances to reduced Offi-

cers there was an increase of £1000 arising from the allowances to Quarter-masters, and the half-pay to Officers of the Garrison Battalions. The charge on the estimate of the In-Pensioners of Chelsea and Kilmahain Hospitals was decreased £4700. That on the Out-Pensioners appeared on the face of the estimates to be increased £93,000 arising from the circumstance, that as last year £100,000 out of £240,000 recovered from the Prize Agents, was appropriated in aid of those establishments, this year only £25,000 was so appropriated. The real increase, therefore, of charge was only £18,000; £13,000 for England, and £5000 for Ireland.—He proceeded to the estimate of Widow's Pensions; the charge on which was increased £5000 in consequence of an addition to the number of individuals receiving those pensions. The charge on the estimate for Volunteers would be found to be diminished £303,000; a diminution which rose chiefly in England, from a reduction of the number of days on which the Volunteers were to be on permanent duty; and in Ireland, from the sum of £179,000 deducted in consequence of there being no necessity to furnish clothing to the Yeomanry in the present year, as well as from the reduction of the number of days of permanent duty. On the face of the estimate of the Local Militia, there appeared an increase of charge of £61,000 but this was attributable to the estimate of last year falling short of the expence by £128,000 owing to the too small sum allowed for clothing, to the augmentation of some of the corps, and to the addition of others. It was intended in the present year to reduce the number of training days from 21 to 14; and by this reduction a saving would be affected of £110,000. When the state of efficiency in which the Local Militia was reported to be by the district Officers was considered, it might be presumed that the service would not suffer by this arrangement; the more especially as it was intended that those corps which had not been out before, should be exercised for seven days previous to the regular training, under the permanent Staff of their respective districts. In the estimate of Foreign Corps there was a decrease of charge of £2100 in consequence of the incorporation of the 97th Regiment into the line, and the total reduction of the Regiment of Malta. The next estimate was that of the Royal Military College. In the body of this estimate it would be found that the charge was decreased £29,700 a diminution arising from the supposition that no further sum would this year be required for the expence of building. Since the estimate had been framed, however, it had been signified to him that £30,000 would be required to complete the building for the Junior Department. One cause of an increase in a part of this estimate was the removal to Woolwich of the Cadets, of the Artillery, who used to contribute £100 a year each to the establishment, and who were replaced by Cadets, some of whom did not pay any thing, and none of whom contributed in an equal degree to their predecessors. The estimate of the Royal Military Asylum was nearly the same as last year. That of retired Chaplains was increased in charge £10,000. The estimate of Hospital Expences was increased in charge £17,000; £500 for medicines, and the remainder for transfers made to that from other estimates. The Compassionate List and King's Bounty estimate was increased in charge £7600 in consequence of the increase in the number of prisoners that were entitled to relief. The estimate of the Barrack Department in Ireland, was increased in charge £23,000; a very large portion of which arose from the lodging and fuel-money for recruiting parties from regiments on the British establishment. The charge on the estimate of the Irish Commissariat would be found to have increased £73,000. This was to be ascribed to the transfer to that Department of the forage estimates. On a general view of the whole of these estimates, it would appear that there was a diminution in the number of men of 514; and that there was an increase in the charge of £42,000. Against this increase of charge, however, must be set, the saving which would arise from diminishing the number of days on which the Local Militia were to be trained, which saving did not appear on the face of the estimates, and a balance would then be left of £60,000. Of course, he was aware that in such a variety of details there were many articles which he must have left unexplained.—He would reserve himself, however, for whatever enquiries might be made on the subject. Having said this much, his Lordship observed, that he would sit down were he not anxious to draw the attention of the Committee to the state of our regular army, and to the view which Government took of that subject. This was a topic which obviously divided itself into two considerations—first, the amount of the force necessary; and, secondly, the means by which that force should be rendered effectual to its purpose. With respect to the first consideration, it was a matter of congratulation to the country, that Parliament was not now called upon to devise the means of creating a regular army. It was not as at the commencement of the war, when all we had to oppose to the invader, was the ardent and invincible, but undisciplined spirit of the people. The time was gone by. The country had now the satisfaction to see, that they possessed a regular military establishment, so powerful, as not only to enable us to lay our heads on our pillows in security, but also to arrest the progress of the enemy in those countries which he had already called his own.—(Hear! hear! hear!)

The attention of Parliament, therefore, must be directed, not to the means of augmenting the regular army, but to the means of keeping it effective and complete. In order satisfactorily to resolve this inquiry, it became necessary to consider, first what would be the probable annual casualties, and then from what sources the supply of those casualties could best be derived. Exclusively of Artillery, the regular force amounted to 235,000 men, of whom 211,000 might be considered

effective. Considering the various, and some of them dangerous, services in which our army was engaged, the casualties could not be assumed at less than twenty-two or twenty-three thousand men. For this number, therefore, it would be necessary to provide. What were the means? In the first place, the ordinary recruiting; the produce of which, however, must be confined within certain limits; for when the price of labour, which our extended agriculture, manufactures, and commerce occasioned, was considered, it was not to be expected that many would anticipate, in the profession of a soldier, such paramount advantages as would induce them to quit the peaceful occupations of civil life. He would state the probable produce of the ordinary recruiting, therefore, as low as eleven thousand men. It was true, that in the year 1810, the returns amounted only to between nine and ten thousand men; this was in a great measure to be attributed to the obstacles which the regular recruiting had to encounter last year from the ballot for the Militia in the latter part of the year, and from the expectation of the ballot in the former part of it. In some years the produce of the ordinary recruiting had been 18,000 men; but on such a result in the present instance he would not now calculate. From the foreign recruiting, taking the average of the last two years, it was fair to expect 4 or 5000 men, making altogether near 17,000 men, which it was likely would be obtained by voluntary enlistment. To devise some mode of supplying the deficiency between that number and the number of casualties, was the province of Government. It had occurred to them, that it would be advisable to recur to the means which experience had shewn to be so successful, namely, to allow a certain portion of the Militia to volunteer into the line. The Militia establishment was 92,000 men, of which the effectives might be considered to be 34,000, added to which there was due by ballot 5 or 6000 men. Considering, on the one hand, the amount of the regular force, which under any circumstance would be kept in this country, and on the other, the great security to the country arising from the Local Militia, which was every year increasing in discipline, it might be stated, without fear or contradiction, that the present establishment of the regular Militia was greater than the national defence required. It was proposed to reduce it to the old establishment, namely, 70,000 for the two Islands; and for this purpose to allow a number, not exceeding ten thousand, to volunteer into the line. This measure was the less objectionable, as from the effective state of the Militia, a new ballot would not be necessary until the end of the year 1812. His Lordship expressed his persuasion that when Parliament reflected on the number of men which had already been raised in this manner, they would be of opinion, with his Majesty's Government, that it was the best method which could be adopted to meet the casualties, and the least likely to interfere with the ordinary recruiting. On the resumption of the House, it was his intention to move for leave to bring in a Bill for this purpose. If leave were granted him, he should, after it had been read a first time, move that it be printed, in order to give ample opportunity for discussing the various provisions which it would contain. His Lordship concluded by moving the first Resolution:

“That a number, not exceeding 207,474 men, be granted for the regular service of the army for the year 1811.”

General TARLETON took a view of the conduct of the war in the Peninsula from the commencement of the contest, and lamented the opportunities we had failed to take advantage of the late campaign. He thought meeting France on the Continent we most favoured the views of Bonaparte, by exhausting the resources of this country. He disclaimed all enmity against Lord Wellington, and did not speak from rivalry (*A laugh.*) when he gave it as his opinion that he could not justify the conduct of the campaign. There would, however, be future opportunities for speaking on that subject, and he should therefore decline going into it at present. It was useless to contend with France on ground where they could bring ten combatants against one of our's. The Spaniards were not hearty in their own cause, or it was impossible for the French to gain the supplies they received, through a country which affords such great facilities for impeding them in their progress, and obstructing them on their way. At present an immense expence was imposed on the country, as Lord Wellington had to furnish the people he had brought from the villages with provisions, as well as the population of Lisbon and the Portuguese army. In a word, he was obliged to issue not less than from 4 to 500,000 rations daily. He did not oppose the Resolutions of the Noble Lord, he left them to be decided on by the wisdom of the House, and to meet the judgment of the country.

Lord CASTLEREACH approved the determination of Ministers to adhere to the plan which he had first introduced of recruiting the army by drafts from the Militia, by which a great standing army might always be sustained so as to crush any idea of invasion, and at the same time furnish a large disposable force, without the people of this country feeling any dread at so many of its defenders leaving our shores. He conceived, that the army now employed in Portugal was as effectually defending Ireland as if they were upon its shores, but he thought a great permanent increase to the security of Ireland, and of the Empire, would be produced by a certain interchange of the Militia of the two countries.

Mr. HERBERT and General STEWART warmly supported the ideas of his Lordship.

Some explanations took place between Mr. WHITEBREAD and Lord Palmerstone; the former of whom stated, that in the event of the Irish Militia being employed in England, he should certainly call the attention