

# The SAINT JOHN GAZETTE.

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## Parliamentary Intelligence.

LONDON, APRIL 9.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, April 10.

LORD MELVILLE.

Mr. PITT informed the House of the resignation of the office of First Lord of the Admiralty by Lord Melville, and of His Majesty's acceptance of the same.

Mr. WHITBREAD moved, that the last resolution of the House passed on Monday, respecting the conduct of Lord Melville, be read, which being read accordingly, he addressed the House to the following effect:—The notice of the resignation of Lord Melville cannot be unexpected; but this single act can, by no means, answer the great ends of public justice, or the designs of this House, after having passed the resolution which has now been read. If the issue of the debate of the night before last were merely to be the triumph of a party, that party might be satisfied because its triumph was complete, and the Noble Lord had thought it prudent to retire. But neither I, nor those who voted with me on the recent occasion, have condescended to party motives. I undertook the cause of the public, and in this moment of urgent necessity the cause of the public I will not abandon. If I know any thing of my own heart, any thing of the immediate feelings by which I am actuated, there is no portion of the vindictive principle in my conduct, and having obtained the verdict of the House I should here stop. But, Sir, I am not permitted to gratify my wishes, the situation of the country requires that I should still persevere. My Lord Melville has not yet been dismissed from the presence and Councils of his Sovereign: true it is, he has tendered the resignation of one of the numerous offices he held, and in this he has done what every discreet man in his situation would have performed; but if the House proceed no further, he may be restored to-morrow, and the nation may again feel the consequences of his mal-administration. Is it fit, is it decent, after the resolution you have passed, that this should be possible? Ought he not to be banished for ever from the Councils of State? On reflecting on the late determination of the House, I am persuaded there is no man in the country who will not review it with conscious pride and fervent gratitude, with emotions of joy and triumph. There is, Sir, no page in the history of Parliament which will be perused with more satisfaction. There was a numerous convention of the Members, the event was doubtful, the scales were equally poised, and it remained for you to decide between two contending parties—for you, who belong to no party, to whom no party views can be attributed—of whom none can be surmised. Such, Sir, was the important situation in which you were placed, and your decision did honor to your heart and to your understanding; and you will be rewarded by the love and applause of your country. Popularity which succeeds to such actions, is the highest gratification the mind of man can enjoy, next to the serene consolation it receives from the consciousness of a faithful discharge of its duties. No man can frequent the places of resort in this capital, without witnessing the sentiments of congratulation by which the public is animated, without hearing the language of approbation directed to the Commons of England. But we shall not complete the work which is so well begun; we shall not answer the expectations we have so honorably excited, if we stop here, if we admit Lord Melville again to appear in the Councils of the Empire.—While I express these opinions, I submit them with peculiar deference and respect to the consideration of the House, because I know I am addressing myself to those who have conducted themselves in a way most reputable to themselves, and most beneficial to their country. I should reluctantly urge any sentiments which would not be congenial with your feelings; but from all I have collected from persons unconnected with any party, from all I have understood from the party to which I belong, (and I consider it an honor to belong to that party) from all I have heard from every description of men, the uniform expectation is, that more must be done; ulterior proceedings must be had, and we must acquaint His Majesty, according to the most solemn forms in which we are conversant, that Lord Melville ought to be removed from every public situation he holds, and for ever be excluded from the Councils, and be banished from the presence of his Sovereign. Yet not on the head of this combination, but the inferiors in office require some attention.—Has Mr. Trotter been dismissed? (The reply was in the affirmative.) Has Mr. Willson been discarded? (The reply was in the negative.) If either of these public officers have been retained, the Right Hon. Gentleman, (Mr. Canning) has not done what he ought, from deference and respect to this House, to have instantly performed. If Mr. Willson be not directed to retire already, is it the intention to dismiss him? It must evidently appear upon the tenth Report, he ought no longer to be retained. If both were driven from their situations more is yet to be done; and I take this opportunity of giving notice, that it is my desire to move, that the Attorney-General be directed to proceed against Lord Melville and Mr. Trotter, in order that the public may receive the profits derived from their illegal practices, which ought to be refunded to the nation. The Learned Gentleman will, no doubt proceed in the way he should deem most effectual for

the restitution of the property of the State. There are other proceedings necessarily resulting from the tenth Report. If the question should be carried, we are far from having finished the duties of the day. We are yet only at the dawn, but it is an auspicious dawn; and when the sun sets, I hope it will set in glory. With regard to that part of the subject on which the House has before decided, nothing could be more obvious than the line of conduct it ought to have taken, and nothing more correct than that which it has adopted; but there are other parts in which some preparation is necessary. It at first occurred to me to be right to make a motion expressly on the subject of the transfer of the public money, in the custody of the Treasurer of the Navy, to other offices; yet, as I found it to be the opinion of some Gentlemen, that such a transfer might admit of apology, if not of vindication, I have not persevered in this design; it will, however, be proposed, that a Select Committee be appointed to enquire into the transaction, notwithstanding the explanation given by the Right Hon. Gentleman, (Mr. Pitt) as to the portion of the amount so transferred. No subject of greater moment can be submitted to the House. Such conduct may, in some instances, be excusable, in others, meritorious; but if it should pass unnoticed, what an example, what a precedent would appear to sanction the misconduct of future officers of the Crown? It is extremely remarkable, that this appropriation of the funds devoted to the Navy, to other services, was never practised before, and never after, the Treasurership of Lord Melville. It was impossible, under such circumstances, not to entertain suspicions. But how much was suspicion increased, when we are told that all the records of the transactions were destroyed? Is not this sufficient even to convert doubt into certainty, and will not this justify the most unfavorable construction? If these records were of a secret nature, they ought, at least, to be deposited in a place of security; to be produced and inspected at a future period, when concealment was no longer necessary; the destruction of such materials of information must be understood as an act of self-condemnation. In the present peculiar circumstances, not only the particulars of the Report, but matters unconnected with that Report, ought to be referred to the Committee. When I last had the honor of addressing you, Sir, it was my intention to have said a few words on the conduct of the Bank, but it then escaped my recollection. It appeared the vouchers of the Bank itself were deficient.—Subsequently an explanation was attempted, and the neglect was attributed to the person who produced a counter-statement. Wherever the culpability lies, let it be understood to whom the imputation should be directed; it does seem that the Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Pitt) is not without fault, and if suspicion fall upon him, let him be heard in his own vindication. I did, explicitly, charge him with being informed of the irregular mode in which the banking account of the Treasurer of the Navy was conducted, and he has never yet explained why he tacitly suffered this violation of the Act of Parliament. The consideration of this part of the case must also be referred to the Committee. The circumstance respecting Mr. Jellicoe will also devolve under the same class of enquiry. It is calculated to make a deep impression upon the mind. It is not only Lord Melville who is implicated, but the Commissioners of the Treasury appear to be partakers of this crime. They granted, as a quietus, to the Treasurer of the Navy, 24,000l. to support the defalcation. The Right Hon. Gentleman, in the last debate, mistook between an item of 134 millions, and another of 186 millions. Such was the effect of official prodigality, that 52 millions were of little account. Here the sum in question is merely 24,000l. but if it is only 24,000 pence, the grounds of investigation are the same, and the Lords of the Treasury have abandoned, in this transaction, the principles to which they ought to have rigidly adhered. The most important and serious enquiry, most important and serious both as it respects Lord Melville and the public, is, into the connexion and interest that Nobleman may or may not have had, with the speculation, of Mr. Trotter. If under the difficulties attending such a subject, it be possible to ascertain the truth, the Committee of the House will not be deficient, either in vigilance or discernment, to enable themselves to expose the facts of the case. The long administration of my Lord Melville would, at least, afford abundant materials, and some of the most curious systems of arithmetical computation would be disclosed. I think Swift has somewhere said, that in the calculation of the Customs 2 and 2 do not make 4; it will be discovered that my Lord Melville, adopting the same doctrine of quantity, disallowed that 4 and 4 were coincident, as I shall presently explain.—Lord Melville uttered continual complaints that he was oppressed with the weight of his official duties, yet it was necessary, for the arrangement of administration, that he should remain President of the Board of Control, Secretary of State, and he should have the principal conduct of the war. But was it equally so, that he should occupy the situation of Treasurer of the Navy? At the first view we should answer in the negative, and an abundant supply of candidates may be found for an office where all the emolument is to be received, and no functions are to be discharged. But reasons may be assigned why such candidates should be disappointed; and here I will hint at a satisfactory solution of the arithmetical paradox to which I have adverted. Lord Melville resigns a stipend of 4000l. as Secretary of State, and

commutes for it an equal income as Treasurer of the Navy. A plain man would suppose he would be neither richer nor poorer by this change; but he would be, I fear, most egregiously mistaken. Four and four, with statesmen, are not equal; nor is the received axiom with mathematicians correct, that things equal to the same thing are equal to one another. Thus in this case, the 4000l. as Treasurer of the Navy was somewhat fatter; it was of the feminine gender, it was prurient; and by the laws of nature, as politicians understand them, capable of bearing a golden progeny. I confess I cannot suppress my suspicions when these truths, which have been recognised for centuries, are thus controverted. This, however, remains to be enquired into; but we are no longer to be taught on the fact of his criminality out of his own mouth; under his own hand he has acknowledged himself guilty of the offence with which he is charged, and the House of Commons has voted in consequence of that confession. It is then expedient, for the safety of the kingdom, that such persons as Lord Melville should not intermeddle with matters of State; it is no less necessary, as an example to future generations; and I trust this House will justify its former resolution, and vindicate its own honor, by addressing His Majesty to remove this Nobleman from all offices whatever. It will be recollected the office of First Lord of the Admiralty is not the only station he holds in the Empire; the resignation, therefore, thus far, does not rid the King's Councils of the man who is undeserving the confidence of his Sovereign: this insulated act has not satisfied the justice of the country, it is only one link of the chain, which must be broken to pieces, or it will be employed to manacle the State. If the punishment of Lord Melville had no concern with the interests and with the security of the public, I should exclaim, "Let him go free."—By reflection on his past conduct, by the view of his present disgrace, by the prospect of his future fortunes, and, above all, by the painful consciousness that he has deserved the sufferings he endures, he has undergone, and has yet to bear more than we can desire any man to sustain. But the aim of all punishment is not the mischief accruing to the individual, but the benefit of society; and to promote this great end, it was a duty to the country not to admit this distinguished criminal to escape without the penalties which the law, and the authority of Parliament, have attached to his crimes. Lord Melville has engaged the confidence of the Crown, and has been the servant of the people; The King has multiplied favours on his head, and within a year of the time in which I am now speaking, 1500l. per annum has been granted to him, in addition to his post of First Lord of the Admiralty. This was not mere matter of conjecture, the account was upon the table, and the transaction was public before the world. It was, indeed, supposed, that no new honors and emoluments awaited the ambition of Lord Melville; it was imagined he had retired for the remainder of his days into his native country. It was, perhaps, owing to the peculiar difficulties and necessities of the Right Hon. Gentleman, (Mr. Pitt) that he was again, unfortunately, invited to tread the public stage; he was called to fill the second official dignity in the State, and the compliment of 1500l. per annum was granted, in addition to the emoluments of that eminent station. A question may arise, if this be a grant for life, if this patent gift, so long as he shall hold the Privy Seal of Scotland, be indeed that sort of perpetuity? Should it be revocable, it ought to be cancelled; if irrevocable, the more is it to be lamented that the property of the nation should devolve into unworthy hands. Who were the advisers of this grant, and also of others, to different branches of his family, will be another proper subject of future investigation. I here more particularly allude to the gift to Lady Melville, which, if I am not misinformed, was conceded in a clandestine manner. It seems to me highly probable, that the persons who signed their names to that grant were not duly apprised of the contents of the instrument they then passively sanctioned with their authority.—Sir, I have already expressed my wish to conduct myself with particular respect to the House, under the encouragement I have so recently obtained during my exertions in the public cause, and in the confidence I feel that it will persevere in the display of the same spirit by which it has been so honorably distinguished; I shall not, therefore, press the subject farther than the House will approve, but shall now, after this general explanation, content myself with moving, "That an Address be presented to His Majesty, to remove Lord Viscount Melville from all the offices he holds in the State, and from the Royal Councils and presence, for ever."

Mr. CANNING rose and said, that he could not help feeling, notwithstanding the variety of professions that were made as to the subject now under consideration of the House, that, in the midst of the topics which had been urged on all sides, from those who brought forward and supported this motion, there remained something more behind than what was suffered to appear in open view. The Hon. Gentleman who brought it forward made it an accusation against Lord Melville, that he has done every thing in his power to shew his respect for, and to acquiesce in, and bow to the opinion of the House, and that he deserves therefore to be followed up with severity. He thought this mode of argument was the direct reverse of what it ought to be, and flattered himself the House would be of the same opinion.—The Hon. Gentleman had also particularly address-