IMPERIAL PARLIAMENT.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, July 20.

GENERAL DEFENCE BILL.

[CONTINUED.]

The secretary at war expressed his anxiety to avoid delay. Mr. Pitt's proposition he regarded as in a great measure ineffectual. There could be no objection to his majesty giving the instructions to lords' lieutenants which he suggested, relative to voluntary enrolment, or that they should make a canvass, as he had termed it. Such a provision, however, had been already made by parliament, during the present session, in a bill which this was meant to amend, by which a similar power was given to his majesty. It was not necessary, because, if fit to exercise it, such power he already possessed. He was anxious that the lists should specify where voluntary service was conceded, with respect to the number of persons comprehended under the bill, as it now stood, his majesty could give no satisfactory information. It amounted altogether to about one in twenty four of the whole population of the country, or to between 4 and 500,000. The number, therefore, proposed by the right honorable gentleman to be allowed, namely three-fourths, would be more than his majesty would require.

Mr. Pitt explained that he meant three-fourths of the first class.

The secretary at war said, that would be perfectly satisfactory. He doubted, however, whether the time could be so much shortened as stated by the right honorable gentleman.

Dr. Lawrence thought the house was much indebted to the noble lord (lord Castlereagh) for the improvement he had suggested. He was rejoiced that the alterations proposed by the right honorable gentleman (the secretary at war) himself, were calculated to put it into a more perfect shape, and contended, that every word which had been uttered in the discussion had tended to some useful amendment.

Sir James Pulteney could not conceive why the offers of voluntary service should be confined to persons in the first class. It was his opinion that they should extend to all. There was one point upon which he differed, however, from every gentleman who had spoken on the subject. He did not attach so much importance to voluntary services as the house seemed disposed to do. It was the duty of all capable of bearing arms to come forward at such a crisis in defence of their country, and he thought the sense of duty would be a greater incentive in action, than mere voluntary offers, which might arise from vanity, ostentation, or the motive of the moment. He could see no good reason why, when a certain number was admitted to be necessary, three-fourths, or any other proportion of it should be accepted in lieu of it. He did not approve of the principle of granting the exemption as a boon to the country in case of a certain number of volunteers coming forward, because it was the duty of all at such a crisis. He should therefore, when the clause concerning the number should come to be considered, take an opportunity of opposing any proposition for fixing it, or of moving that the whole should be compulsory.

Mr. Sheridan did not deny that the question was open for discussion, but he thought the discussion had been too long protracted. He was much of the opinion of the honorable member who had just sat down, as to the expediency of rendering the force to be raised fully effectual, by not trusting too much to the prospect of voluntary offers, but rather employing the powers of the bill for that purpose. With regard to the act of the 11th of June, to which the secretary at war had alluded, very few members, he believed, were acquainted with it. The house had been told that it was a literal transcript of a bill that had passed during last war, and it was hurried through the house with such dispatch, that it had not been even printed. The lords, however, had ordered it to be printed, and it was so he had obtained a copy of it. By that bill the same powers were given to lords lieutenants of counties as by the present bill, to procure returns of all males between the ages of sixteen and sixty, and to ascertain what the numbers were of those who were willing to come forward with voluntary offers of service. Whether any progress had been made in that enquiry he did not know, but he confessed, that when the measure was bro't forward last war, he had thought it a foolish one, and not likely to produce the effect expected from it. He had been in Northumberland at the time the schedules were sent to the lords lieutenants, and by them distributed thro' the different hundreds, for the purpose of entering down the names of each inclined to volunteer, and the service for which he volunteered. In one village the numbers had been thirteen gentlemen to serve on horseback, twenty-five on foot, a hundred and thirty as guides, two hundred as waggoners, and two hundred and thirty as drivers. He should be glad to know, whether any applications had been made under the late bill, and what had been the success of them? He doubted much of the propriety of the suggestion of the secretary at war, for discharging all from the necessity of serving in consequence of the voluntary offers of any given number, and he could see no good reason why, if more than the number required, or any of the classes not called upon, were desirous of being trained, they should not be admited to learn the discipline; for these reasons the opinion of the hon. gentleman met, in some measure, his concurrence; and another consideration also induced him to agree in it, because the effects of the voluntary service, being unduly encouraged, would be to cover the backwardness of those, who would take advantage of the exemption to skulk from their duty.

Mr. Sullivan informed the hon. member that directions had been forwarded to the lords lieutenants, and that some progress had been made in procuring the returns.

Mr. Windham supported the superiority of voluntary service by reference to the exploits of the Greeks. The case of impressed men did not apply, because they had no means of declining their duty. There was one point, and one only on which he differed with his right hon. friend under the gallery, and that was with regard to the rules of exemptions, which he feared would go to establish a system of substitution as in the militia and the army of reserve. He thought such a clause exceptionable, because it would teach people to shift the burthen off their own shoulders, by forming combinations in the different parts of the country to provide substitutes; besides, he thought it would limit the prerogative of the crown.

Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Windham explained.

Lord Hawkesbury thought the honorable gentleman (Mr. Windham) did not understand the argument of his noble friend. The object of the bill was only to relieve the district or country from the obligations imposed by the bill, in case a certain proportion of volunteers should come forward, it did not at all interfere with any other obligasions; neither did it in any way diminish the prerogative of his majesty.

General Tarleton contended, that seventy-five volunteers would be equal to one hundred compelled to serve, and quoted many instances from history of the bravery and distinguished conduct of British troops, which had voluntarily undertaken dangerous services.

Mr. Canning thought the question concerning volunteers had been too much argued. He vindicated the opinions of his right honorable friend (Mr. Pitt), which had been misunderstood, and contended that his proposition was calculated to accelerate the object, which every member had in view, without interfering with the machinery of the bill. He thought compulsion so little applicable to the nature of the duty, that if any other term could be employed he should prefer it. He thought his honorable friend (Mr. Sheridan) would have been the last to object to voluntary service, and he had imagined that he could not have a more effectual trap for a speech from him than by submitting a proposition for resorting to a compulsory measure, when a voluntary service might be procured.

Mr. Sheridan was happy to find his honorable friend (Mr. Canning) entertained such an opinion of him. He had never stated that compulsory means should be preferred; but that, as the spirit of the country was not yet alive to the danger, he thought the applications for voluntary service would not be efficacious; and that it would perhaps be more adviseable to raise the necessary force by the shortest means.

The chancellor of the exchequer submitted to the committee, whether it would not be better to discuss the respective clauses, when they should come to them. The discussion had already been prolonged considerably, though the committee had not passed through a single clause. As he was on his legs, he begged to advert to the bill which had been alluded to, and which his right honorable and learned friend (the attorney-general) had brought forward in June. That bill was but a mere transcript of the bill of last war, the only difference being that it extended to Ireland. The bill was neither unknown in the house, nor in the country. It had been particularly adverted to in the meetings that had taken place in the city and in the counties of Kent and Lancaster, in a manner highly honorable to the persons composing the meetings. His honorable friend (Mr. Sullivan) had informed the house, that some returns had been received, in compliance with the requisitions under the late act; and he was himself disposed to think the returns would be highly satisfactory. He should be sorry, however, to calculate on the returns, as likely to afford the means of providing a force adequate to the exigency; and he hoped the committee would act upon the principle of the bill, when that should be necessary.

General Gascoigne agreed with his honorable colleague, in admitting the superiority of volunteers, and he contended the whole British army was composed of persons of that description.

Mr. Henry Lascelles considered the bill in two points of view. He thought it was likely to impress the country with an adequate sense of its danger, and to prove the means of resisting it.

Mr. Pitt, though desirous to come to the consideration of the several clauses, was yet disposed, while the observations of the honorable gentleman, who had alluded to the propositions he had submitted to the committee, were fresh in his own mind and theirs, to make some reply to them. The honorable gentleman then in a perspicuous and concise manner took a review of all the instances in which he had been misunderstood or misrepresented, and set his original propositions in a clear point of view.

The house then proceeded to the consideration of the several clauses.

Mr. Windham explained.

Several amendments were adopted on the suggestion of Mr. Pitt for facilitating the execution of the bill. He wished to give to two deputy lieutenants the same power as the lord lieutenant has of issuing summonses in case of the absence of the lord lieutenant; but after some discussion, it appeared that little would be gained in that way; and the secretary at war having stated that every thing would be done to make previous arrangements by having the bill printed, and sent to the lords lieutenants, so as that they would be ready to proceed the moment it should have received the royal assent, if no alteration was made; he thought ten days too long a time to allow to the constables to serve the notices; that time was, after some discussion, fixed as the utmost limit, and the words "as much sooner as possible," introduced as an amendment. On the proposition of Mr. Pitt, also, the time allowed for the occupiers of houses to fill up the lists of their inmates was reduced from seven days to two. On the clause for exempting those serving by substitutes in the militia, and the army of reserve, Mr. Sheridan contended there ought to be no exemption; and his idea was agreed to on the gound that every person was liable to be called on to serve by the prerogative of the crown in case of invasion, even though he may be serving by substitute; and that the present measure went only to put them in a condition to serve with effect, without imposing any hardship upon them. The secretary at war contended for the exemption, on the ground that it was necessary to be scrupulous in maintaining every thing that could be looked upon as a public engagement; but he acquiesced in the sense of the house, which was evidently in favor of Mr. Sheridan's proposition.

Mr. Tierney recommended a provision for compelling the landlord, or the collector of his rent, to give such information as may be necessary for tracing weekly lodgers, who made it a practice, in the suburbs of London, to screen themselves from the ballot, and other obligations to the service of the country, by shifting their residence as soon as any claim was made on them. Nothing was introduced at this time conformable to the right honorable gentleman's suggestion: it was reserved for further consideration.

On the clause for limiting the period of training and exercising,

Mr. PITT spoke as follows:—"Considering the importance of having this force speedily trained, I cannot be satisfied that for this year at least the period of training and exercising should be confined to the small portion that is to come of the interval between Lady-day and Michaelmas. I think it should, for this year, extend to December. I name that month, because it generally affords such weather as is not too severe for the exercises necessary to the object we have in view, because in that month there are few agricultural operations to be interrupted by those exercises, and because it is generally conceived, that if the enemy shall this year make any attempt to carry his designs into effect, it will be about that time; and it is for this last reason that I am particularly anxious to devote as much time as possible to the training, and to extend the period of it to the time on which the expectation of the attempt is most particularly fixed: For I do conceive, sir, and I am thoroughly persuaded that when once this great power is organized so as to be capable of giving that effectual support which it may be made to give to our regular and militia forces, and the supplementary force already considerably advanced in its formation, I am persuaded that when once this object is accomplished in spite of the vaunts, of the enemy, he will hesitate to give us what will then be most to be wished for, the opportunity of contending with him on British ground. *(A cry of hear! hear!)* But if he should affords us that opportunity, we may be certain that he would be received in such a manner as must end in his speedy and complete discomfiture. There would then be an end of invasion, we should be rescued from those threats which, though regarded with just contempt when compared with the strength and spirit of this country when put in motion, are yet the subject of presumption to an ignorant and vain enemy, as long as they remain undefeated, and the cause of alarm and disquiet to the tranquility of the country. If this force was prepared, and the attempt was made, there could be no doubt of our sending back ruined, reduced, and discomfited to France, the force so presumptuously designed to reduce us to slavery. And if the people of France beheld their mighty plans frustrated, their legions, so confidently supposed to be invincible, sent back defeated; if they beheld their boasted chief so familiarised with victory that the magic of his name was conceived capable of commanding it; if they were to see him return leaving England secure, would he not then find the country so much changed that instead of the blind devotion and servile adulation which marked his outset in his presumptuous expedition, he would find himself regarded with contempt, disappointment, and indignation. Is it not likely that he would not find himself surrounded as now without a chain of vassal powers, content to kiss the rod with which he scourges them. Have we no reason to expect that, as soon as we should turn the force, which is now a defensive force, into an offensive force against him, we should not only render our own security more complete, but commence the erection of a barrier for the general security and independence of Europe. *(Hear! Hear!)* I wish, thefore, to look forward to those exertions, and impress the consideration of the advantages that may be derived from them, that they will put a stop to the presumptuous pride of success, and the activity of guilty and insatiable ambition.—*(Hear! Hear!)* If the enemy should attempt his expedition, which in that case it would be my chief apprehension he should not attempt, he will be anxious to attempt it so as to take us while we are yet in a state comparatively unprepared, while it is yet possible that the event may turn against us, or at least that it may be less favorable to us than it could be if our preparations were complete. It is on this account, therefore, that I am anxious that the period of training should not be confined to such narrow limits. I do not wish to extend it, so as that it should interfere with the pursuits of agriculture and industry, though if it did even require the sacrifice of those pursuits, I do think they should be cheerfully given up. For it is not of so much importance to get in the harvest soon as to be sure of enjoying the harvest. *(Hear! hear!)* I should therefore expect that the farmer will be anxious to put himself in a condition to be able to protect his harvest this year, and to maintain the illustrious name, the honor, and independence of England; as without those any harvest must be fruitless. *(Hear! hear!)* I therefore do expect that the stout yeomanry and farmers of this country, and the zealous landholders, will look to objects beyond the consideration of their immediate interests; that they will look to the protection of their sacred rights, and that they will not be content till they make the enemy feel those terrors which he dared to threaten, and restore to the nations of Europe that spirit which is now paralysed. I know I do not feel more anxiety on this subject than other gentlemen, and therefore I am sure the house will not be content with training from Lady-day till Michaelmas. I trust gentlemen will not be satisfied till they are sure of having 2, 3, or 400,000 of these defenders of their country, and with the reliance that may be placed on those, and our other armed force, the rest of the people may exercise their industry with a security that the produce of the soil, and of the industry of its inhabitants, will remain with its lawful possessors instead of becoming the prey of spoilers. *(Hear! hear!)*

I therefore wish that another species of training may be adopted this year, on a principle of exertion which may be more accommodated to the purposes of agriculture and industry in succeeding years, when the security of the country shall be fully and permanently provided for; and I wish that provision may be made to this effect by the introduction of some words to the following effect, omitting the words that now stand "or for such other number of days, together or separately not exceeding 30 nor less than 20, as may be deemed most effectual for carrying this act into effect, until the object of it be attained;" then other objects may be attended to, but the principle object must be looked to first, having regard to the particular circumstances of each country. I wish to lay down the power in the manner best calculated to bring the training to a number of days in succession. Then we may look to the mode of training, bearing with us this reflection throughout, that upon the use which we, and the people at large, shall make of a few weeks to come, may turn the future destiny of this country, and of Europe in general. *(hear! hear!)*

Mr. Sheridan coincided most heartily in the sentiments expressed by the honorable gentleman who spoke last; and, in support of them, he begged the house to recollect, that, of those who would be called upon by the present measure only a very small portion were engaged in agriculture. The rest were engaged in pursuits from which they may be called away to exercises of such momentous importance without any serious mischief of a public or private nature,

The suggestion of Mr. Pitt was, however, dropped, and another amendment was proposed by Mr. Pitt, and adopted by the committee, that the different corps should be exercised a few days successively within the week, as more effectually tending to create good discipline, or promote a knowledge of the use of arms, that twice that space of time at seperate periods.

A long conversation took place on the clause giving power to the lords lieutenants to appoint a certain proportion of every Sunday for training and disciplining the men.

Mr. Thornton and Mr. Wilberforce opposed the clause, as likely to offend tender consciences, They admitted the expediency of performing the duty on that day, in common with every other day of the week in case of necessity, but objected to appointing that day alone, from a mere consideration of saving money. General Maitland, Mr. Grant, and sir William Erskine argued, that the Scotch would never be brought to submit to it, and that it would interfere with their zeal. Sir Wm. Curtis, Mr. Pitt, and Mr. Kinnaird, thought that the workings of conscience should be respected, but, that the opinions of the few should not be made the standard for the majority. The clause was then altered, that Sunday, or any other convenient day in the week should be appointed in England, and any convenient day in the week in Scotland.

In the clause respecting the distance from which persons were to assemble to be trained, four miles were substituted instead of three.

Mr Kinnaird submitted whether it would not be more convenient for the chairman to report progress, and ask leave to sit again, particularly as the honorable secretary had some clauses to bring up.

The Secretary at War objected to that proposition. He proposed that the committee should pass through the bill this night; that the report should be brought up to-morrow, and the bill read a third time on Friday, when his clauses would be ready.

Mr. Kinnaird wished to state objections to serveral clauses, particularly the schedule.

Mr. Pitt suggested that it would be desirable to go through the verbal amendments this night, and that the honorable gentleman would have an opportunity of stating his objections on the report.

The committee then passed through the several clauses, with some verbal amendments.—Adjourned between four and five.

CINCINNATI, August 17.

We understand that two Indians were lately killed in Montgomery county by a white man, the particulars, as far as have come to our knowledge, are: The white man was hunting, and happened to fall in with an Indian camp; the Indians appeared not very friendly, he left them; he had not went far on his way, when he saw two of the Indians a head, and both taking aim at him, their guns flashed; the white man then fired and killed one, and ran upon the other and dispatched him with the butt of his gun. It is said the white man has given himself up.

HARTFORD, September 7.

To the public.

In compliance with a request we have this day received from the mayor of this city, we are happy to have it in our power to contradict the unfavorable reports which have been circulated respecting the health of its inhabitants, by stating; that for four weeks previous to the 20th of August, there was not a single burial in the city; that from that period to the present time, four children and one adult have only died of the dysentery, and one child of the scarlet fever; that two or three other deaths have only taken place, and which succeeded to chronic diseases, and that no case of malignant or any contagious fever has occurred in this city or its vicinity.

It may be further said, with the strictest propriety, that its inhabitants have seldom experienced a season of better health.

ELIAKIM FISH,
MASON F. COGSWELL,
LEONARD BACON.

FRANKFORD, (K.) August 25.

Extract of a letter from Vergennes, (Indiana Territory) dated 15th August, 1803.

"I promised you news of importance, and have now to communicate it. A treaty was signed a few days since, at this place, between governor Harrison, on the part of the United States, and the chiefs of the Kaskaskias tribe of Indians, by which the United States have acquired at least eight millions of acres of land.—The whole country is ceded, from the junction of the Ohio and Missisippi, up to the mouth of the Saline creek, which makes into the Ohio a few miles below the mouth of the Wabash—and from thence along the high lands that divide the waters that fall into the Saline, the river A'Vase and Kaskaskias, on the one hand, and those of the Wabash on the other, to the ridge that divides the above waters from those that fall into the Illinois river—thence in a direct line to the mouth of the Illinois, and thence to the Ohio.

"The Indians are all at peace, and now more attached to the United States, than they have ever been before. Indian affairs have been conducted in such a manner—upon such principles, that their firmest confidence has been acquired. They find an abvious interest in cultivating our friendship, and the task will be easy hereafter, in preserving the strictest amity with them—Many tribes, formerly powerful, have dwindled away, comparatively speaking, into nothing. The Kaskaskians have now wholly thrown themselves under the protection of the United States.

Measures, I expect, will shortly be taken to assist them in preparing for cultivating a small tract or two, which is reserved for their use. They express much anxiety to become farmers, and acquire the rudiments of cultivation. Game in some measure is destroyed, and it is with difficulty they obtain a subsistence from that source—they therefore have the strongest motives to turn their attention to agricultural pursuits, and the experiment which will be made on the Kaskaskias tribe will no doubt have a happy influence on the surrounding nations."

BY THIS DAY's MAILS.

BOSTON, September 5.

Arrived, snow Lion, Rice, Havanna, 25 days, released from quarantine.

Same day, brig Dispatch, Moore, Trinidad, 38 days, via quarantine. Marine news in our last.

September 6.

Arrived, schooner Adventure, Butterworth, Halifax, 8 days; Pilgrim, Perry, do. 7.

September 7.

Arrived, the brig Argus, capt. Grafton, 67 days from Russia. Spoke, July 7, in the North Sea, the brig Polly, Bayley, 50 days from Portsmouth, for Copenhagen. July 18, in sight of Fair Isle, brig Hine, Bruce, 21 days from Copenhagen. August 7, lat. 50, 20, long. 30, 30, brig Montezuma, Rice, 21 days from Boston, for Dublin. August 8, lat. 48, 42, long. 32, 10, ship Eliza, Patch, 31 days New-York, for Ireland. August 30, lat. 42, 10, long. 62, 5, schooner Mary, Lambert, from Cadiz, for Boston.

Same day, sloop James, captain Fanning, 7 days from Digby.

Signal at the fort for a brig.

Arrived at quarantine,

Brig Alert, Fisher, Port-au-Prince, 19 days, has 65 French passengers on board; Ann and Betsy, Quinton, Jamaica, 44; Herald, Paul, St. Vincents, 22; ship Olive, Babson, Point-Petre, 23; schr's Harmony, Adams Martinique, 22; Saucy Jack, Appleton, St. Thomas, 25; William, Newell, Trinidad, 20; Vandyke, Adamson, do. 25.

The brig William, Peck, of New-Haven, sailed from Martinico, August 14.

Cleared, ships Mary, Baloh, Port Jackson and Batavia; Belle Savage, Ocking