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THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE TRANSPORT ~~SYSTEM~~ ^{SERVICE.}
DURING THE WAR AGAINST REVOLUTIONARY FRANCE,
1793-1802

by

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ABSTRACT

During the war against revolutionary France, in order to carry out the ambitious policy of Henry Dundas, Secretary of State for War, the King's forces were conveyed to the far distant East and West Indies, to the Continent, the Mediterranean and Egypt and to the Cape of Good Hope.

For the first eighteen months the war was conducted in a sluggish and haphazard manner resulting in failure on the Continent and in an inefficient transport service. The disorganization of the Navy Office and abuses in the Royal dockyards, defects in the transport system which had been revealed by a commission of naval enquiry appointed in 1785, still existed. It became increasingly difficult to hire, inspect and fit out enough ships to be used as transports. By July 1794 the lack of success of the Continental campaigns and the realization that war would continue caused the ministry to make important changes in the government and in the transport system. The business of hiring vessels to be used as troopships, victuallers, and ordnance vessels was now centered in a Transport Board and the competition in the engagement of shipping that before existed between the Navy, Victualling and Ordnance offices was eliminated. A board set up to deal specifically with transport affairs was able to give undivided attention to them. Thus a more organized and efficiently run transport service was inaugurated.

Since the war against France was conducted through a series of campaigns and expeditions the Transport Board did not have to maintain a large army overseas for an extended period of time. However, it carried out some of the greatest troop movements of the eighteenth century, particularly the Abercromby-Christian expedition of November 1795 which

involved the conveyance of 27,000 men, their equipment, provisions and ordnance to the West Indies, and the expedition to North Holland in 1799 which involved the transportation of 46,000 men from England and the Baltic. The progress of the transport service in getting the expeditions out to sea, especially those going to the West Indies, was often impeded by the slowness of other departments, particularly the Ordnance, in preparing for the military enterprise and by the natural foibles of storms and contrary winds.

Throughout the war the Transport Board also had to cope with a dangerous shipping shortage, due to a vast increase in every branch of trade. This was a time of unprecedented commercial prosperity when it became more advantageous for the merchant to put his ship to a trade than to let it to the government. Hiring space on merchant vessels that traded regularly between Britain and the areas where the army was being sent was one method the Transport Board employed in an attempt to meet its tonnage requirements. Many troops and almost all officers were sent to the West Indies in this manner and a great part of the provisions sent to the British army overseas were conveyed in victuallers hired on freight. The Transport Board chartered eighty ships at Hamburg in order to satisfy its shipping needs in 1795. However, this venture proved a great and costly disappointment. More beneficial was the Board's practice of keeping the freight rate offered by the government to the owners of merchant vessels consistent with the high cost of provisions and stores and increased wages. The freight rate was increased by over seven shillings per ton or by two thirds over an eight-year period. Previously, it had remained almost static throughout the eighteenth century. By these wise and practical methods the Transport Board was able to meet the logistical requirements of Dundas' ambitious policy throughout the war.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Add. MSS.	Additional Manuscripts, British Museum
GP	Grey Papers
NLS	National Library of Scotland
NMM	National Maritime Museum
NRS	Navy Records Society
PRO	Public Record Office
SRO	Scottish Record Office

FOREWARD

The logistical problems confronting a government in sending and maintaining a sizeable army overseas is a neglected study in the field of military history. The swiftness and efficiency with which troops, their equipment and ordnance are transported to the field of battle is a very essential factor in the outcome of any military campaign and should not be ignored. Because of the inability of the government to adequately supply and provision forces during combat the objectives of many a military operation were never achieved. It is the purpose of this enquiry to see how efficiently and effectively the transport service was conducted during an eighteenth century world war. The choice of the war against revolutionary France as a setting for this administrative study proved specially interesting. During that war the transport system for the first time in one hundred years was radically changed by the creation of a Transport Board.

The need to undertake a study of the logistical problems confronting the British government during the French war was first brought to my attention by Professor I. R. Christie of University College, London. From the very beginning Professor Christie showed confidence in me to pursue the subject and for that I am grateful. I am also very indebted to him for his constant and patient guidance at every step of preparation for this project. I would like also to thank Mr. D. Syrett, a former student of Professor Christie who is now on

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CHAPTER I

THE CHAIN OF COMMAND IN THE TRANSPORT SYSTEM

I

William Pitt never wanted war; and so he never prepared for it. For ten years Pitt had been improving the general administrative machinery of the country but neglecting the army; when the war began the ministers had to improvise an army as soon as possible. The navy, though not as neglected as the army, was far from being in perfect condition. There was mismanagement in the Admiralty and waste and fraud in the Royal dockyards. Abuses in the Royal dockyards and consequently in the transport system had been revealed by a commission of naval enquiry appointed in 1785; but no action had been taken to eliminate them. Action would not be taken until the cabinet realised war would continue and that was a year and a half after it had begun.

The Prime Minister was not alone in his desire to steer England clear of war; his most prominent supporters were the King and Lord Grenville at the Foreign Office. Once England was at war, however, they all hoped and counted on it being a short one. For a period of eighteen months after the French declaration of 3 February 1793 an indeterminate, slow and cumbersome war machine was employed in preventing the establishment of a new order in France. The War Office was under a nonentity,^{Li} George Yonge, and did not even have cabinet rank. The Master of the Ordnance was the Duke of Richmond

who after a time ceased to attend cabinet meetings. Pitt's brother Lord Chatham was at the head of the Admiralty and would later be replaced by the more vigorous and efficient Lord Spencer. Pitt, whose forte was not foreign or military affairs relied to a great extent on his overworked Secretary of State for Home Affairs, Henry Dundas, to formulate military policy. With these haphazard and odd arrangements it is not difficult to see the reasons for failure and discouragement in the early part of the war. Another very important reason for failure was the adoption by Pitt and Dundas of military plans on a scale far in excess of what the resources of the army could maintain. Pitt and Dundas' military policy had several objects. They hoped to arrest the growth of revolutionary France in Europe by campaigning in the Netherlands and by aiding the French Royalists; they also wished to increase the wealth and security of Britain and at the same time weaken France by picking up French colonial territories. These multiple objects required a military strength beyond the capacity of Britain at the time. The ministry not only failed to estimate correctly the military strength of the country but failed to decide where it could best be applied. The major and best part of the King's army was consigned to the West Indies since that object was given priority over the others, leaving a limited number for the campaigns on the Continent and still fewer to aid the rising French Royalists. This diffusion of efforts by the ministry without sufficient military resources led to blunders and mistakes - the campaigns

on the Continent were a disaster and Pitt's efforts to aid the French Royalists were a total failure - giving the Whig opposition plenty of material for criticism.

Whigs under the leadership of Edmund Burke and the Duke of Portland criticised severely the ministry's multiplicity of objects and thought the government should concentrate on the one objective of ridding the Continent of Europe of the revolutionary menace, particularly by giving substantial aid to the French Royalists. Another faction of the Whig opposition under the leadership of Charles James Fox greatly impeded the efforts of Pitt and Dundas by adamantly upholding the ideas of the Jacobin radicals and by urging the withdrawal of Britain from the war altogether.

Since there was so much opposition to the war and since the campaigns on the Continent had been going so badly, Pitt decided in July 1794 to introduce important changes in the government and in the administrative machinery. These changes he hoped would secure a united front as well as an efficiently run war machine. The broader aspect of these changes is seen in the fruition of Pitt's negotiation with the Portland Whigs. Portland himself accepted Pitt's invitation to be Second Secretary of State with control of the Home Department and the Colonies. His supporter William Windham was given the post of Secretary at War;¹ that office was reorganised

1. Lord Grenville remained at the Foreign Office;
Mr George Yonge was transferred to the Mint.

and given cabinet rank. Pitt, however, still was determined to keep the course of the war under the direction of Dundas. He therefore created a new office that of Secretary of State for War with a seat in the cabinet. Thus from July 1794 both the Secretary of State for War and the Secretary at War were in the cabinet, giving military affairs a better chance to receive adequate treatment. In another effort to appease the Portland Whigs Windham was given supervision of the Royalist expeditions. At the end of the year Lord Chatham at the Admiralty was replaced by Lord Spencer who was far more efficient; at about the same time the Duke of Richmond was retired from the Ordnance in favour of Lord Cornwallis. Pitt also recalled the King's son, the Duke of York, from command in Holland; after returning to England he served with great benefit to the army and the nation in the capacity of Commander-in-chief.

Secondly, in an attempt to make the war machine work more efficiently, Pitt made changes in the administrative machinery of the transport service. In July 1794 he followed up some of the findings of the commission of naval enquiry by creating a Transport Board, altering radically the chain of command in the transport system. In order to appreciate the efficiency of the transport system after these innovations it is necessary to see how the administrative machinery of the transport system worked before the changes in the cabinet and before the establishment of the Transport Board.

II

The transportation of troops, their provisions and supplies involved a series of operations and a relegation of commands carried out by a number of persons, ranging downwards from the ministers in cabinet, through the secretary of state, the secretary at war, the secretary of the Admiralty, the master of the ordnance, comptroller of the navy, the commissioner of the victualling, down to the transport agent. To equip and transport one regiment of troops the War department, the Ordnance Board, the department of State, the Treasury department, and the Admiralty and its subdivisions the Navy Board and the Victualling Board were all concerned. Each one of these departments and boards was still involved in the transportation of troops after the establishment of the Transport Board on 4 July 1794; but the chain of command was altered considerably. In what follows the organisation as it existed at the beginning of the war will be discussed; the changes arising from the creation of the Transport Board will be examined in chapter II.

The secretary of state was in the pivotal position in the chain of command; it was he who kept the war machine in motion. The Admiralty (and later the Transport Board as a branch of the department of the Admiralty) received a letter from the secretary of state before any important undertaking.¹ That letter usually announced a cabinet decision and signified the King's pleasure upon

1. E. g., PRO, ADM/1/4159, 26 Nov. 1793; ADM/3/110, 2 March 1793; ADM/2/600, 15 July 1793, f.539; ADM/1/3730, 26 Aug. 1794.

which the Admiralty was to act. "If an integrated expedition was successfully assembled with its proper equipment, provisions, and transport, and at the place and time which the cabinet had decreed, this was the achievement of the responsible secretary of state."¹ This was true of the war against revolutionary France as it was of the American war.

All letters flowed through the department of State. A decision to send troops to a particular theatre once agreed by the cabinet would be set in motion by the secretary of state who forwarded the cabinet's resolutions to the King for his approval and transmitted them to the various department heads. He signified the cabinet decision to the Admiralty by requesting vessels for the troops which were to embark. Here is a typical instruction from the secretary of state to the Admiralty at the beginning of the war. Henry Dundas wrote on 21 February 1793.

It being the King's intention that three of the battalions of His Guards should be sent as soon as possible to Holland to assist in the defence of that Republic; I am commanded to signify to Your Lordships His Majesty's Pleasure that you are to give orders that a proper quantity of shipping may be provided for the reception of the said troops, with the number of women and servants mentioned in the inclosed Return together with their Camp Equipage and Baggage, and to convey them wither to the Brill, Williamstadt, or such other place in Holland as the Officer commanding the said troops shall think most convenient for landing.

1. Piers Mackesy. The War for America 1775-1783 (London, 1964), 17.

The troops will be ready to embark from Greenwich Hospital Stairs on Monday next, previous to which time it is hoped that the transports will be prepared, and will proceed down the river as near the Hospital as conveniently may be, and that proper craft will be ready to assist in the embarkation of the said troops the sooner the Camp Equipage and Baggage can be put on board the better.

In addition to the transports which may be requisite for the troops baggage, it will be necessary that a proper vessel should be appointed for the reception of the battalion horses. If she cannot be fitted in time to accompany the other transports it will be expedient that she should follow them as soon as possible.

The mention of convoy came next.

Your Lordships will take care that a proper convoy be appointed to accompany the said transports to the place of their destination and to remain there till further orders, with a view of affording the troops any assistance or protection which they may stand in need of; the transports to be taken up for the conveyance of the troops, excepting about 300 or 400 tons, may be discharged as soon as the troops' stores shall have been landed.

On 24 February the secretary of state's office informed the Admiralty that the Guards were to go to Helvoetsluys.²

In informing the Admiralty of the cabinet decision concerning the movement of troops the secretary of state told the Admiralty where and when the troops would be ready to be embarked, their place

1. PRO, ADM/1/4157, 21 Feb. 1793.

2. Ibid., 24 Feb. 1793.

of destination, the different kinds of transports that would be needed (for troops, for baggage, and for horses) and the destination of the transports after the troops had been landed; a request for a convoy was also made. (Except in regard to victualling ships in almost all cases where overseas convoy was needed, the secretary of state made that request of the Admiralty. This could take place at any time from the initial request for conveyance up till the vessels were reported ready for service.¹⁾ Three days later the Admiralty was informed of the exact place of destination.

Thus, the administrative machinery was set in motion. Then the Admiralty department with its subdivisions the Navy Board and Victualling Board, the Treasury department, and the Ordnance Board were put to work.

Once the Admiralty had received an instruction from the secretary of state requiring the use of transports, in turn it passed orders to the Navy Board to provide the vessels and get them ready.² The Navy Board was under the direction of the commissioners of the Admiralty but unlike other subdivisions of government departments it had a high degree of autonomy especially in the transport and supply area. The commission of naval enquiry

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1. E. g., PRO, ADM/1/4162, 16 Sept. 1794; ADM/1/4290, 24 May 1793; ADM/3/110, 28 June 1793. When the East India Company Directors were apprehensive about their ships sailing in enemy infested waters they wrote to Secretary Dundas and asked if it might not be advisable to have a convoy.
 2. E. g., PRO, ADM/1/4159, 2 Dec. 1793; ADM/106/2651, 24 July 1794; ADM/3/110, 24 June 1793; ADM/2/600, 23 May 1793.

appointed in 1785 had called for a new constitution of the Navy Board in order that it might form a system better adapted to the conduct of business. By 1793 the reconstitution had not taken place and the admirable and efficient comptroller ^{John} Charles Middleton was no longer at the Board, his place having been taken by Henry Martin. In 1793 the Navy Board consisted of eight commissioners. It was the duty of that Board to consult and advise with the Admiralty how to transact to the best advantage all affairs tending to the well-being and regulation of the civil establishment of the navy. With the agreement of most members and by common council it proceeded to make contracts for naval stores of every kind, and supervised their issue; it prepared all estimates for the expense of the navy; directed all monies for naval services into the treasurer's hands; and examined and certified his accounts for naval expenses. Added to these naval responsibilities was the duty of hiring and preparing all army troop transports and navy victuallers as well as preparing army victuallers and ordnance vessels. It was not the Navy Board's duty to hire army victuallers; that was the responsibility of the Treasury.¹ Nor did it have the duty of hiring ordnance vessels. The Ordnance Board hired its own vessels; but it was the Navy Board's duty to inspect and if need be equip all

1. This was different from the practice adopted during the American war of independence, when, at first, the Treasury hired its own ships to carry food but latterly the Navy Board took over responsibility. See below p.19.

vessels, whether troop transports, victualling transports or ordnance transports, for their particular service.

In the period before the establishment of the Transport Board the Treasury department was the only department which performed its duty regarding transports without working directly through the secretary of state. The Admiralty, as we have seen, corresponded extensively with Dundas. As we shall see, the War Office and Ordnance Board did also. But the Treasury usually received its information from the Admiralty; and the Victualling Board which worked closely with the Treasury and was a subdivision of the Admiralty corresponded very little with the secretary of state.

Since the Treasury was responsible for provisioning the army, that department was informed by the Admiralty (more often than not through the Navy Board) of the need for provisions, of the length of time the troops were to be victualled with provisions and at what rate. And the Victualling Board working closely with the Treasury was directed by the Treasury to provide the provisions and often to provide the vessels for army provisions.¹ The business of the Victualling Office as described by the commission of naval enquiry appointed in 1785 was concerned with victualling the navy.

1. E. g., PRO, ADM/1/4290, 26 Sept. 1794; ADM/109/102, 8 Nov. 1793; ADM/111/129, 16 Nov. 1793. The duty of purchasing provisions for the King's forces and settlements abroad was given to the Victualling Board in October 1793. Before that the Treasury alone handled the purchasing. ADM/109/102, 24 Oct. 1793.

It provided,

either by contract or otherwise all provisions, and also certain stores required for His Majesty's Navy; arranging and distributing the whole to the several ports and places at home and abroad, as the service may require; to take care that the different provisions and stores, when issued be properly charged to the Agents, Storekeepers, Purasers, Masters of transports, or others, to whom they were issued; and to compel the respective parties to pass timely and regular accounts; also to take care that all offal arising from articles manufactured be properly disposed of, all old stores sold to the best advantage, and the proceeds duly accounted for; to attend the various checks, etc. which have been instituted for the security of the Public, with other numerous and important objects, which were constantly and necessarily attached to this office.¹

The business of victualling the army was conducted by the Victualling Office in a similar way. At the outbreak of the war, however, the Victualling Board did not have the duty of victualling the army; it was the sole responsibility of the Treasury. Nine months after the war began the Victualling Board was given the responsibility of victualling the army under the general direction of the Treasury. The commissioners of the Treasury were of the opinion that this service might "be performed with greater advantage to the public by [the Victualling] Board than in any other way," as the commissioners were satisfied by two members of the Victualling Board that the Board could "discharge that duty without prejudice

1. Parliamentary Papers, 1806. Eighth Report of the Commissioners appointed by Parliament to enquire into the Fees, Gratuities, Perquisites, and Emoluments, which are, or have been lately received in the several Public Offices therein mentioned, vol. VII, 554.

in the smallest degree to the service with which [they were then] entrusted for the navy."¹ In addition the Victualling Board was often directed by the Treasury to hire the vessels to carry these provisions. The latter responsibility was transferred to the Transport Board in 1794; but the Treasury continued throughout the war to hold the responsibility of providing the army with its provisions.

Here follows an example of Treasury arrangements concerning transports. In October 1793 provisions were needed to victual 334 men in the Bahama Islands. The troops consisted of seven companies of the 47th regiment amounting to 314 men and a subaltern's command of artillery consisting of twenty men. The Victualling Office at the direction of the Treasury calculated the amount of provisions needed for the troops after the rate of one pound of flour and twelve ounces of pork per man per day and transmitted its report to the Treasury on 15 October. On 8 November the Treasury after studying the report directed the Victualling to provide the amount of provisions specified in the report for six months and send the same to the Bahamas at the first opportunity. By 14 December the provisions had been shipped on the Mary Ann victualler.²

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1. PRO, ADM/109/102, 24 Oct. 1793. Because of the added duties imposed on the commissioners they were given the following sums in addition to their salaries. To the Chairman of the Board £500 a year. Each of the other commissioners £250 a year. Clerks and officers under them were given allowances that commenced from 24 June 1793; on 26 Oct. 1793, G. Rose was appointed storekeeper of army provisions. PRO, ADM/109/102, 26 Oct. 1793.
 2. Ibid., 15 Oct.; 8 Nov. 1793.

Since, before the Transport Board was established, it was the responsibility of the Treasury to hire its own vessels the commissioners of the Treasury usually directed the Victualling Board to provide the vessels;¹ and on occasion it requested the Navy Board to do so;² there is evidence that the commissioners of the Victualling made the same request to the Navy Board.³

The Navy Board acquainted the Treasury when the victuallers were laden and ready to sail; then the Treasury requested convoy for the victualling ships.⁴ The Treasury with the assistance of the Admiralty or the Navy Board directed them to their place of destination. For example, on 21 January 1794 George Rose, secretary to the commissioners of the Treasury, wrote to the commissioners of the Victualling:

I have laid before the Lord Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury your letter of the 20th instant, acquainting their Lordships that the supply of provisions for three months for 10,000 men in the West Indies have been shipped on board the transports named in the margin [Ranger, Welcome Messenger, Freedom, Camilla], which have been directed to proceed to Spithead; and I am commanded by their Lordships to acquaint you they have given orders to the Commissioners of the Navy to direct them to proceed with the next convoy for the West Indies.⁵

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1. E. g., PRO, ADM/109/102, 15 Nov. 1793; 21 Jan. 1794; 1 Jan. 1794.
 2. E. g., Ibid., 27 Nov. 1793; 18 Nov. 1793.
 3. E. g., PRO, ADM/109/102, 3 April 1794.
 4. E. g., PRO, ADM/1/4290, 24 Dec. 1793; ADM/109/102, 24 May 1794; see above p.16.
 5. PRO, ADM/109/102, 21 Jan. 1794.

On the following day the Victualling Board informed the Navy Board of this letter.¹

Money needed for the various operations of the Admiralty department was supplied by the Treasury; the receipts for delivery of stores and provisions were eventually to be in the hands of the Treasury department. The Navy Board, the commissioners of the Victualling, and the commissioners of Transports, when that Board was set up, transmitted to the Treasury Board the estimates which would be laid before the House of Commons in the ensuing session of parliament, for the service of the navy, victualling and the transports for the coming year.²

When the Transport Board was established the debt of that Board was included in the debt of the navy.³ A letter from the Treasury of 26 September 1794 authorized the treasurer of the navy to make all payments for the transport service. He was directed to "apply to the Treasury for such monies as shall be necessary for such service and pay the bills issued by the Commissioners of Transport in the same manner as those which are

1. PRO, ADM/109/102, 22 Jan. 1794.

2. E. g., PRO, ADM/1/4290, 10 Oct. 1795; ADM/106/2218, 31 March 1794; ADM/108/67, 17 June 1800.

3. PRO, ADM/1/4290, 14 Jan. 1795, G. Rose to P. Stephens.

issued by the several Boards under the Department of the Lords of the Admiralty."¹ Since the money expended in the transport service was taken out of the General Fund appropriated for naval services, in the spring of 1796 the treasurer of the navy suggested that a fourth section for the transport service be added to his accounts, to be examined and certified by three commissioners of the Navy in the same manner as had long been practiced with respect to the expenditures in the department of the commissioners of Victualling and of Sick and Hurt Seamen.²

Unlike the Treasury the War department had the secretary of state as the intermediary between itself and the different departments. The War Office run by the secretary at war and the commander-in-chief³ was a subordinate administrative office. It did not plan strategy or the strength of the army. That was controlled by the cabinet and secretaries of state. With the changes in the ministry and the reorganisation of the War Office in July 1794 the secretary at war had a seat in the cabinet. His presence there enabled him to inform the ministers of the actual strength of the army, which cannot but have been of advantage. But Henry Dundas as Secretary of State for War with the cabinet planned the war. He sent operational instructions directly to the commanders

1. PRO, ADM/1/4291, Office for Auditing Public Accounts to Treasury, 29 April 1796.

2. Ibid.

3. The Commander-in-chief was Lord Amherst until the appointment of the Duke of York to that position in 1795.

in the different theatres of battle and issued orders to the War Office for troop movements. The War Office carried out these orders. It provided the secretary of state with lists of the men and draughts to be embarked and intimations of when they would be ready to be embarked. If detachments of artillery were intended to be attached to these regiments, then a further provision of tonnage would be necessary, the estimate of which would be furnished by the Master General of the Board of Ordnance. If transports taken up could not remain at the place of debarkation to attend upon the motions of the troops then more shipping would be hired for the purpose of replacing them.

Preliminary moves regarding transports might be made at a lower level but formal authorization was also required. Here follows a case of the subordinate office acting informally to get things started, pending official orders. In early June 1794 the Secretary at War wrote directly to the Navy Board requesting transports for cavalry. The Navy Board prepared to provide the necessary conveyance but not without taking the precaution of writing to the Secretary at War that he should make the regular application for transports to the Admiralty "that the Navy Board may be justified in what they have done to forward the service."¹ Oneday later Lord Amherst informed the Admiralty of an increase in the number of cavalry to be embarked. On the same day the Admiralty informed

1. PRO, ADM/1/4330, War to Admiralty, 9 June 1794, enclosing a copy of a letter from H. Martin to Lord Amherst, 8 June 1794.

Amherst that Secretary Dundas had not yet signified the King's pleasure for providing any shipping for the number of cavalry but as soon as it was received the service would be furthered.¹ Thus the operation could get started but could not proceed to an effective conclusion without the proper authorization. It was natural during war time for convenient steps to be taken to shorten procedure and hasten an operation; but formal authorization eventually had to be received. When the channels of communication between the various departments were slow and ineffective so was the transport system.

Only with regard to minor arrangements did the War Office write directly to the Admiralty and receive immediate favourable response to its request. These requests were mostly concerned with the transportation of individual officers and their baggage to a specific destination (in such cases the transportation usually took place on a warship); or with the appointment of a certain officer to superintend a specific transportation; or to move a particular regiment in one transport from one British port to another; or to make sure the troops were supplied with fresh provisions as they remained in port in transports.² However the War Office needed to ask the Admiralty to have an army officer leave a ship in order to join another army detachment.³

1. PRO, ADM/1/4330, War to Admiralty, 9 June 1794.

2. PRO, ADM/1/4330, 22 Feb.; 21 May; 9 Aug.; 2 Oct. 1793.

3. Ibid., 21 Dec. 1793.

If artillery, engineers and ordnance stores were to accompany the army to its place of destination that was the responsibility of the Ordnance Board. Again the secretary of state acted as intermediary; this time between the army commanders and the Ordnance Board. The Ordnance Board received information from the secretary of state about the movement of artillery and artillery companies. It then acquainted the Admiralty with this information and requested them to order the Navy Board to make sure a ship was equipped to receive the artillery and to make sure the necessary proportion of provisions and water casks were issued from the Victualling Office.¹ During the American war and during the war against revolutionary France before the establishment of the Transport Board the Ordnance Board hired its own ships to convey ordnance stores. A request for convoy for these transports was sometimes made by the Ordnance Board but generally the secretary of state performed this service.

Here is an example of Ordnance Board activity involving transports. It was assumed the Navy Board would hire the vessels to transport these artillery men but as a rule artillery men were transported on armed ordnance vessels. In September 1793 Secretary Dundas informed the Master General of the Ordnance that two companies of the Royal regiment of Irish Artillery in Flanders should be ordered to accompany the expedition under the command of Sir Charles Grey to

1. E. g., PRO, ADM/1/4014, 1 Oct. 1793.

the West Indies. He wanted the companies ready to embark from Ostend within a fortnight, in order to join the expedition at Spithead. On 1 October the Master General requested the Admiralty to order the Victualling Office to issue the necessary proportion of provisions and water casks for the two companies and to order the Navy Board to hire and equip a vessel to convey them.¹ By these means the artillery were transported overseas.

Responsibility travelled further down the chain of command as each department carried out its special duty in regard to transports. The transport agents of the Navy Board and later of the Transport Board were perhaps the most important link in the chain of command of the transport system. Without these men a transport service could never have existed. Transport agents were agents of the Navy Board who were stationed in domestic or foreign ports where transports were located or who travelled with the transports. Those stationed in domestic ports were known as resident agents and generally had a naval rank of Lieutenant, though some were Captains. Those agents who travelled with the transports or were stationed in foreign ports were known as agents of transports or agents afloat or floating agents. These agents were usually Captains and therefore had a higher naval rank than resident agents.

Resident agents resided at their stations and corresponded regularly with the Navy Board reporting the arrival and sailing of

1. PRO, ADM/1/4014, 1 Oct. 1793.

transports and all occurrences relating to the service of this department. They gave orders for the transports to be fitted and supplied with whatever was necessary for the respective services; they demanded provisions and water and all such stores as were furnished by other departments; and took care that all transports were regularly mustered when the weather would permit, and that they were kept clean, and in proper condition to receive troops, horses, baggage and stores, according to the apportionment transmitted from the Board. They superintended all embarkation and disembarkation of cavalry and infantry at their station and communicated with the General commanding the district in all such occasions. They purchased forage, and such other articles of immediate supply as the Board might have directed and hired vessels, when necessary, for short services directed by the Board.¹ Resident agents were considered "the immediate organs of the Board, with whom instructions might be committed for the conduct of the floating agents upon their arrival from different parts of the world or by whom the particular orders of the Board might be delivered for the speedy execution of the service."²

Agents afloat when ordered with a number of transports upon service, placed themselves on board whichever one was most convenient

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1. Parliamentary Papers, 1809. Thirteenth Report of the Commissioners for revising and digesting the civil affairs of His Majesty's Navy, vol. VI, 5-8.
 2. PRO, ADM/1/3741, Transport Office to E. Nepean, 19 Aug. 1801.

for their duty; the masters were required to accommodate and assist them. It was the duty of the floating agent to see that the transports had their proper complement of men according to their charter parties. They also attended the embarkation and disembarkation of the King's forces and were responsible for the expenditure of provisions and stores in each transport. They kept an account of such stores as were received and issued and corresponded with the Board. On foreign stations they were at the service of the commanders-in-chief.¹ While under the orders of the commanders-in-chief the transport agents on foreign stations sometimes hired, equipped and fitted out transports.

After the transports were equipped and the troops embarked the convoy commander took control in accordance with his instructions from the Admiralty. He was the senior officer once the transports were in motion; and it was his task to see the transports in safety to their destination. After that he was under the orders of the local naval commander unless the Admiralty directed otherwise.

As a rule this was the chain of command used in operating the transport service. However during wartime a department often found it more expedient and convenient to deviate from the standard practice. In most cases the departments concerned were informed and when the deviation was completed the usual channels of command were restored and the proper authorisation issued.

1. Parliamentary Papers, 1809, op. cit., Thirteenth Report, 5-8.

As we have seen the transporting of men and supplies involved much activity and correspondence between the different branches of government. When the Transport Board was established on 4 July 1794 a radical change took place in the administrative machinery and inter-departmental communication and consequently in the chain of command.

CHAPTER II

THE NEED FOR AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A TRANSPORT BOARD

The creation of a separate board in July 1794 to handle the business of transports, and thereby relieve the Navy Board of this important and time-consuming task, was not a new idea. There was a Transport Board in the first quarter of the eighteenth century which went out of existence in 1724.¹ The notion of renewing the establishment of a separate board to handle the freight and victualling services had been discussed during the American war of independence when Charles Middleton was comptroller of the Navy Board. The American war had revealed the inadequacies of the transport system and abuses in the Royal dockyards. Middleton was in a position to observe these inadequacies at first hand. As a result he became interested in navy reform and during his long tenure as comptroller (from 1778 until 1790) he was outspoken on the navy's defects and conscientiously active in proposing remedies. Although Middleton was not a member of the commission of naval enquiry appointed in 1785 to look into the abuses in the Royal dockyards he was definitely the source of ideas for the commissioners. It is almost certain that Middleton's revelations about the weaknesses

1. This Transport Board was instituted in 1690 to execute the service of providing ships and necessaries for the transportation of the army to Ireland. It consisted of 8 commissioners with a salary of £400 per annum each. About the beginning of the reign of Queen Anne, the Transport Board appears to have been reduced to 3 members. Parliamentary Papers, 1809, op. cit., Ninth Report, 4.

of naval administration were instrumental in the calling of the commission. Throughout his life he continued to advocate administrative reform and integrity in government. It was perhaps particularly these efforts that brought him into line for the post of First Lord of the Admiralty in 1805, when Pitt needed to do everything possible to erase the image of Admiralty corruption conjured up by the impeachment of Dundas. That same year he received his peerage and became known as Lord Barham.

Middleton mentioned the idea of creating one particular board to deal with the transport service when criticizing the victualling and transporting of troops during and after war with America. It was his opinion that the relief of Gibraltar had been inefficiently and hazard^{ously} effected due to the stores and supplies not being ordered on time to be got ready at Spithead. He thought that if the preparation of the whole expedition had been committed to one particular board, or to one man acquainted with sea affairs, this lack of coordination between the various departments might have been avoided.¹

Middleton's notions about the creation of a separate Transport Board probably influenced Frederick Cornwall, a member of the Treasury Board, during the American war. Cornwall wrote in 1778 to John Robinson, Secretary of the Treasury, "On the Freight Service and the Supply of Provisions for the troops in

1. NRS, Barham, vol. II, 17.

America for 1778." In that letter he mentioned that some time ago he had proposed the establishment of a board for carrying on the freight and victualling services. He did admit that at that period there was scarcely time to execute such a measure, for the choice of the right men to run the Board would require a proper investigation. The same objection held true in 1778 and Cornwall optimistically felt that the service would be coming to a conclusion. Therefore, he thought the freight service, though inadequate must be continued in 1778 as it had been the past two years.¹ One change however was made. In 1779 the army victualling ships service was taken away from the Treasury and given to the Navy Board. At the outbreak of the war against revolutionary France the Treasury again had the responsibility of handling the army victualling ships service but it relied to a great extent on the Navy Board's assistance in hiring victualling ships. Then, as has been before stated, on 24 October 1793 the Treasury delegated to the Victualling Board the duty of procuring army provisions.² This arrangement had been discussed during the American war when Lord North acting upon a representation made to him some time before, that it appeared probable that the Treasury paid a great deal more for beef and pork than the victualling office, asked John Robinson "to consider whether we shall not save considerably to the public by putting the victualling of the army under the [victualling] commissioners."³

1. Add. MSS., 38209, f. 330-1.

2. PRO, ADM/109/102, 24 Oct. 1793. see above, pp. 19, 20.

3. Abergavenny MSS. 390, 30 Sept. 1781.

With the return of peace in 1783 there was time and opportunity for investigating the abuses of the navy and for introducing improvements. Therefore, the decade between the American war and the war against revolutionary France was one of investigations and inquiries into naval problems and recommendations for their solutions.

Parliament took up the question of naval reform by appointing a commission in 1785 to look into the abuses in the Royal dockyards.¹ Middleton was undoubtedly instrumental in the calling of this commission. The chief commissioners were John Dick, William Molleson, and Francis Baring. The latter had been in charge of handling the victualling for the Treasury in the last year of the American war. The investigation took three years to complete and its results were printed in a series of reports which were dated from April 1786 to June 1788. Though none of the reports of the commissioners dealt solely with the transport service, the fifth, sixth and eighth reports yielded information about the abuses which hampered this service and made valuable suggestions for its improvement. Some of the proposals of the commissioners appointed in 1785 were carried into effect during the war against revolutionary France and during the Napoleonic wars. Middleton's influence on the commission becomes obvious when one compares his ideas on the subject of transport improvement with the recommendations of the commissioners.

1. Parliamentary Papers, 1806, op. cit., contain the reports of the commissioners of enquiry appointed in 1785.

In the fifth report which dealt with the Commissioners of the Navy the commission of naval enquiry noted that the most damaging mismanagement was the practice of several boards and officers taking up transports for themselves in different modes, or by single persons acting under their authority.¹ Three different organisations had been used for hiring freight: the Navy the transports which accommodated the troops; the Treasury the transports which carried the provisions; and the Ordnance the transports which conveyed the ammunition and stores. Each department freighted and employed its own vessels and sometimes at different rates, depending on the urgency of the situation and the ships that were available; as a result each board competed with the others for the available shipping. It was largely to eliminate this competition that the Navy Board in 1779 under the direction of Middleton took over from the Treasury the army victuallers. The Ordnance Board however continued to hire its own shipping. In the last stages of the American war Middleton stressed the case on grounds of rational administration for transferring the Ordnance and Victualling Board shipping to the Navy Board.² After 1780 the Navy Board had found it extremely difficult to charter additional tonnage "because the weakness of the Navy's credit did not permit it to offer competitive rates of freight and it was constantly outbid for ships by the Ordnance and Victualling

1. Parliamentary Papers, 1806, op. cit., Fifth Report, 190.

2. Mackesy, op. cit., 68.

Boards."¹

After the American war Middleton forwarded his opinion on this subject to the King in a memorial written near the end of 1783. It was his opinion that the victualling business of the army suffered in the American war because the men who managed it for the Treasury lacked knowledge of shipping and hired without adequate inspection or supervision at a higher rate than the Navy Board. He concluded it would be beneficial to the service as a whole to entrust the hiring of ships to professional men with a knowledge of shipping. He stated:

that should a consideration of these reasons for entrusting Your Majesty's Memorialists with the transporting and victualling business, and an attention to the advantages arising from the whole being uniformly conducted and from whatever regards shipping being entrusted only to professional men and a desire to prevent, among the different boards, a competition most injurious to your Majesty's service, ever bring about a resolution to transfer to them, with the approbation of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, the whole business of providing hired ships or transports for every other public board, so as to make it their duty to supply the Victualling and Ordnance Boards in particular with whatever ships may be wanting in their respective departments,— they are, with a view to the advantage of your Majesty's service, ready to undertake it with the utmost frugality, and, with the same attention as in the other branches, to make the several parts useful to each other.²

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1. David Syrett, The Navy Board's Administration of the Maritime Logistics of the British Forces during the American War, 1775-1783. (unpublished University of London Ph.D. thesis, 1966), 392.
 2. NRS, Barham, vol. II, 169-70.

Middleton's memorial was written in 1783. In 1788 the commissioners in their fifth report cited the practice of purchasing or hiring ships and vessels, when required for the public service, by different boards, as one found by experience to be inconvenient and detrimental. It was their opinion, like Middleton's, that the performance of this service altogether by the Navy Board would be for the public benefit,

the professional knowledge of the members at that Board would prevent purchase or hire of improper vessels; and the competition being removed, the tonnage wanted would be obtained at a fair and reasonable rate; whereas, by several Boards bidding against each other, the price will be raised, and vessels unfit for the service frequently engaged.¹

The commissioners thought the Navy Board might make the agreement, and the contract be drawn pursuant thereto, between the owner and the department for which the ship was wanted.

Middleton's influence on the commission is very apparent. It is not surprising since he was comptroller of the Navy at the time and since he was in the forefront of naval reform. While the naval enquiry was in progress the Prime Minister put a set of questions known as Mr. Pitt's Queries to Middleton in early 1786 about the state of preparation in dockyards, etc. for a war emergency as well as questions dealing with what would have been necessary for carrying on the service to advantage in the last

1. Parliamentary Papers, 1806, op. cit., Fifth Report, 190.

war. (These questions may have been the same as a set of questions concerning naval reform which Middleton had written and submitted to the King in December 1785.)¹ Middleton's answers reveal the steps he thought should be taken in ensuring better naval administration. He stressed the drastic need for the reorganization of the Navy Board. Instead of nine commissioners sitting at one table to obstruct business, Middleton thought they must be broken into committees so that they could examine more correctly the contracts and accounts, and give dispatch to the variety of matters before the Board. He considered the method then used of conducting business as very uneconomical and thought considerable changes were needed.²

The commissioners in their fifth report which was not completed until 14 February 1788, after emphasizing the need for a reorganization of the Navy Board, proposed that there be ten commissioners of the Navy resident in London, for conducting the business of the Navy Board who should be divided into three committees; viz a committee of correspondence, of accounts, and of stores.³ This proposition was adopted by order in council 8 June 1796.⁴

Since Middleton was exceedingly anxious that Pitt should acquire an adequate notion of the Navy Board department he forwarded

1. NRS, Barham, vol. II, 207-8.

2. Ibid., see also, PRO/30/8/246.

3. Parliamentary Papers, 1806, op. cit., Fifth Report, 183.

4. Parliamentary Papers, 1809, op. cit., Fourth Report, 3.

to the Prime Minister in September 1786 a book of Navy Board warrants and his reasons for undertaking it. "It is a national concern of the first magnitude" he wrote to Pitt. The book of Navy Board warrants contained the regulations for the civil branch of the Navy and exhibited what Middleton had done so far to put the dockyards in order. The information it contained had been gathered during and after the war with America. Since the copy he gave Pitt was the only one in his possession, Middleton requested the Prime Minister to return it before the commissioners entered upon their enquiry at the Navy Office.¹ The book must have been returned by December for in that month Middleton sent a letter to Francis Baring, one of the commissioners, in which he enclosed a paper on which he set down his meditations on the abuses of the Navy Board. These meditations were taken most likely from the book of Navy Board warrants. In the paper sent to Baring Middleton pointed to the fact that in King William's time though the business was much less than it was in the 1780's, the comptroller was allowed an assistant. He emphasised his point by stating that the want of such help was felt by him during the American war when he handled almost the whole correspondence of the army victualling, transportation of troops and secret expedition independent of all the other business of the Board. Though every effort was made at the time to save the public from imposition Middleton found it was impossible. The ever-growing

1. PRO/30/8/111, 18; 23 Sept. 1786.

business of the Navy Board put it out of the power of their number to examine "with that scrupulous nicety which their importance requires, the public accounts, belonging to their department. It was impossible without a total change to reach that correctness which the magnitude of the object required."¹ A reorganisation of the Navy Board was essential.

The commissioners of naval enquiry in their fifth report pointed out that in spite of the great increase of the navy the constitution of the Navy Board had undergone very little change for upwards of a century, except that the number of commissioners had occasionally varied from seven to ten;² in 1788 the duties of the principal officers and commissioners not only pertained to the navy but also included the transporting of troops and supplies for the army. As a result of the increased naval duties and of very little alteration in the Board for over a century

several parts of the business allotted to the commissioners, who were supposed to have special superintendence over each branch of duty, were unavoidably left to clerks, who, however honest and diligent, were not the persons who could properly be considered responsible to the Public for what was done.³

1. NRS, Barham, vol. II, 241-4.

2. Parliamentary Papers, 1806, op. cit., Fifth Report, 182.

3. Ibid. Parliamentary Papers, 1809, op. cit., Seventh Report, 3.

To remedy this the commissioners of enquiry called for a new constitution of the Navy Board in order that it might conduct its business more adequately.¹

In the enclosure sent to Baring in December 1786 Middleton also gave it as his opinion, that to correct the many defects of the Navy Board a much stronger controlling power than there was then was absolutely necessary. Responsibility in the strictest sense had to be tacked on to this power, Middleton thought, or it would be futile.² The commissioners incorporated this idea into their fifth report when they criticized the lack of special superintendence over each branch of duty of the Navy Board and recommended placing a general superintending and directing power in the comptroller who would do more than conduct the business and lead his fellow officers. He would arrange the whole of the business, dividing it amongst the several members for the purposes of accuracy and dispatch, and would control the expense in every branch of the office and its dependencies. Thus he would be responsible for the whole.³ It is very clear that the commissioners were putting down on paper the ideas of the comptroller.

In that same letter to Baring Middleton stated that no part of the service stood more in need of reformation than the transport service itself.

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1. Parliamentary Papers, 1806, op. cit., Fifth Report, 182.
 2. NRS, Barham, December 1786, vol. II, 243.
 3. Parliamentary Papers, 1806, op. cit., Fifth Report, 182.

The most enormous abuses are suffered to take place in it. Transports when wanted to be taken up or bought, are surveyed by the master attendant, master shipwright and clerk of the survey of Deptford yard, and they are hired and freighted on their report, and though every measure that caution can suggest is taken to prevent imposition, yet we have the strongest reason to believe it is still carried on, by its pernicious and extravagant effects. The Yard officers ought to have no part in this business. During the last war it employed almost the whole of their time, to the entire neglect of their own proper business.¹

The sixth report of the commissioners which dealt with the dockyards and was completed 10 March 1788 called attention to this abuse of the transport service as set down in Middleton's paper of December 1786. In that report the commissioners again emphasized the over-burdening duties of officers under the jurisdiction of the Navy Board. Only this time the examination pertained to the duties peculiar to the officers belonging to the yard at Deptford and Woolwich namely that of surveying, measuring, valuing, and reporting upon all ships tendered to the Navy Board for transports or store ships, either for hire or purchase. The commissioners came to the conclusion that during the last war this duty occupied a great deal of the naval officers' time and often took them away from the yard to the detriment of the special duties of their stations which required their presence in the yard.² The commissioners recommended in their sixth report that the burden of surveying,

1. NRS, Barham, vol. II, 248.

2. The number of days employed on this particular service the commissioners of 1809 noted had even exceeded two hundred in the course of a year; and extra wages allowed on these occasions to the officers of the yard, occasioned a considerable additional expense to the public. Parliamentary Papers, 1809, op. cit., Ninth Report, 5.

measuring, valuing and reporting on ships tendered for transports or store ships be taken away from the naval officers of the yard and be performed under the direction of the professional members of the Navy Board by men specifically appointed for the purpose.¹

The point that must be emphasized is that Middleton and the commissioners of enquiry stressed the fact that the Navy Board was overburdened; that it needed to be constituted in a different form in order to carry out its duties effectively. The Navy Board was relieved of the business relating to transports when the Transport Board was created in 1794 and the burden of carrying out those duties pertaining to the transporting of troops and supplies for the army and supplies for the navy was taken away.

The Victualling department also came under the scrutiny of the commission appointed in 1785 and was the substance of its eighth report. The commissioners found flagrant abuses respecting the commissioners of the Victualling Board who superintended the department of the Hoytaker. They noticed that several of the victualling officers and clerks acted as agents for pursers, other officers of ships, and sometimes for contractors; "a practice which, however sanctioned by long usage or custom, we must continue to reprobate upon every occasion..."²

1. Parliamentary Papers, 1806, op. cit., Sixth Report, 305.

2. Parliamentary Papers, 1806, op. cit., Eighth Report, 574-5.

They also noticed that many transports were hired by the Board, which belonged to the Hoytaker, and to other persons in the King's victualling service. The commissioners voiced in the strongest terms their disapprobation of such conduct on the part of the persons in question, and were surprised, that such improper proceedings escaped the censure and correction of the Board, since it must have been well known at the time to several members of that Board.

By their examination into the duty of the Hoytaker the commissioners of 1785 were led to review the whole of the transport service during the American war. They noticed a variety of abuses resulting from the mode of taking up transports by the Victualling and Ordnance Boards. Unlike the Navy Board which took up transports according to the measured tonnage of the ship, these other boards took them up according to the quantity of stores put on board.

Under the Commissioners of the Navy measurement is the criterion; and under the Board of Victualling a calculation is made of the certain quantity of Provisions or Stores to the ton; the contract price, according to the latter method, is nominally lower, but by no means cheaper; that circumstances however is trivial, if compared with the great detriment and loss which the public sustain by exciting a competition against themselves, whereby individuals obtain ultimately their own terms and prices;¹ and which they could not possibly

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1. The Victualling Board became aware of the great temptations to the persons interested with the execution of this service without sufficient control. At their suggestion, in 1793, the salary of the Hoytaker at Deptford was increased from sixty pounds a year to two hundred pounds upon the express abolition of all future fees.

For the extravagant fees which had been paid with respect to transports employed by the Board of Ordnance, see the twelfth report of the commissioners for stating the public accounts. Parliamentary Papers. 1809. on. cit.. Ninth Report. 5.

accomplish, if the whole of the transports required for Your Majesty's Service were to be hired exclusively by one Board.¹

This abuse was remedied with the establishment of the Transport Board when the hiring of victuallers and Ordnance vessels passed under its jurisdiction.

During the American war Middleton had formed the habit of noting down every defect as he discovered it, with the hopes of remedying them with the return of peace. After the war, however, he found the cooperation of Howe's Board disappointing and complained in early 1786 that Howe ignored him; the comptroller's advice was not sought; that he did not have much to say in important decisions, particularly about the appointment of officers to the dockyards, about whose characters and capabilities the Navy Board was best informed. Middleton was hoping that the commission of enquiry would open a door for reformation and "the great lines of the Navy Board department would once more be discussed between the Secretary of the Admiralty and the comptroller."² He also wished to see the commissioner's enquiry bring about a proper arrangement for the introduction of reform in the method and economy of the Navy Board. For these reasons Middleton stayed on in office after Howe became First Lord.

1. Parliamentary Papers, 1806, op. cit., Eighth Report, 579.

2. NRS, Barham, vol. II, 207-8.

It is a comfortable reflection that much is not needed to put a finishing hand to the business. It will consist chiefly in completing the regulations of the home-yards, and arranging the Navy Board for expediting business in such a manner as may appear best to themselves for that purpose.¹

But the navy enquiries of the late eighties were allowed to die away by 1790. No examination of the reports of the commission of enquiry took place and thus, no remedy was taken for the disorders which the enquiry had disclosed. The Navy department had to wait until England was involved in the war against revolutionary France before serious thought was again given to rectifying the disorderly state of the office. Middleton's disappointment over the failure of the proper authorities to follow through on the result of the enquiry and his feeling of uselessness in the then disorderly state of affairs resulted in his resignation from office in March 1790.

"It was not the remoter objects of the department" which worried Middleton, *the fleet and arsenal were in the best possible state at the time of his resignation,*

~~the fleet and arsenal were in the best possible state at the time of his resignation,~~ but the internal arrangements of the office itself respecting persons and their particular duties, in order to carry on business with life and dispatch, and to correct the various abuses which the late enquiry has exposed, but which, from the discouragement the enquiry itself has received, have grown stronger than ever, if not confirmed.²

1. NRS, Barham, vol. II, 227.23/

2. Ibid., 350; see also, PRO/30/8/111, Middleton to Pitt, 8 Feb.; 15 March 1790.

On resigning his position at the Navy Board, Middleton was appointed chairman of the commission to enquire into the civil affairs of the navy, and continued to act in that capacity until November 1795 when a quarrel with Lord Spencer resulted in his exclusion from all business concerning the management of the navy. Under the administration of Lord Spencer and afterwards of Lord St. Vincent, Middleton could not and did not interfere.

For the first year and a half of the war against revolutionary France the transport system was administered as it had been during the American war with the exception that the Treasury was again responsible for the hiring of victualling ships. The abuses in the transport system, some of which were brought to the attention of the government by Middleton's memoranda and by the reports of the commission appointed in 1785 were again apparent. It was also apparent by 1794 that the war would continue. For these reasons the government recommended that the management of the transport service be carried on by one board. Middleton's insistence on the need for the Board most likely persuaded the ministers to bring it into existence. In the Melville manuscripts there is this note. The inefficiency of not having a Transport Board "operated so much on the mind [of Middleton] that it induced him to submit to Mr. Pitt, the absolute necessity there was for its existence;" and Pitt "was so convinced of it as immediately to put it into execution."¹ The

1. NLS, Melville MSS. 1044, f. 107.

commissioners of 1785 had pointed to the Navy Board as the most proper to conduct this service on account of there being ~~se~~^{se} officers in the commission. But the Navy Board's duties had multiplied with the growth of the navy while, as we have already observed, its constitution remained the same. Also there were transport duties under the direction of the commissioners of the Treasury for which no particular arrangement had as yet been made (most prominent—the transportation of army victuals). Therefore, it was decided to renew the establishment of a distinct Board to deal specifically with transport services. Thus the Transport Board came into existence.

The Transport Board was constituted by Order in Council on
4 July 1794:

His Majesty taking into consideration the great extent and magnitude of the transport service of the army, and that the same together with the various incidental services which have arisen in the course of the War, cannot be conducted by the Principal Officers and Commissioners of the Navy without great detriment and inconvenience to the more immediate duties of their office in attending to the concerns of the Navy, and that therefore great public benefit would arise if this important Branch, as well as those other services under the general direction of the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury for the due performance of which no particular arrangement at present exists was to be put under the management of a separate Board under the denomination of a Board for Transports. His Majesty is thereupon pleased by and with the advice of His Privy Council to approve of the Establishment of a particular Board for the conduct of the Transport Service and of those other services under the general direction of the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, for the

due performance of which no particular arrangement at present exists. Such Board to consist of three Commissioners two of whom to be officers belonging to His Majesty's Navy, and a third to manage the correspondence and accounts incident to the said Establishment.

It had been the opinion of Middleton and the commission that the transport system could only be adequately run by men experienced in naval affairs. The government appointed two sea officers of considerable experience and seniority and one civilian as commissioners of the Transport Board. Hugh Cloberry Christian Esq., Captain in the Royal Navy was appointed Chairman. Philip Patton Esq., Captain in the Royal Navy and Ambrose Serle Esq., were the two commissioners appointed to assist him.² A secretary and other

1. PRO, ADM/108/31, 20 Aug. 1794.

2. Sir Hugh Cloberry Christian (1747-1798) attained the rank of Rear-Admiral of the Blue and Commander-in-chief at the Cape of Good Hope before he died in 1798. He took part in the action off Grenada, 6 July 1779; and was present at the actions off the Chesapeake, 5 Sept. 1781; St. Kitts, 26 Jan. 1782; and Dominica, 12 April 1782. He left his position at the Transport Board after becoming Rear-Admiral of the Blue in June 1795. In November of the same year he was appointed Commander-in-chief in the West Indies.

Philip Patton (1739-1815) reached the rank of Admiral before he died in 1815. He had an active and honourable naval career, having been present in the battle of Quiberon Bay; taken part in the reduction of Havana; and having had an important share in the defeat of Langara on January 16, 1780 before being appointed one of the commissioners of the Transport Board in May 1794. In 1795 he insisted on taking his flag. Lord Spencer having found him so useful at the Transport Board tried to persuade him to stay. This failing he did not employ him.

Ambrose Serle (1742-1812), the civilian commissioner, was a Calvinistic writer before being appointed to the Transport Board in 1794. After serving under Lord Dartmouth for a considerable period, he was appointed Solicitor and Clerk of the Reports for the board of trade and soon afterward accompanied Lord Howe to America as his private secretary. At the invitation of Governor Tryon, Serle had charge of the political section of the New York Gazette from September 1776, until he departed for Philadelphia in July 1777. He left America in 1778. He was the only one of the original three

officers necessary for carrying on the transport service were appointed.¹ Many of the officers were already experienced men from various sections of the old Navy Board department. The commissioners were given a salary of £800 per annum (to each in lieu of gratuities, house, rent, coals and candles, etc. at £200 per annum). The secretary received a salary of £400 per annum. Clerks received from £250 to £80 per annum.²

On 25 September 1795 the Transport Board received the assistance of two more members, a sea officer and a civil commissioner, when the business relating to the care and custody of prisoners of war in health was transferred from the commissioners for Sick and Wounded Seamen to the Transport Board. The commission was accordingly instituted under the Great Seal, consisting of five members. They were: Rupert George Esq., Captain in the Royal Navy and chairman of the Transport Board since Christian left that post in June 1795; John Schank Esq., and William Albany Otway Esq., Captains in the Royal Navy; Ambrose Serle Esq. and John Marsh Esq.³ The branch for Sick and Wounded Seamen was transferred to the Transport Board in 1806 with one additional member, a physician.⁴ Therefore, the Transport Board

commissioners to stay on the Board throughout the war.

1. The secretary of the Transport Board throughout the war against revolutionary France was Alexander Whitehead.
2. PRO, ADM/108/31, 20 Aug. 1794.
3. PRO, ADM/1/3730, 30 Sept. 1795; see also, T/64/218, 25 Sept. 1795, f. 40.
4. Parliamentary Papers, 1809, op. cit., Ninth Report, 6.

in 1806 consisted of three divisions: a branch relating to the transport service, a branch for sick and wounded seamen, and a branch for prisoners of war. This was the constitution of the Transport Board until it went out of existence in 1816.¹

This thesis is concerned only with the branch relating to the transport service. The special duties of the Board under this division, according to the commissioners of 1809, consisted

in the hiring and appropriating of Ships and Vessels for the conveyance of Troops and Baggage, Victualling, Ordnance, Barrack, Commissariate, Naval and Military Stores of all kinds, Convicts and Stores to New South Wales, and a variety of miscellaneous Services, such as the provision of Stores and a great variety of articles for the Military Department in Canada; the purchase of annual presents for the Indians in Upper and Lower Canada; the procurement of clothing, ironmongery, and all sorts of wares, together with various articles of Stores for New South Wales, Goree, the West Indies, many articles of Store for the Cape of Good Hope, and for other foreign stations (not attached to other Boards) under the immediate direction of the Lords Commissioners of Your Majesty's Treasury, and to fulfil such Orders from other great Officers of State as may be sanctioned by their Lordships authority.²

Within this branch, however, the thesis is concerned with the hiring and appropriating of ships and vessels for the conveyance of the army — the troops and their baggage, victualling, ordnance and military stores of all kinds to the areas of military activity.

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1. In that year the Transport Office reverted to its old position — a branch of the Navy Office. A separate Transport department was re-established during the Crimean war and went out of existence at that war's termination.
 2. Parliamentary Papers, 1809, op. cit., Ninth Report, 9.

The Transport Board acting together at one table dispatched its business by common counsel and consent. When a resolution was agreed upon the initials of the members present were affixed to it and the necessary orders were given.

The chairman was always a sea officer. His special duties consisted

in presiding over and superintending the whole Office, and its various concerns; in attending the Treasury, Admiralty, Secretaries of State, and Secretary at War, for their respective directions; in occasionally, and as often as the current business of the Office will admit, visiting the Transport Yard at Deptford, and examining Ships offered for Service; in appropriating Tonnage for the various purposes required by the several Boards; in assisting at the discussions of the Board, whether upon the subject of Transports, Sick and Wounded Seamen, Hospitals, Hospital Ships, Surgeons, Prisoners of War, or the numerous Duties attached to these respective Heads of Service, with other miscellaneous directions received from government.

Since the chairman was the main channel of communication and confidence in the preparation of transports his attendance was daily and unremitting and during the war admitted of no absence.

The other two sea commissioners were chiefly employed in assisting the chairman in his various duties;

in the inspection of transports proposed for hire; in frequent visitations of Deptford Transport Yard; in the Survey, Appraisement, and Purchase of Stores, in considering the terms and conditions for Charter Parties and other Instruments belonging specially to the Service at Sea; in examining Log-books, Musters

1. Parliamentary Papers, 1809, op. cit., Ninth Report, 7.

of Men in Transports, and their Returns, transmitted by the several Agents; in pointing out neglects of Duty in Masters of Transports, and the necessary mulcts for the same, in all which Duties their assistance appear~~ed~~ highly important, as well as in the ~~then~~ current business of the Office. Excepting their occasional visitations at the Out Ports, etc. their Attendance was also constant at the Office.¹

The secretary was responsible for the correspondence of the Board; he accordingly arranged and prepared it for the Board's approval and signature. He superintended the general conduct of the office seeing that there were no irregularities or abuses, or waste of time in the several persons employed and saw that the minutes were properly kept.²

The transport agents of the Navy Board became the agents of the Transport Board.³ All new agents were selected in the future by the Transport Board but they had to receive the approval of the Admiralty. Upon its establishment the Transport Board increased the number of resident agents since they found it necessary to have a resident agent at some of the principal ports. The cadre of resident agents established by the Navy Board during the American war had been largely disbanded, and in the opening year of the French war there were two only - at Deptford and Woolwich. During that year arrangements about the hiring of transports or the conduct

1. Parliamentary Papers, 1809, op. cit., Ninth Report, 7.

2. Ibid.

3. PRO, ADM/106/2651, 23 Aug. 1794.

of embarkations at the outports or in Ireland were handled by sending an agent there to deal with each particular piece of business. The Transport Board stationed resident agents at Deptford, Woolwich, Southampton, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Gravesend, Deal, Dover, Guernsey and Cork; resident agents were sometimes stationed at Cowes, Liverpool, Spithead, Leith, Bristol and Waterford. In 1795, '96 and '97, however, several resident agents and agents afloat were dismissed because of the Board's economising efforts.¹ The duties of the resident agents and floating agents were much the same under the Transport Board as they had been under the Navy Board. Some of the instructions, however, were made more explicit. Since floating agents often received their orders through resident agents who were inferior in rank, Rear Admiral Christian and Patton drew up the following instructions and ordered it to be inserted as the 41st article of the printed general instructions to all agents. "You are at all times to receive directions upon Service from our Resident Agents, though inferior to you in Naval Rank; but, when two or more other (i.e. floating) agents are upon Service together, the Reports of each Division of transports must be collected and transmitted to us by the Senior Captain, or Lieutenant in the form of a regular abstract."² Thus the order of the naval service respecting rank was attended to while resident agents continued as channels of conveyance for orders from the Transport Board to floating agents.

1. See below, p. 233.

2. PRO, ADM/1/3741, Transport Office to E. Nepean, 19 Aug. 1801.

Soon after its creation the Transport Board resolved that "all transport agents particularly those in England and elsewhere if possible, having occasion to draw upon the Board for money, should submit at all times, their intentions with their reasons for so doing, and wait the Board's approbation and consent, previously to their issuing the bills."¹ In November 1795 floating agents were instructed to follow all orders of the convoy commander.² The Transport Board also made it explicit that if the agent was directed to hire any ships, vessels or boats of any kind, for the transport service abroad, he had to have a proper order in writing from the commander-in-chief for so doing; he had to take care to agree on the cheapest and best terms possible, and as nearly in tenor as might be to the charter-parties made at the Transport Board. The counterpart had to be sealed with his own seal; and the agreement, with a copy of the order, by which he had acted had to be transmitted by the first opportunity.³

There is much evidence that all transport agents corresponded more regularly with the Transport Board than they had with the Navy Board.⁴

31 August 1794 was the last day the transport service was officially carried on by the Navy Board. All expenses of the

1. PRO, ADM/108/31, 29 Sept. 1794.

2. PRO, ADM/1/3730, 6 Nov. 1795.

3. Article XII of printed instructions to agents of transports as found in PRO, ADM/1/3737, 14 Jan. 1799.

4. PRO, ADM/108/31 - ADM/108/70.

transport service prior to the 1st of September were settled at the Naval Office; after that period by the Transport Board. The officers of the several yards and naval officers were directed to send a separate account of the expense of transports at their port to the 31st of August.

On the 21st of that month the Admiralty ordered the Navy Board to deliver all the relevant books, papers and instruments to the newly appointed Transport Board. By 23 August the Navy Board had done so and were preparing to assign over the charter parties. On the same day the resident agents were informed that they must now correspond with the Transport Board whose office was in Dorset Square, Westminster.¹

On 12 September 1794 the commissioners of the outports were directed to deliver all books and papers relating to the business of transports to the commissioners of that department. Orders were also sent to the yards to supply the Transport Board with any articles that the transports might need immediately till further arrangements could be made. A list of all transports and all agents of transports was sent to the transport commissioners.²

The main channel of communication for the Treasury and State departments to the Admiralty respecting transports was now the Transport Board; these departments instead of writing to the Admiralty

1. PRO, ADM/106/2651, 23 Aug. 1794.

2. Ibid., 29 Aug.; 12 Sept. 1794.

communicated with the Transport Board. The secretary of state began writing directly to the Board soon after it was established, to request conveyance and then he wrote to the Admiralty to provide a proper convoy. After a while the Transport Board gradually took over from the secretary of state the duty of requesting convoy. The letters from the secretary of state to the Admiralty requesting convoy usually read: "The commissioners of Transports having been directed to provide the necessary shipping etc. I am to signify to Your Lordships His Majesty's Pleasure that a proper convoy be appointed for the protection of the transports to be employed in the execution of _____" The key words in that paragraph are 'the commissioners of transports having been directed.' Obviously the secretary of state wrote to the Transport Board first. Here is a more specific example. On 14 October 1794 Dundas wrote to the Admiralty that he had already directed the commissioners of transports to provide vessels for the reception of several officers of the Brigade of Guards, who had received orders to join the army under His Royal Highness the Duke of York. Then he asked the Admiralty to provide an escort to protect them till they reached Holland.¹ But even this kind of letter to the Admiralty becomes infrequent and disappears altogether by early 1795. From then onwards the secretary of state corresponded only with the Transport Board concerning transports.

1. PRO, ADM/1/4162, 14 Oct. 1794.

The change was gradual and took about five months to be completed. From about 25 August 1794 when the first Transport Board letters to the Admiralty appear to about January 1795, when the Transport Board had a firm hold on its duties and responsibilities the transport system was passing through a transitional phase. It was natural during this period for the Transport Board to work closely with the Navy Board to get things done. The minutes of the Navy Board for the month of August reveal that the Navy Board was advising the Transport commissioners on the procedures to take; it told them the directions that should be used and the persons who should carry them out. During this period also at the request of the commissioners of transports, the Admiralty continued to give orders to the Navy Board and Victualling Board for such stores and provisions as were needed for immediate service until the Transport Board was further prepared.¹

During the transitional period requests for convoys passed through several different channels. They were made from the secretary of state to the Admiralty,² from the Transport Board to the Admiralty via the secretary of state,³ and from the Transport Board directly to the Admiralty.⁴ The latter method became more frequent until January 1795 when it appeared to be the duty of the

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1. PRO, ADM/1/3730, 29 Aug. 1794.
 2. E. g., PRO, ADM/1/4162, 22 Nov. 1794.
 3. E. g., Ibid., 5 Sept. 1794.
 4. E. g., PRO, ADM/1/3730, 2 Oct. 1794.

Transport Board to request a convoy when informing the Admiralty about the transports which were being used. From then on the secretary of state corresponded only with the Transport Board when discussing transports. This was an important and radical change in the channel of command.

One cannot over-emphasize the authority which was conferred upon the Transport Board. It received the King's commands directly from the secretary of state instead of from the Admiralty as was the case when the transport system was conducted under the auspices of the Navy Board; it was the Transport Board which informed the Admiralty of the cabinet decision and requested a convoy at the same time; it directed the transports to the place where they were to pick up the troops; it ordered the transport agent to see that the troops were embarked and to wait for the commands of the Admiralty respecting convoy to the place of destination.

The new chain of command operated in this way. On 6 September 1794 the Transport Board wrote to the secretary to the Admiralty requesting a convoy for the transports at Spithead which were to proceed to the West Indies under the charge of Captain William Hollamby.

In obedience to the king's commands, signified to us by the Right Honorable Henry Dundas, one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, we have caused the transports, named in the inclosed list, to be fitted for the reception of troops at Portsmouth; and we acquaint you for the information of the Right Honorable the Lords Commissioners

of the Admiralty that the troops were embarked on board them on the 2nd instant and that the transports are in readiness to proceed to their place of destination under such conveyance as their Lordships may be pleased to appoint.

The information in the list given to the Admiralty by the Transport Board included the names of the transports, their tonnage, whether or not cavalry were to be embarked, the number of horses fitted for, the names of the regiments with the number of horses, men and officers to be embarked. Usually the names of the transport agents in charge of the transports were given.

There were delays in service during the transitional phase when the bulk of the transport system was being taken from under the auspices of the Navy Board and transferred to the Transport Board. Orders were slow in being sent out as the boards and departments were adjusting their procedures and correspondence to the new system.²

By the creation of a Transport Board many of the abuses revealed by the commission of naval enquiry were eliminated, the most important being the competition among the different boards for tonnage. Soon after its establishment the Transport Board made efforts of its own to eliminate some of the abuses that still existed. One of the first resolutions passed by the Transport Board was to the effect that no person belonging to, or under the direction of the Board should have any property vested in transports, nor share or shares of

1. PRO, ADM/1/3730, 6 Sept. 1794.

2. Ibid., 29 Aug. 1794.

any ships, or vessels employed as a transport, directly or indirectly, under pain of immediate dismissal from office.¹ It also appointed professional members to the staff specifically for the purpose of surveying, measuring, valuing and reporting on ships tendered for transports, thus taking the burden away from the naval officers at the yards. Almost immediately after the establishment of the Board the duty of hiring and inspecting victualling transports was taken from the Hoytaker and was given to the Transport Board. About this time also the commissioners of Victualling entered into a contract for all small craft required for the conveyance of provisions and stores to the ships in the Thames, to the establishment at Chatham, etc. The only part, therefore, now remaining of the duties stated by the commissioners of 1785 to have been at that time performed by the Hoytaker, consisted in occasionally taking up small vessels to carry provisions and stores to the outports, and in "attending the issue and loading of all provisions and stores for those ports, foreign yards, etc. attending the unloading of such provisions etc. as are returned into store, and in taking an account of remains on board ships, transports, and victuallers."²

The commissioners of the Treasury continued to work closely with the commissioners of the Victualling directing them to provide provisions; only now the Transport Board provided the tonnage necessary to convey provisions to both the army and the navy. The Transport

1. PRO, ADM/108/31, 26 Aug. 1794.

2. Parliamentary Papers, 1809, op. cit., Eleventh Report, 28.

Board was given the duty of hiring vessels to carry provisions to the army formerly undertaken by the Treasury.¹ It also asked the Admiralty for convoy for these victuallers. It should be remembered that before the Transport Board was in existence the Treasury requested convoy from the Admiralty for the victuallers.²

Soon after the Transport Board was established Charles Long, one of the joint secretaries to the Treasury, wrote to the commissioners of the Victualling directing them at the command of the commissioners "to cause ten thousand bags of biscuit containing one hundred and twelve pounds each, to be immediately provided and sent consigned to Brook Watson Esq., Commissary General, at Helvoetsluys on board such vessels as the Commissioners for the Transport Service shall be directed to engage for that service."³ In this way the Treasury directed the Victualling Board to provide provisions. One day later the Victualling Board wrote to the Transport Board for the necessary tonnage. Two days later when the Transport Board had already provided the ships to transport the bread, the Victualling Board ordered the bread to be brought from the stores at Deptford, and shipped under the direction of the army storekeeper, on board the transports that the Transport Board had provided. The bread would be replaced in the stores at Deptford in due time.⁴

1. See above, p.17.

2. See above, p.16.

3. PRO, ADM/109/102, 19 Sept. 1794.

4. PRO, ADM/109/102, 19 Sept. 1794.

The Transport Board, like its predecessor in the transport service, the Navy Board, after receiving requests for troopships, often acquainted the Victualling Board with the order to provide provisions for the passage. The Treasury made sure the Victualling Board carried out this order since provisioning the army and navy was a Treasury responsibility. To ensure the Victualling Board's compliance with any demands made upon them by the newly created Transport Board Dundas on 3 September 1794 asked the commissioners of the Admiralty

to give the necessary orders to the Commissioners of the Victualling to comply with any demands which they may receive from the Commissioners of the Transport Board, for victualling the transports under their direction, in conformity to the requisitions which in the execution of their duty, they may make from time to time to the abovementioned office.¹

However, a dispute arose between the Transport Board and the Victualling Office concerning the chain of command soon after the Transport Board was established. This dispute concerned the giving of sailing orders to the masters of victuallers. In September 1794 several letters passed between the Transport Board and the commissioners of the Victualling in which there seemed to be some difference of opinion respecting the conduct of the victualling transports. In one letter the commissioners of the Victualling claimed

1. PRO, ADM/1/4162, 3 Sept. 1794.

a right to send out provisions, and by that right to give their directions for the movements of the transports, not admitting that the Transport Board had any power to do more than to hire in the first instance, and found this right upon the directions of the Right Honorable Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to them.

The dispute began when the Victualling Board gave sailing orders to the master of the Active victualling transport which was laden by that Board to proceed to Spithead and received a letter of remonstrance from the Transport Board. The Transport Board was of the opinion that "the victualling service should extend no further than with respect to the time of receiving and the species of provisions they had occasion to embark."² The Transport Board required of them by a letter of 5 September the information for whom and to what place the victuallers were to proceed.³ Subsequently, on 20 September the Transport Board laid copies of the correspondence between the two Boards before the Admiralty. It wished the Admiralty to settle the dispute and give directions to the Victualling Board accordingly.⁴ It seems reasonable to conclude that the Admiralty deemed it the duty of the Transport Board to give sailing orders to victuallers for the succeeding letters between the Transport Board

1. PRO, ADM/1/3730, 20 Sept. 1794.

2. Ibid., 17 Sept. 1794.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., 20 Sept. 1794.

and the Admiralty concerning the appointment of a convoy for victuallers reveal that the Transport Board had already given the victuallers orders to proceed.¹

By 6 October it was clear that the Transport Board had won the dispute with the Victualling Board. On that day the Transport Board wrote to the Admiralty

the Commissioners of the Victualling having reported to us that the Bessey victualling transport, John Coverdale, Master, had completed her lading of victualling stores for the leeward Islands, and having ordered her to proceed to the Nore in her way to Spithead; we acquaint you therewith, for the information of the Right Honorable the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that their Lordships may be pleased to appoint a convoy.²

The Transport Board had ordered the Bessey victualler to proceed and were now requesting convoy. Letters to the Admiralty requesting convoy for victuallers in future conformed to this pattern.

The Ordnance Board ceased to hire its own vessels once the Transport Board came into being. It wrote to the Transport Board to provide tonnage for ordnance and other stores. The Transport Board informed the Admiralty that the transports had been provided and were ready to sail under the charge of a specific transport agent. At the same time the Board requested a convoy. The Transport Board had also acquired the duty of ordering the convoy for ordnance vessels

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1. On 17 Sept. the Victualling Board was informed that the Transport Board conceived it most regular and advantageous to appoint agents under the Transport Board's direction to proceed with the victuallers when laden. PRO, ADM/108/31, 17 Sept. 1794.
 2. PRO, ADM/1/3730, 6 Oct. 1794.

as it had for victuallers.¹

The Transport Board had to meet five days a week; and the commissioners decided to meet on Saturday if an absolute necessity demanded it. From the very beginning it proved necessary that the Transport Board meet on Saturday and it continued to have a six day week throughout the war. It relayed all information regarding its activities to the Admiralty and in return the Board executed orders with respect to transports wanted for the navy or victualling service. When tonnage was required for the conveyance of troops or stores application was made to the Transport Board from the several departments, and they were usually provided without delay. Any requisitions for transports which demanded particular consideration or incurred great expense, however, had to receive the sanction or direction of the Treasury or the Admiralty.² Throughout the war instructions were issued and improvisations made by the Admiralty and the Transport Board to increase the efficiency of the transport service. For example, in October 1795 the Admiralty instructed the Transport Board to transmit to the Admiralty a list showing the navy and army victuallers and storeships employed in the transport service, the place from which they sailed and their proposed destination. The list submitted four times a month looked like the

1. PRO, ADM/1/3730, 20 Oct. 1794.

2. Parliamentary Papers, 1809, op. cit., Ninth Report, 9;
PRO, T/64/218, 25 Sept. 1795 f. 40.

following:¹

List of navy and army victuallers and store
ships employed in the transport service

	<u>At What Place</u>	<u>Service Ordered On</u>	<u>Navy Vict.</u>		<u>Army Vict.</u>		<u>Naval Store Ships</u>	
			<u>Ships</u>	<u>Tons</u>	<u>Ships</u>	<u>Tons</u>	<u>Ships</u>	<u>Tons</u>
Example:	Sailed from Portsmouth	With provisions for the West Indies	4	670	4	1002	—	—

This request of the Admiralty was adhered to throughout the war. After a little more than a year in office the Transport Board displayed signs of precision and organisation and its methods achieved a degree of efficiency.

The minutes devoted to the transport system while conducted under the auspices of the Navy Board constituted about one and one half pages daily. By contrast the Transport Board minutes averaged about ten pages per day. One must remember that the Transport Board

1. PRO, ADM/1/3730, October 1795.

acquired the duty of hiring army victuallers and ordnance transports, a duty which the Navy Board did not have. But taking this into consideration there is still sufficient proof that a much more detailed and conscientious effort to supply army and navy transports and victuallers efficiently was taking place. It stands to reason that a Transport Board set up specifically to deal with these problems could give undivided attention to them, whereas, the Navy Board with its duties and obligations to naval affairs as well as the transport service could not.¹

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1. The bulk of the correspondence between the different branches of government concerning the transport service was undertaken by the following people during the war against revolutionary France.

E. Nepean, secretary to H. Dundas until 1795.

P. Stephens, " " " after 1795.

P. Stephens, secretary to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty until 1795.

E. Nepean, secretary " " " " " " Admiralty after 1795.

G. Rose and C. Long, joint secretaries to the Lords Comms. of the Treasury.

See G. Yonge, Sec. of War until July 1794.

W. Windham, " " " after " "

H. Martin, Comptroller of the Navy Board.

A. Whitehead, secretary of the Transport Board.

G. Cherry Esq., Chairman of Victualling Board until 1800.

J. Marsh, " " " " after 1800.

J. Crewe, secretary to the Master General of Ordnance.

CHAPTER III

THE TAKING UP OF SHIPS AS TRANSPORTS

There were advantages for the merchant in letting his ship to government service in wartime. Such wartime fears, as interference from the enemy, delays of convoy and difficulties of manning¹ were eliminated. If a merchant's trade was completely cut off due to the war, tendering his ship to the government avoided the difficulty of putting his ship to a new trade. By letting his ship to the government the merchant's earnings were assured, and these earnings compared favourably with those earned in peacetime. The government paid in case of capture or damage that was not due to negligence. When the British Navy established her supremacy on the seas and the interference from the enemy was practically eliminated then the government had to offer compensation to the merchant adequate to the sacrifice demanded of him. When a merchant returned home safely with a cargo of goods, his profits were high, for goods were scarce during wartime. But many merchants preferred to let their ships to the government rather than take this gamble.²

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1. Merchant seamen on board ships let to the government were supposed to be free from impressment. See below, p. 201.
 2. An approximation of British merchant ships taken between 1793-1802 was 3,919. 799 were retaken leaving 3,120 in the enemy's hands. Losses during the American war of independence were 3,386 much the same as during the French revolutionary war. However losses during the French war were proportionately less because during that war there were more merchant ships engaged in a more extensive trade. (These figures were drawn up by John Bennett, the First Secretary of Lloyds.) Charles Wright & C. Ernest Fayle. A History of Lloyd's (London, 1928), 183.

The government wanted ships to transport troops, provisions, horses and stores. It needed small bread ships (about 100 tons) to carry bread to Holland; it needed large East Indiamen (about 700 and 800 tons) to carry troops and supplies to Capetown and the East Indies. But most of the vessels taken up by the transport service during the war against revolutionary France averaged between 150 and 300 tons.

Since the government wanted to hire transports that would give the best performance possible with little delay for damages and repairs, sheathed vessels were much preferred to unsheathed ones, and those sheathed with copper were preferred to those sheathed with wood.¹ In September 1796 all the transports not copper sheathed were ordered home from the West Indies.² As an incentive to owners to sheath their ships a higher rate was paid to sheathed vessels and a still higher rate was paid to those sheathed with copper instead of wood. Wood sheathing did not last as long as copper and might have been destroyed by worms in one year. For example, wood sheathing that was put on the Sea Nymph in 1796 was found to have been destroyed in 1797 by the time she returned from the West Indies.³

1. Copper sheathing was introduced into the navy during the American revolution. Robert G. Albion. Forests and sea power, The timber problem of the Royal Navy, 1652-1862 (Cambridge Mass, 1926), 11.

2. PRO, ADM/108/53, 13 April 1798.

3. PRO, ADM/108/49, 14 Oct. 1797.

The cost of sheathing a three hundred tons ship with wood was £158. The cost of sheathing a vessel of the same tonnage with copper was £629. However copper endured on an average, upwards of six years, and then was worth one half its original value - as in three years it was worth three fourths - and so in proportion. Merchant ships sheathed with copper were generally sheathed with wood first, and then, if in other respects good, they generally ran a period of six years, without requiring any repairs to the bottom. Therefore, H. Boyce, the Shipwright Officer at Deptford, thought that in valuing the ship copper sheathing should have been estimated at the charge of both.¹ But the government met with difficulty in procuring copper bottomed vessels unless at an extravagant rate.²

When tonnage was needed to convoy troops, provisions, cavalry and stores the government sometimes advertised in newspapers. But more generally notice was sent to the Exchange and Coffee Houses for the amount of freight for a particular expedition. Lloyd's Coffee House had become the centre for marine insurance during the eighteenth century and was frequented by owners of ships and ships' brokers. Lloyd's kept in close touch with the Admiralty throughout the war against revolutionary France. When the Transport Board came into existence notice of the need for ships was put up also in the waiting room of the Transport Office where ship owners and

1. PRO, ADM/108/49, 14 Oct. 1797.

2. PRO, ADM/108/50, 23 Nov. 1797.

brokers continually reported.

The broker was the intermediary between the government and the ship owner. Before the Transport Board was established nearly two thirds of the ships that were hired as transports by the several boards were tendered by not more than a dozen persons and had been in the charge of one broker, George Brown & Co. When the tendering of transports was in the hands of George Brown the price at which the public would be supplied with transports was rather fixed by him and he would recommend to the owners not to tender their ship until they obtained their price.¹ After the establishment of the Transport Board more and more brokers were used as part of a deliberate policy to break the monopoly held by a few brokers.² By the close of the war the Board held contracts with between 300 and 400 different persons many of whom were the actual owners.³ Sometimes the Board bypassed brokers and did business with individual owners.⁴

The deciding factor as to whether or not a broker on behalf of an owner or the owner himself would tender a ship to the transport

1. NLS, Melville MSS. 1044, f. 109; PRO, ADM/106/2644-2651.

2. PRO, ADM/108/31-70; ADM/108/158, 159. Some of the brokers who most frequently did business with the Transport Board were: George Brown & Co., James and Joseph Dawson, Gardner & Angus, James Duncan, William Beatson, John Tullock, and Thomas Jameson.

3. NLS, Melville MSS. 1044, f. 109.

4. PRO, ADM/108/158; ADM/108/163, 26 Sept. 1799. It should be noted that members of Parliament could not tender ships to the Transport Board. ADM/108/61, 17 July 1799.

service was the rate of pay then being offered by the government. The rate of pay plus the elimination of war risks had to offset the sacrifice of a possibly lucrative trade.

The rate of pay differed according to the way the transport was taken up. Transports were taken up on tonnage or on freight. Transports on tonnage were hired at a certain rate per ship ton for each month they were employed in the service. Transports on tonnage were of two descriptions: regular transports or those taken up for six months certain; and those engaged for only three months certain. Transports taken up on freight were hired in three separate ways: they were hired at a certain rate per ton for the quantity of stores conveyed to a particular destination.¹ They were hired at a certain rate per man, woman, or child, for the number conveyed to a particular destination.² And they were hired by the run; that is, at a certain fixed sum of money for the use of a ship to convey to a particular destination such stores or persons as might be shipped on board.³

Public benefit required the government to hire transports at the lowest rates possible while still maintaining its requirements for strong, seaworthy vessels suitable for conveying troops, provisions

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1. E. g., PRO, ADM/106/2645, 2 March 1793; ADM/108/38, 20 Aug. 1796.
 2. E. g., PRO, ADM/108/50, 27 Nov. 1797; ADM/108/66, 20 Feb. 1800; NMM, ADM/R.P./2, 26 Aug. 1794.
 3. E. g., PRO, ADM/106/2651, 12 Aug. 1794; ADM/1/3735, 19 March 1798; ADM/108/61, 29 June 1799, see also, Parliamentary Papers, 1809, op. cit. Ninth Report, 13.

and stores. However, the government had to offer prices that were consistent with the cost of living. As the cost of stores and provisions rose and wages increased the government raised the freight rate of transports. Also it was reasonable for the government to expect freight rates to be higher in wartime because of the danger of privateers and enemy fleets. Since trade was seasonal which effected the amount of shipping space available at different times of the year the prices of transports hired on freight fluctuated much more than those hired on tonnage. When Britain established her supremacy on the seas freight rates still could not be reduced. The merchant had to be offered adequate compensation for sacrificing a very profitable trade when tendering his ship to the government; and during the war against revolutionary France Britain's trade had been extended beyond that of even the most flourishing periods of peace.¹ The price the government offered to owners was also determined by the progress of the war and the increased demand for transports. When the demand for transports was great the government was willing to pay a higher price.

Throughout the eighteenth century there had been a long time stability in ^{freight} freight rates. The peacetime rates were about 10/- to 11/- per ship ton.² The usual price at which the Navy

1. PRO, Customs 17/18, f. 1.

2. Ralph Davis. The Rise of the English Shipping Industry in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries (London & New York, 1962), 223.

Board contracted for ships on tonnage during the American war of independence was 11/- per ship ton per month. Due to an increased demand for transports, however, the rate was increased to 12/- in 1778.¹ The Navy Board had hoped at the beginning of the war against revolutionary France to again pay 11/- per ship ton.² Just before the outbreak of war, it had contracted with George Brown for seven ships to convey troops at that price.³ However by February 1793 Brown would not accept less than 12/- per ship ton per month.⁴ By May 1794 he would not accept less than 13/- per ton.⁵ The Navy Board reluctantly accepted these terms which were an increase of 2/- per ton per month over a period of fifteen months. In the interest of the public, however, the Navy Board tried to keep the freight rates as low as possible. The Transport Board's efforts to employ ships from many owners and brokers was in keeping with these wishes. But as the war progressed the costs of provisions and stores rose and wages increased. It was inevitable that the owners would demand higher freight rates. By 18 March 1796 the owners of regular transport ships at London, Sunderland, North Shields, South Shields, Whitby and Newcastle upon Tyne had sent several memorials asking for an increased allowance of freight in consequence of increasing wages and the high cost of provisions.⁶ By 5 April 1796 the Transport

1. Syrett, *op. cit.*, 101, 107. For a short period during the American war the Treasury offered 12/6 a ton. Add. MSS., 38343.

2. PRO, ADM/106/2644, 19 Feb. 1793.

3. PRO, ADM/106/2643, 28 Dec. 1792.

4. PRO, ADM/106/2644, 22 Feb. 1795.

5. PRO, ADM/106/2650, 10 May 1794.

6. PRO, ADM/108/5, 18 March 1796.

Board had to consent to an increase of 2/- per ton per month to sheathed vessels.¹ That meant that regular sheathed vessels were now being hired at 15/- per ton. By early 1798 a reduction in the demand for and expenses of shipping enabled the Transport Board to resolve that the additional allowances would cease on 4 July 1798 for wooden sheathed vessels.² They would be hired at the old rate of 13/- per ship ton, the same as unsheathed vessels. The owners of these vessels could lay claim to 2/- per ton by sheathing their ships with copper. The government allowed them ten days to do this and added the value of the copper to the value of the ship.³ This reduced rate of pay which lasted from 5 July 1798 to 5 April 1799 saved the government about £40,000.⁴ By 1799 the difficulties the Board was experiencing in trying to hire six months ships at 13/- a ton, and the statements of the memorialists, convinced the Board that the price of naval stores, the pay of seamen, and the increased demand of shipping, through the vast increase of trade, justified an advance in the price of freight.⁵ From 5 April 1799 the basic freight of a wooden sheathed transport was raised from 13/- to 14/6 per ton.⁶ And the freight of a copper sheathed transport

1. PRO, ADM/108/42, 30 Nov. 1796; ADM/108/158, 30 Jan. 1799.

2. PRO, ADM/108/5, 24 June 1796; ADM/108/51, 5 Jan. 1798; ADM/108/52, 22 Feb. 1798.

3. PRO, ADM/108/57, 15 Nov. 1798.

4. PRO, ADM/108/58, 30 Jan. 1799.

5. PRO, ADM/108/58, 19, 23, 30 Jan. 1799.

6. PRO, ADM/108/60, 23 April 1799.

was raised from 15/- per ton per month to 16/- per ton.¹

However the Transport Board met with difficulty in obtaining tonnage even at the new rate on account of the vast increase in every branch of trade.² When it sought tonnage for the Mediterranean Victualling service in May 1799, the broker, James Duncan, replied to its request by saying that "the great encouragement shipowners receive in the Merchant Service, makes them disinclined to government service, unless higher terms be offered."³ Lieutenant Flinn, the Transport Board's Agent in Cork, wrote three days later that he was having difficulty in obtaining tonnage. And the following day the Transport Board learned that because of the scarcity of tonnage troops were accumulating at Duncannon Fort and New Geneva Barracks.⁴ In the meantime preparations for Abercromby's invasion of the Continent were taking place. For these preparations the Transport Board relied heavily on the transports already in the service. The Board refused to discharge any of its transports even at the persistent request of the owners.⁵ By the end of October the owners had written several memorials to the Transport Board requesting an increase in

1. PRO, ADM/108/60, 30 April 1799.

2. PRO, ADM/108/60, 6 May 1799; ADM/1/3737, 20 Feb. 1799.

3. Ibid., 22 May 1799.

4. Ibid., 23 May 1799; 24 May 1799.

5. Ibid., 17 Aug. 1799.

the freight rate or permission to withdraw their ships from the service.¹ The Transport Board's reply to the memorialists was that it had not the power to raise the price of freight then established; but that it would discharge those transports that wished to leave the department as soon as the public service would admit.²

The public service did not admit the discharge of transports until January 1800. At that time the Transport Board began to discharge the three months ships as they returned from Guernsey and Jersey.³

At this time the Transport Board was also in the process of seeking authorization for an increase of pay for regular transports. By June 1800 an agreement was reached with the Treasury, under which wooden sheathed ships received 18/- per ship ton and copper sheathed ships 19/6. The new rates were to be effective from the previous first of January. Copper sheathed ships were given the additional 1/6 per ship ton per month as an encouragement to owners to copper them. It was also considered just and reasonable that unsheathed vessels should be paid 16/- per ship ton from 1 January 1800 in place of the previous rate of 13/-.⁴ These rates continued until the Treaty of Amiens.

1. PRO, ADM/108/63, 28 Sept. 1799; 2 Oct. 1799; ADM/108/64, 30 Oct. 1799.

2. PRO, ADM/108/64, 30 Oct. 1799.

3. PRO, ADM/108/66, 2 Jan. 1800. Because of the scarcity of shipping in 1799 Captain Popham, the Transport Board agent on the Continent, hired 15 ships in the Baltic to transport troops, provisions and supplies to the Texel; see below p. 243.

4. PRO, ADM/108/67, 4 June; 13 June; 20 June 1800; see also, WO 1/800, 18, 21 March 1800.

Transports on tonnage for less than six months were always hired at a higher rate and they were usually not guaranteed against capture.¹ Ships engaged for three months were hired at the beginning of the war at £4.10.0 per ship ton per month. After 1799 the Transport Board was paying as high as £6.0.0 per ship ton for three months ships. When the three months ships' time of hire was up and they were continued in the service they were paid as regular transports.²

The Transport Board did not employ ships from brokers who offered new and extraordinary proposals.³ But often exorbitant rates and unnecessary expense of demurrage were paid to vessels hired for short services and for emergencies. For example, between 16 and 23 May 1796, Captain Lecky, the transport agent at Cape Nicola Mole, in the West Indies, took up eight ships for six months, by order of Major General Forbes, at an expense of £30,000. Two were chartered to convey troops at 40/- per ship ton (at this time the usual price paid to sheathed vessels to convey troops was 15/- per ship ton); four were hired at 30/- per ship ton to convey provisions, barracks, ordnance and hospital stores and two more were hired to convey provisions, one at £400 per month for five months and the other at £600 per month for six months.⁴ Transactions of

1. PRO, ADM/108/46, 19 May 1797.

2. PRO, ADM/1/3739, 25 June 1800; see also: ADM/108/158; ADM/108/61, 10 July 1799.

3. PRO, ADM/108/37, 12 July 1796.

4. PRO, ADM/108/19, 4 July 1796; see also: ADM/108/48, 17 Aug. 1797; ADM/1/3735, 19 March 1798.

this kind were made out of necessity by transport agents and by commanding officers. The latter had the added difficulty of a lack of knowledge of shipping especially regarding size and price.

In some cases of exorbitant rates collusion was suspected. Then the Attorney and Solicitor General were consulted and orders were issued by the Treasury that the bills were not to be accepted unless under legal compulsion. It was intended to give the parties an opportunity to come to a fair settlement. If they did not then the owners would risk disclosure of their malpractices in the court.¹

Transports on tonnage were paid in navy bills drawn upon the Treasury. Advances of money were made to the owners of transports at stated periods, in part payment of the freight due for the hire of the vessels. However, the Navy Board and then the Transport Board always reserved the amount of six months pay from regular transports to enable the government to indemnify itself for any claims which it might have upon the owners.²

The rate of pay for transports hired on freight varied much more than the rate of pay of regular transports. Also their pay was considerably higher since they were employed for an uncertain period of time. Transports on freight were used much more during the French war than they were during the American war.

1. PRO, ADM/108/37, 30 July 1796; see also: ADM/108/5, 6 Aug. 1796.

2. Parliamentary Papers, 1809, op. cit., Ninth Report, 11; see also W.O.1/800, 21 March 1800, f. 415.

The price of transports on freight like the price of transports on tonnage was effected by the inflation that prevailed in Britain in the 1790's. Here are several examples.

In the early part of the war the cost of conveying troops per head to the West Indies was about £4.0.0. By the spring of 1796, because of the rise in the cost of provisions and stores and because of increased wages, the cost had risen to £5.0.0 or £6.0.0.¹ As early as 2 March 1793, the Navy Board was paying for freight of provisions from London to Barbados at the rate of 27/6 per ton of provisions.² By the summer of 1796 the Transport Board was willing to pay 70/- per ton to the West Indies. At this time it would pay 40/- per ton for the freight of stores to Gibraltar, and 50/- per ton to Corsica.³ It now allowed twenty days for loading in the Thames⁴ in contrast to 1793 when seven to ten days were allowed for loading. By September of 1796 the Board allowed another increase of 10/- per ton on stores to Gibraltar. At this time also an increase was made in the amount of demurrage allowed. Demurrage began once the transports on freight were reported ready by the owner. In the early part of the war, the demurrage allowed was 13/- per ship ton and by the summer of 1796 it had risen to 15/- per ship ton on sheathed ships.⁵

1. PRO, ADM/108/158.

2. PRO, ADM/106/2645, 2 March 1793.

3. Early figures as a basis of comparison for Gibraltar and Corsica have not been found.

4. PRO, ADM/108/38, 20 Aug. 1796.

5. PRO, ADM/108/39, 8 Sept. 1796.

The reduction in the demand for and expenses of shipping in 1798 affected the prices offered to transports on freight as it had to transports on tonnage. As a result the Board was able to resolve that all ships taken up on freight on and after 9 January 1798 would be allowed no more than 13/- per ship ton demurrage at however high a rate their whole tonnage was engaged.¹ (Demurrage remained at 13/- per ship ton for ships on freight throughout the war against revolutionary France.) In 1798 there was a noticeable decrease in the cost of sending troops and provisions and stores to the West Indies. The rate per head for troops dropped from £6.0.0 to £4.4.0. And the cost of sending provisions and ordnance to the West Indies fell to 40/- from 70/- at which it had stood during the two previous years. However, by the end of 1799 and early 1800 all these rates had again risen to the 1796 level.²

Transports on freight like transports on tonnage were paid in navy bills drawn upon the Treasury. Transports on freight hired to convey stores and provisions had their whole freight paid on certificates being produced showing that the cargo had been delivered.³ Transports on freight hired to convey troops received half freight in advance and the second half was paid when the Board received certificates of debarkation.⁴

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1. PRO, ADM/108/51, 5 Jan. 1798.
 2. PRO, ADM/108/158, 159.
 3. PRO, ADM/108/38, 20 Aug. 1796.
 4. PRO, ADM/108/158, f. 3.

Near the close of 1796 the Transport Board began to utilise merchant ships to convey officers to the West Indies. The Board preferred this to appropriating one or more transports for the purpose. The merchant was given £10.0.0 for each officer's passage plus 1/3 a day for his victualling.¹ On 9 March 1797 the Transport Board in conjunction with the Treasury decided to make an allowance of twenty guineas to each officer in lieu of providing him with a passage. The twenty guineas was to be paid to the master of the merchant ship on board which the officer might embark, on production of the necessary documents from the Duke of York's office of his having actually received orders for sailing to the West Indies. Passage money was also given to such officers whose names had been transmitted to him through the Transport Board.² This allowance was given for passage of officers to the West Indies only and not to any other theatre of the war.³ Even though officers were conveyed by these means to the Caribbean throughout the war against revolutionary France the Transport Board was disappointed in the response of merchantmen to this practice. Thus, in 1799 an insertion was made in the charter parties of victuallers that those ships must receive a certain number of officers together with their men.⁴

1. PRO, ADM108/42, 15 Dec. 1796.

2. PRO, ADM/108/44, 9 March 1797; 18 March 1797; ADM/108/6, 8 March 1797.

3. PRO, ADM/108/44, 21 March 1797.

4. PRO, ADM/108/19, 29 Dec. 1796; ADM/108/46, 16 May 1797;
see below, p. 100.

A ship tendered as a transport on tonnage had to be surveyed, measured and valued. The ship was surveyed to see if she was fit to be a transport. She had to be measured in order to ascertain her tonnage since the owner of the transport was paid monthly according to the tons burden of the ship. Finally she was valued in order that just compensation would be made to the owner in case of capture or accident.

The Navy Board's method of surveying, measuring and valuing a ship was expensive, time consuming and injurious to other dockyard services. It consisted of three inspections made by its agent at Deptford together with the Deptford dockyard officers. The first inspection to see if the vessel tendered was fit for a transport, was made by the Master Attendant and the Clerk of the Survey in one boat, the Builders Assistants in another and the Foreman with the Agent in the third. If the vessel was found fit for service the master was directed to put her into dock or upon the ground in order to be measured.¹ The Navy Board measured the ship in accordance with the Act of 1773 and the Navy Board order of 1781. The Act of 1773 stipulated:

The Length shall be taken on a straight line along the rabbet of the keel of the ship, from the back of the main stern-post to a perpendicular line from the forepart of the main stem under the bowsprit, from which subtracting three-fifths of the breadth, the remainder shall be esteemed the just length of

1. Parliamentary Papers, 1809, op. cit., Ninth Report, 5.

the keel to find the tonnage; and the breadth shall be taken from the outside of the outside plank in the broadest place of the ship, be it either above or below the main wales, exclusive of all manner of doubling planks that may be wrought on the side of the ship; then multiplying the length of the keel by the breadth so taken, and the product by half the breadth and dividing the whole by ninety-four, the quotient shall be deemed the true contents of the tonnage.

On 16 February 1781 the Navy Board modified the method for calculating the breadth of the ship when it ordered that "the Plank or Thickstuff above or below the Wale where taken all that it exceeds the Thickness of the Plank of the Bottom" should be subtracted from the breadth of the ship. Thus the following formula was used by the officers of the Royal dockyards to ascertain the tonnage of the ship:

$$\frac{(L - 3/5B) \times B \times B/2}{94}$$

This was the formula used by the Navy Board in measuring vessels until 1835 when a more scientific method of measurement was introduced.¹

While the ship was on the ground having her dimensions taken her bottom was also inspected. This second inspection and measurement was performed by the same officers and agent who performed the first. If the vessel was approved the master was ordered to take his provisions and stores on board and proceed to Deptford. When

1. For the Act of 1773 see The Mariner's Mirror 1958, vol. 44, Answers - "Tonnage Measurement", 161-2. For the Navy Board order of 1781 see Syrett, op. cit., 139. For another account of Navy Board measurement in the 18th century see Burney, William, ed. A New Universal Dictionary of the Marine; Being etc. (London, 1815), 568-9. For a brief history of early tonnage measurement see William Salisbury's "Early Tonnage Measurement in England", The Mariner's Mirror 1966, vol. 52, 51.

the ship arrived at Deptford a third inspection was made by the same persons with the addition of the Master Mastmaker, Foreman of the Riggers, the Clerk of the Survey's Clerk, the Master Sailmaker and some of his Assistants, the Master Joiner for marking out cabins, and the Clerk of the Check for mustering the crew. The value of the ship and stores was recorded in the Clerk of the Survey's office. When her owner reported her ready to enter into pay she was delivered into the charge of an agent, fitted out and hastened on the service for which she was intended.¹

If the tides were favourable these duties were usually performed in a week's time. It can easily be seen how a great part of the time of the dockyard officers was taken up by this service.

When the Transport Board came into existence it was aware of the disadvantages inherent in the old method of surveying and measuring transports on tonnage. Therefore, very soon after its establishment, on 30 August 1794, the Board adopted a plan for taking up transports according to their registered tonnage, that is, the tonnage registered with the Customs officials in accordance with the Act of Parliament of 1786.² The plan was proposed by an experienced official, Captain Bowen,³ who pointed out that the shipowners would register the tonnage of their vessels with the surveyors of the

1. Parliamentary Papers, 1809, op. cit., Ninth Report, 5.

2. 26 George III, c.60, see Appendix, p. 327.

3. He had been employed by the Navy Board and then the Transport Board, in taking up and equipping transports in the Thames.

Customs as low as possible. Therefore, it was in the interest of the Board to use the ship's tonnage as registered.¹ Captain Bowen calculating on several vessels then in the service, stated the measured tonnage of those vessels to be on an average about seven percent beyond the tonnage registered at the Customs.² Thus, taking up ships by their registered tonnage instead of measured tonnage saved the time of a number of navy yard officials and prevented undue expense and inconvenience. If the figures in the Melville papers can be taken as correct, the amount of money saved to the public between the years of 1795 and 1806, by the adoption of this plan, was £261,980.³ It is possible, however, that the financial benefits derived from this change were eliminated by the higher ton rate; that rate might have been occasioned by the increased pressure from owners and brokers to get the ton rate raised because the Board was paying less for their ships.

When the tender of a ship was accepted by the Transport Board the ship was sent down to the Transport Office at Deptford, where she was surveyed and valued and a report was made out and returned. The report according to the form issued by the Transport Office specified the ship's tonnage by register, her class, whether Ship, Brig, Snow etc., her height from deck to deck and from deck to beam, whether sheathed or unsheathed and when and where built.⁴

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1. PRO, ADM/108/31, 30 Aug. 1794; Parliamentary Papers, 1809, op. cit., Ninth Report, 12.
 2. Parliamentary Papers, 1809, op. cit., Ninth Report, 12.
 3. NLS, Melville MSS. 1044, f. 111.
 4. Parliamentary Papers, 1809, op. cit., Ninth Report, 10.

The survey team under the Transport Board consisted of Captain Rains, the Inspecting Agent of Transports, and H. Y. Boyce, the Shipwright Officer.¹ Captain Rains estimated the rigging, sails, cables, anchors and other equipment; H. Y. Boyce valued the hull, masts, yards, pumps, boats and carpenter's stores. This valuation was transmitted, in a form prescribed, to the Transport Office, and deposited with the Accountant for the transport service.² None of the inferior officers who conducted the surveying and measuring for the Navy Board were employed by the Transport Board. By 1801 the Admiralty thought a Sea Commissioner should sanction or reject the report of the survey team by his own personal inspection. Thus, in April of that year, a naval professional member of the Board was added to the survey team. With the Inspecting Agent and Shipwright Officer at Deptford he had to testify to the vessel's fitness to be a transport by signing his name upon the report before the ship would be engaged.³

If the ship was approved the owner or broker was notified to fit the ship for service on his part. When the owner made known the fact that the ship was fitted and manned according to the terms of the charter party, she entered into pay.⁴

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1. PRO, ADM/108/31, 26 Aug. 1794; ADM/108/33, 8 Dec. 1794; Lieutenant Uzuld was Inspecting Agent for the first three months of the Transport Board's existence. ADM/108/31, 1 Sept. 1794.
 2. Parliamentary Papers, 1809, op. cit., Ninth Report, 10.
 3. PRO, ADM/108/69, 13 April 1801.
 4. Parliamentary Papers, 1809, op. cit., Ninth Report, 10.

The method of taking up tonnage when the Victualling Board and Ordnance Board hired their own ships was not according to the measured tonnage of the ship, but according to the quantity of the stores put on board, a method subject to a variety of abuses also noticed by the Commissioners of Naval Enquiry appointed in 1785. The Hoytaker at Deptford checked the tonnage of the stores laden for the Victualling Board and the Inspector of Shipping did the same for the Ordnance Board. But nobody checked the Hoytaker or the Inspector of Shipping. Thus, the amount the public was to pay to transport provisions and ordnance stores depended entirely upon the integrity of these two men. The commissioners of enquiry strongly suspected that the nature of the report too often depended upon the fees.¹

It is not difficult to comprehend the extraordinary expense and other disadvantages which attended the hiring of transports by persons not acquainted with shipping and naval affairs. When the Transport Board came into existence and took over the business of hiring vessels for the Ordnance and Victualling Boards it eliminated the above abuses and eliminated the competition of those two Boards in hiring vessels.

It is only fair to note that Lord Cornwallis, the Master General of the Ordnance, was not pleased with the way the Transport Board hired vessels for the Ordnance. In 1796 he advocated restoring the provisions of transports to the Ordnance Board. He complained

1. Parliamentary Papers, 1806, op. cit., Eighth Report, 574-5; see above, p. 45.

that many of the accidents that happened to the Ordnance transports and the delay which the service experienced in shipping the stores would have been in a great degree avoided, "if the duty of hiring the transports had been committed to the care of those who by long habit and experience in the peculiar duty of shipping ordnance stores must be most capable of judging what description of vessels are best suited for that service, and would feel the whole responsibility resting on themselves only in case of any neglect or misconduct."¹ However, the Transport Board continued to hire vessels for the Ordnance until the end of the war. Ships loading with Ordnance stores were always under the management of the Ordnance officers.²

Vessels tendered on freight to carry troops had to be surveyed and reported on by the Deptford officers, in the same manner as has been described with regard to the regular transports. When approved the owner or broker had to prepare the ships on his part, that is, provide the necessary stores, provisions and crew. At the same time an order was given to the transport accountant to make out a charter party. It was the duty of the Inspecting Agent and Shipwright Officer to fit the transport at the expense of the government with berths, hammocks and other necessaries for

1. PRO/30/11/236, Cornwallis to Dundas, 10 March 1796.

2. PRO, ADM/108/31, 24 Sept. 1794.

troops.¹ The government hired many ships on freight at a certain rate per head to carry troops to the West Indies.²

Transports hired on freight to carry stores were taken up and examined in the same way. If the ship was found fit a charter party was drawn up and the vessel hastened by the owner or broker to the place where the stores were to be laden. The Navy, Ordnance or Victualling Boards appointed their own officers to superintend the lading. According to the proviso inserted in the tender of these ships in 1796 the persons to be received and victualled if necessary were not to exceed four to every hundred tons of stores at the rate of two tons freight for the passage of each man or woman, and half that rate for each child.³ Transports hired at a certain rate per ton usually received demurrage of 13/- per ton per month.⁴

Transports by the run were usually hired at the Out Ports of Leith, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Liverpool, Dublin and Cork where the demand for short services was greatest. The prices for freightage from place to place was generally well known. The transports were hired by the transport agents at these ports in consultation with the Transport Board. If the situation was urgent and would not admit of delay the transport agent stated the reasons for having acted without consultation and forwarded the necessary vouchers for the Board's inspection.⁵

1. See below, p. 95.

2. PRO, ADM/108/158.

3. PRO, ADM/108/42, 15 Dec. 1796.

4. PRO, ADM/108/62, 10 Aug. 1799; ADM/108/158.

5. Parliamentary Papers, 1809, op. cit., Ninth Report, 14.

Most ships hired on the run were employed for about twenty days; if detained after that demurrage of one pound a day was paid.¹

When a ship was approved as a transport a charter party or contract was drawn up between the owner or broker and the Transport Board. The charter parties used by the Transport Board were similar to those of the Navy Board. In fact soon after the establishment of the Transport Board five hundred copies of charter parties similar to those used by the Navy Office were ordered to be printed for the use of the Transport Office.²

The outstanding features of a charter party were certain obligations on the owners' part and certain guarantees on the part of government. These differed according to the way transports were hired, whether on tonnage for six months certain or less, or whether on freight.

Transports taken up on tonnage were guaranteed employment for a certain period of time and therefore, the obligations of the owners were greater. These transports were required to be sheathed with wood or copper completed in men and stores and fitted for the particular service for which they were employed entirely at the owner's expense. They could be sent anywhere with or without convoy; and entered into pay when the owners made it known that the transports were ready.³

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1. For a list of ships hired by the Transport Board, the ships' brokers, their rate of pay and period of hire, see PRO, ADM/108/158; ADM/108/159.
 2. PRO, ADM/108/31, 20 Aug. 1794.
 3. PRO, ADM/106/2651, 28 July 1794.

On the other hand transports on freight were completed in men and stores on the owners part but were fitted (that is, with cabins or hammocks etc.) on the part of government. Owners of vessels hired on freight could not be expected to bear the cost of fitting when their time of service with the government was so temporary. These transports usually sailed with a convoy and entered into pay on the day the dockyard officers certified them ready, that is, after their cabins etc. were built.¹

The government for its part guaranteed a certain rate of pay, and demurrage or compensation for damage to or loss of the transport while employed in government service. The value and freight of all transports burnt or sunk by the enemy was guaranteed by the government. But it was customary for only transports taken up on tonnage for six months certain to be guaranteed also against capture by the enemy.² In such cases, if the captured ship was restored it became the property of the crown.³ These guarantees were fulfilled providing there was no negligence on the part of the master or ship's company. The freight would be paid but not the value of a vessel which was lost by the fault of her master.⁴ When an owner was being paid for the value and/or freight of his vessel an allowance for wear and tear was always deducted from the freight.⁵

1. PRO, ADM/106/2650, 24 May 1794.

2. PRO, ADM/106/2653, 3 Nov. 1794.

3. NMM, ADM/R.P./2, 24 Sept. 1794.

4. PRO, ADM/108/37, 8 July 1796.

5. PRO, ADM/106/2652, 3 Nov. 1794; see also, NMM, ADM/R.P./2.

The Navy Office calculated for wear and tear of transports in the following way. They multiplied the burthen in tons, by eight shillings; which gave the amount of wear and tear for one year - from that amount for any longer or shorter period might have been easily ascertained. The rule was formed upon the supposition that a ship was eight shillings a ton the worse for use, every year. The wear and tear of the bull masts and yards was estimated at five shillings and of the rigging at three shillings yearly.¹

Other instances when demurrage or compensation was paid to the owners of transports on freight were: when a ship lost its trade because the convoy was late;² when a ship was detained in a foreign port remaining in the transport service longer than was stipulated in its charter party and perhaps losing the chance of a return cargo;³ and when alterations were made in the vessel as a result of being employed in the transport service.⁴

1. PRO, ADM/108/35, 20 Feb. 1795.

2. E. g., PRO, ADM/108/5, 31 March 1796; ADM/108/60, 11 May 1799.

3. E. g., PRO, ADM/1/3732, 25 July 1796; ADM/108/60, 20 April 1799.

4. E. g., PRO, ADM/106/2649, 29 March 1794. Damage done by soldiers to a transport while on passage was not the responsibility of the Board as soldiers were not under the control of the Board. ADM/108/62, 26 Aug. 1799.

Since transports on freight were not guaranteed against capture by the enemy the owners of these transports had to purchase insurance to cover that. If the transport sailed without a convoy the owner had to purchase additional insurance.¹ Generally the Transport Board provided transports on freight with a convoy. If it did not provide the transport with a convoy then the ship's additional insurance was paid for by the Treasury. The insurance policies had to be produced to prove the additional premiums.² However in 1798 it became compulsory by Act of Parliament for all merchant ships engaged in foreign trade (with certain stated exceptions) to sail with a convoy.³

During the war the Transport Board improved the charter party from time to time securing to the Board more disciplinary powers over the masters and enforcing the owner to strict performance of his agreements.

The transport service suffered because of the behaviour of masters throughout the war. A survey of the Transport Board minutes reveal many instances of disobediences and negligence on the part of masters and subsequent mulcts of pay. Because of the disobedience of orders by masters transports failed to join convoys on time and thus delayed an expedition or caused jeopardy to garrisons waiting

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1. Merchants had been acquiring the habit of insuring their ships, particularly at Lloyds, the centre for marine insurance, since the beginning of the 18th century. (Davids, op. cit., 318.) During the war against revolutionary France there was an increase in the number of insurance subscribers and a growth of the marine insurance business. (Wright & Fayle, op. cit., 196.)
 2. PRO, ADM/106/2646, 26 June 1793; 22 July 1793.
 3. 38 George III, c.76.

for provisions and reinforcements. Other transports were lost to the enemy due to the masters' negligence or disobedience to signals.¹ In both cases transports were mulcted, that is, they received a loss of pay. By failing to join a convoy on time a transport was mulcted the whole of her pay from the time she was supposed to join the convoy to the time she actually did.² In fact transports were mulcted for causing any delay.³ The owner of a transport captured through the negligence of the master was denied the value of the transport.⁴

As a further check to the misbehaviour of the masters the Transport Board improved the charter party. On 29 March 1797 the Board resolved to insert a clause in the charter party which stated that the Board would not grant Imprest bills for the hire of transports on tonnage till a certificate was sent to the Transport Office certifying "that the Master had behaved himself properly and was always obedient to command during the time he had been under the direction of the commanding officer or agent of transports."⁵

Unfortunately the Transport Board had no direct control over the masters of transports on freight. They were responsible only to

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1. As an encouragement for transport masters not to let their ships fall into the hands of the enemy the Transport Board allowed 15/- a day for the transports' assistance in defending their ships from the enemy. If any captures were made the prize money was divided among the Board, the owners and crew. If any soldiers were on board they shared in the prize money also. The Board decided the portions. PRO, ADM/108/42, 2 Dec. 1796; ADM/108/61, 13 June 1799.
 2. PRO, ADM/108/43, 6 Jan. 1797; ADM/108/46, 22 May 1797.
 3. PRO, ADM/108/64, 22 Oct. 1799.
 4. E. g., PRO, ADM/108/42, 19 Dec. 1796; see above, p. 95.
 5. PRO, ADM/108/28, 29 March 1797.

the owners for their conduct. The Board relied on its agents to give explicit directions to these masters.¹

At the same time the Board attempted to enforce a stricter performance of agreements upon the owners by a further improvement in the charter party. The owners or masters were finding it beneficial to keep the crew deficient or to substitute boys for able seamen since the scarcity of seamen, caused to a great degree by their being employed by the navy, had increased the wages of the men. This practice exposed the vessels as well as the troops and stores aboard them to danger. For economy's sake transport owners had also been tempted to keep their ships deficient in stores. Thus the Transport Board resolved to insert a clause in the charter party which would state that the Board would not grant Imprest bills for the hire of transports till a certificate was sent to the Transport Office certifying that the ship was fit for the service for which she was employed and was complete in men and stores.²

At the time the Transport Board passed this resolution it also initiated a Register which showed the deficiency in men and stores. If the transport was found deficient in men and stores then it was subject to mulct, that is a deduction was made from the freight of the ship when the accounts were passed.³ These charter party improvements applied only to transports hired on tonnage.

1. PRO, ADM/108/58, 11 Feb. 1799.

2. PRO, ADM/108/28, 29 March 1797; NLS, Melville MSS. 1044.

3. Ibid., PRO, ADM/108/51, 13 Jan. 1798; ADM/108/56, 2 Oct. 1798.

In the same year an improvement came in the charter parties of victuallers on tonnage and on freight. During the war the Transport Board repeatedly instructed its agents to make general and liberal offers to the victuallers and ships upon freight to take in as many officers, as could be conveniently accommodated in their respective ships. A very few at most were provided for by these means; victuallers and merchantmen in general were reluctant to receive officers only upon any terms. Perhaps they felt the inconveniences were not worth the money they would receive. As a result transport agents were obliged to crowd more into the transports.¹ Therefore, in 1797 the Transport Board wrote into the charter party of all victuallers that those ships had to receive a certain number of officers together with their men.²

Further charter party improvements were made in August 1800. The charter parties for vessels hired on freight to convey ordnance stores and provisions were altered to include a clause binding the owners to make good any deficiencies according to their evaluation of them and also to prevent freight being paid for a larger quantity than was actually delivered. By September a form was issued for passing the account of a ship on freight.³

Once the transports were surveyed and valued and a charter party was made out they were then fitted for the service for which

1. PRO, ADM/108/19, 29 Dec. 1796.

2. PRO, ADM/108/46, 16 May 1797; see also, PRO, ADM/108/58, 11 Feb. 1799.

3. PRO, ADM/108/67, 7 Aug. 1800.

they were employed. During the survey the Deptford officers gave their opinion which transports would be better used for the conveyance of troops, cavalry, provisions, or stores. The transport agent would direct the transports to be fitted only when he received orders to that effect from the Transport Board.¹

Early in the war the Navy Board wished all troop transports to be at least 5'6" between decks and issued orders to their officers at Deptford not to survey any that were not.² By January 1794 the officers at Deptford were finding it difficult to supply the pressing demands with the height restriction. The Navy Board had to lower its requirements and settle for not less than 5'2" between decks, still much higher than those allowed in the American war.³ Eight months later the Transport Board had to reduce its requirements still further. They stipulated that they would not take into service a transport unless her height between decks was at least 5 feet.⁴ This remained the constant rule of the Transport Board throughout the war.⁵ A vessel with its decks too low for carrying troops but whose hold was very deep made an excellent victualler. Ships that could not meet the height restriction for troop transports were often made into victuallers.⁶

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1. PRO, ADM/108/31, 9 Sept. 1794.
 2. PRO, ADM/106/2646, 30 July 1793.
 3. PRO, ADM/106/2649, 13 Jan. 1794.
 4. PRO, ADM/108/31, 18 Sept. 1794.
 5. PRO, ADM/108/65, 11 Dec. 1799.
 6. PRO, ADM/108/33, 14 Nov. 1794.

Generally troop transports were fitted with berths, cabins and hammocks. For a very short voyage, however, beds were not considered necessary and they were not used on short services from Jersey and Guernsey to Plymouth or Portsmouth.¹ For example, in the spring of 1800 the transports which brought the Russian troops from Guernsey and Jersey were fitted at the low rate of three men to four tons² and a blanket and pillow instead of a bed were put on board for each soldier. An attempt was made to use no ship of less than 200 tons in this operation.³

For voyages that were not very short the Transport Board commonly fitted troop ships with berths, arranging them so as to admit the greatest possible number. The berths occupied each side and the intermediate space was filled with hammocks as the ship might allow.⁴ A ship fitted up with berths carried more men than those with hammocks. A ship of 600 tons carried 300 men in hammocks. If a ship having six feet and upwards height between decks was properly fitted with berths it could carry 500 men, at the rate of something more than one and one half ton per man. The same ship could carry 450 men in partly berths and partly hammocks at the same rate of ton per man. These estimates are for vessels on home service or short services, such as the Continent. The Russian ships returning to the Baltic in 1800⁵ were ordered to be

1. PRO, ADM/108/36, 24 Aug. 1795; ADM/108/61, 19 June 1799.

2. See below, p. 258.

3. PRO, ADM/108/67, 17 May; 5 June; 6 June 1800.

4. PRO, ADM/108/66, 31 Jan. 1800.

5. See below, p. 258.

supplied with hammocks if the men did not have berths. If the material was prepared a ship was fitted in one day with berths. The expense was about £100. Hammocks were about 4/6 a piece.¹

Equipping transports with hammocks would have allowed more room for the individual soldier and would have added considerably to his comfort and health during the passage. Since this practice meant that less troops could be embarked on one transport, the Transport Board found it impracticable and uneconomical at times when there was a great demand for tonnage. Thus, the common practice of fitting ships with berths. In fact the Transport Board exercised every ingenuity to make the transports capable of carrying as many men as possible.²

In 1795 Major General Whyte wished hammocks instead of standing berths to be fitted into the transports that were to convey his troops from Ireland to the West Indies. The Transport Board's answer was that "the present great demand for tonnage rendered the fitting with hammocks altogether impracticable, although the principle was highly approved and had been adopted."³ The next day the Transport Board informed Captain Patton that the Active might be appointed, "but that the urgent demand of tonnage, in the Transport department, forbade any diminution of capacity for stowing troops...

1. PRO, ADM/1/3739, 17 May 1800.

2. PRO, ADM/108/36, 18 Aug.; 19 Aug. 1795.

3. Ibid., 18 Aug. 1795.

therefore, Sir Jeremy's plan of berthing in hammocks must be suspended at present."¹

Sir Jeremy Fitzpatrick, M.D., Inspector of Health for the Land Forces, lamented that his advice had not been taken and was critical of the government's more practicable and less comfortable way of conveying troops. "When ships of only 5'4" between decks were fitted with two heights of berths," Sir Jeremy said, "the men were too crowded and imbibed their own morbid exhalations!" He went on to say, "that 25000 men crowded in a huddled way into transports, would only be on paper, that number. At the place of their destination, not more than 15000 of them would appear in their shoes... that both charity and policy dictated the fitting ships under 5'4" for hammocks."² It was unfortunate that Sir Jeremy's plan was not adopted for many of the troops that were sent to the West Indies were not in a state to march much less to bear arms upon their arrival. This fact coupled with the deadly West Indian climate considerably decreased Britain's military strength in that area.

However other attempts were made to make the soldier's passage on board a transport more comfortable. In order to give more air to the troops scuttles were cut in the upper decks of the troopships according to a fixed plan. They were cut in a manner

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1. PRO, ADM/108/36, 19 Aug. 1795.
 2. Ibid., 29 Aug. 1795. On 8 Sept. 1794 the King appointed Sir Jeremy Fitzpatrick, Inspector of Health for the Land Forces, with a particular view to their situation when on board transports.

least prejudicial to the ship, the government made good to the owner the expense of the damage done to the deck. But no more scuttles than were absolutely necessary were cut.¹

While the troops were being conveyed in berths and hammocks the officers on board troopships usually resided in cabins. Most vessels taken up as transports had to have cabins fitted in. Richard Martyr was the contractor for the Navy Board and then the Transport Board who fitted the transports with cabins and with stalls for horses.² His work was supervised in the Deptford yard by H. Boyce, the Shipwright officer.³ The East India ships like transports on tonnage were fitted at the expense of their owners or by the East India Company.⁴ However, consistent with the practice of the Navy Board, the Transport Board supplied the East India ships with air tubes and with beds.⁵ On the whole East India ships were expensive troop transports. They were large ships so their cost per ton was high. Admiral Sir Hyde Parker at the West Indies preferred the coppered North Country built ships, armed with close quarters. He recommended that they be sent out, "in preference to the large East India ships, for accommodating troops - as manageable with fewer seamen!"⁶ Though East India ships had been used to

1. PRO, ADM/106/2649, 29 March 1794.

2. PRO, ADM/108/31, 20 Aug. 1794.

3. PRO, ADM/108/52, 15 March 1798.

4. PRO, ADM/108/37, 1 July 1796.

5. PRO, ADM/108/57, 12 Dec. 1798.

6. PRO, ADM/108/49, 4 Oct. 1797.

transport troops and provisions from the very beginning of the war regular transports and ships on freight were preferred.

The extent to which ships would be fitted with cabins, berths and hammocks, depended on the size of the ship and the number of troops and officers who were to embark. Here are examples of the fitting out of armed transports of three decks and two decks. The transport of three decks was fitted with two-men cabins on the lower deck from the bulkhead of the store rooms to the gun room, and the middle part was fitted with hammocks; the forepart of middle deck was appropriated for the ship's company; the space between the separation bulkhead and the wardroom was for soldier-officers, with mess tables and benches, and cabins against the sides - the round house was for the commander of the ship, the commander of the troops, and for some of the officers of the ship. Armed transports of two decks were fitted with two-men cabins on the lower deck from the manger to the gunroom bulk head, the middle part was fitted with hammocks; the ship's company was berthed under the half deck; the wardroom was for the soldiers' officers with a mess table and benches and two cabins against the side aloft the after gun; the round house was for the commander of the ship and master while the rest of his officers were in the gun room.¹

When there was little time to fit ships for an expedition that was departing rather quickly, beds and hammocks were supplied

1. PRO, ADM/108/52, 9 March 1798.

to ships with no cabins.¹

The Transport Board continued with the practice first suggested by the Navy Board of dividing the troops into watches, so as to keep one third upon deck at a time.² This meant that the troops below deck would have been much less crowded and the chances of sickness prevailing would have been lessened. When sickness did occur, however, in order to prevent it from spreading, the sick were usually transferred into hospital ships. Also, after 1794, at the suggestion of Sir Jeremy Fitzpatrick, the practice of landing the men, especially the sick, from a ship in port in order to take in fresh air, was begun.³ Ships that had sickness were well white-washed and fumigated before other troops were embarked.⁴ Because of the prevalence of sickness among the troops in the West Indies, all the transports coming from those Islands were placed in tiers for inspection. That is, as they arrived in the River Thames, they were placed distinct from all others. They were fumigated and the unfit beds were destroyed.⁵ In fact all ships returning from Gibraltar as well as the West Indies were placed in quarantine until the secretary of state's permission was given

1. PRO, ADM/106/2645, 13 May 1793.

2. NMM, ADM/R.P./2, 4 April 1794.

3. PRO, ADM/1/4160, 16; 22 Feb. 1794. E. g., see Sir John Moore. The Diary of Sir John Moore. Edited by Major General Sir J. F. Maurcie, K.C.B. (London, 1904), vol. I, 384; vol. II, 56; Sir R. T. Wilson. A Narrative of the Expedition to Egypt under Sir Ralph Abercrombie containing an Exposition of the Principles and Conduct of Napoleone Bonaparte, Abridged from the History of the Campaign (London, 1803), 4.

4. PRO, ADM/108/49, 4 Oct. 1797.

5. PRO, ADM/108/31, 25 Sept. 1794; ADM/108/34, 24 Dec. 1794; see also, W.O.1/798. 2 Feb. 1795.

for their release.¹

Once the government fitted the ships for troops the Agent Victualler was applied to for water casks and for sufficient provisions.² Regular transports were usually provided with enough provisions for four months.³ However by 1800 transports taken into service for the Continent and Mediterranean were only victualled to two months though those for the West Indian services continued to be victualled to four months.⁴ The master was answerable for all provisions and stores put on board his ship and it was his duty to issue the provisions to the troops.⁵

The Navy Board and then the Transport Board paid the subsistence of the soldiers only during their passage. It was the responsibility of the commanding officers to provide for their subsistence before they embarked. Residence on board a transport where there were no victualling stores on board was considered as quarters only for the convenience of the troops and the town and was not considered an embarkation.⁶

Horses, like soldiers, had to be conveyed great distances with as little discomfort and injury to health as possible. They

1. PRO, ADM/108/19, 16 Oct. 1797.

2. NMM, ADM/R.P./2, 26 Aug. 1794.

3. PRO, ADM/108/31, 23 Aug.; 13 Sept. 1794.

4. PRO, ADM/108/67, 13 June; 23 June 1800.

5. PRO, ADM/108/46, 18 May 1797.

6. PRO, ADM/108/28, 6 Feb. 1797.

were conveyed in stalls built into the vessels taken up as cavalry transports. Each horse's stall had to be 2'6" in breadth, and the heavy horse required a stall 7'4" in length.¹ Horses were hoisted onto the cavalry ships by means of large sweep blocks and halters.² To facilitate the embarkation of the cavalry at Southampton a temporary stage was erected in the Itchen River by order of Captain Woodriff the transport agent there.³ The slings were made for the horses at Deptford and Woolwich. Many other items such as horse hammocks, collars, halters etc., used on cavalry ships were also issued there.⁴

Here is an example of how Richard Martyr turned nine troop transports into horse transports. The nine transports had stowed their holds with two tiers of casks. The height under the beam was only six feet which was not a sufficient height for horses to stand under. In order to make the ships^e capable to receive horses on board, the hold had to be unstowed, one tier of casks taken away and the lower tier had to be covered with ballast and bavins. The horse ships were then ready to be fitted with stalls for 180 horses. Martyr's people assisted by house carpenters from the yard required four days to complete them. Cabins were not interfered with, except the hatches, which having been covered over for the soldiers' messplaces, were required to be opened to admit

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1. PRO, ADM/106/2645, 28 May 1793.
 2. PRO, ADM/108/42, 21 Dec. 1796.
 3. PRO, ADM/108/43, 4 Jan. 1797.
 4. PRO, ADM/106/2645, 8 April 1793.

air to the horses.¹

Cavalry transports conveyed one cavalry man to each horse. These men were usually accommodated with hammocks under the lower deck. Some of the larger transports could take sixty or seventy additional men by hanging in more hammocks.² The provisions for the men on board were stowed in the afterhold so the steam of the horses would not damage them.³

Hay, bran and oats had to be put on board for the horses. Each horse was allowed ten pounds of hay, eight pounds of oats and a small parcel of bran per day.⁴ Each horse also was given six gallons of water a day.⁵ The masters were responsible for the forage as they had been for the provisions. The space of six stalls were appropriated to store the forage.

Shipping of hay was out of the question during the American war since fodder in general was bulky to ship.⁷ During the war against revolutionary France the process of pressing hay before stowing it on transports was begun. At a cost of 71/- per ton⁸

1. PRO, ADM/106/3323, 19 March 1793.

2. PRO, ADM/108/31, 9 Sept. 1794.

3. Ibid., 9 Sept. 1794.

4. PRO, ADM/108/32, 10 Oct. 1794.

5. PRO, ADM/108/36, 30 July 1795.

6. PRO, ADM/108/33, 14 Nov. 1794.

7. Mackesey, op. cit., 66.

8. PRO, ADM/106/2649, 3 Jan. 1794; ADM/106/2645, 8 April 1793.

hay could be compressed into trusses weighing 224 pounds¹ which took up only 1/6 of the space required for unpressed hay.²

Victuallers and storeships required less fitting than troop and cavalry transports. The only fitting that had to be done was the erection of bulkheads to secure the provisions and stores and the building of berths to accommodate the officers that victuallers by charter party had to receive.³ Their readiness for service was reported to the Ordnance and Victualling Boards who had the stores and provisions prepared for transportation. The lading was then entrusted to their own officers.

Each transport was supplied with a flatboat which was used for embarking and disembarking troops.⁴ Most transports had long boats also which were used for scouting purposes and for communicating with other ships when sailing in a fleet. During 1798 the long boats were fitted with a gun for security against attacks from the enemy's privateers etc. The owners of transports then engaged were requested to adopt the measure and a clause referring to this was inserted in the charter parties of all transports then subsequently engaged.⁵

The troopships, cavalry ships, victuallers and storeships usually returned to the Thames after completing their assignment.

1. PRO, ADM/108/28, 2 Jan. 1797.

2. PRO, ADM/108/61, 19 June 1799.

3. See above, p. 100.

4. PRO, ADM/106/2647, 13 Aug. 1793.

5. PRO, ADM/108/53, 13 April 1798.

If they were not needed they were discharged on the usual allowance if the owners would accept it. The usual allowance was one month's pay.¹ One month's pay was also given to transports in lieu of returning to Deptford.² For example, in 1800 during the acute grain shortage in Britain, the Transport Board allowed transports in the Gibraltar and Mediterranean services to be discharged there and given one month's pay in lieu of being discharged at Deptford, provided they loaded without delay a cargo of wheat for any port in Great Britain.³ Most transports accepted this offer.

Transports were repaired at the Deptford and Woolwich Navy yards. This arrangement included the East India ships that were used as transports.⁴ The usual time allowed for repairs was five weeks, after that the ship was mulcted.⁵ There was no delay for the materials were at hand since the storehouses and timber piles had been well stocked by Middleton after the American war.⁶

In a letter to Secretary Dundas, of 29 Dec. 1796, the Transport Board offered a defence of transport conditions at the time.

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1. PRO, ADM/1/3732, 25 July 1796.
 2. PRO, ADM/108/40, 19 Oct. 1796.
 3. PRO, ADM/108/66, 8 March 1800.
 4. NMM, ADM/R.P./4, 6 Feb.; 10 Feb. 1796.
 5. PRO, ADM/108/57, 12 Nov. 1798.
 6. Albion, op. cit., 371.

It will not escape your goodness to observe, how extremely difficult it is, in services like these, where foreigners as well as our own people are concerned, to prevent every murmur; and especially where the accommodations, at the best, must necessarily fall very far beneath what such persons have been accustomed to on shore; although we may be permitted to add, that never, before the present War, were so many comforts and conveniences administered to troops, in Extra-Provisions, and Stores particularly, as have been afforded by the Liberality and Indulgence of Government, upon the late and present Services.¹

1. PRO, ADM/108/19, 29 Dec. 1796.

CHAPTER IV

THE HIRING OF SHIPS IN HAMBURG, 1795

Between August and November 1795 the Transport Board chartered eighty two ships from Messrs. Parish and Company, a brokerage firm in Hamburg, to convey from the Continent to England and the West Indies foreign troops and cavalry, most of whom were destined to serve under Sir Ralph Abercromby in the Caribbean. The price paid per ship was about one third more than the cost of hiring a similar ship in Britain - the result for the main part of a different method of ship measurement in Hamburg. The extraordinary expenses incurred in hiring these ships initiated an inquiry into the accounts of Messrs. Parish and Co. and into the conduct of Captain Home Popham, the transport agent in Hamburg. It was indeed unfortunate that this episode occurred just at the time when the Transport Board was under great pressure from the ministry to economise in every possible way. The Hamburg ships proved a grave disappointment also, since none of the vessels would go further than England; new tonnage had to be obtained from the maritime resources of Britain resulting in delay and inconvenience and additional expense. In order to understand the necessity of hiring so many foreign ships for this service one must briefly look at the military situation on the Continent in 1795.

Since the beginning of the war the allied forces had been meeting with little success on the Continent. The British government was slow to mobilise its forces. Apart from this there were

conflicting ambitions and lack of cooperation among the European nations that made up the coalition which hampered operations. As a result the first expedition to the low countries mounted by Pitt and Dundas met its end disgracefully in the Spring of 1795. At the beginning of March 1795 French forces occupied the Dutch Netherlands. On the 8th of that month the British cabinet decided to withdraw its troops from the Continent and three days later information was sent to General Harcourt that transports for 23000 men were on their way to him. On the 22nd the British began their march to Bremen for embarkation. Two weeks later, Prussia, whose troops had recently arrived to hold the line of the Ems after the British withdrawal, signed the Treaty of Bâle with France in order to be free to use the threat of military force to vindicate her claims upon Austria and Russia for a larger slice of Poland. She, then, occupied the ~~kingdom~~^{electorate} of Hanover in an attempt to force its neutrality. The French were freer to act in Germany because Tuscany had fallen the previous February. On 19 April the British infantry and part of the British artillery took ship for England, leaving the remainder of the artillery and the whole of the cavalry behind them under Lord Cathcart and Lieutenant General David Dundas. The number embarked was nearly 15000. Rear Admiral Harvey was in command of the convoy sent out to protect the transports on their passage from Bremer Lehe to England.¹

1. Add. MSS., 27595, 17 April 1795; see also: PRO, ADM/108/169, 8, 18, 19 April 1795. Captain Popham, in February 1795, hired 14 vessels from Messrs. Bavinck and Company, merchants in Emden, to convey British hospitals to England. PRO, ADM/108/172, 11 Feb. 1795.

The entire defence of northern Germany had broken up with the Treaty of Bâle and the subsequent withdrawal of Prussia from the war. Therefore the British cavalry and artillery remained in Germany until the end of 1795 when the Hanoverian Regency agreed to the neutrality imposed by Prussia.¹

Henry Dundas, as Secretary of State for War, employed the British forces left on the Continent as a recruiting agency and relied on them to raise a number of foreign regiments for service with the British forces. The recruiting and inspecting of the foreign corps was under the immediate direction of Lieutenant Colonel Nesbit. The British government hoped to raise French, German and Dutch troops. The greater part of the French Emigré and Dutch Corps were to be conveyed to England and then to Guernsey and Jersey for the purpose of returning with an invasion force to the Continent. A small French contingent, some Dutch artillery and all of the German corps were to be conveyed to England and thence to Guernsey and Jersey for the purpose of serving in the West Indies. Later the Transport Board wanted to drop the plan of sending the foreign infantry to the West Indies via the Channel Islands, but none of the transports hired from Parish and Company would go out of Europe.

Several French Emigré regiments (Rohans', Beons', Damas, and Perigord) had been collected by Colonel Nesbitt at Stade and Zell

1. John W. Fortescue. A history of the British Army (London, 1915), vol. IV, 323, 388, 409, 410.

by the end of May 1795. The English transports that conveyed these regiments had arrived at Cuxhaven by the 15th of June under Lieutenant Marshall.¹ The troops were embarked at Bremer Lehe and by 7 July they were in Portsmouth.²

The foreign troops raised to serve in the West Indies consisted for the most part of German corps of infantry and cavalry. The ministry was hoping that the employment of foreign troops in the West Indies would relieve more British troops for service in other areas in this over-extended war. "The present critical situation of the West India Islands and the various other services now in contemplation which must be provided for by this country", wrote Portland, Secretary of State for Home Affairs, to Lieutenant General Dundas, Commander of the British forces on the Continent, "make it very desirable that as great a proportion as possible of German infantry should be procured by the beginning of September."³

Although the service for which the German corps of infantry and cavalry were intended was considered very important, their transference from the Continent was not to interfere with the withdrawal of British troops and cavalry if the situation on the Continent made it necessary to take away the British forces earlier than had been

1. PRO, ADM/108/169, 15 June 1795; see also, ADM/108/169, 29 June 1795.

2. Add. MSS. 27595, Portland to D. Dundas, 7 July 1795.

3. Ibid., 3 July 1795.

expected. If that was the case, the transports intended for the embarkation of the foreign corps were to be employed in removing British troops. Before issuing that order, however, the army commander had to examine the situation very carefully since transports were being prepared in England to take away the British forces. Henry Dundas writing to Lieutenant General David Dundas explained. "Although under such pressing urgency, as that to which I have referred, I have given you discretionary power to withdraw the transports prepared for other services, and to apply them to the object of effecting the safe retreat of the British cavalry under your command, I must particularly mention to you that they are not to be so applied unless such urgency does exist, as other arrangements are making for bringing away the British troops in consequence of the orders to be conveyed to you by His Royal Highness the Duke of York."¹ The withdrawal of the remainder of the French Emigré and Dutch corps were not to interfere with the removal of the troops intended for the West Indies or with the preparations for bringing away the British cavalry.

The British cavalry, about 3,000 horses with their riders, and about 5,000 British infantry with a certain proportion of artillery and stores, were withdrawn from the Continent of Europe in British transports² by the end of 1795. The Transport Board provided nearly 25,000 tons of shipping for this service.³ The German infantry and

1. Add, MSS., 27595, H. Dundas to D. Dundas, 23 Sept. 1795.

2. PRO, ADM/108/170, 29 Sept. 1795.

3. Add. MSS., 27595, 15 Oct. 1795, H. Dundas to D. Dundas.

cavalry consisting of Irvine's Hussars, Hompesch's Hussars, regiments commanded by Colonels Hardy and Ramsay and the Prince of Salm's battalion, intended for service in the West Indies were for the most part conveyed to England in the transports hired by Captain Home Popham at Hamburg. A further quantity of tonnage was also hired in Britain, and sent to Hamburg for this service.¹ Some French corps were embarked in British transports and in some of the Hamburg ships. A corps of Dutch artillery destined for St. Domingo were embarked also in transports sent from Britain.

The idea of chartering ships in Hamburg for the transportation of troops was adopted early in the summer of 1795. The ships were chartered under the direction of Henry Dundas and carried on, without the immediate intervention of the Transport Board, by Captain Christian, one of the Transport Board's commissioners, in a correspondence with Captain Popham, the principal transport agent on the Continent.² Dundas and Christian had been of the opinion that it might be practical and convenient to hire foreign ships to transport the Continental forces rather than send more British tonnage across the Channel. The available tonnage in England was being prepared for the Abercromby-Christian expedition to the West Indies, and some of it was being held ready to withdraw the British artillery and cavalry from the Continent.

1. PRO, ADM/108/66, 22 April 1800.

2. Popham was also Inspector of Inland Navigation on the Continent for the army, an appointment he received at the request of the Duke of York on 20 February 1795. PRO, ADM/108/4B, 20 Feb. 1795. He had been appointed an agent for transports at Ostend and Nieuport on 6 Sept. 1793, when he was a Lieutenant.

The first correspondence that appears on the subject is a letter dated 26 July 1795 from Popham to Christian concerning the quantity of tonnage that could be procured on the Continent. Popham had been asked earlier to ascertain the capability of Germany to furnish tonnage. He informed Christian that he could procure from 10,000 to 20,000 tons from Messrs. Parish and Company "at £3.0.0 per ton for the voyage, allowing twenty days after they are fit to receive horses or men, as lay days; and ten more after their arrival in Port for their discharge." Popham said that it worked out to about 15/- per ton per month, "calculating on the time of fitting, and the long casualties of passages out and home which with their thirty days demurrage will make near four months." He told Christian that he had chartered 10,000 tons at the time and planned to charter more when he knew the exact quantity that was wanted; that he hoped Parish and Company would agree to tendering them by the month instead of by the run "as it would prevent any possibility of dispute about demurrage;" that he sent round a proper person to survey the ships before they were chartered with directions how to fit them and he gave orders to hire every carpenter in Hamburg and Altona; that he planned to inspect them himself as soon as possible; and that he told Parish and Company they had to supply money for the purchase of all materials and for the disbursements of outfit they would be allowed a two percent commission which was the same allowed to the Commissary General on such occasions. Popham told Christian that

he planned to give bills on the Board for the "exigencies of the moment" but he wished to wait the authority of the Board before he drew for any considerable sums; that under the present contract they were to have half freight paid immediately and if they agreed to charter by the month Popham supposed they would ask an advance of two months freight.¹

On 2 August Popham wrote again to Christian and informed him that he was "getting on very fast in the equipment of transports", and was apprehensive of having to wait for convoy.² On that day Messrs. Parish and Company agreed to supply Popham with 20,000 tons of shipping to carry cavalry to England or Ireland and on that day also the Heads of a Charter Party (the preliminaries to a charter party) were signed. All the transports taken up on freight in Hamburg were hired on these terms. The Heads of the Charter Party read as follows:

Heads of a Charter party between Messrs. Parish & Co. of Hamburg and Capt. Home Popham on the part of the Commissioners for conducting His Majesty's Transport Service.

Messrs. Parish engage to lett to Capt. Popham by the 25th of August 20,000 Tons of Shipping at the rate of 60 shillings sterling per ton to carry Horses from Stade to Ireland or the limits of Ireland 20 days to be allowed for the fitment and Shipping which is to be at the expence of Capt. Popham 10 days to unload . £15 percent to be paid Primage to the Captains as is the custom of this Port extra Port Charges except to the Port of Delivery to be paid by Capt. Popham

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1. PRO, ADM/108/169, Popham to Christian, 26 July 1795.
 2. PRO, ADM/108/169, Popham to Christian, 2 Aug. 1795.

The Ships to be all examined by Capt. Popham or his Officers as none will be accepted that are not tight and in every respect well fitted; after they are examined and approved they are to be considered as chartered.

Messrs. Parish & Co. are to forfeit the hire of as many Tons as are not ready by the 25th August and Capt. Popham has leave to stop their Progress by giving 24 Hours Notice provided the Ships are not approved; as Messrs. Parish & Co. immediately hire them on the Approval of Capt. Popham.

One half of the Freight Money to be paid to Messrs. Parish & Co. on the day of Signature of the Charter Party by Bills on the Commissioners of Transports at 30 days sight the other half one Month after the Transports leave Stade by Bills of the same date.

Messrs. Parish & Co. to pay all the Bills of Outfit and on producing their Bills certified by the British Consul and a respectable Merchant to have a Commission of £2 percent and the whole to be paid by Bills at 30 days sight as aforesaid. All Risks of the Enemy to be sustained by Capt. Popham; and any Deviation or other Dispute to be settled by arbitration.

Bremer Lehe Signed August 2, 1795.¹

According to the Heads of the Charter Party the ships were to be chartered by the run. But the charter party was left open as was the custom of the Transport Board in case Messrs. Parish and Company would charter by the month. Originally twenty one ships were chartered by the run according to the terms of the above charter party. They were let by different owners to Parish and Company who then chartered them to the British government. (During the third week of August Popham began to show signs of apprehension about his basis of authority for carrying on these transactions and he wrote

1. PRO, ADM/108/170, Case From the Honorable Commissioners for Transport Service.

to Christian on the subject on 17 August. Up till then all his correspondence had been with Christian personally and he only began to correspond formerly with the Transport Board on 2 September. In fact Popham had acted without proper authorization and this was to cause difficulties later.¹⁾ By 19 August he had secured twenty seven ships on freight to convey the cavalry to England or Ireland. On that day a charter party for the twenty seven ships was signed on the terms of the above Heads of a Charter Party between Popham and Messrs. Parish and Company.² At least eight of the twenty seven ships were owned by Parish and Company.

At this time Popham proposed to take as many of the twenty seven ships into monthly pay as were willing to engage. Thirteen out of the original twenty one acceded to this proposition and went into monthly pay on giving up the half freight paid at Hamburg. Fourteen of the twenty seven ships remained to proceed by the run. These fourteen were to receive the horses of the Duke ~~de~~^{of} Choiseul's regiment and sail from Stade on 12 Oct. 1795.³ On 19 August charter parties were signed between Popham and the individual owners whose ships went into monthly pay. All ships taken upon tonnage in Hamburg were to be chartered on similar terms. Here is the charter

1. PRO, ADM/108/169, 17 Aug.; 2 Sept. 1795.

2. Ibid., 19 Aug. 1795. For the actual charter party of the twenty seven ships see Appendix, p. 329.

3. PRO, ADM/108/169, 16 Nov. 1795.

party of the Rambler one of the twenty seven ships that went into monthly pay.

By this present Charter party be it known unto whom it may concern that on the 19th day of August in the Year of our Lord 1795 before me Charles Conrad Frederic Hartman Notary Public practising in the free Imperial City of Hamburg personally appeared Capt. Home Popham Esq. on behalf of his Britanick Majesty's Commissioners for conducting his Transport Service, affreighter, on the one part and Captain Joseph Green Master or Commander of the Ship or Vessel called Rambler of the Burthen of 122 Lasts as ascertained by the Sworn Harbour Master of this city by his Report annexed who declared that by the Interposition of Mr. Christ Died Glashott of Hambourg Sworn Ships Broker they had covenanted and agreed on the freighting and letting said vessel to the disposal of the British Government for Six Months certain and as much longer as the British Government chuses to keep her in their Service on the Terms as follows that is to say.

Capt. Joseph Green is obliged immediately on signing these Presents to let and deliver his said Ship and Boats tight and staunch, well tackled, appparelled, manned with ten Men for every Hundred Lasts and provided with everything else necessary for the performing of said Service to the sole Use and free Disposal of the British Government (the proper Place for putting in the Sails, Cables and provisions, as also the necessary Room for the Crew excepted, as being for the Ship's Use) he not being permitted to load any Goods or Wares for any Body else, under any Pretence whatsoever.

The Freighter may get shipt on Board the said Vessel as many Troops, Horses and Stores of every Description as they may think fit and suitable to the Burthen of the said Ship, for

all which Stores and Provisions the Master is to sign a Receipt and to be accountable for the same. He is further to sail under such convoy as may be appointed for the Service. The Freighter is obliged on Account as aforesaid to cause to be paid unto the said Captain or Owners or to their Order, exactly and without Exception, his Freight money stipulated at the Rate of thirty six Schillings Sterling good and lawful Money of Great Britain for each Last for every Calendar Month the Ship is in the above Service, and besides Fifteen percent Primage and Hatmoney of the Amount of the said Freight. The Payment to be made in the following Manner: The Ship to enter into Pay, on signing the present Charter-party when the Freighter will pay two Months Advance by Bills as aforesaid at Ninety days Sight, after which the Commissioners for conducting His Britannick Majesty's Transport Service are to pay to Messrs. Parish and Co. Owners of said Ship or their Order the Freight every two Months as it is due on producing a Certificate of the Ships existing from the Senior Agent of Transports or Commanding Officers of His Majesty's Ships at the Place where the said Vessel then is, after they have been long enough in the Service to allow of two Months to be kept in arrear; which is to be paid on the Ship's being discharged and if out of Europe she is to have Six Weeks Pay exclusive of the Freight due to the Captain at the Time of his Discharge as an Equivalent for his Passage to Europe. The Captain is to find cooking Utensils at the Rate of one Man for every Last as also Firing, Candles, wooden Bowls, Platters and Spoons for which shall be allowed him one Penny Sterling for each man per day. The Freighters pay the Expence of Outfit of Cabins for the Officers and Soldiers and a Cabin shall be put up for the Master and Mate of the Ship. The government also pays all Pilotage, Light money, Harbour Dues etc. etc. Should the vessel be burnt, sunk or taken by the Enemy, in and during the Performance of the aforesaid Service and it shall appear to a

Court of Enquiry that the same did not proceed from any Fault, Neglect or otherwise in the Master and Ship's-Company, the value of her shall be paid for by the Freighters with twenty nine thousand six hundred Marks current Money according to the annexed appraisement of the Aldermen, Captains and Carpenters, or the value thereof, a reasonable Tear and Wear being deducted.

If any Carelessness, mismanagement or Neglect of the Master or Crew occasions any Detention of the Service, the Ship shall be responsible in the same Manner as all British Transports are. And for the true Performance of all and singular the above Contracts and Agreements both Parties above named bind themselves mutually in the penal Sum of double the Amount of the Freight and Primage above fixed for six Months, which the Party failing is to pay without any Object or Benefit of the Law to the Party performing And in Witness whereof have hereunto set their Hands in my Registry in Hamburg the Day and Year aforesaid.

Home Popham
Edward Carness owner

Which I attest under my usual firms and Seal
of Office of Notary hereunto affixed-

Charles Hartmen 1795¹
(Notary Public)

Between 12 August and 31 October 1795 Popham chartered fifty five ships from Parish and Company for six months certain. Their charter parties were the same as the above. Therefore there were eighty two separate charter parties signed between Messrs. Parish and Company of Hamburg and Captain Popham between August and November 1795 - the fifty five ships chartered for six months certain

1. For the charter parties of the 82 ships hired at Hamburg, see PRO, ADM/108/171.

and the twenty seven hired by the run to convey cavalry to England or Ireland.¹ The fifty five ships were used for the most part to convey the foreign infantry to England.

By 28 August Captain Popham had acquired 8000 tons of shipping for six months certain. It is interesting to note that wooden bottomed ships received eighteen shillings per ton and copper bottomed nineteen shillings. The price offered in England at this time was thirteen shillings per ton for vessels whether sheathed with wood or copper.² The owners received fifteen percent primage on the freight as was the custom of the port because in Popham's own words "without this last clause no person would agree."³ The 8000 tons was adequate to 4000 infantry. Popham continued to take up transports to meet the demands of Colonel Nesbitt's 8000 men. "Every ship fit for service that can be procured shall be taken up at Hamburg, to fulfill the extent of the Board's order" he wrote on 25 September.⁴ (As has been mentioned earlier Popham began to correspond formerly with the Board on 2 September.⁵) Popham built wharves in the Elbe for the embarkation and disembarkation of troops and he ordered hammocks and beds which were very expensive in Hamburg

1. Some of these were hired on different terms later as explained on p. 124.

2. See above, p. 77.

3. PRO, ADM/108/169, 28 Aug. 1795.

4. PRO, ADM/108/169, 25 Sept. 1795.

5. See above, p. 124.

from England. He built a sick room in all the larger ships, with two decks and two side scuttles. He ordered the provisions for the transports to be purchased in Germany and he drew on the commissioners of Victualling for the cost.¹ He was able to obtain forage in the river Elbe; but since German hay was very bad, he directed Captain Lecky, a transport agent sent to Hamburg to assist him, to supply hay from a sea stock brought over in English transports and only if more hay was needed to use the German hay.² When the ships were fitted out and provisioned ensigns were hoisted to the foretop gallant masthead to signify that they were ready for embarkation.³

The operations of Popham in the Stade were greatly impeded by the foreigners involved. There was the problem of managing the foreign troops, the foreign captains and masters, and the foreign sailors. The masters were totally unacquainted with the transport service and the difference of language made it necessary for Popham to send an interpreter with his agents to give them instructions. One can appreciate Popham's difficulties when one recalls that the transport service was continually being hampered by English masters who spoke the same language as the transport agents. Other difficulties were caused by the French agents, the Hanoverian government

1. PRO, ADM/108/169, 2 Sept. 1795.

2. Ibid., 20 Oct. 1795.

3. Ibid., 4 Nov. 1795. There is evidence that Popham fitted and provisioned for the West Indies the ships taken up by the month that were to accommodate Hardy's and Ramsay's corps. PRO, W.O.1/798, Popham to Christian, 25 Aug. 1795. However, these ships did not go past England.

and the weather. Since Popham was working in a free port he had to compete with the French agents who were trying to procure tonnage to convey corn and stores which they shipped from Altona and other places in the river Elbe.¹ He also had to contend with the interference of the King of Prussia and the Regent of Hanover in the embarking of troops. They had been adding to Popham's difficulties ever since the Peace of Hanover. On 25 October Popham wrote to the Transport Board, "We are positively denied the privilege of embarking at Stade; unless any subsequent arrangements from England should prevail on the Regency to change their determination." At the same time he informed the Board that the Regency of Hanover required the British cavalry ships then in the Elbe to quit that River and proceed to the Weser.² Finally the continuity of stormy weather during the winter months in Hamburg greatly interfered with the sailing of convoys and transports. All these obstacles together with the daily increase in the demand for tonnage made the need for assistants absolutely essential. As early as 30 August Christian had promised Popham the assistance of two transport agents. When they had not arrived by 2 October Popham applied to the Board for the assistance of three or four lieutenants.³ Later in the month the Transport Board sent Captain Lecky and Lieutenant Elliott to assist him. Popham appointed William O'Brien, a proprietor of three

1. PRO, ADM/108/169, 2 Sept. 1795.

2. Ibid., 25 Oct. 1795.

3. PRO, ADM/108/169, 2 Oct. 1795.

ships in the transport service, and who had been six years in the Navy, an acting agent of transports.¹ He also appointed Lieutenant Graham in the same capacity.²

By 11 October Irvine's Hussars, Choiseul's Hussars, Rohan's Hussars (two dismounted troops), Lowenstein's Chasseurs, and D'Allonville's Corps were on board the Hamburg ships.³ They sailed for England and Ireland a few days later. By December Mortemart's, Castries' and Ramsay's Infantry as well as Hompesch's Hussars were embarked. William O'Brien was given charge of all the transports fitted at Hamburg for infantry and he proceeded with them to their destination.⁴ Lieutenant Elliott was put in charge of the transports that contained Hompesch's Hussars.⁵ On an average three months' corn was put on board for the German horses; but since the hay grown locally was of very poor quality and since the English hay had been given to the cavalry that left the Elbe in October, only enough German hay for the passage to England was put on board. The transport service was to supply these vessels with hay for their voyage to the West Indies. At the direction of Colonel Nesbitt they were allowed only eight pounds of hay and six pounds of oats

1. PRO, ADM/108/169, 1 Dec. 1795.

2. Ibid., 24 Dec. 1795.

3. Ibid., 11 Oct. 1795.

4. Ibid., 1 Dec. 1795.

5. Ibid., 5 Dec. 1795.

per day. At this time horses embarking in England in English transports received ten pounds of hay and eight pounds of oats. Also, the only ballast available in Germany was sand which was by no means suitable for horses to stand on during a long voyage, since it settles and wastes. Popham therefore recommended that Elliott obtain about three inches of shingle for each ship as soon as he arrived at Portsmouth. He had already informed the Board of his recommendations to Lieutenant Elliott. As the ships were waiting to sail fresh beef was supplied from on shore. Lieutenant Elliott and William O'Brien left the Elbe with the transports under their charge in the middle of December.¹ On 23 December an additional number of Hompesch's Hussars arrived and were embarked on board the Thetis, the last Hamburg ship to be chartered.²

By the end of October Popham had stopped engaging neutral ships and began to conclude his accounts. The Transport Board had informed him that there were ships fitting in England fully adequate to the remainder of the services that were to be performed in Germany.³ (The issuing of this order was probably influenced to some extent by the Transport Board's disturbance over the expenses in Germany, the bills for the Hamburg ships having begun to arrive at the Transport office about the middle of October).⁴ For the reception of the

1. PRO, ADM/108/169, 5.

2. Ibid., 23 Dec. 1795; The Thetis has been chartered on 31 Oct.

3. PRO, ADM/108/170, 31 Oct. 1795.

4. Ibid., 11 Oct. 1795.

British cavalry and infantry the Transport Board had already prepared transports in the Thames and provided about 12,000 tons at Shields. At the same time as preparations for the British cavalry were proceeding directions were given to the agent at Portsmouth to prepare tonnage and victualling for Salm's infantry, Latours infantry and Dutch artillery destined for St. Domingo, amounting to about 1,200 men. The transports from Shields proceeded to the Elbe under the command of Captain Williams and Captain Poulden. The transports from the Thames and Portsmouth were dispatched to the Elbe in October under the direction of Captain Lane.¹ Due to the enormity of the expense Dundas ordered that no horses whatever, excepting those really belonging to the British cavalry could be admitted into any of the transports and consequently none of the commissariat battalion horses, artillery, wagon or private horses were received. All of them were disposed of on the Continent.²

The whole of the British cavalry and infantry were embarked by 14 December 1795; and sailed with the convoy under Captain Bayly. They included part of the 15th, the whole of the 16th and the 11th light dragoons. Lieutenant Graham, one of Popham's appointees, was put in charge of the ships left in Germany and the services to be performed by them.³

1. PRO, ADM/108/170, 16 Oct. 1795.

2. Ibid., 20 Oct. 1795.

3. PRO, ADM/108/169, 24 Dec. 1795.

After the embarkation was completed the Transport Board's business on that side of the Continent was finished. By February 1796 the Board began looking into the activities of Captain Popham and examining thoroughly the accounts of Messrs. Parish and Company. It is not difficult to understand the Transport Board's concern over these accounts when one considers that the Board was under contract to pay one third more for each of the eighty two ships chartered in Hamburg than for similar ships chartered in Britain.

The first sign of discontent at home about the way Popham was hiring ships in Hamburg appeared in the middle of October when Popham wrote a letter to the Transport Board defending himself against the charge of irregularity.¹ Since 11 October Popham had been sending to the Board bills drawn on them for the freight of the Hamburg ships.² On 20 October the Transport Board informed Popham that "the purchase of ships, merely with a view of passing over troops, or even for a distant expedition - extraordinary business both in magnitude of expence and other consequences - cannot be done without the most explicit orders of government" - another indication of concern over the mounting expenses at Hamburg.³ and on 31 October Popham received the order from the Transport Board to discontinue engaging neutral ships and conclude his accounts.⁴

1. PRO, ADM/108/169, 16 Oct. 1795.

2. Ibid., 11 Oct. 1795.

3. Ibid., 20 Oct. 1795.

4. See above, p. 132.

On 2 November Popham enclosed in a letter to the Transport Board a list of all the transports chartered at Hamburg either by the run or by the month. In that letter he mentioned he was "sorry to find himself loaded with reproaches at a time he is doing all in the power of man for the good of the Service." He hoped "the Board would in future be more lenient in their strictures, when they consider the many disadvantages he laboured under in this country."¹

On 4 November Popham said he was "misunderstood about the purchase of ships."² Soon after he was called to headquarters on the Weser by Lieutenant General Dundas. Later in December after his return to Stade he indicated in a letter to the Board that his pride was damaged by Commissioner George's two last letters.³ In January of the New Year after completing the embarkation Popham returned to England and in February he appeared before the Board.⁴ An examination into the accounts of Parish and Company followed soon after.

The great feature in the disagreement between the Transport Board and Messrs. Parish and Company was measurement.

There were differences in the mode of measuring ships in Hamburg and in England. Hamburg measurers took the depth of the hold which was not done in England and therefore their calculation was different. Hamburg ships were measured in lasts instead of tons,

1. PRO, ADM/108/169, 2 Nov. 1795.

2. Ibid., 4 Nov. 1795.

3. Ibid., 11 Dec. 1795.

4. Ibid., 5 Feb. 1796.

a last being equal to two tons according to the sworn measurers of Hamburg. They calculated a last at eighty square feet or in their own words two tons of forty square feet each.¹ But the Hamburg foot was $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch or $\frac{1}{16}$ shorter than the English foot. This of course effected the measured tonnage of a ship. For example, the ship Prins Carl von Hesse measured at Ramsgate was said to be 330 tons; if one added to it the difference of the foot, which is exactly $\frac{1}{16}$ she would measure an additional 20 and $\frac{1}{2}$ tons. Therefore measuring with the Hamburg foot even in the English mode she would have been found to measure 350 and $\frac{1}{2}$ tons.²

The charter parties of the Hamburg ships were made out in lasts instead of tons. In Popham's first letter to the Transport Board concerning these ships dated Stade 2 September he informed the Board "that the only alteration since (his letter to Admiral Christian)³ has been to accede to the charter parties being made out in lasts, as the Sworn-measurer of Hamburg always measures in lasts, which they deem equal to two tons."⁴

Popham's mistake was that he took the word of the Hamburg measurers without checking their calculations to see if a Hamburg last actually did equal two English tons and omitted to insert a clause to that effect in the charter party. Also, contrary to the rules of the transport service both under the Navy Board and the

1. PRO, ADM/108/170, 13 Aug. 1796.

2. PRO, ADM/108/169, 14 April 1797.

3. See above, letter of 26 July 1795, pp. 121, 122.

4. PRO, ADM/108/169, 2 Sept. 1795.

Transport Board he omitted to insert a clause in the charter parties "subjecting the owners or contractors to abide by a remeasurement by Transport officers when opportunity should offer." He did not check for other possible deviations, an oversight, thought the Transport Board, for the Hamburg measurers were probably in the disposition to please their employers who were not strangers, as the transport agents must have been.¹

Aware of these two omissions in the Hamburg charter parties the Transport Board directed their officers to remeasure the ships when they arrived in England. In this way the Board hoped to have a check upon any demand for lastage which the contractors might make. Some of the shipwright officers in charge of remeasurement were H. Boyce at Deptford, R. Fabian at Southampton and Luke Ladd and Matthew Norris at Dover. The shipwright officers in each port remeasured the ships under the guidance of the transport agent stationed there. Thus, Ladd and Norris remeasured the ship Hoopt in the transport service in Dover Harbour at the request of transport agent, Lieutenant Edward Down. The shipwright officers set down on paper the names of the ships and masters, the length of the ship's keel, the ship's extreme breadth, their tonnage found in England and their lastage chartered at Hamburg. Then calculations were made for the overcharge in lasts. Here is R. Fabian's Report for the

1. PRO, ADM/108/170, 8 Aug. 1796, Transport Board to G. Rose. At least 70 of the ships hired in Hamburg were measured by J.J. Schaffer, Harbour-master in conformity to the usage and rules governing Hamburg. ADM/108/169, 8 Nov. 1796.

Admeasurement of six foreign ships at Southampton, dated 11 December 1795.¹

In compliance with your Transport agent Lt. R.P. Young's orders, I have carefully readmeasured the under mentioned ships engaged at Hamburg on freight.

<u>Ships</u> <u>Names</u>	<u>Masters</u> <u>Names</u>	<u>Dimensions</u>		<u>No. of</u> <u>Tons</u>	<u>No. of</u> <u>Lasts</u>
		<u>Length</u>	<u>Breadth</u>		
		<u>ft.inches</u>			
Beckey	W. Bryden	96.6	28.1	334.14/94	200
Hope	C. Sansted	73.2	25.3	196.71/94	190
Amelia	H. Flor	86.5	23.10	217.82/94	140
Juliana	M. Welling	92.5	29.10	352.80/94	220
Bergen Galley	A. Johnson	92.	25.7	266.77/94	203
Tomkie Margaretha	J. Kim	85.4	21.5	176.79/94	132

The transport officers remeasured eighteen of the twenty seven ships chartered to convey cavalry to England or Ireland. They found that upon these eighteen ships the number of lasts overcharged were 1,212½ lasts, which at six pounds per last, according to their charter, amounted in sterling to £7,275. The Transport Board calculating on the other nine ships which were not measured and taking them to have exceeded in the same ratio of nearly one third stated their overcharge of lastage to be 557 lasts. The overcharge in sterling on the nine ships amounted to £3,342. Therefore the Transport Board calculated the overcharge on the twenty seven ships to be £10,617. This calculation did not include the overcharge for primage of fifteen percent charged upon each of the twenty seven ships.

1. PRO, ADM/108/169, 11 Dec. 1795. By multiplying by two (since one last equalled two tons according to the Sworn Harbour-master of Hamburg) the number of lasts specified for each ship in the above report, it becomes clear the excess tonnage per ship for which the Transport Board had to pay.

Fourteen of the above ships which proceeded on the voyage were to be paid the remaining half freight and primage in London. Eight of these ships were measured in Hamburg at 1,478 lasts and after being remeasured in the English mode and by the English foot were found to contain only $1,052\frac{1}{2}$ lasts. The difference therefore, was 425 lasts or £1,276.10 which was about a two-sevenths overcharge besides primage. Therefore, the demurrage on the fourteen ships according to the above statement amounted to £2,779.15.1.

The Transport Board remeasured forty six of the fifty five ships taken up for six months certain. They found the general overcharge in the freight and primage of these ships to be about two-fifths. Taking the remaining nine ships in the same proportion they arrived at the total overcharge. By the Hamburg measurement the government was charged for 12,416 lasts which for six months at the rate according to the charter party amounted to £154,809.15.7. By the English measurement the freight and primage of those ships should have been charged at 7,436 lasts. Then the amount due to the Hamburg owners would have been £92,746.13.10. Consequently the whole overcharge for the freight and primage of the fifty five ships was £62,063.1.9.

Since these ships were over-rated in their lastage and charge a proportional excess arose in their brokerage. The Transport Board estimated the overcharge for brokerage at £629.11.1.

In scrutinising the accounts of Messrs. Parish and Company the Transport Board found other articles exaggerated and they also reported on them, though not with the same degree of certainty as they did with measurement. They found an overcharge in the article of exchange. To calculate this overcharge the Transport Board obtained through mercantile channels the course of exchange on the several days, in which the bills were drawn upon the Board. They found a material difference in the course drawn and the course existing. The difference on all the bills drawn amounted to an overcharge of £1,547.11.5. The Transport Board was also concerned with the two percent commission Parish and Company were to receive. They thought one percent would have been sufficient especially since the brokers were the owners of several of the ships. The Board concluded also that the Hamburg ships were engaged at a disadvantage in pilotage and light money though no calculations were made to determine the amounts. (Pilotage, port charges and light money, like Primage were all new expenses to the Transport Board. The Transport Board did not pay these when it hired ships in England.) They also calculated there were overcharges for measuring and fitting out each ship, for each charter party and for store or warehouse rent.

On the above data concerning freight, primage, demurrage and exchange the Transport Board concluded that there was a general overcharge of £76,003.18.10 on the bills drawn on the Board as a result of contracts made between Captain Popham and Messrs. Parish and

Company.¹

The Hamburg ships were discharged as soon as the terms for which they were contracted ceased; not one was in the employ of the transport service after May 1796. However two months' pay remained unsettled on the whole of the fifty five ships. The Board planned to use this as a set off against the overcharges. In the meantime Popham was held responsible till the accounts of Parish and Company were fully examined. He was thought to have acted precipitately and contrary to his instructions particularly concerning the two omissions in the charter party.

Papers with the above calculations and other papers relative to the Hamburg proceedings were sent to the Treasury in August 1796 for their perusal. The Transport Board also submitted their case against Parish and Company to the Attorney and Solicitor General for their opinion. The commissioners of transports wished to know whether they were bound by the several charter parties made between Popham and Parish and Company to pay for the vessels at the measurements expressed in each contract, or whether if the contractors were compelled to submit to a remeasurement the Transport Board would consider the proposals as an engagement that each last equalled two tons. The Attorney and Solicitor General, John Scott and John Mitford respectively, gave their opinion of the case respecting the

1. For the calculations for lasts and overcharge see: PRO, ADM/108/170, 8 Aug. 1796, Transport Board to G. Rose; ADM/108/170, 5 Aug. 1796, the Transport Board's case as set down by solicitors W. & E. Bray for the opinion of the Attorney & Solicitor General.

accounts of Messrs. Parish and Company on 17 November 1796.

Scott and Mitford mentioned that they found it difficult to advise the transport commissioners upon the case because of the manner in which the proceedings at Hamburg had been conducted, particularly since Popham acted as their transport agent though contrary to his general instructions and he did contract for the vessels without full instruction from the Transport Board.

It was the opinion of the Attorney and Solicitor General that if the vessels "really contained respectively the numbers of lasts expressed in their respective charter parties, according to the measure, and the mode of measurement, established at Hamburg, and according to which they ought to have been measured by the Sworn Harbour Master" the owners were entitled to be paid at the rate of 36/- per last per month according to the charter parties. The Hamburg measurement had to be accepted, they thought, even though two tons did not equal a last according to British measure, unless it was proved that some fraud had been practised on Captain Popham to misrepresent the quantity of a last in order to get him to change the form of the contract. However, the Attorney and Solicitor General did not find proof of fraud among the evidence. It was their opinion that if an enquiry was made the contractors would probably insist and with good ground that they considered the ton "according to the sense in which the word was used in Hamburg and

the measurement established there, and not according to what would be understood by the same word" in England.

The Attorney and Solicitor General gave their opinion also on the charge for exchange and other articles which the Board thought exaggerated. They thought the commissioners "ought to allow only the sum due according to the real course of exchange, which was a mere question on evidence of fact." The commissioners' charges for fitting, measuring and charter parties had to be judged on the evidence the commissioners received of how much Parish and Company actually expended on the articles, and the propriety of such expenditure. Of course any articles that Parish and Company supplied themselves, had to be paid for at the same rate the articles were purchased in Hamburg. The charge for brokerage, however, could not be claimed by Parish and Company who contracted with Captain Popham to procure vessels at a certain rate. The Attorney and Solicitor General were of the opinion that if the charter parties were adopted the charge for primage, pilotage etc. would have to be paid according to the terms of the charter parties, and the commissioners* of transports "usual course of dealing cannot affect contracts which have not been made according to their usual course of dealing, nor under their authority." The charges were stated by Captain Popham to Admiral Christian, "and if they were objectionable we presume they would have been objected to by Admiral Christian, who must be considered as standing in the place of the commissioners if they shall

adopt his proceedings." The same held true for the two percent commission upon the disbursements of Messrs. Parish and Company since it was an article distinctly stated to Admiral Christian. And that stipulation of two percent seemed "to show that a commission on the whole or any other parts of the transaction, was not understood to be payable to the contractors."¹

Thus the Attorney and Solicitor General were of the opinion that the Transport Board was bound by the charter parties and that the real blame for contracting for ships contrary to the usual rules of the Transport Board lay with Admiral Christian, who as a Transport Board commissioner was representative of the Board in those transactions, and not with Captain Popham.

The dispute between Messrs. Parish and Company and the Transport Board was finally settled by arbitration, in accordance with the Heads of the Charter Party signed at Bremer Lehe, 2 August 1795, between Captain Popham and Parish and Company. The Heads of the Charter Party stated that "any deviation or other dispute was to be settled by arbitration."²

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1. PRO, ADM/108/170, Copy of the opinion of the Attorney and Solicitor General on the case respecting the accounts of Messrs. Parish and Company.
 2. See above p.123; The arbitrators in the dispute were Alexander Champion, John Deffell, George Burton and Josiah Cotton.

After sifting the evidence (both Popham and Christian gave evidence before the arbitrators during February 1797) the arbitrators reached conclusions similar to those of the Attorney and Solicitor General. By September 1797 the dispute was settled in favour of Messrs. Parish and Company and orders were issued that their accounts be concluded.¹

Captain Popham was exonerated and returned to active employment in the transport service. He resumed his position as principal transport agent on the Continent and was in charge of the transportation of the army during the Ostend expedition of 1798 and the Helder expedition of 1799. During the latter expedition he was sent to Russia to take charge of the embarkation of Russian troops and there he chartered fifteen ships in the Baltic to be used as transports.²

1. PRO, ADM/108/49, 27 Sept. 1797; see also ADM/108/170, Hague to Marsh, 8 Feb. 1797.

2. See below, p. 243.

CHAPTER V

PASSAGE ON BOARD A TRANSPORT

DURING THE WAR AGAINST REVOLUTIONARY FRANCE

Life on board a transport was considerably less comfortable for a soldier than life on shore. Every effort was made, therefore, to not embark the troops until there was the opportunity of immediate sailing, especially when the troops were being embarked in small vessels on a short voyage. The soldiers were taken from the shore to the troopship in flatboats, one being supplied to every transport;¹ a Jack flew from the foretop gall mast-head of the vessel as a mark until all the troops were on board.² The amount of troops embarked on each transport depended on the size and destination of the vessel. A regiment going to the Continent would require less transports than one going to the West Indies because the space allowed to one soldier going to warm climates and for long distances was greater than for shorter distances. It was a rule of the Transport Board to allow two tons per man to warm climates and for long distances and in proportion for shorter distances. But the Board never allowed less than one ton a man for the shortest.³ For example, soldiers going to the West Indies were always allowed two tons per man; soldiers going to Gibraltar and the Continent were sometimes allowed two tons per man but usually were allowed a ton and a half per man; and soldiers going from Geneva Barracks to Chatham were allowed one ton per man.⁴ Allowing

1. PRO, ADM/106/2647, 13 Aug. 1793.

2. PRO, ADM/180/28, 6 June 1796.

3. PRO, ADM/108/38, 20 Aug. 1796; ADM/108/64, 16 Nov. 1799.

4. PRO, ADM/106/2645, 14 May 1793; ADM/108/60, 4 May 1799; ADM/108/67, 7 June 1800.

two tons per man, a regiment consisting of 700 men required 1400 tons of shipping; since most transports averaged between 150 and 300 tons this one regiment required on an average six troopships for its transport.¹

There does not seem to have been a set rule for the allowance of space to a commissioned officer on board a regular transport. During the expedition to the West Indies some officers were allotted the space of four privates and some the space of two.² Ships hired on freight as a rule allowed two tons freight for each private and two tons and one half for each commissioned officer.³ Since women travelled with the soldiers during the war against revolutionary France, it was the custom to embark six women to a company of sixty men. By the end of 1800, however, in order to cut down on expenses the Duke of York directed that only six women to every 100 men be allowed to embark.⁴

Once the troops were on board the vessel they were accommodated in the hammocks and beds with which the transport had been equipped.⁵ They were generally victualled at two thirds allowance of a seaman's whole allowance; that is, six soldiers were victualled the same as four seamen. Women and children were victualled the same as the troops at the beginning of the war;⁶ but during 1794 the children's

1. PRO, ADM/108/2648, 3 Oct. 1793.

2. PRO, ADM/108/31, 10 Sept. 1794; ADM/108/60, 4 May 1799; ADM/108/67, 7 June 1800.

3. PRO, ADM/108/38, 10 Aug. 1796.

4. PRO, ADM/106/2647, 12 Nov. 1793; ADM/108/68, 20 Nov. 1800.

5. See above, pp. 102-4.

6. PRO. ADM/106/2647, 9 Sept. 1793.

portion was reduced to one half of a whole allowance.¹ In August 1799 in another effort at economy women's allowance was cut to one half and at the same time children's allowance was reduced still further to one fourth of a whole allowance. The troops continued, however, to be victualled at two thirds.² The soldiers embarked in ships on freight were also victualled at two thirds of a seaman's whole allowance.³

Here is an example of the amount of provisions given in one week to six soldiers on board a transport going to the West Indies. It consisted of: 28 pounds of bread, 28 half pints spirits, 12 pounds of pork, 8 pints of pease, 8 pints of oatmeal, 16 ounces of butter and 32 ounces of cheese.⁴ Generally the Transport Board provided provisions for the troops but if transport owners provided them then an allowance was made to them. The owners were given one shilling per day for each soldier to be victualled at two thirds of a seaman's whole allowance. By 1800 in consequence of the high price of provisions the owners were given one shilling and six pence per day for each soldier to be victualled at the same allowance.⁵

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1. PRO, ADM/108/32, 10 Oct. 1794.
 2. PRO, ADM/108/62, 17 Aug. 1799; ADM/108/66, 19 April 1800.
 3. PRO, ADM/108/52, 28 Feb. 1798. After Sept. 1798 troops embarked on board transports were supplied with whole allowance of fresh beef but the whole allowance was confined to fresh beef only. ADM/108/56, 18 Sept. 1798.
 4. NMM, ADM/R.P./2, 26 Aug. 1794.
 5. PRO, ADM/108/66, 28 April; 19 April 1800.

The Transport Board insisted that the master issue the provisions to the troops since he was answerable for all provisions and stores put on board his ship.¹ On the other hand the army insisted that their officers supervise the distribution of provisions. It is most likely that both supervised.

The crew of all transports during the war against revolutionary France was in the proportion of five men and one boy to every hundred tons measurement; and for the fraction above the hundred tons they had one man to every twenty tons. For example, the Mary transport measured 313 tons, so that the nineteen she had on board was exactly her complement.² If she was short her complement she would have been considered not ready for service and consequently mulcted.³

While the troops were on board the transports they were subject to the discipline of the army commanders and not to naval discipline. The authority for this regulation can be traced to an act of parliament passed in 1749 relating to the government of war-ships, vessels and forces by sea. That act stipulated that no soldier on any transport was to be tried by a naval court martial.⁴ However, during the war against revolutionary France soldiers were often

1. PRO, ADM/108/46, 18 May 1797.

2. PRO, ADM/1/3732, 31 Dec. 1796; ADM/108/43, 11 Jan. 1797. A troop transport during the American war had a common transport complement of six men to 100 tons burthen. And a victualler had a complement of seven men to 100 tons burthen. Syrett, op. cit., 113; Add. MSS., 38343.

3. PRO, ADM/106/2646, 22 July 1793.

4. 22 George II, c. 33.

transported on board warships, particularly during the Abercromby-Christian expedition to the West Indies in 1795 and during the expedition to the Helder in 1799. When soldiers were transported on board warships a controversy over naval discipline ensued.

According to the Duke of York's regulations of October 1795 soldiers and officers on board transports and warships were not subject to naval discipline.¹ The Admiralty, however, objected to the regulations and Admiral Sydney Smith offered one of the strongest objections in a letter to Lord Spencer dated 3 November 1795. He claimed that the 'regulations' were in direct violation of the act of parliament of which the articles of war were ipso facto (22 George II) and which no army arrangement could or should affect. He argued that the

act expressly puts 'soldiers' and all persons 'in or belonging to the fleet' under naval discipline and excepts those only who are embarked on board transport ships which exception marks the line more precisely. It is contended that nothing can set aside an Act of Parliament but its repeal, and presumed that Government can never wish to change the mode of discipline as established in the Navy after the experience in this reign and part of the last in favor of it as it stands. The Article of War annexed by the King to the Army code added weight to the operation of the act. The 'regulations' from the Duke of York if enforced do away the effect of both; and the Admiralty order² by

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1. These regulations were intended to apply to troops that were put on warships for the purpose of being transported and did not apply to such as were doing the duty of marines. PRO, ADM/1/4166, 4 Nov. 1795. For the regulations themselves see, PRO, ADM/1/4166, 11 Oct. 1795.
 2. In October 1793 the Admiralty issued an order which stated that army officers and their respective corps, whenever embarked on board warships, were to consider themselves subject to the act passed in 1749. PRO, ADM/1/4159, 13 Nov. 1793.

transmitting the regulations as well as the article is considered as imposing the authority of the Duke of York on the Navy in contradiction to that of an Act of Parliament.¹

The controversy over naval discipline continued throughout the war. In a draft paper circulated to the cabinet on 15 February 1798, Spencer brought up the subject again. He remarked he would rather see troops transported on warships for in point of expedition and security they were unquestionably the best method. But whenever troops had been embarked on board warships the question whether these troops were subject to naval discipline or not had "excited such jealousies and uneasiness in both the sea and land service"² that it was detrimental to the service as a whole. It was Spencer's distinct wish that if troops should be embarked on board a warship they should be placed under the discipline of the navy, because of the absolute necessity of safeguarding the discipline of the warship and investing her commander with a power adequate to the great responsibility of his position.³ To avoid this difficult situation he could see no other course than to contract for transports. The subject of naval discipline arose before the sailing of the expedition under Admiral Hugh Christian to the West Indies. The troops had already been embarked. After a compromise had been suggested and discarded by all the admirals then at Portsmouth, the Admiralty had to trust to the temper and right headedness of the sea and land

1. NRS, Spencer, vol. I, 199.

2. Ibid., vol. II, 296.

3. NRS, Spencer, vol. II, 296.

commanders of that expedition.¹ This most probably was the method used by the Admiralty for the duration of the war.

In addition to the regulations concerning army discipline on board transports rules were formulated at the same time to preserve the health of the troops during passage. As a result of the prevalence of sickness among the forces en route to and while serving in the West Indies a Board of Military and Medical Officers was set up in September 1795 at the suggestion of the War Office in order to frame "Regulations for the better Preservation of the Health of troops at Sea, and on Service in hot climates."² The Board appointed by Sir Ralph Abercromby suggested that for every one hundred men the following medical stores for the use of the sick and convalescents be placed on board all troopships.

One dozen of Port Wine	
Portable soup	6 lbs.
Pearl Barley	28 "
Rice	28 "
Moist Sugar	28 "
Soap	6 "

Immediately this suggestion was put into effect when the above items were ordered in October 1795 to be placed on board the troopships of the Abercromby-Christian expedition leaving from Portsmouth and Cork.²

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1. NRS, Spencer, vol. II, 296.
 2. For the Regulations themselves see Parliamentary Papers, 1795-6. Accounts and Papers Presented to the House of Commons, respecting the Expedition to the West Indies, under the Command of Sir Charles Grey and Sir John Jervis, vol. 100, no. 840, pp. 92-100.
 3. Ibid., 88.

A further preventive against the spread of sickness among troops while on board a transport was the regulation that required army officers to make sure the sick were separated from those in health as much as possible; upon the first appearance of any acute infectious disorder, signals were to be made to the hospital ship accompanying the fleet, and the diseased man was to be removed to her.¹ Another regulation called for fumigating equipment such as lime and brushes for white-washing between the decks once a month to be placed on each troopship. Other rules were concerned with cleanliness, sanitation, exercise, etc. all of which are distinctly illustrated in the general orders given by Lieutenant General Gainfield and Lieutenant Colonel Grey presented below.²

The long haul to the West and East Indies and the Cape of Good Hope required more tonnage per man, a greater supply of provisions and a more organized and regulated life during the long passage as compared to the short haul to the Continent; there was also a greater emphasis on the comfort of the soldier. For a short voyage soldiers might not have beds at all and since they were more crowded they were less active, though they were probably given the task of cleaning and preparing arms while their voyage was completed. The organization of a soldier's life and his daily routine while on board a transport

1. Parliamentary Papers, 1795-6, op. cit., vol. 100, no. 840, p. 99.

2. See below, pp. 155-8.

was the responsibility of the military commanders and they issued orders to that effect before sailing. The general orders given by Lieutenant General Gainfield to troops sailing from Calcutta to Gibraltar in September 1798 present a picture of transport life during a long voyage. The fact that the vessel was an armed transport does not diminish the value of this representation of the soldier's daily routine on board a transport. This would be true whether the vessel was an East India ship taken up on freight, a warship or a regular troopship. Lieutenant General Gainfield issued these orders to his officers before sailing.

The military officers commanding in the different armed transport ships are to do their utmost to promote a good understanding between the sailors and soldiers, and to preserve cleanliness and regularity on board their respective ships, and in order to be enabled to make a proper defence in case of being attacked by the enemy, a proportion of the soldiers are to be quartered at, and taught the exercise of the great guns,¹ another proportion for the use of small arms, and those who cannot be immediately employed with arms to be stationed either so as to be useful, or not to impede the defence:

The troops on board each ship are to be divided into three watches, and those watches again divided into two equal parts, one half to parade on the starboard, and the other on the Larboard side, the whole to be again divided messes of six persons in each mess:

The watch, a compleat third, is to be on deck, changing with the watches of the ship during the night, and an half watch during the day, except in cases when the weather will not admit of it.

1. This of course would not take place on board an unarmed troopship.

The troops are to be on deck from 8 to 10 in the morning, during which time the births are to be cleaned out, and every thing between deck made as clean as possible, and in order more easily to effect it, the women, servants, and every person sleeping in the soldiers department are to be upon deck, taking with them not only their bedding, but every other thing which belong to them; after cleaning between the decks they are to be inspected by the Captain before the men are permitted to re-enter;

During the time allotted for the troops to be on deck one hour is to be employed by the soldiers and women in having their hands and faces washed, their hairs combed and tied, their shoes cleaned and their clothes brushed: They are afterwards to fall in, and to be regularly inspected by their officers and looked over by the officer commanding in the Ship; Should the weather permit the arms and accoutrements are to be inspected on Thursday and Sunday mornings. The arms should be kept well flinted and the ammunition ready to be delivered on the shortest notice, should there be an arm chest a proportion of arms and accoutrements with ammunition should be constantly deposited in it, and examined every evening:

Every person is to be on the deck at dinner time, also one hour at Sunset, at which time the sweeping the floor between decks, will very much conduce to the comfort of the troops.

It must be understood that in the arrangements for the troops occupying the decks, it is to be with the concurrence, and suiting the convenience of the captain of the ship, and that in rainy weather, the less the troops are exposed to wet the better.

The centries usual are to be furnished by the watch on deck, and relieved regularly every two hours, each centry should either have his bayonet drawn, or some mark to distinguish him as such.

An officer at least to be constantly on deck during the day, and when there are sufficient numbers a Captain and two Subalterns during the night.

An officer to attend constantly the delivery of provisions from the ship steward, when it is delivered to the cooks, and when after cooking it is to be delivered to the mess man.

The Captain of the watch is to see the messes equally divided before they are distributed to the soldiers.

The rum is to be mixed with the usual proportion of three of water to one of spirit, in the presence of the officer.

In the issue of provision, or on any other occasion, when there may appear a deficiency or irregularity, the soldier is to complain to the officer, who will, if he sees occasion, report the circumstance to the Captain of the watch, who is to examine into the matter of complaint, and, if it cannot be arranged by him, to make the report to the military officer commanding in the ship, who will of course endeavour to have it adjusted with the Captain.

The Subaltern officers attending the deliveries of provisions to report each delivery to the Captain of the watch, who, at being relieved, will make a general one to the military commanding officer. Such soldiers who have been accustomed to a sea-faring life may, at the request of the Captain, be employed in the navigation, the rest of the soldiers should not be encouraged in going up the shrouds, nor should they be permitted to swim unless boats are lowered down.¹

Similar orders were given by Lieutenant Colonel Grey, commander of the 12th regiment of foot which sailed from the Isle of Wight to India in June 1796. A few more insights into the activities of a soldier on board a transport were revealed by these orders.

The men were ordered to parade every morning at ten o'clock, and every evening at half past six; they were on no account whatever

1. NLS, Melville MS. 3597, ff. 196-99.

to go between decks but at the times of breakfast or dinner unless ordered, the sick excepted; it was expected that the officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers of the watch, would be ready and alert in performing any duty required of them, by the officers of the ship, as they were stationed on decks for that purpose; the men had to put on clean shirts every Sunday and Wednesday; the dirty ones were washed on Monday's and Thursday's; the men always paraded the evening before the day appointed for their changing their linen, with their clean shirts in their hands; they had to wash at the head of the ship; each company by squads, and the shirts or trousers had to be hung by companies in the shrouds to dry under the inspection of a non-commissioned officer who would give them in charge to a sentry until they were taken down; any man found guilty of selling his food, or buying another soldier's would have his allowance stopped during the passage; winter clothing was given up and summer clothing received as the ships entered tropical waters; the arms and accoutrements were taken out, cleaned, oiled and inspected by companies on appointed days; the men and officers including their servants attended divine service on Sunday mornings.¹

Every Saturday evening was usually a time for entertainment; General William Dyott in his diary speaks of dancing as a kind of amusement on board one of the transports in the Abercromby-Christian fleet destined for the West Indies in January 1796. Dyott was the

1. GP, 2249, ff. 1-42; 2248.

commander of the troops on board the vessel and on 25 January he states: "I set the people to dance in the evening, all the officers assisted at the ball and it put everybody in good spirits. It was the first day since our departure that was at all calculated for this kind of amusement."¹ Later Dyott refers to dancing as the usual form of Saturday evening amusement for officers on that voyage. The rank and file provided their own kind of entertainment below deck on Saturday evening.

Having established a mental picture of the life of a soldier on board a transport during the war against revolutionary France we can now undertake to see how efficiently the troops were transported around the world, to the far distant West and East Indies, to the Cape of Good Hope, to the Continent and to the Mediterranean and Egypt.

1. William Dyott. Dyott's Diary, 1781-1845. A selection from the journal of William Dyott sometime General in the British army and Aid de Camp to His Majesty King George III (London, 1907), vol. I, 86.

CHAPTER VI

THE TRANSPORTING OF THE KING'S FORCES:
THE LONG HAUL TO THE WEST INDIES, THE
EAST INDIES AND THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE

The West Indies played a very essential part in the military policy of Pitt and Dundas. If France could be stripped of her rich West Indian colonies it would do serious harm to her already weakened financial structure and might hasten her surrender; the captured islands would bring to Britain additional wealth, security and strength.

There were two major offensive campaigns in the Caribbean during the war against revolutionary France, the campaign of 1794 conducted by Sir Charles Grey and Sir John Jervis and the campaign of 1796 under the joint command of Sir Ralph Abercromby and Admiral Hugh Christian. Two minor campaigns were fought in 1795 and 1797. In 1795 the garrisons in the West Indies concentrated on retaining the islands already captured and on subduing the negroes who were in revolt; in the early months of 1797 a minor offensive campaign was conducted by Sir Ralph Abercromby, after which the ministry sought no more colonial territories in the West Indies.

The Navy Board and later the Transport Board were in charge of preparing troopships, victuallers and storeships to carry to the West Indies the various detachments and the two expeditions that conducted these campaigns. These boards were successful in appropriating ships for the West Indian service and in getting the troops, provisions and stores to the islands. They were not successful,

however, in getting them out of port in time to reach the West Indies during the most advantageous season. Since November began the best period for acting in the West Indies each expedition should have left no later than the end of September. Each expedition was held up, however, because of a shortage of men and equipment; and the Abercromby-Christian expedition was also delayed because of the persistent violent weather which made it impossible to get the ships out to sea. As a result the expeditions left England at least two months too late and by the time the troops were disembarked and made ready to begin fighting there was little time left before the deadly summer season set in.

For the first year of the war Britain relied to a great extent on her forces already in the West Indies, on small detachments sent out to reinforce them, and on the Royalist troops levied there. Though the Navy Board was responsible for transporting these reinforcements to the West Indies and provisioning the army stationed in the islands its real work in conveying troops, provisions and supplies began with the preparations for the Grey-Jervis expedition in August 1793, which was to begin the offensive campaign of 1794. However, it is necessary to look at the military situation in the West Indies in 1793 to understand the campaign of 1794.

Before war began Britain had nineteen battalions either in the West Indies or on the way, not for purposes of aggression, but for purposes of security. White refugees from the French islands had appealed to Britain for protection against the black insurrectionists

who had been encouraged to revolt by commissioners from the National Convention at Paris. In January 1793 Dundas also accepted the offer of three St. Domingo plantation owners for British protection of the island until a conclusion of peace. As soon as war began Dundas issued orders for the capture of Tobago in the lesser antilles and on 28 February he sent instructions to Brigadier General Cuyler, the army commander in the West Indies, to capture the windward and leeward islands of Guadeloupe, Martinique, St. Lucia and Marigalante. At the same time the 32nd regiment and an attachment of Royal Artillery was ordered to be brought from Gibraltar to the West Indies in two 44 gun warships which were fitted out at Portsmouth for that purpose.¹ By the time these troops arrived at Barbados during the second week of May,² Cuyler had captured Tobago, St. Pierre and Miquelon. The two 44 gun warships that brought the men from Gibraltar remained in the West Indies to be of service to Cuyler.³ After an abortive attack upon the island of Martinique on 16 June, and, also, since it was apparent at this time that the situation was ripe for a general insurrection among the negroes, the ministry began to think seriously of sending more troops to the West Indies in order to conduct a campaign of considerable strength. Preparations were made to send Major General Prescott and Lieutenant Colonel Dundas with five regiments in the autumn of 1793. They sailed from England on 23 September;

1. PRO, ADM/1/4157, 28 Feb. 1793.

2. PRO, ADM/1/4158, 13 May 1793.

3. Ibid.

Prescott and Dundas and their servants were accommodated on board one of the warships that composed part of the convoy.¹ But the preliminaries for a much larger expedition under the command of Grey and Jervis were also begun by the Navy Board in August. On the 23rd of that month Grey was given orders to prepare for service in the West Indies.²

Since the Navy Board minutes that deal with the transport service are very limited, it is difficult to give a detailed description of the preparations for the transportation of various expeditions to the West Indies as well as to the Continent; this includes the Grey-Jervis expedition which was conducted when the transport service was under the auspices of the Navy Board. It becomes easier to trace the transporting of troops after the Transport Board is established in July 1794. Then, frequent lists and charts appear which show the embarkations of transports and their destinations. The transport service is more efficiently run and the Transport Board minutes become a more valuable source. This evidence of a more efficiently run transport system as revealed by the Transport Board minutes in itself was a justification for the Board's existence.³

It took about three months to hire, fit, prepare and collect tonnage required by the different departments for a great expedition including the time the troops took in getting ready even after the

1. PRO, ADM/1/4158, 23 Sept. 1793.

2. Fortescue, op. cit., 75-140.

3. see below, footnote 4, p. 179.

tonnage was allotted to them. Therefore, preparations for the Grey-Jervis expedition should have begun in early July instead of in August in order to get the fleet out to sea by the end of September. Another cause of delay was that the Navy Board had not prepared an expedition since the American war and, like other departments during the early stages of the war against revolutionary France, the Board was slow in getting organized. A hospital ship for the Grey expedition was ordered to be fitted as late as 15 October;¹ as late as 21 October storeships were appropriated.

It was originally intended that Grey take over 20,000 troops with him;² but only 10,760 men could be mustered from the military resources of Britain. Then, eight of Grey's battalions numbering 4,642 men were taken away in October for Moira's expedition to La Vendée. Therefore, the troops which sailed from Cork and Portsmouth on Grey's expedition to the West Indies amounted to 6,118 men including 400 artillery or about one third of the force that was originally contemplated.³ This might have been sufficient to conduct an offensive campaign but it was not sufficient also to garrison and retain the islands once they were conquered. This was to lead to the loss of some of the islands by the end of 1794. The final arrangements for Grey's expedition were made in October; by 24 October five Irish regiments, the flank companies of fourteen other Irish

1. It was the Atlantic transport of 400 tons. PRO, ADM/106/2648, 15 Oct. 1793.

2. GP, 190, 31 Aug. 1793.

3. Parliamentary Papers, 1795-6, op. cit., vol. 100, no. 840, pp. 3, 5.

regiments and a company of Irish artillery were at Cork ready to proceed to the West Indies. The troops were accommodated at two tons per man, the usual allotment given to soldiers on a long passage, and they were provisioned at two thirds of a seaman's whole allowance. The transports for this service were fitted at Spithead then they sailed under convoy to Cork to receive the troops and then to Barbados.¹

In early November Grey joined Sir John Jervis at Portsmouth to hasten preparations and at last they sailed away on 26 November, two months too late. The troops were disembarked in January 1794 and by the time they were made fit to begin the campaign it was February with the deadly summer season just three months away.

Grey and Jervis reached Barbados the 6th of January while the troops from Ireland did not all arrive until 10 January.² Six months had passed since the time preparations for the expedition had first begun. In evaluating the Navy Board's slowness in getting the expedition out to sea one cannot overlook the demands made of the Navy Board by Dundas' ambitious policy as well as his habit occasioned by a shortage of troops of appropriating regiments for one service and soon after switching their destination. The fact that early in October, at very short notice, Grey was sent on an expedition to Ostend certainly must have slowed up arrangements for his West Indian expedition. Nevertheless it is most probable that

1. PRO, ADM/1/4159, 24 Oct. 1793.

2. GP, 2243, Grey to Dundas, 21 Jan. 1794.

he was sent on the expedition because the transports for the West Indies were not complete.

Since two transports containing most of the medical stores for the expedition were left behind Grey had to purchase medical supplies of an indifferent quality at an exorbitant price in the West Indies. The Roebuck transport containing medicine and hospital stores was left at Portsmouth because he was not ready; she was not to arrive in the West Indies until March 1794. The Peggy transport was left behind at Cork because she had been dismasted. The Peggy also had on board Lieutenant Colonel Blundell with two Light Companies, thus diminishing further Grey's forces.¹

This was indeed unfortunate since nearly 900 of the men from Cork arrived in the West Indies sick with fever, a result of orders and regulations not being properly attended to on board many of the troopships, and of the failure to provide hospital ships so that the fevers on board the transports would not spread. One hospital ship the Atlantic did sail with the fleet from Portsmouth. Soon after his arrival in the West Indies Grey complained to Dundas about the sickness among the troops from Ireland and requested hospital ships in order to prevent future outbreaks.² Fortunately, the troops recovered their health quickly and by February were fit for duty.

Grey had a force of little more than 6,000 men for the purpose

1. GP, 2243, Grey to Dundas, 21 Jan. 1794.

2. Ibid.

of conquering the French islands of Guadeloupe, St. Lucia and Martinique. On 18 January he learned that Dundas had ordered the 22nd and 41st regiments to sail from Cork to the West Indies to help garrison Jamaica. Thus, the army commander began his operations in the West Indies with a spirit of optimism. He felt that this reinforcement might prove so sufficient "that no further aid would be required from the part of the West Indian army now here - which would prove a most fortunate event, as being the only one that could bring it within the bounds of possibility to obtain all our West Indian objects in the course of this campaign."¹ However by the middle of March during the siege of Martinique his optimism wained for the 22nd and 41st regiments had not arrived. Should the British succeed in capturing the French islands they would have to be garrisoned and he did not want to deplete his forces if he could help it. Thus, Grey wrote to Dundas on 16 March informing the Secretary of State of the necessity of sending more troops together with ordnance and ordnance stores. The 22nd and 41st regiments were not to arrive until the first week of May.²

On 22 February Grey embarked a force of 6,000 men against Martinique and by 25 March the island had been captured.³ Grey then left sufficient troops with an officer of experience and ability to command to garrison it. This became his procedure throughout the

1. GP, 2243, Grey to Dundas, 21 Jan. 1794.

2. Ibid., Grey to Dundas, 16 March 1794.

3. Ibid., 25 March 1794.

campaign. Next he attempted to capture St. Lucia and landed a force there on 1 April. A day later it capitulated; two regiments under St. Charles Gordon remained to hold it. On 12 April after the capture of Point à Petre at Guadeloupe Grey left a garrison under the command of Major General Dundas and then still with no reinforcements in sight proceeded without delay to take other important posts on the island.¹ By 22 April Guadeloupe and its domains were annexed to Britain.

Troops were taken from island to island generally in schooners, transports, and sometimes in warships when transports were not available. Transports hired on tonnage usually stayed in the West Indies to be at the service of the army and sometimes were sent back to England with prisoners. The service of transports on freight was concluded as soon as the troops were disembarked unless the commanders in chief judged it necessary to retain them. Then, of course, demurrage would have to be paid. Grey and Jervis like all army and navy commanders had been instructed to take up vessels as transports when they judged it necessary and expedient.²

When the reinforcements which Grey urged Dundas to send had not arrived by the end of April, not even the 22nd and 41st regiments which were ordered in January, Grey authorized the formation of a corps from among the plantation owners called the Island Rangers and gave them provincial rank.³

1. GP, 2243, Grey to Dundas, 12 April 1794.

2. GP, 175B, Instructions to Sir Charles Grey.

3. GP, 2243, 29 April 1794.

By 6 May, however, the Cork fleet, under the direction of transport agents Captain Lecky and Lieutenant Whittaker, arrived bringing the 22nd and 41st regiments as well as the 23rd and 35th. It took 14 transports with an average tonnage of 326 tons to convey these four regiments to the West Indies. This convoy was delayed most probably because of a lack of tonnage. The government's attempt to deal with too many problems at once, its reluctance to raise the freight rate in 1794, and the increasing commercial prosperity of Britain all contributed to a decline in the amount of merchant tonnage available. In early 1794 the Navy Board had ordered home from Ostend all the unemployed British transports in order to be able to reinforce the army on the Continent and at the same time the Board was finding it difficult to obtain enough tonnage to send an expedition under Lord Moira to Ostend in June. Grey left the 35th regiment at Martinique to strengthen the garrison there which had been weakened by death and sickness due to the hard service it had already undergone. He ordered the 22nd, 23rd and 41st regiments and the flank companies of the 35th regiment, in all 2,201 men, under the command of Brigadier General Whyte to leeward to Jamaica to be at the disposal of Major General Williamson, the governor of that island. They were then sent to St. Domingo.¹

The few reinforcements that were sent to Grey were still not enough to garrison the conquered islands properly especially since

1. Fortescue, op. cit., 366.

the garrisons that were already there were continually being reduced by sickness. Thus by 7 June Point à Petre was retaken by the French. On 13 June Grey wrote to Dundas. "Unless a considerable reinforcement of troops be speedily sent to these islands there will be great risk of losing them."¹ A month later he urged that "seasoned regiments only should be sent out and not recruits to fill up regiments that [were] already [there]. The latter [were] usually the first to be swept away by sickness." He thought "ideally 6000 men should be sent to the West Indies as soon as possible," but he knew how difficult it would be to collect them and therefore he recommended "that from 1200 to 2000 be sent to reinforce those islands with all possible expedition."² By the end of 1794, after a deadly summer of yellow fever and attacks by hostile negroes in the windward and leeward islands, a minimum of 10,000 troops was needed.

Previous expeditions had shown that after a summer in the West Indies an army was reduced by at least half; but Dundas did not have the reinforcements or the ships to send supplies. Through the neglect of the War department sufficient clothing had never been provided for the British army, for two months after their arrival in the West Indies they were short of shoes, flannel waistcoats and drawers; at the time Grey mentioned this to Dundas.³ By July no clothing had arrived and there did not seem to be the prospect of a

1. GP, 2243, Grey to Dundas, 13 June 1794.

2. Ibid., 8 July 1794.

3. Ibid., 25 March 1794.

supply. This aggravated the already dangerous condition of the troops, many of whom were almost skeletons after six months service in the West Indies. During the summer and autumn of 1794 six regiments were drafted in the islands due to the loss of troops. In the third week of July Dundas decided to do something to combat the spread of sickness among Grey's forces. On 16 July he instructed Grey as well as Brigadier General Whyte at St. Domingo to send to Halifax or Quebec those troops who either from wounds or disease were unfit for duty; the numbers to be sent were left up to the discretion of the commanders.¹ About 1,000 from Martinique and 500 from St. Domingo, along with medical and surgical supplies and some artillery and ordnance stores captured at Martinique, were transported to Canada on board the transports already in the West Indies. Only those soldiers who were debilitated and weak but could still bear arms were sent.²

Because of the prevalence of disease due to the tropical climate the consumption of medicines in the Caribbean throughout this war was very great indeed. There were not many hospital stores, medicines or utensils upon Grey's arrival in the islands but efforts were being made by the Navy Board to send out a sufficient supply. In May 1794 the Navy Board sent five ships containing hospital stores, such as, dishes, mops, platters, bed pans, lamps, kettles, saucepans,

1. PRO, ADM/1/4161, 16 July 1794.

2. Ibid., 19 July 1794.

basins, lamp oil, soap, vinegar etc., to Martinique.¹ (Soon after its capture Martinique became the depot for medicines and hospital stores as it did for provisions.) Another supply of hospital stores plus hospital tents and bedding were laden on the Minerva transport in August 1794 and sent to Jamaica, St. Domingo and Barbados.² Six transports and three packets carried just medicines to the West Indies in 1794. One of them, the Phillipa Harben which sailed on 7 May with fourteen tons and twenty eight packages of medicines for the hospital at Martinique was taken by the French and carried into Guadeloupe.³ However the other ships carrying medicines reached the West Indies. By the end of the year the transport service had sent 90 $\frac{1}{4}$ tons and 178 packages of medicines alone to the West Indies.⁴ Most of these medical supplies did not begin to arrive in the islands until the autumn of 1794 and some came in 1795.

Throughout the summer and autumn of 1794 Grey continued to look for more transports with reinforcements and supplies. He suggested that troops might reach the West Indies faster if they were conveyed in frigates and warships since they would not have to wait for a convoy and would arrive earlier than the French reinforcements. Even Spencer thought warships made better transports but there were not enough warships to accommodate the navy as well as the army.⁵

1. Parliamentary Papers, 1795-6, op. cit., vol. 100, no. 840, p. 14.

2. Ibid., pp. 15, 20.

3. Ibid., p. 40.

4. Ibid., p. 18.

5. See above, p. 152.

During the summer of 1794 while Grey's men were dying by the hundreds the ministry after much effort collected a force for the West Indies. The Duke of York's army, which was meeting defeat at the hands of the French in Flanders, was to be denied the assistance of these troops. Captain Hollamby with seventeen transports destined for Gibraltar and the West Indies sailed from Spithead on 13 September¹ with the 100th regiment and the first battalion of the 82nd. Because of bad weather they had to put into Plymouth and did not sail again until the end of the month. After disembarking the regiments at Gibraltar he received the 46th, 61st and 68th from the Gibraltar garrison and conveyed them to the West Indies.² It was considered preferable to send the Gibraltar regiments to the Caribbean rather than the 100th and the first battalion of the 82nd because the former regiments had been for some time in a climate approaching the tropics. These troops which should have arrived in the Caribbean by the end of November, did not reach the islands until 21 December.³

At the same time as the ships under Captain Hollamby's charge were being prepared, arrangements were also being made to send the 17th, 31st and 34th, 81st and 96th regiments from England to the West Indies. The first three would join the army under Sir Charles Grey and the last two would go to St. Domingo. The bad luck of British transports with stormy weather and contrary winds during this war is

1. PRO, ADM/108/31, 15 Sept. 1794.

2. PRO, ADM/1/4162, 25 Aug. 1794; ADM/108/31, 6 Sept. 1794;
ADM/1/3730, 30 Aug. 1794.

3. PRO, W.O./1/83, 21 Dec. 1794.

astounding and this particular convoy was to experience it greatly. Of the five regiments that made up the convoy two were to eventually reach the West Indies. The five regiments consisting of 3,430 men and 180 women were embarked on board 24 ships with a total tonnage of 7800 tons.¹ They were at Spithead ready to sail on 26 September; two days later their convoy the Trusty arrived but hostile winds kept them at their anchorage.² They attempted to sail again on 21 October³ but from a variety of adverse circumstances particularly intemperate weather nearly the whole of the transports on which troops had embarked so long ago as September had to put back to Plymouth. One transport with one hundred of the 17th regiment on board separated from the rest in their attempt to clear the channel and that one transport arrived in the West Indies on 1 December.⁴ The other transports destined for the Caribbean attempted to sail again on 23 December.⁵ This time, the sailing of the Brest fleet made it unsafe for the warships, transports and merchant ships composing the West India fleet to put to sea and they returned to port. They tried to sail again the third week of January 1795. The troops had been on board since September 1794.⁶ The only regiments of this convoy eventually to reach the West Indies were the 81st which entered St. Domingo harbour on 12 May 1795 and the 34th which arrived at Martinique on 30 March 1795.

1. Parliamentary Papers, 1795-6, op. cit., vol. 100, no. 840, p. 71.

2. PRO, ADM/108/31, 26; 28 Sept. 1794.

3. PRO, W.O./1/82, 21 Oct. 1794.

4. PRO, W.O.1/59, 8 Dec. 1794.

5. PRO, W.O.1/60, 23 Dec. 1794.

6. PRO, W.O.1/83, 9 Jan. 1795; see also, W.O.1/62.

The newly created Transport Board not only had to contend with contrary winds and enemy fleets in their attempts to get the transports to their destination but also with terrified crews who deserted their transports when they learned their destination was the West Indies.¹ Desertion was not restricted to home ports; it was prevalent in the West Indies as well. On 26 October 1794, transport agent, Lieutenant Hibbs, wrote from the Caribbean "that desertion and sickness had sadly reduced the crews of the transports and the masters strove in vain to recruit."² Since merchantmen gave 50 guineas a man for the run home from Jamaica transport crews deserted to gain these high wages. They could not do as well serving on board ships that were so much employed by the army.³ Death and desertion among transport crews were problems that plagued the transport agents stationed in the West Indies for as long as the British had forces there.⁴

The reinforcements ordered to the West Indies were few and only part of these actually arrived. This fact plus the sickness which prevailed among the troops left the English islands in a very precarious state. In November Guadeloupe was retaken because of sickness and mortality among the men stationed there, particularly at Berville Camp;⁵ they had been in the island since May 1794. By the end of

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1. E. g., PRO, ADM/108/32, 3 Oct. 1794.
 2. PRO, ADM/108/34, 20 Dec. 1794; see also ADM/108/36, 3 Aug. 1795.
 3. PRO, ADM/108/39, 5 Sept. 1796; ADM/108/37, 26 July 1796.
 4. E. g., PRO, ADM/1/3730, 24 Sept. 1795; ADM/108/39, 5 Sept. 1796; 22 Sept. 1796.
 5. PRO, W.O.1/82, Vaughan to Portland, 24 Nov. 1794.

November, when Major-General Vaughan took over the command from Grey, who sailed home with Jervis in the Boyne, the total number of British troops fit for duty in the islands was 1500 with 150 artillery. Of Grey's original 7000 men at least 5000 perished. Casualties among the transports' crews in 1794 were 46 masters and 1100 men dead chiefly of yellow fever.¹ The four regiments that arrived in May from Cork came just in time to succumb to yellow fever; and only 2,369 other troops reached the West Indies that year. As has been stated before, one hundred of the 17th regiment from England and the three regiments numbering 2,269 men from Gibraltar all of which arrived in December.² The only troops St. Domingo received throughout 1794 were the three regiments (22nd, 23rd, 41st) under the command of General Whyte sent by Grey in May. The 81st and 96th were still at Plymouth waiting for an opportunity to sail. The garrison in St. Domingo was also weakened by the deadly climate and by the autumn of 1794 it had to contend with the blacks in full revolt. By December two of its most important posts, Leogane and Tiburn² were lost.³ Until the end of 1794 the government's West India policy consisted of sending recruits for the garrisons stationed there plus small reinforcements. Even the Grey-Jervis expedition was not as large a force as was needed or as had been expected by the army already in the West Indies. As a result Grey's expedition was initially a success but without adequate

1. Fortescue, op. cit., 384-5.

2. See above, pp. 174, 175.

3. NRS, Spencer, vol. I, 133.

reinforcements the islands were not retained. In 1795 the French were able to make a partial recovery in the islands. Also in 1795 the government adopted a different policy, that of sending to the Caribbean large reinforcements, particularly the expedition under the joint command of Abercromby and Christian. Though the policy decisions and arrangements for the expedition were made in 1795 the reinforcements did not arrive until 1796 to begin the second major offensive.

Many of the transports sent to the West Indies during the first campaign were back in England in early 1795. During the summer of 1794 there were forty three transports, victuallers and storeships or 12,625 tons at the disposal of Grey and Jervis. These transports were needed to send reinforcements to the West Indies as well as to transport recruits and supplies to the army on the Continent and were costing the government a considerable amount in demurrage while being detained in the Caribbean. In July 1794 the Admiralty at the direction of Dundas ordered Jervis to send home any transports, victuallers and storeships that were not absolutely necessary and at the same time to make up a list of all the vessels that would be retained and show in that list "the particular service to which each ship or vessel respectively was or might be appropriated, and the probable time of her being released from the further execution of such service."¹ Three weeks later seven transports sailed from Kingston,² and transports continued to sail home throughout the autumn

1. GP, 4161, 3 July 1794.

2. PRO, ADM/1/3730, 8 Oct. 1794.

and winter. 21 ships returned between November 15 and December 20 alone.¹

The transports sent home first, were of course, those without copper sheathing since their resistance to climate, worms, etc. was not nearly as great as the coppered ships. But many of the coppered ships that were in the West Indies at the beginning of 1795 had been South Sea whalers before they were transports and some of them had been coppered over five years ago. Since coppered sheathing was supposed to last no more than six years these ships were approaching a dangerous state. The fact that there was no material in the West Indies with which to sheathe ships added to the anxiety of the transport agents who looked each day for the arrival of new transports in order that they might send home the old.²

By February 1795 the total tonnage of transports including army and navy victuallers in the West Indies was 5,582 tons as compared to 12,625 tons the previous July.³ This was the transport situation as the second campaign began in the Caribbean.⁴ No large scale reinforcements reached the West Indies during this campaign and the resultant lack of success was to be evident half-way through

1. PRO, ADM/108/34, 20 Dec. 1794.

2. PRO, ADM/1/3730, 28 Feb. 1795.

3. PRO, 30/8/252, 4 Feb. 1795.

4. It is impossible to trace with the detail I would like the preparations for the 1795 campaign in the West Indies because unfortunately the Transport Board minutes for that year consist of a very small part of the months of January, February, July and August. The other eight months are totally missing, as are the first six months of 1796. I have tried to fill in the picture by using ADM/1/3730-33 and the W.O.1's.

the year. This caused the ministry to change its policy and begin preparations for the largest West Indian expedition of the war, that of Sir Ralph Abercromby and Admiral Christian which were to arrive in the West Indies in the Spring of '96 to begin the third campaign.

In the windward and leeward islands at the beginning of '95 there were less than 2,000 men to defend eleven different islands; the security of these islands needed a force of at least 10,000 men.¹ In September 1794, Dundas had despatched six battalions and in December seven more together with 3,500 drafts to help meet this need. However, this was the expedition which was not ready to sail when the wind was fair and then met with difficulty from September to January in trying to clear the channel and in trying to avoid the Brest fleet. Of the three most important French islands in this sphere Guadeloupe had been retaken in November but Martinique and St. Lucia remained in the hands of the British.

By 30 March 1795, Dundas' promised reinforcements which sailed from England the middle of February reached Barbados. However, it consisted of no more than five battalions numbering together 2,700 men instead of eleven battalions and a large body of drafts which had been promised. The regiments were the 2nd, 25th, and 29th, 34th, and 45th. The 34th was the only regiment of the original convoy that had been prepared as far back as last September. Dundas' explanation for the decreased reinforcements was that five of the battalions had

1. PRO, W.O.1/31, Vaughan to Portland, 19 Nov. 1794, see above p.171.

been so many months on board the transports that sickness broke out (presumably Typhoid fever), and not being in a fit state to proceed to the West Indies they were left in England to recuperate.¹ The 2nd and 45th regiments joined the expedition at a rather late date and did not embark on board transports for this service till after the 24th of December.² Most of the recruits were raw and young, not capable of withstanding the fatigues of battle and climate, and their clothing was unsuited for the tropics.³ Two hundred of them were on the sick list before they had been two weeks in the West Indies. There was still a force of under 5,000 men in the lesser antilles even with the reinforcements. Matters were made worse by the fact that 6,000 Frenchmen had got into Point à Petre on 6 January.⁴ In addition to the difficulties of a shortage of troops the British army in 1795 was confronted with the greater part of the negroes in the West Indies in open revolt, the storm having begun in Guadeloupe during the first week of March. Therefore the object of the campaign of 1795 was to drive the brigands, who were spurred on by the French, into the jungle where the prospect of starvation might make them surrender. To achieve this object the new reinforcements were dispatched to Grenada, Martinique, St. Lucia and St. Vincent.⁵

1. PRO, W.O.1/83, 19 Feb. 1795; see also, 16 April 1795.

2. PRO, ADM/108/34, 24 Dec. 1794.

3. Fortescue, op. cit., 430.

4. PRO, W.O.1/83, 11 Jan. 1795.

5. Fortescue, op. cit., 432; see also, PRO, W.O.1/31.

The regiments sent to St. Lucia and Grenada proved too small a reinforcement to garrison the islands, fight the brigands and combat the peril of yellow fever which returned with the month of May. Thus, St. Lucia was lost by the 18th of June and by the end of '95 only the town of St. George's in Grenada was in the hands of the British.¹

Vaughan like his predecessor Grey had pleaded with Dundas in April 1795 for more troops. In June preparations were begun in England to send 4,000 troops to the islands. Four battalions (40, 54, 59, 79) totalling 2,000 men under Major General Hunter embarked on 10 July and, convoyed by the Scipio, arrived in perfect health at Martinique on 24 September.² The other four battalions which were under orders to follow a few days later were windbound in Cawsand Bay and then their destination was changed. The 40th, 54th and 59th were immediately sent to St. Vincent under the command of Major General Irving; they arrived there on 2 October. These three battalions had served on the Continent in the later part of 1794 and took part in the disastrous retreat to the Ems. They returned to England from Germany only in May when they were soon ordered to embark for the West Indies. The three battalions were supplemented by a battalion of the 60th regiment which was sent to St. Vincent, soon after its arrival at Barbados in June from Demerara, where the Dutch government refused it permission to land. The four battalions were

1. Fortescue, op. cit., 439.

2. PRO, W.O.1/31, Milnes to Portland, 4 Oct. 1795; W.O.1/83, Dundas to Williamson, 11 July 1795.

not capable of containing the brigands and by the beginning of '96 the British possessed only a small portion of the island of St. Vincent.¹

The summer of '95 had been as disastrous to the British troops as the summer of '94. Within a two week period in July, 450 soldiers died of yellow fever in the windward and leeward islands including Vaughan the Commander-in-chief. The new Commander-in-chief General Irving had written to Dundas on 23 July. "If you want full possession of these islands 20,000 men will be necessary. By the end of the campaign there will not be above 10,000 left."² By the end of '95 the British just barely managed to hold on to Martinique and the commanders were in the process of raising black regiments, the only soldiers capable of surviving while fighting in the tropical West Indian climate. It is not surprising that there was very little success in the windward and leeward islands in the campaign of '95. The few reinforcements that were sent were hastily gathered and badly equipped without proper clothing or comforts of any kind. The Transport department under pressure from the ministry to get expeditions out quickly allowed them to sail poorly equipped and improperly prepared.

The campaign in St. Domingo during 1795 was as unsuccessful as it was in the lesser antilles. By the end of '94 Britain suffered the loss of Tiburn and Leogane and retained a precarious hold on the

1. Fortescue, *op. cit.*, 439-49.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 451.

rest of the island. By 1 January 1795 its troops numbered only 1,100 fit for duty. The first reinforcements to reach St. Domingo in '95 came on 12 May. They consisted of the 81st regiment and five companies of Murray's regiment. The 81st regiment had originally embarked for the Caribbean in September 1794 and was part of that fateful convoy that had started out for the West Indies many times between September and January. The 81st were probably disembarked and re-embarked in March for St. Domingo. They and the five companies of Murray's regiment arrived at the worst possible time for one month later, even with the new troops, only 1,300 men were fit for duty in St. Domingo. The second reinforcements to be sent to St. Domingo in 1795 were the 83rd foot and detachments of the 13th, 14th, 17th and 18th light dragoons (400 men in all) which embarked in England for St. Domingo in May and reached Jamaica 18 July. Three of the transports containing part of the 17th and 18th light dragoons were missing when the fleet was dispersed off St. Helens. It was almost certain two of them were taken by the enemy.¹ When they arrived at Jamaica (They were conveyed in West Indian ships hired on freight whose charter party did not compel them to take them farther than Jamaica.) the Maroons, a wild tribe descended from slaves, were in full revolt. Therefore these troops remained in Jamaica to suppress the revolt and were not sent to St. Domingo until the end of July; then, only some of them were sent.² It can be presumed that the

1. PRO, W.O.1/31, R. Milnes to Portland, 7 July 1795; see also, W.O.1/92, Balcarres to Dundas, 20 July 1795.

2. Fortescue, op. cit., 462.

1,000 sets of cavalry clothing and 2,000 sets of clothing for the infantry which were put on board the ships in this convoy reached the army in the Caribbean, since no complaints of their absence were sent to Dundas during that year. However, this supply was not sufficient and requests for more clothing were made in September.¹

On 9 August another small reinforcement, the 82nd regiment under command of Major General Forbes from Gibraltar, came to St. Domingo.² These small reinforcements, however, were not large enough to be of help and were just sent to die in the West Indies; in August and September 900 soldiers died in St. Domingo alone. By 1 October the force had sunk again to 1,300 soldiers fit for duty and 1,000 sick.

More hospital stores and medicines were sent to the West Indies in this war than in any previous one and still there were not enough to meet the needs of the British army. The Transport Board shipped 354 tons and 775 packages of medicines to the Caribbean in 1795 bringing the total amount of medicines sent to the West Indies in '94 and '95 to 444 $\frac{1}{4}$ tons and 953 packages.³ In July 1795 the Board also sent four transports with seven hundred sets of hospital bedding to the leeward islands; and in September nineteen more transports were laden with hospital tents, bedding and stores and shipped to the leeward islands and St. Domingo. One month later another ship, the

1. PRO, W.O.1/62, 4 June 1795; 9 Sept. 1795.

2. PRO, W.O.1/62, Williamson to Dundas, 11 August 1795.

3. Parliamentary Papers, 1795-6, op. cit., vol. 100, no. 840, p. 19.

Ulysses, sailed for the West Indies with the same cargo.¹

Near the end of November 1795 the commanders learned of the government's new West Indian policy which was to enable Britain to take the offensive with considerable strength in St. Domingo and in the windward and leeward islands. Because it was becoming increasingly difficult to hold on to the conquered West Indian islands and at the same time conduct an offensive campaign and because of the extent of the negro insurrection in the islands the ministry in early 1795 abandoned its policy of sending small reinforcements and adopted the plan of sending to the Caribbean the largest expedition to date. Preparations for this expedition, which was commanded by Sir Ralph Abercromby and Admiral Christian and which included British troops as well as a large contingent of foreign infantry and cavalry, were under way by the summer of 1795. Between August and November eighty two ships were hired at a considerable expense, by Sir Home Popham in Hamburg, to convey the foreign infantry and cavalry from the Continent to England and the West Indies. None of the Hamburg ships went further than the British Isles. Therefore, all the infantry and cavalry, both British and foreign, had to be conveyed from Britain

1. Parliamentary Papers, 1795-6, op. cit., vol. 100, no. 840, pp. 26, 30, 33.

The expense incurred at the Navy Office and Transport Office for the West Indian expeditions between 1 Jan. 1794 and 31 Dec. 1795 was £859,634.4.7 £205,161.1.0 was spent by the Navy Office between 1 Jan. 1794 and 31 Aug. 1794. £654,473.3.7 was spent by the Transport Board from 1 Sept. 1794 to 31 Dec. 1795. These expenses included: freight of transports and other vessels for the conveyance of troops, provisions and stores. Value of ships captured by the enemy, bedding for the troops, building cabins, and making other preparations on board transports for the troops, medical stores and various articles of refreshment for the troops and pay to officers employed as agents of transports. Ibid., p. 41.

to the West Indies in British vessels. This caused considerable delay since tonnage to replace the Hamburg ships had to be hired in British ports. The Hamburg ships arrived in England throughout the autumn and winter of 1795 and during the early months of 1796. Many of them did not reach England in time for the first sailing of the expedition but were there for the second and some arrived in time for the third. Still other troops brought to England by the Hamburg ships were to sail after the expedition; the last of the foreign corps were to arrive in the West Indies during the early months of 1797.

The Abercromby-Christian expedition like the Grey-Jervis which preceded it, left from Portsmouth and from Cork. The fleet that sailed from Portsmouth was destined for the windward and leeward islands; the Cork fleet was destined for St. Domingo. Since it was difficult to procure tonnage at a reasonable rate in Ireland the board supplemented Irish tonnage with English transports in order to fulfil the needs of the Cork expedition. Some were hired in the western ports, particularly Bristol.

The maritime resources of Britain were drained for this military operation and still there were not enough troopships for the King's forces. Of the 7,000 infantry (5,000 British and 2,000 foreign) that were originally to be embarked at Cork 38 troopships totalling 9,048 tons were taken up to accommodate 4,714 men, and warships were appropriated to accommodate the remaining 2,200 men. The 2,000

cavalry were brought over in cavalry ships.¹ By 3 November less than 2,000 foreign corps, a combination of infantry and cavalry, had arrived at Cork. Two transports containing Irvines Hussars sank because too great a proportion of horses had been embarked.² Thus in the November sailing from Cork there were about 5,000 British infantry and 2,000 foreign corps.

Scarcity of troopships also effected the embarkation at Portsmouth. The 20,000 troops that were to leave from Portsmouth were accommodated on board troopships, East and West India ships, victuallers, navy store ships and hospital ships and on board the warship the Commerce de Marseilles. 16 East India ships, totalling 12,883 tons, were hired on freight to carry 6,558 men. Each East India ship was contracted to carry out 400 troops, and as many more as she could conveniently stow at £20 per head for passage and victualling. Her tonnage was to be at the disposal of government, and confined in her voyage to the leeward islands; if the urgency of the case required her being sent on further service it was to be at the risk of government.³ 51 West India ships with a total tonnage of

1. PRO, W.O.1/798, 31 Aug. 1795.

2. PRO, W.O.1/84, 3 Nov. 1795.

3. PRO, W.O.1/798, 20 Oct. 1795; see also, NRS, Spencer, vol. I, 155-7. The other terms on which the East India ships were hired are as follows: The Victualling of the troops beyond two months either in or out of Port, was to be furnished by government, or the owners were to be paid 1/-6. per day for each man. The passage money was to be paid two months after the ship left Portsmouth. Demurrage was to be paid at the rate of 20/- per ton per month from the 15th day of November, until the ship's arrival back at Gravesend in the River Thames. But if the ships were detained by government on any other service; than that for which they were particularly engaged, then the demurrage was to be at the rate of 40/- per ton per month, from 1 Dec. until the ship's arrival back in the river Thames. The payment for demurrage or extra victualling of the troops was to be made one month

15,683 were taken up to accommodate 8,295 men. 4,240 men were conveyed on 30 troopships,¹ 995 men were accommodated on board the warship the Commerce de Marseilles, and soldiers were given passage on board victuallers, navy store ships and hospital ships.²

Since all previous expeditions to the West Indies failed to start on time more strict instructions than ever before were laid on the Transport Board to keep Dundas informed of their progress. Daily reports of the progress of the ordnance transports at Woolwich were sent to Dundas and about once a week the Board submitted a report which showed the state and condition of all transports fitting in the river; they also sent in reports which listed the ships in England and Cork ready to sail.

In spite of these efforts the Abercromby-Christian expedition, which the ministry had hoped would sail by the first of October, did not sail until the middle of November. The sailing of the fleet was delayed by waiting for the foreign corps to arrive at Cork and by the slowness in lading and completing the ordnance vessels. The Board had been receiving requests for tonnage to convey ordnance stores since 12 August and tonnage was appropriated for this service within two or three days of each request. However, many of the ships that were appropriated had gone so long without being examined that

after the arrival of all or any of the ships at Gravesend in the River Thames; or if any of them were lost or captured, the payments were to be made within one month from the time such loss or capture was ascertained.

1. PRO, W.O.1/798, 15; 20 Oct. 1795.

2. Ibid.

they could not be immediately fitted;¹ once fitted, the ordnance wharf at Woolwich could not lade more than two ships at one time.² Time was also lost in lading the ships because of the absence of small craft to bring stores down the river to be placed on ordnance vessels, a task which was the responsibility of the Ordnance Board. No fault lay with the Transport Board which had supplied the ships in good time.³ Thus, the ordnance ships were appropriated rather quickly but time was lost in preparing them for service. By 4 November only half the ordnance vessels (13 ships or 4,078 tons) were completely laden and ready to sail.⁴ Since Abercromby refused to sail till everything was complete the inconvenience and delay in shipping the stores for the West Indies held up the entire expedition. And by this detention the fair wind for sailing was lost.

In a letter of 3 November Dundas urged Abercromby to sail with everything that was ready as soon as the wind was right. If he was "to wait for every transport or boat that might receive a hurt, or for every article that any department might be negligent in sending," Dundas wrote, he did not see any reason to hope that Abercromby would be more ready to go a month later than he was then. He felt it was a "disgrace to the executive government of the country, and every branch, acting under it, that an expedition determined upon

1. PRO, W.O.1/798, Transport Office to Crew, 8 Sept. 1795.

2. Ibid., 16 Sept. 1795.

3. PRO, W.O.1/798, 1 Oct. 1795.

4. PRO, ADM/1/3730, 4 Nov. 1795.

six months ago, should not be in a state to sail seven weeks later than its appointed time."¹

Abercromby was urged to sail with a deficiency of ordnance stores and medicines² and on 16 November, under convoy of a squadron commanded by Admiral Christian, the expedition sailed from Portsmouth. After two days at sea the wind rose to a hurricane force; several transports were lost with all men on board, and the rest returned to port many with considerable damage. If the Ordnance Board had the ordnance vessels ready when the wind was fair the expedition would have been on its way to the West Indies. Thus, Dundas lost patience with what he thought was the inefficient way of transporting troops on distant service and he brought this to the attention of the Admiralty on 24 November.

I have no objection to a board for the transport service. I believe if proper men are appointed it is a most excellent institution, but I am decidedly of opinion that if they are not provided with a set of shipping appropriated to the special purpose of transports and of a size to accommodate a considerable number of troops at a time, it is impossible that service can be carried on with any degree of propriety. Indeed, so much am I impressed with that conviction, no consideration on earth would induce me to take charge of any expedition, if the present system of providing transport in any chance way you can was to be continued. I am positive, exclusive of every other advantage, the saving to the public by such an arrangement would be immense. Twenty or twenty-five ships of the size of India ships or 44 gun ships would be adequate to all the service

1. PRO, W.O.1/84, 3 Nov. 1795.

2. PRO, ADM/1/3730, 4 Nov. 1795.

of the country, and it would take a volume to point out all the advantages to the public service which would result from it. Be so good as to mention the subject to Mr. Pitt, but in the meantime let me entreat you without delay to transfer to the transport service all ships of the description I have mentioned that either are within your power or can be got. I repeat it again that unless this measure is adopted no man can act in the situation I am placed with the smallest confidence that anything he does will ultimately redound to the success of the object for which his exertions have been made. I do not mean to write at length, for it is too long a subject to be detailed in a letter. But I trust your lordship and Lord Hugh will give a serious consideration to what I have said and search through your list of shipping for the purpose of examining what ships you can spare to transfer to the transport service, suited to the double purpose of being both transports and convoys.¹

Dundas, like Spencer and Grey before him, realized the practicability of employing armed ships as both transports and convoys in a great expedition. Warships were used to transport a part of this expedition as they would be used in later military operations, for example, the expedition to the Helder in 1799. However, there were not enough warships or armed vessels to answer the needs of the navy as well as to transport the army during the war against revolutionary France.

While the Cork expedition was waiting for a chance to sail again more troops and ships were added; 1,904 dismounted light dragoons² had arrived at Cork by 2 December, and 13 ships totalling 4,011 tons were appropriated to convey them and their baggage. By

1. NRS, Spencer, Dundas to Spencer, 24 Nov. 1795, vol. I, 159-61.

2. Not less than 2,000 horses were to be purchased in the U.S.A. and conveyed to the West Indies in American ships for the British light cavalry sailing from Cork. W.O.1/162, 25 Sept. 1795.

3 December the other tonnage at Cork consisted of 53 troopships (including two West India ships on freight), totalling 14,207 tons, appropriated to carry 8,547 troops. Therefore the total strength for the St. Domingo service by 3 December consisted of 66 transports totalling 18,218 tons accommodating 10,451 men. Room was found for troops also in the five warships accompanying the transports.¹ Therefore, the December sailing from Cork consisted of over 10,000 men. In November the sailing comprised only 7,000.

The men on board the troopships were being conveyed at slightly less than two tons per man. When General Whyte, the commander of the Cork expedition, wished to substitute hammocks for bed-places, the Transport Board explained that if such an arrangement were generally extended it "would occupy at least three tons per man, require 1/3 additional tonnage and demand more shipping than could be provided by the country, to say nothing of the vast additional expense."² The tonnage for a West Indian expedition was calculated at two tons per man and was rarely exceeded. Though occasionally this ratio was altered for the accommodation of extra troops or officers not included in the original scheme.

In addition to the Portsmouth and Cork expeditions 2,000 men and one company of artillery were sent under command of Major General Bowyer from Gibraltar to Mole St. Nicholas in St. Domingo. They

1. PRO, W.O.1/798, 3 Dec. 1795.

2. Ibid., 2 Dec. 1795; see also above, p. 103.

sailed in December and arrived at the Mole the first week in January.¹

The Portsmouth expedition, which now consisted of about 18,000 troops having lost many in the storm, sailed again on 9 December; and was compelled to return to port for a second time on 30 January, by continuing stormy weather and contrary wind. One of the transports was blown through the 'Straights' of Gibraltar; and several were captured by Admiral Hugue's cruisers. The number of troops that returned with Abercromby and Christian, who had been trying for seven weeks to clear the channel, did not exceed 11,000. Therefore it was hoped that about 7,000 would have reached Barbados. Thus the ships began arriving at Barbados by single vessels. According to Fortescue, of those that actually reached the island but one regiment was complete and the remainder included fragments of 20 corps, varying in strength from six men to 400.² The same storms prevented the forces embarked at Cork, under convoy of the Canada, from leaving that port, where they continued ready to sail with the first favourable wind.³ A favourable wind allowed them to sail on 10 February; but they were again scattered by a storm; such vessels that returned were not able to start again until the 24th. "Never did any expedition pay more dearly for its unreadiness than this to the West Indies in 1795."⁴

1. PRO, W.O.1/162, 22 Sept. 1795; 5 Feb. 1796; see below, p. Between 1 Jan. 1793 and 1 April 1796 5,668 men were brought from Gibraltar to the West Indies by the transport service. Parliamentary Papers, 1795-6, op. cit., vol. 100, no. 840, p. 5.

2. Fortescue, op. cit., 482.

3. PRO, W.O.1/62, 5 Feb. 1796.

4. Fortescue, op. cit., 482.

Abercromby received his fourth set of instructions in early February in accordance with the latest news from the West Indies. The expulsion of the enemy from Grenada and St. Vincent became the first object; the capture of St. Lucia and Demerara the second, and St. Domingo was relegated to the background. What was left of his army gathered at Portsmouth amid much disorder for its third attempt to reach the Caribbean. Brigadier John Moore in command of some of the foreign corps who were to serve in the West Indies wrote from Portsmouth on 26 February. "The confusion of this place is beyond anything that could be believed; everything is in disorder, and the expedition will sail in as bad a state as ever expedition did sail from this country."¹ The reasons for the state of confusion at Portsmouth are quite clear. A convoy of troopships, victuallers and storeships were twice dispersed at sea; each time they had to be re-victualled, and many repaired and re-equipped. Regiments had to be collected, counted and some reorganized. In addition the foreign troops from Germany were continually arriving in the Hamburg ships, all of which would not go out of Europe. The troops had to be disembarked and new tonnage hired for their conveyance. The government had been eager to send out as many of the foreign corps as possible, but ships could not be got ready for the Royal Etrangers, Hompesche, and Dutch Artillery that made up Moore's brigade. Moore and Colonel Nesbit² were pleased that these forces were detained,

1. Moore, op. cit., vol. I, 193.

2. See above, p. 117.

however, since "they had been four or five months on board ship and were in no state for service.... consequently they will join us in six weeks or two months after our arrival in good order."¹ Moore, like most officers travelling to the Caribbean, had to seek passage on board a victualler, another transport, or on a merchant ship going to the West Indies. He did not find this task very agreeable. "It was not pleasant, when I was going upon the King's service, to be obliged thus to solicit a passage and to allow myself to be forced upon people with whom I had no acquaintance, but I was determined to make no difficulties and not to give a handle to any people whatever to accuse me of backwardness. The West India service is not popular..."²

Abercromby sailed independently in a frigate and arrived at Barbados with 6,477 troops on 10 March.³ The main body of his forces which were now reduced by half, sailed from Portsmouth at the end of February, cleared the channel and made their way to Barbados. The convoy was dispersed at sea, however, and only half the troops arrived during the month of March.⁴ Abercromby immediately sent reinforcements to Grenada. On 1 April the troops from Cork, bound for St.

1. Moore, op. cit., vol. I, 194.

2. Ibid., 193.

3. PRO, W.O.1/85, 10 March 1796.

4. The transport carrying Lowenstein's Jagers was sunk, and above 100 soldiers were drowned. An equal number were saved. Moore, op. cit., 195.

Domingo, arrived under General Whyte. A part of this force was sent to Demerara and Berbice which had offered to place themselves under British protection, delaying for a few weeks the reinforcements for St. Domingo. Two weeks after the Cork fleet reached the islands two divisions of Cornwallis' convoy (part of the Portsmouth convoy) arrived. Abercromby, now with enough ships and 8,000 men fit for duty, attacked St. Lucia and on 25 May the island was recovered. In the meantime two more regiments of the Portsmouth convoy (27th and 57th) arrived. By 9 June the insurrection in St. Vincent was decisively broken and by 18 June the insurrection ended. This closed the offensive campaign of 1796 since Abercromby did not have enough men to attack Guadeloupe the centre of the disturbance; the General sailed home in August leaving Colonel Thomas Graham in charge. As in '94 and '95 yellow fever raged furiously during the summer of '96 and Abercromby's army like Grey's was diminished by half. So ended the third campaign in the windward and leeward islands.¹

In St. Domingo in January 1796 there were about 1,300 men fit for duty when the 66th and 69th regiments under command of General Bowyer arrived at the Mole.² At the same time treaties had been signed with Titus and Gagnet, chiefs of the negro bands, by which they joined the British in arms. On 1 March more troops were released from Jamaica and another West Indian regiment was raised; but these

1. Fortescue, op. cit., 482-96.

2. PRO, W.O.1/82, 23 Jan. 1796; see above, p. 193.

reinforcements were small. At last in May and June 1796 the long awaited Cork fleet of the Abercromby-Christian expedition arrived at St. Domingo. The May contingent consisting of both British and foreign troops raised the forces in St. Domingo to 7,500 men. However the troops from England were in poor condition and the foreign cavalry was ready to desert. During the same month reinforcements for the French army arrived in the West Indies. The British forces that came in June consisted of seven regiments of British light dragoons, some Dutch artillery, Hompesch's Hussars, and Montalembert's Legion, all under the command of Major General Whyte. However, again the troops arrived at the beginning of the summer season and yellow fever began its decimating attack on the British and foreign forces. After the outbreak of war with Spain in October 1796 troops were sent to strengthen the garrisons of the Bahamas and Barbados. This action plus yellow fever shrunk the forces in St. Domingo to such an extent that all offensive operations were abandoned. By February 1797 the forces in St. Domingo which in July had numbered 9,000 men shrunk to 1,400 sickly demoralized men. No troops had arrived in St. Domingo during the healthy season. Again, the eternal difficulty lay in the want of troops.

The government was displeased with the way ships were hired to convey troops, provisions and stores for the Abercromby-Christian expedition, particularly with the terms offered to the Hamburg ships

and the East and West India ships. The Treasury seeking an explanation for the unusually high prices paid to transport owners and the liberal terms on which the transports were hired, sent several memorials to the Transport Board in the spring of 1796. The terms on which the 82 ships were hired from Messrs. Parish & Co. in Hamburg caused considerable disturbance in the ministry and the Transport Board and have been discussed at length in chapter four.

On 12 April 1796 Captain George, the Transport Board chairman, submitted an account of the terms on which the East and West India ships were engaged to carry troops to the West Indies and at the same time offered this explanation.

On this occasion allow me to recall to your mind, that at the time Rear Admiral Christian was desired to provide for the conveyance of her [sic] such armaments as were to assemble at Spithead and Cork, several other services were then carrying on, and to provide transports for so many troops with the addition of ordnance ships, victuallers, hospital ships and a long train of etceteras was not to be done by the means before practised: Rear Admiral Christian therefore availed himself of the arrival of the East and West India fleets, and proposed to the persons acting for their owners that they should receive a certain part of the troops - as 11 out of 16 East India ships were engaged to proceed to India in the Spring, - their owners could not be prevailed upon to engage in this service without encouragement in proportion to the risk they run in losing their voyages, and the Rear Admiral after much pains at last agreed as stated in the report - The double demurrage was strongly insisted upon in behalf of the 11, to prevent detention in the West Indies, and consequently the loss of their respective voyages without having any claim upon government for the double demurrage, and delay has operated proportionably to the disadvantage of the West India ships.

It may be necessary further to observe that this arrangement was not made by a man or a set of men just entered with office with improper precipitation, as has been erroneously stated.¹

This may have pacified the Treasury in its quest for an explanation for the unusually liberal terms offered to the owners of the East and West India ships, however, it did not deter the Treasury from its efforts to economize and the Transport Board was directed to diminish expenses wherever possible. Since no large scale expeditions were to take place until that sent to the Helder in the autumn of 1799 in an attempt to recapture Holland from the French, the Transport Board for the next three years was able to discharge transports that were not absolutely necessary for the service and to turn down innumerable tenders from ship owners.

The ministry was as displeased with the slowness of the Transport Board in embarking the last and smaller expedition of Abercromby to the West Indies in December 1796 as it had been with the other West Indian expeditions.

The sailing of this fleet was delayed because the ships were not properly equipped on the owners' part;² because of the ministry's economizing efforts which necessitated the transfer of ships appropriated for the Portugal service to that for St. Domingo;³ and

1. PRO, W.O.1/799, Captain George to W. Huskisson, 12 April 1796.

2. See PRO, W.O.1/799, 29 Dec. 1796.

3. Ibid.

because of the impressment of the transport crews.¹

The few troops (including the last of the foreign corps to be sent to the West Indies) which the ministry could furnish Abercromby were still in the process of embarking when the General sailed again for the Caribbean on 17 November 1796. About 3,200 men destined for the lesser antilles were accommodated on board seven ships totalling 7,192 tons. (The Board used 4 teak ships, two armed transports and one ordnance ship for this service). The troops consisted of part of Lowenstein's Corps, the 87th regiment and over 100 artillerymen.²

The 636 men destined for St. Domingo consisted of part of Rohan's, York's and the Prince of Wales Hussars, and Montalambert's Corps. These soldiers were conveyed in 5 ships amounting in tonnage to 1,511 tons.³

The Transport Board drew up a conspectus of the preparations for this expedition upon one large sheet of paper, in which they marked down the arrivals, destinations, embarkations, and allotments of the West India and Portugal services to convince the ministry of the care and attention of the Transport Board and its agents to their duty in these embarkations.

1. PRO, W.O.1/799. On 10 January 1797 the Admiralty gave directions to the officers of the impress service "not on any account whatever to impress the crews of any transports, victuallers, or other ships or vessels in the service of government upon their producing a protection from this office; stating the number and description of the men employed to navigate such ship or vessel respectively." Nevertheless, the protection certificate was largely ignored by the impress officers and transport crews continued to be impressed throughout the war.
2. PRO, W.O.1/99.
3. Ibid., see also, PRO, ADM/1/3732.

Some of the foreign regiments arrived in the West Indies in early February, after which Abercromby embarked a force for Trinidad. Trinidad was captured by 7 February 1797 and Abercromby left Lieutenant Colonel Picton with one thousand men to garrison it while he returned to Martinique. In April, after the arrival of the rest of the reinforcements and stores from England a fruitless attempt was made to capture Puerto Rico, that island having become an object since the declaration of war by Spain on 5 October 1796. The campaign in the windward and leeward islands ended soon after and in June an order was issued by Dundas that there were to be no more offensive campaigns. With most of the objects for which the army was sent to the West Indies attained, though at considerable expense to the war effort elsewhere, the ministry decided not to pour more men and resources into the Caribbean. Instead it laid the foundations of a new policy by raising more negro regiments to garrison the islands. Abercromby superintended the increase of the negro regiments to eight before returning to England in August; he left as his successors Generals Cuyler and Bowyer.

During the winter of 1797-98 the last of the brigands were subdued or destroyed and the lesser antilles returned to peace. Since all offensive operations in the West Indies ceased for the remainder of the war the government relied for the defence of the islands on the West India regiments (twelve had been formed by 1799), on the 60th regiment and on a strong naval squadron. Until the end of the war the Transport Board was responsible for the transportation of

reinforcements to the garrisons in the West Indies and for the conveyance of provisions and stores to the army and navy stationed there.

The pressure of the government's economizing efforts determined its policy regarding St. Domingo. General Maitland successfully conciliated the brigand chief Toussaint and St. Domingo was evacuated by 3 October 1798. Toussaint, who faithfully honoured the agreement with the British and did not take part in raids on the British colonial forces, established his supremacy in the island by the end of 1800.¹ Between January 1793 and April 1797 the transport service was successful in bringing to the islands over 58,000 troops. Despite the shipping shortage that was prevalent in Britain at this time the Navy and Transport Boards met their tonnage requirements for the West Indian campaigns by utilizing merchant ships trading with the Caribbean. Almost all officers went to the islands on merchant ships and over one half of the troops that sailed with Abercromby and Christian in November 1795 were accommodated on East and West India ships hired on freight. However, not one of the expeditions to the West Indies left on time to enable the British troops to take advantage of the more favourable season and this rightly disturbed Whitehall. But it is probably true that the ministry did not comprehend the problems that were involved. The Board's efforts were vitiated by the failure of other departments

1. The Dutch West Indies were taken under British protection, Surinam for the consideration of £100,000 in 1799 and Curacao upon request in 1800. Fortescue, *op. cit.*, 545. Trinidad was to be the only conquered colonial possession in the West Indies retained after the Treaty of Amiens.

to co-operate effectively. Because the Ordnance Board neglected to act promptly the ships were not ready to sail when the wind was favourable. Because of Dundas' ambitious policy there was a shortage of men and equipment which held up the preparations of the expeditions and their subsequent sailing. The war organization in general was at fault; not the transport system. Other factors that contributed to the Navy and Transport Boards' failure to get the West Indian expeditions to sea on time were extraordinary bad luck with the winds; the fact that convoys had to be waited for; that transport crews deserted when they knew they were going to the West Indies; and the frequent impressment of those crews.

Besides the West Indian service, the Transport Board had to provide accommodation for the long haul to the Cape of Good Hope and the East Indies. The ships of the West India ~~Company~~^{Merchants} were used to supplement regular tonnage in the long haul to the West Indies in the transportation of troops. However, the situation was not the same in regard to the Cape and the East Indies. Soldiers going to these stations were generally conveyed in East India ships and occasionally in a troopship. Supplies and stores were also transported on board East India ships.¹ After East India ships chartered on freight disembarked troops at the Cape and the East Indies they returned home with a cargo of goods. Before convoy became compulsory the East

1. E. g., PRO, W.O.1/798, 22 Feb. 1797; PRO, ADM/108/28, 24 May 1796; PRO, ADM/1/3736, August 1798; NRS, Keith, Elphinstone to Blankett, 26 June 1796, vol. I, 430.

India ships were protected to a safe distance sometimes by a West India convoy for as long as their paths might lie together.

The Transport Board became involved in transporting the King's forces to the Cape of Good Hope and the East Indies in early 1795 when it became clear that the change of government in the United Provinces was turning that state into an enemy of Britain. It became an object of British policy to secure the base at the Cape for the Stadholder and prevent the French from seizing it. Since Holland was lost to the French the ministry also hoped to safeguard the Dutch colonies in Africa and the East Indies from French occupation. The first British troops arrived at the Cape in the summer of 1795. Admirals Keith and Blankett as well as Major Generals Alured Clark and Craig conducted this expedition. All the troops were transported on board East India ships except 500 of the 78th regiment who were taken on board the warships of Admiral Blankett's squadron.¹ For reasons which are not clear many of the soldiers on board Blankett's squadron were sick with the scurvy by the time they arrived at the Cape, whereas the other troops were reported to have arrived in good health.²

The Dutch at the Cape at first did not co-operate with the British and refused to give supplies to the army. When provisions began to run out the army had to rely on what they could obtain from

1. PRO, W.O.1/323, 4 May 1795; Fortescue, op. cit., 394.

2. PRO, W.O.1/323, Craig to Dundas, 16 June 1795.

the fleet and from foraging parties. Their discomfiture was not lessened by the fact that the ships which brought the troops under Craig had no provisions of bread or spirits on board.¹ Since the army, as in other campaigns, was hampered by a lack of artillery and land transport it took until 16 September to force the colony and castle of the Cape of Good Hope to capitulate.² None of the troops were sent on to India that year since the inhabitants were still hostile to the British. At the insistence of Keith a depot was set up at the Cape that would in time become a common rendezvous for ships going to India.³

In early 1796 because of the designs of the enemy the ministry decided to reinforce the troops in India and strengthen the fleet at the Cape.⁴ Reinforcements left Spithead for the Cape on board East India ships on 12 April 1796; they arrived on 28 May.⁵ Another fleet of East Indiamen reached the Cape on 21 July having lost one ship the Taunton Castle with over 70 recruits of the 33rd regiment on board. She was believed to have been taken by four French cruisers sailing off the Cape.⁶ On 17 August the Dutch Admiral surrendered to the

1. PRO, W.O.1/323, Craig to Clarke, 12 Sept. 1795; NRS, Keith, Keith to D. Scott, 27 June 1795, vol. I, 297.

2. PRO, ADM/1/55, 23 Sept. 1795.

3. NRS, Keith, Keith to Dundas, 23 Sept. 1795, vol. I, 371.

4. Fortescue, op. cit., 506.

5. NRS, Keith, Keith to Blankett, 26 June 1796, vol. I, 430. Fortescue, op. cit., 507.

6. PRO, 30/11/235, J.C. Sherbrooke to Cornwallis, 25 July 1796.

British in Saldanha Bay and the British hold on the Cape was secured. More troops arrived in September. The Scotch Brigade sent from Gibraltar on board a troopship came on 18 September; the 12th and 86th regiments transported from Britain in East Indiamen arrived a day later.¹ The arrival of these reinforcements enabled the commander to send three regiments to India from the Cape; they were in India at the start of the new year.²

To capture the overseas possessions of Britain's enemies had been a part of Pitt's policy since 1793. In that year Pondicherry capitulated to a force of native and British troops assisted by the British navy. The Dutch possessions in Malacca were captured in 1795 and 1796. A force of about 1,100 Europeans and two battalions of native infantry under the command of Colonel James Stuart of the 72nd regiment sailed from Madras on 30 July 1795 for this purpose. On 26 August Trincomalee surrendered to the British. In October de Meuron's Swiss regiment stationed at Colombo in the service of the Dutch East India Company passed into the hands of the British through the diplomatic efforts of Mr. Hugh Cleghorn.³ When Colombo capitulated on 15 February 1796 Ceylon, important for the protection and security of India, came under British control. These movements of the troops in the ^{Moluccas}~~Malaccas~~ were conducted on board transports hired from the maritime resources of India.⁴

1. PRO, W.O.1/325, Keith to Dundas, 21 Sept. 1796; 22 Sept. 1796.

2. PRO, W.O.1/357, 20 Jan. 1797; ADM/1/5513, 13 Nov. 1796.

3. PRO, W.O.1/361; Fortescue, op. cit., 402.

4. PRO, ADM/1/55, 29 Dec. 1795.

In 1798 when the ministry was satisfied that Egypt was the destination of Bonaparte's fleet and when the ministry received intelligence that the French, Tippoo Saib and Zumaun Shah, the king of the Afghans or Abdallies were leagued in a common cause for the expulsion of the English from India, it decided to send reinforcements to India. The 10th regiment was to be sent from England, the 51st from Lisbon and three more battalions were to go from the Cape. In August 1798 the 10th regiment of foot embarked on two East India ships at Spithead and proceeded with a third East India ship to Lisbon. There it received the 51st regiment and the whole proceeded to India. A few days later the 61st and 81st embarked for the Cape in East India ships. These ships conveyed the three battalions from the Cape to India after landing the two regiments.¹

Before reinforcements came the British in India secured a victory over Tippoo Sultan in May 1798. When the new forces arrived the army, under the command of Arthur Wellesley, was to concentrate on the pacification of southern India. In 1801 Wellesley also had the responsibility of providing transports for the army (4,000 to 5,000 troops) that would act on the coast of the Red Sea assisting Abercromby's assault on Egypt.

It was difficult to procure tonnage for the transport of a large force in India on any sudden emergency. The available tonnage of the port of Bombay was not considerable; that of Madras was

1. PRO, ADM/1/3736, August 1798.

extremely limited; that of Calcutta however at certain periods of the season was of great extent, and no large armament could be provided with transports without aid from that port. However, much depended on the weather since no ship could leave the port of Calcutta without difficulty from the middle of March to the commencement of November, and the port of Madras could not be approached or quitted with safety from the commencement of October to the close of December. In addition to these circumstances, of the shipping available around Calcutta by the end of the year, much of it was taken up for normal trade by the end of January and none was obtainable by March.¹

Thus, for the Red Sea expedition Wellesley employed the whole available tonnage at the port of Calcutta at the proper season. Major General Baird, commander of the Red Sea operation, sailed from Calcutta on 14 February 1801. Wellesley directed that agents be appointed to see that the several presidencies in India furnished a constant and regular supply of provisions, and of all necessary articles for the troops going to the Red Sea. Wellesley thought a considerable quantity of salt provisions might be procured from the American and Danish ships, which frequented the ports of India, and which usually imported salt provisions as an article of trade.² Because there was a deficiency of tonnage at Ceylon, a proportion of the troops going from Ceylon to the Red Sea to assist Abercromby's assault on Egypt

1. PRO, W.O.1/358, Wellesley to Abercromby, 28 Feb. 1801.

2. Ibid.

were accommodated on board warships.¹ The British force from India was to arrive at Rosetta after a five months passage too late to be of any assistance.²

1. PRO, W.O.1/358, Wellesley to Abercromby, 28 Feb. 1801.

2. See below, p. 273.

CHAPTER VII

THE TRANSPORTING OF THE KING'S FORCES:
THE SHORT HAUL TO THE CONTINENT AND THE
MEDITERRANEAN

The campaigns of 1793 and 1794 on the Continent were attempts to preserve the integrity of the Dutch Netherlands by driving the French from Flanders; thus maintaining an effective barrier between Holland and France. This traditional line of Britain's defence policy became an essential feature of the military policy of Pitt and Dundas. The great emphasis the ministry placed on the campaign in the West Indies, however, drained the maritime and human resources of Britain to the Caribbean greatly hindering the effort on the Continent.

The responsibility for sending troops, provisions and stores on the short haul to the Continent during the two campaigns was for the most part in the hands of the Navy Board, since the Transport Board did not come into existence until the summer of 1794. Preparations for sending troops to the Continent were going on at the same time as those for conveying troops to the West Indies; this led to confusion and difficulty during embarkations and to a scarcity of tonnage during the campaigns.

The optimism of the British Government about an early victory over France and the unpreparedness of the British army, which had long been reduced by peacetime economy, resulted in Britain transporting to the Continent during the first half of 1793 only 4,000 troops and 3,000 cavalry. These numbers were to be supplemented in August 1793 when gunners were transported to Dunkirk and in September when

eight battalions were sent to reinforce Ostend.¹

The campaign of 1793 began when the British government, in answer to a threat made by the French General Dum^oriez to the free passage of the Hollandsdiep, sent three battalions of horse guards to Helvoetsluys. The three battalions numbering under 2,000 men were under the command of Colonel Gerrard Lake of the First Guards and were accommodated on board thirteen hastily improvised transports that had not more than fourteen days provisions with them.² After a few narrow escapes from shipwreck they reached Helvoetsluys in perfect health on 1 March, just eight days after Dundas issued the order for tonnage. Transport agent Lieutenant Naire at Helvoetsluys retained the thirteen transports by hiring them for six months certain.³ It was lucky for the Navy Board and for the three battalions that the transports reached the shores of the Continent without encountering stormy weather, otherwise the troops might not have been so fit upon landing. The Board had been so anxious to get the ships ready and out to sea as soon as possible that most of them were in a very unfit state for the reception of troops. "The tonnage of the ships was so inadequate to the numbers embarked, that every bad consequence was to be apprehended had it been necessary to put on the hatches, which must

1. In 1793 about 14,000 Hanoverians and 8,000 Hessians were placed on the British payroll and became Continental auxiliaries to the British army.

2. PRO, ADM/106/2645, 12; 26 March 1793.

3. Ibid., 12 March 1793.

have been the case had we not made Helvoet before the gale of wind came on. There was no small species of provisions on board; no vinegar (that most essential preservative); and lastly, neither medicines nor surgical instruments."¹ Soon after arrival, the King's forces with the aid of 8,000 Prussians totally defeated the French at Neervinden and by 5 April had driven them from the Austrian Netherlands.² At this early stage in the war it appeared as though the allies would be easily successful.

The enthusiasm of the Dutch for an active campaign against the French was so heightened by the arrival of the three battalions and soon after by the arrival of the Duke of York, commander of the King's forces on the Continent, that Dundas decided to send more troops to Helvoetsluys. On 4 March the Navy Board was requested to supply tonnage to accommodate three regiments of infantry, the 37th and 53rd then serving in Scotland, and the 14th regiment at Dover; they were to be sent under the command of Sir Ralph Abercromby for the protection of Holland only.³ The 600 men of the 14th regiment were to embark at Dover or Sheerness and a detachment of Royal Artillery and a Company of the Royal Military Artificers were to embark at Woolwich and be sent to Helvoetsluys under the same convoy.⁴ The 1,000 men

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1. Sir Harry Calvert. The Journals and Correspondence of General Sir Harry Calvert Comprising the Campaigns in Flanders and Holland In 1793-4. With an Appendix, Containing His plans for the Defence of the Country in case of invasion (London, 1853), 22, 23.
 2. Fortescue, op. cit., 67-8.
 3. PRO, ADM/1/4157, 4 March 1793.
 4. Ibid.,

belonging to the regiments from Scotland embarked at Leith where the Navy Board was able to hire six transports for six months certain at 13/- per ton, enabling the Board to keep the transports in Holland to be ready to remove the troops if necessary.¹ Since passage to the Continent was a short haul the troops were accommodated at one ton and a half per man and were provisioned at the usual allowance, that is, at 2/3 of a seaman's whole allowance. The transports with three weeks provisions on board sailed from Leith on 21 March, arrived off Yarmouth on the 25th and sailed a few days later for Holland.² The troops embarked and sailed less than three weeks after the order was issued for the appropriation of transports. All of them were at Helvoetsluys by 1 April.³ There were now about 4,000 British soldiers on the Continent to take part in the advance on Flanders.

Having decided to spare no more infantry for the Continent the ministry ordered 11 detachments of cavalry to be taken up for that service. Ten of the detachments consisted of 262 men each and 300 horses with about 14 servants and 25 women. The detachment of the first dragoon guards, however, consisted of 393 men and 450 horses.⁴ In response to orders for tonnage issued on 18, 27 March and 6 April to accommodate the cavalry the Navy Board took up enough vessels in the Thames to transport one third of them at one time. Unlike the infantry transports the cavalry transports returned to Deptford as

1. PRO, ADM/106/2645, 21 March 1793.

2. PRO, W.O.1/66, Abercromby to Dundas, 27 March 1793.

3. Ibid., 1 April 1793.

4. PRO, ADM/1/4157, 18, 27 March; 6 April 1793.

soon as possible in order to receive the second and third divisions of cavalry destined for Ostend.¹ (The twelve transports loaded with hay which sailed for Ostend on 27 May also returned to England as soon as their service was complete.)² The entire first division plus ordnance stores and Royal artillery were embarked by 10 May and on that day their convoy was ordered;³ they arrived at Ostend about the middle of May. On 3 June the transports which accommodated the second division were back in Deptford Yard being fitted to receive the third division.⁴ When the third division arrived there were 3,000 British cavalry on the Continent.

Besides the detachments of cavalry sent to Flanders the allies were strengthened by successive contingents of Hanoverians. At this time the allies decided to divide the army into two divisions. The Austrians were to invest Quesnoy while the British besieged Dunkirk. To aid the siege of Dunkirk gunners were sent to the Duke of York; but when they arrived on 27 August, they had very few guns for the Duke's army.⁵ This was a foretaste of things to come for an insufficiency of ordnance stores was to impede the British campaign on the Continent throughout 1794. The Admiralty sent a frigate and a

1. PRO, ADM/1/4157, 19 May 1793.

2. PRO, ADM/106/2645, 28 May 1793.

3. PRO, ADM/1/4158, 10 May 1793.

4. PRO, ADM/106/2646, 3 June 1793.

5. PRO, ADM/1/4158, 23 Aug. 1793.

few armed cutters to the coast of Dunkirk as well as Admiral MacBride without his fleet. The force, however, proved inadequate and on 8 September the Duke was forced to retreat.¹

The failure at Dunkirk emphasized the critical situation in Flanders. Accordingly, on 11 September Dundas ordered eight battalions to embark for Ostend as a temporary measure. At the same time he informed Lord Hood of the importance of holding Toulon (Lyons, Marseilles and above all Toulon, the great naval arsenal of the Mediterranean, had been in revolt against the National Convention since July; Corsica was also in revolt under the leadership of the old patriot Paoli.); he framed a design for a descent upon St. Malo and for the occupation of the Isle D'Yeu off the coast of La Vendée; and also overseered the arrangements for the Grey-Jervis expedition to the West Indies. Thus several foreign enterprises were being planned and prepared by the ministry at the same time resulting in confusion and difficulty for the Navy Board at home. The eight battalions (3rd, 19th, 27th, 28th, 42nd, 54th, 57th and 59th) destined for Ostend were taken away from Grey's West Indian expedition. They were fated to be transported back and forth across the channel several times, while embarked on board transports for weeks on end resulting in sickness and death for many of their number, while Dundas decided where they would best serve the ministry's policy. Shipping for most

1. Fortescue, op. cit., 124-29; see also, Alfred H. Burne. The Noble Duke of York - The Military Life of Frederick Duke of York and Albany (London & N.Y., 1949), 75.

of them had been ordered as early as 15 August in response to Dundas' request to have a force assembled at Spithead by early September to be ready to proceed to Ostend if the situation demanded it.¹ If the situation on the Continent did not demand their presence they were to go with Grey and Jervis.

The eight reinforcing battalions had just joined the army in Flanders when Dundas on 18 September ordered four of them to return to England at once and the remainder as soon as possible.² He now wanted them to join Lord Moira on an expedition to help the royalist forces in La Vendée. Dundas felt safe in recalling them because the allies, after the failure of Dunkirk were meeting with success, causing the French to retreat to their former positions. The 63rd, 28th, 54th and 59th returned to England immediately. This partial withdrawal from Flanders however, was premature for news soon reached Britain that Nieuport, held by a weak garrison, was being successfully bombarded by the French. The ministry, fearful that they might lose their base at Ostend, ordered the four battalions to be sent back at once to the Continent under the command of Sir Charles Grey who had orders to use his judgement in either defending Ostend or taking away the entire eight battalions.³ In the meantime Major General Stuart, the commander at Ostend, disembarked the remaining four battalions that were to sail for England. The situation at Ostend soon improved

1. PRO, ADM/1/4158, 15 Aug. 1793.

2. PRO, ADM/1/4158, 11; 18 Sept. 1793.

3. PRO, ADM/1/4257, 25; 27 Oct. 1793.

however, when the French were forced to retreat and when they failed to capture Nieuport which was reinforced on October 27th by a battalion of Hessians and by a few gunners from Ostend. Grey arrived a day later when his assistance was no longer needed; he and the eight battalions returned to England soon after. By the close of 1793 Ostend had been retained as a British base.

The eight battalions that returned with Grey were given to Lord Moira for the expedition to La Vendée. These battalions were to be joined by a Hessian force embarked at Ostend. The Royalists' insurrection in La Vendée had begun as early as March 1793; and met with success until the end of June when it suffered its first defeat in an attempt to capture Nantes. Dundas began preparations for an expedition to help the Royalists in November. In the confusion surrounding the sailing of Grey's expedition to the West Indies, Moira's expedition was delayed as well as the collection and departure of the transports destined for Ostend for the accommodation of the Hessians. Moira's fears that the Royalists would be beaten by the time he arrived proved correct. He sailed on 1 December and on his arrival a day later there was no sign of a Royalist. The insurgents had won a victory at Antrainon 21 November but after an unsuccessful attack upon Angers they began to retreat and were finally overthrown at Savenay on 23 December. Had Moira sailed on 22 November as originally intended the situation might have been different. By 2 December he was too late; there was nothing he could do but retreat

to Guernsey with his whole force.

Moir's eight battalions which crossed the channel several times between October and December 1793 were kept on board ship to deal with a possible French invasion. It was inevitable that men crowded on board transports fitted for a short voyage would become sick; the fact that many died of typhus fever is a black mark on the conduct of the transport service at the time.

The expedition to La Vendée had been a failure and by the end of 1793 Toulon, which Dundas had said was so important to hold, was also lost. The only British troops to arrive at Toulon, after those disembarked by Admiral Hood who occupied Toulon on 28 August, were two weak battalions and a few gunners, or about 800 men in all. They were sent from Gibraltar and arrived at Toulon on 27 October under command of General O'Hara and Major General David Dundas. This small contingent was not strong enough to counteract a rapidly deteriorating situation where neither supplies nor stores had been sent to the forces disembarked by Hood. As a result the British suffered a defeat on 29 November during which O'Hara was captured; and by 18 December they made plans to retreat.¹

A scarcity of troops was the reason for the failure to hold Toulon. Near the end of September Hood had been promised 5,000 Hessians but they were given to Moira instead for the descent on Brittany. Hood was also promised the 12th regiment of light dragoons

1. Fortescue, op. cit., 157-77.

and the 40th regiment of infantry from Cork. By 6 October the 12th regiment was already embarked on board transports having been destined originally for Ostend; they were waiting for transports to arrive from England to accommodate the 40th regiment in order that they could both sail under the same convoy to Toulon.¹ Since the 40th regiment was not embarked by the end of October the 12th light dragoons was ordered to proceed to Toulon without them; they were to sail with a West India convoy as far as possible and with a single frigate from Sir John Jervis' squadron to go as far as Gibraltar and there pick up a convoy for Toulon.² On 1 December the 40th regiment which was now embarked was ordered to wait for other transports to be sent to Cork to embark two other regiments destined for Toulon.³ The departure of the transports from Deptford was delayed and by the time they reached Cork the news from Toulon was so bad that Dundas decided not to send the regiments there. The 40th regiment was still at Cork in January 1794 when it was ordered to join Moira's second expedition to Ostend and the 12th light dragoons which never reached Toulon were to serve in Corsica in June 1794 after a long and hazardous journey.

After Hood failed to hold Toulon he went to Corsica in order to assist the National party, led by Paoli, to throw off the yoke of the French. By now, the British land forces on board the fleet including the soldiers doing duty as marines, consisted of 2,232 rank

1. PRO, ADM/1/4159, 6 Oct. 1793.

2. Ibid., 31 Oct. 1793.

3. Ibid., 1 Dec. 1793; 23 Dec. 1793.

and file.¹ The fleet arrived off Mortello fort on 7 February and the troops were landed the same day. Mortello surrendered on the 17th and St. Fiorenzo on the 19th. While the soldiers were in Corsica they were very deficient in ordnance stores and camp equipment. However, Bastia surrendered on 22 May as a result of a successful blockade of that port by Hood. On 3 June the 12th light dragoons, which were originally intended for Toulon arrived after a long and troublesome voyage which included a disembarkation at Gibraltar in January 1794.² On 19 June though Calvi was still to be taken Lord Hood and Sir Gilbert Elliot, charged with the negotiation of an agreement with the Corsican patriots, accepted the crown of Corsica on behalf of George III. The reinforced army under command of Lieutenant General Stuart invested Calvi on 20 June and it surrendered on 10 August.³

The success in Corsica in 1794 was a ray of hope to the British forces who had met failure at Dunkirk, in La Vendée, and at Toulon by the end of 1793. The failure of the campaign of 1793 on the Continent can be attributed for the most part to a genuine lack of troops; to the indecision of the ministry as to where the troops could best serve; as a result they were sent everywhere; and to the nationalist war aims of the allies. Other factors also contributed to the failure of the campaign of 1793. The British never prepared

1. PRO, W.O.1/302, f.735.

2. PRO, ADM/106/2649, 21 Jan. 1794.

3. PRO, W.O.1/302, f.735.

for war and in 1793 every department was slow in getting organized particularly the ordnance department which was negligent in collecting and distributing supplies. The artillery had been allowed to deteriorate after the American war and no attempt was made to augment it until the war against revolutionary France had begun. As a result the troops sent to the Continent were never well supplied with camp equipment or ordnance stores and the shortage of artillery waggons and horses to forward supplies greatly impeded the movement of the Continental army. Alfred H. Burne in a review of the campaign of 1793 in his biography of the Duke of York stated: "A further charge against the government is that they stinted the army of supplies in all its branches, even sending out recruits to the front unarmed. Dundas must not receive the sole blame for this. It must be shared by the Ordnance Department which was at the outbreak of the war in a shocking state of inefficiency."¹ As far as the transport service is concerned, the Navy Board appropriated transports rather quickly, however, it met with confusion in getting a large expedition off to the West Indies and in transporting troops to the Continent at the same time. Since so much tonnage was on the way to the Caribbean the Navy Board prematurely recalled transports from the Continent toward the end of 1793; as a result transports had to be sent back to Ostend delaying the embarkation of the foreign troops in British pay for England and the embarkation for the Vendée. It should also be mentioned that on the short haul to the Continent the troops always

1. Burne, op. cit., 103-4.

arrived in good health. The unfortunate eight battalions, that were sent back and forth to the Continent with Grey and then with Moira and then were allowed to stay on board their crowded transports for weeks on end to deal with a possible French invasion, came down with typhus fever from which many died. Everyone connected with that situation, the ministry, transport service, and War department, must share in the responsibility for that unfortunate affair.

The campaign of 1794 to drive the French from Flanders had as its immediate objective the mastering of every fortress on the French frontier from the Meuse to the sea. By the treaty of Hague, 19 April, about 62,000 Prussian troops entered into the pay of the British and Dutch to be employed wherever Great Britain and Holland felt fit. By the opening of the campaign the two contestants in Flanders were approximately equal, the French being very slightly superior in numbers.¹

Most of the troops sent to the Continent from England for the '93 campaign were still there to take part in the '94 campaign. They were supplemented in April by the 8th light dragoons and the 38th and 55th regiments of foot; in June by 10,000 troops under command of Lord Moira; and in August by five battalions under command of Lord Mulgrave. The tonnage needed for the two last expeditions was collected with great difficulty since so many transports were in the West Indies with Grey and Jervis.

1. Fortescue, op. cit., 226, 229.

Recruits for the British infantry already on the Continent as well as for the British cavalry and Hessian cavalry and infantry had been arriving at Ostend during the first four months of 1794. Many of the troops were ill-equipped and badly clothed. The recruits for General Abercromby's brigade "much resembled Falstaff's men, and were as lightly clad as any Carmahnole battalion."¹ This was not a failure of the transport system but of the war organization in general. British transports at Ostend were ordered home to bring over the British and foreign recruits.² A considerable number of the Hessian troops had to be left in England because of sickness. They had been stationed on the Isle of Wight; some of them in bad quarters and the greater part of them on board the transport ships in which they were brought from the Continent. Due to their confined situation sickness was inevitable.³

While the fortunes of the combatants swayed back and forth in the renewed fighting in Flanders during April, it was not until the end of that month that substantial reinforcements could be brought across. On 30 April the 8th light dragoons and the 38th and 55th regiments of foot arrived at Ostend. Dundas had aimed to get them there by the middle of March.⁴ As early as 16 February he had ordered tonnage to bring them from Ireland. His design was frustrated

1. Calvert, *op. cit.*, 187.

2. E. g., PRO, ADM/1/4160, 23 Jan. 1794; 14 Feb. 1794; ADM/106/2649, 6 March 1794; W.O.1/168, 26; 28 March 1794; ADM/106/2650, 1; 4 April 1794.

3. PRO, W.O.1/175, 24; 29 Feb. 1794.

4. PRO, ADM/1/4160, 16 Feb. 1794; W.O.1/169, 2 May 1794.

by the difficulties of procuring ships in Ireland and by the scarcity of tonnage in English ports as a result of the exceptional demand for transports for the expedition to the West Indies. It became necessary to obtain 4,000 tons of shipping from Ostend; British transports were hurriedly called back.¹ Movement of the regiments was also delayed by contrary winds, which forced the transports to put in at Bristol on their way from Cork; and so ten weeks elapsed between Dundas's original order for tonnage and the troops' arrival in the Low Countries. Such a delay contrasted markedly with the more usual time-limit of three weeks between the ordering of transports for service to the Continent and their arrival at their destination, no more than a week being required to carry over troops from an English port.

The main British force under Moira destined for the Low Countries was still in England, when during May the allied forces suffered a series of reverses and the beginning of the Polish crisis disunited and reduced the will to fight of the continental allies. On 17 June, after the government received news that Ostend was in danger, Dundas ordered Moira to sail at once with his force of 10,000 men. This force included the 14th light dragoons and the 33rd regiment of foot which were to sail for Ostend from Ireland, as well as the following fourteen regiments destined to sail from England, (3rd, 8th, 19th, 27th, 28th, 40th, 42nd, 44th, 54th, 57th, 59th, 63rd, 87th and the 89th).

1. PRO, ADM/1/4160, 16 Feb. 1794; see also, ADM/106/2649, 17; 18 Feb. 1794.

Preparations had begun for Moira's expedition to Ostend as early as January. On the 18th of that month transport agent, Captain Rowell was ordered to send a weekly return of transports employed in the expedition giving the names and tonnage of the ships, their masters, the agent, and how employed.¹ On the same day the 40th regiment of foot, originally intended for Toulon, and two companies of Irish artillery sailed from Cork to join the expedition. Other regiments were added throughout the next five months. Despite the fact that the Navy Board in February 1794 ordered to England all the unemployed transports at Ostend it still found it difficult to provide tonnage for this military operation. Most of the merchant ships available for the transport service had been employed in the Grey-Jervis expedition and were still in the Caribbean. The scarcity of shipping definitely delayed Moira's departure to the Continent. On 18 June Moira wrote to Nepean from Nettley Camp "according to Browell we are hard put to it for transports. The worst is that we have horse ships for no more than fifty horses. So that we will not have horses to draw even our battalion guns much less our other artillery."² By 19 June after five months of preparation there were enough transports for the 19th, 27th, 28th, 40th (8 cos. of), 42nd, 54th, 57th, 59th, 87th, 89th at Portsmouth and on 20 June these regiments were ordered to embark. On the same day the 8th and 44th regiments embarked and one day later they sailed for Ostend. Moira did not

1. PRO, ADM/106/2649, 18 Jan. 1794.

2. PRO, W.O.1/175, 18 June 1794.

have a single transport to spare for the 3rd and 63rd regiments. On 20 June he wrote to the Earl of Balcarres that as soon as there were enough transports at Jersey the 3rd and 63rd regiments should be embarked.¹ In the meantime he and the ten regiments sailed to Ostend arriving on 26 June.² There they met the 8th and 44th regiments of foot who, along with some recruits, had arrived five days earlier. One squadron of the 14th light dragoons and the 33rd regiment of foot had come in on 25 June, having sailed from Cork nineteen days before.³ On 30 June the Navy Board was able to send five transports to Jersey to convey the 3rd and 63rd regiments to the Continent.⁴ However, since Ostend was evacuated on the same day the regiments were sent to England instead.⁵

When Moira arrived at Ostend, the situation of the allies had been rapidly deteriorating. The British and Austrian armies were forced to retreat northward first from Ostend on 20 June, then from Nieuport on 16 July and from Antwerp four days later.⁶ Throughout these reverses the Navy Board continued to send at intervals single transports with detachments of regiments already on the Continent.⁷ When news of the evacuation of Ostend came through the destination of all convoys going there was altered.⁸ Captain

1. PRO, W.O.1/175, 19; 20 June 1794.

2. PRO, W.O.1/169, 26 June 1794.

3. *Ibid.*, 6; 25 June 1794.

4. PRO, ADM/106/2650, 30 June 1794.

5. PRO, ADM/1/4161, 20 July 1794.

6. Fortescue, *op. cit.*, 283-90.

7. E. g., PRO, ADM/1/4161, 6 June 1794; 5 July 1794.

8. *Ibid.*, 1 July 1794.

Craven, the principal transport agent at Ostend, moved with the garrison to Antwerp, where he carried on in the same manner the duty and management of the transports.¹ Near the end of July when Antwerp was abandoned recruits for the regiments already on the Continent were sent to Bergen op Zoom,² and Captain Craven, instructed to follow any orders the Duke of York might give him,³ moved first to Flushing and then in the middle of August to Helvoetsluys.⁴

Throughout the summer of 1794 the transport service was still finding it difficult to supply ships to send recruits and stores to the Continent. It was at this time that a circular was sent to the transport agents in the West Indies to send home all transports that could be spared. In fact, in order to accommodate troops, the Navy Board on 5 July asked the Ordnance Board for the use of the ordnance transports that had returned to Spithead.⁵ All transports returning from the Continent were quickly fitted out, provisioned and sent back again. In August the situation was slightly alleviated when the Navy Board was able to hire on freight several ships to carry army stores to the Continent.⁶

1. PRO, ADM/106/2645, 7 July 1794.

2. E. g., PRO, ADM/1/4161, 30 July 1794; ADM/106/2651, 25 July 1794; ADM/1/3730, 15 Sept. 1794.

3. PRO, ADM/106/2651, 30 July 1794.

4. Ibid., 15 Aug. 1794.

5. Ibid., 5 July 1794.

6. Ibid., 12; 13 Aug. 1794.

On hearing of the capture of Nieuport and the French advance northward Dundas decided to send five battalions under Lord Mulgrave to Flushing.¹ They were the 31st and 34th with a total of 1,000 men; and the 79th, 84th, and 85th with 800 men each; these regiments were the first to be employed in the province of Zealand. To transport them tonnage for 3,400 men was needed;² at a time when shipping was difficult to procure. By the time the Transport Board appropriated ships, embarked the troops and sent them off to the Continent several weeks had elapsed. Dundas requested tonnage on 6 August and the five battalions arrived at Flushing twenty days later; their commander, Lord Mulgrave, having preceded them by nine days. Under normal circumstances the entire operation could have been done in one week. Mulgrave's troops came too late, Sluys having surrendered to the French on the very day of their arrival. No more regiments were to be sent to the Continent during the remainder of the campaign. During the second half of 1794 the French captured one post after another until the allies were forced to retreat to the western bank of the Ems; there they halted on 5 February 1795. The Transport Board continued to send officers and recruits for the regiments on the Continent as well as provisions and supplies until the British evacuation in the early spring.

The want of troops plus division among the allies resulted in victory for the French in Flanders in 1794. (In October of '94

1. Lord Moira had returned to England at the end of July.

2. PRO, ADM/1/4162, 6 Aug. 1794.

the British cabinet cut off financial aid to Austria and Prussia because of their disheartened way of conducting the Continental campaign. In fact, Prussia had not assisted at all.) The 6,500 troops the Navy Board was successful in bringing to the Continent in 1794 were not enough to stem the tide leading to a French victory. It is probably true that the scarcity of transports hastened the French success. If Moira's troops and Mulgrave's five battalions had arrived earlier the French victory would most likely have occurred several weeks later; and if more transports were available adequately to supply the troops with provisions and forage the allied evacuation would probably have been delayed. But the British army in Flanders suffered in 1794 as it had in 1793 because the Ordnance department was still disorganized and inefficient. There was a shortage of artillery, artillery men and artillery drivers throughout the campaign. Military operations were impeded also by a need of recruits, officers and waggons; many of the troops that were sent to the Continent were ill-equipped, ill-disciplined and ill-clothed. The armies were constantly on the move and supplies could not keep up due to the depleted waggon supply. These disadvantages were not the result of transport failure but again were the result of inferior war organization in general.

Transports had been returning from the West Indies throughout the second half of 1794 so there was enough tonnage in England in early 1795 to bring away the British army and cavalry from the Continent.

Many of the vessels were back in England when Civil War erupted in Brittany at the end of May 1795. Therefore, the Transport Board had no difficulty in accommodating two Royalist expeditions (3,500 men and 1,500 men respectively) and one combined British and Royalist expedition (3,300 infantry and 750 cavalry) to Brittany during the summer of 1795. However, these military operations which were hastily planned and not adequately supplied with provisions and forage were a failure. The two Royalist expeditions were in a short time defeated by a superior French force.

The combined British and Foreign contingent was sent to the barren island of Hedic with no assured way of receiving provisions and supplies. Inclement weather (it was the hurricane season) prevented the victuallers from coming near the island till the second week in November; in the meantime several hundred horses died of starvation. Finally in December in accordance with Dundas' instructions the troops embarked on board the warships of Admiral Harvey's squadron and returned to England.¹ The transports which brought the men to the island had returned to England soon after disembarking them. By December 1795 all the available tonnage of the transport service was employed in the Abercromby-Christian expedition to the West Indies and in taking away the last of the British cavalry from the Continent.²

1. PRO, W.O.1/176, 14 Nov.; 13 Dec. 1795.

2. An account of the expenses of the transport office in 1795, £1,979,835.8.11, PRO, 30/8/252, 7 Dec. 1796, f.155.

In 1796 when hostilities on the Continent virtually ceased Britain's European policy became for the most part one of defence which, except for the skirmish of the Bruges Canal and the conquest of Minorca, lasted until the end of 1798. By not having to prepare for a Continental offensive campaign the Transport Board was able to make a genuine effort at reducing expenditure in answer to the ministry's request for economy. As the war had progressed the government became more and more distressed over the expenses involved; and their concern was aggravated by the inflation that swept Britain in 1795-1796. The Transport Board answered the ministry's request for economy by discharging transport agents who were no longer considered necessary and by reducing tonnage. As early as March 1796 an order was issued to transport agent Lieutenant Woodriffe at Lynn to avail himself of every opportunity to discharge all foreign ships and transports engaged for three or four months;¹ by 15 April Woodriffe was reducing his numbers at a fast pace.² Between 3 September 1795 and April 1796 twenty four agents had been discharged the transport service.³

In May 1796 there were 45,000 tons of transports in the West Indies, and in the Mediterranean, together with a great number

1. PRO, ADM/108/28, 21 March 1796.

2. Ibid., 15 April 1796.

3. PRO, ADM/1/3731, 6 April 1796. When agents were discharged from the transport service they were put on the half pay list. ADM/1/3738, 26 Nov. 1799.

of agents, at a very considerable expense to the public. Orders were issued to the different commanders-in-chief of the King's ships on the West Indies and Mediterranean stations to order to England all transports and agents as were not absolutely necessary for carrying on the different services in those countries.¹ The following July the Transport Board issued a circular to its principal agents in the West Indies and Mediterranean to reduce the tonnage to 7,500 tons at the leeward and windward islands; to the same at St. Domingo and Jamaica, and to the same in the Mediterranean, retaining only those vessels best calculated for the conveyance of troops. The others were to be discharged on the usual allowance of one month's pay or sent to England with the first convoy, together with a proportionate number of agents; one agent for every 3,000 tons of transports was to be retained. Transports were not to be used as prison ships or store ships;² ships were to be unloaded as quickly as possible in order that there would be little claim for demurrage, still less for breach of charter parties.³ The Transport Board discharged agents at home and in Ireland and continued discharging them through 1797.⁴ In order to reduce expenses still further instructions were sent to the remaining transport agents telling them how to economize; any

1. PRO, ADM/1/3731, 3 May 1796.

2. PRO, ADM/108/37, 22 July 1796.

3. PRO, ADM/1/3732, 25 July 1796.

4. E. g., PRO, ADM/108/38, 10 Aug. 1796; ADM/1/3735, 29 Dec. 1797; ADM/108/47, 14 July 1797.

charges inconsistent with those instructions were disallowed.¹

In 1797 the Transport Board continued to make a genuine effort to keep costs down by sending another circular to its agents which required from them a general return of all persons of every description employed under them, with a list of all boats or other small vessels in pay of the Board, at their respective ports, and the names of the crews, with the amount of each person's wages, per month, year, or day, specified. The Board also wanted to know the standing charge for rent of storehouse, or offices, with the detail of every cost attending the establishment at each agent's station, and asked for the agent's opinion, whether any, and what, reduction could be effected in the several expenses the Board mentioned.² Two days after the circular was sent, answers to it were received from the agents. The answers contained the particulars of the weekly expenses and notes of any reductions that could be made.³

During the second half of 1796 and the first half of '97 Britain's allies made separate treaties with France and Pitt despatched Malmesbury to Paris for possible peace negotiations. At the same time the explosive situation in Ireland necessitated sending troops there. For these reasons and because of the ministry's anxiety over the costs of the war, Corsica, Elba, and the Mediterranean at large were evacuated; for the next two years Britain stood alone. Her peace overtures had not been successful.

1. PRO, ADM/108/38, 17 Aug. 1796.

2. PRO, ADM/108/43, 10 Jan. 1797.

3. Ibid., 12 Jan. 1797.

During this period of defence the British navy remained active winning two of its greatest victories at St. Vincent and at Camperdown in 1797. It entered the Mediterranean again in the spring of 1798 for the double purpose of discovering the destination of the Toulon armament and of keeping a constant check on the Spanish fleet at Cadiz. St. Vincent, who was given a free hand in the Mediterranean, divided his fleet in order to secure the double object. Nelson, in command of the Mediterranean detachment, pursued Bonaparte to Egypt and won a decisive victory over the French fleet at the Nile. By the end of 1798 St. Vincent had snatched Minorca from the Spaniards and had given the British the base they needed in the western Mediterranean.¹

In December 1796 the British government's efforts to economize delayed an expedition to Lisbon as it had the West Indian service at this time. Soon after Spain declared war against Britain in October 1796 she threatened Portugal with invasion in order to compel her to close her ports to the British. When the Portuguese appealed to Britain for help the ministry decided to send 5,000 men to Lisbon under General Charles Stuart. The Transport Board started up preliminaries to send this force during the first week of November,² and then met with difficulty in collecting tonnage. A conversation between Rupert George, chairman of the Transport Board, Pitt and Dundas about reducing the tonnage held in British ports, which took

1. NRS, Spencer, vol. II, 427.

2. PRO, ADM/1/3732, 3 Nov. 1796.

place on 5 November 1796, resulted in the Board limiting its tonnage to 6,000 tons.¹ However, Rupert George acted beyond the intentions of the government. There had been a muddle as a result of the meeting. When Pitt and Dundas wished the reduction of the transport tonnage they had in view merely the accommodation of the military branch, without any reference to that of the Navy or Victualling Offices, "of which they would not form any accurate opinion." In January 1797 they were to advise the Transport Board to concert with those two Boards on the best way economy as well as efficiency could be procured.² In the meantime most of the 6,000 tons was swallowed up very shortly by the Victualling department; and the Transport Board, when collecting more tonnage, gave precedence to the West Indian service (Abercromby's second expedition to the Caribbean) which had already been delayed and put off still further the expedition to Lisbon. By the middle of December the Board was able to supply eleven ships with a total tonnage of 3,655 tons to accommodate the 2,000 foreign troops who were to leave from England.³ It was the first week in January, however, before the Transport Board was able to appropriate fifteen transports for the 11th light dragoons accompanying them.⁴ Also, officers found it difficult to get passage even though transport agents made liberal offers to ships on

1. PRO, ADM/108/19, 29 Dec. 1796.

2. PRO, ADM/108/43, 4 Jan. 1797.

3. PRO, ADM/1/3732, 13 Dec. 1796.

4. Ibid., 3 Jan. 1797.

freight.¹

The contingent that embarked in England arrived at the Tagus on 11 February and 9 March respectively.² The 2,000 British troops under General Charles Stuart, who were to join them in the Tagus on 27 June 1797,³ were already in the Mediterranean and had transports at their disposal. They were the second battalion of the Royal Scots, plus the original Corsica garrison (the 50th and 51st regiments) which moved to Elba and then to Gibraltar when the Mediterranean was evacuated.⁴

The troops disembarked on 27 and 28 June; and as many transports as could be spared sailed to England in August. This force of 5,000 remained around Lisbon for little more than a year during which time there were frequent alarms of a French and Spanish invasion. In September 1798, the 51st regiment was sent to the East Indies and the others joined General Stuart in an attack on Minorca.

The attack on Minorca was launched in October from Gibraltar where Stuart's force was supplemented by four Gibraltar regiments. When the Mediterranean had been evacuated Gibraltar remained a British stronghold at the entrance to that sea and accommodated the garrisons from Corsica and Elba. From the beginning of the war the transport

1. PRO, ADM/108/42, 26 Dec. 1796; PRO, ADM/108/43, 4 Jan. 1797.

2. PRO, ADM/108/44, 11 Feb. 1797; 5 April 1797.

3. PRO, ADM/108/47, 20 July 1797.

4. PRO, ADM/1/4330, 22 Feb; 29 Sept. 1793; ADM/1/3734, 3 May 1797; ADM/108/47, 26 June 1797.

service was conveying regiments and recruits to that station;¹ and on several occasions transported Gibraltar regiments to the West Indies.² Armed transports of 44 guns fitted in the same manner as a warship and commanded by officers of the same rank in the navy were often used to transport troops to and from Gibraltar. The 44 gun ships were under orders of the Transport Board; and the seamen on board them received £4.0.0 per month as board whereas a naval seaman received only £1.10.0 per month.³ Once Spain became an enemy there was no safety in conveying troops to Gibraltar except in armed ships on account of the Spanish row and gun boats at Algeciras. Therefore, of the six armed transports in the transport service in 1797 and 1798 at least three were appropriated to the task of bringing troops to Gibraltar.⁴

There were enough vessels at Gibraltar to accommodate three of the four Gibraltar regiments that were to go with Stuart. The fourth was accommodated on board four transports which had been employed as watering vessels and which had no cabins. As the station at Gibraltar had the stores and facilities available, the work of fitting cabins into the ships was done there.⁵

1. E. g., ADM/1/3730, 21 Nov. 1795; ADM/1/4158, 12 May, 6 July 1793.

2. E. g., ADM/1/4162, 25 Aug. 1794; W.O./1/268, 2 Aug. 1794; 18 March 1795.

3. SRO, GD51/769/1, Huskisson to Dundas, 11 Sept. 1798.

4. Ibid.

5. NRS, Spencer, St. Vincent to Spencer, 26 Oct. 1798, vol. II, 485.

Stuart and his army sailed from Gibraltar on 21 October 1798. In order to mask the object of the expedition "from the gossiping inquisitive turn of every person in the garrison, without one single exception," St. Vincent ordered sixteen months provisions to go with the transports.¹ The object of the expedition was attained with the aid of St. Vincent's fleet when Minorca was taken on 15 November 1798.

Earlier in May 1798 1,400 men of all ranks taken from the Guards, several regiments and the artillery were sent to Ostend under the command of Major General Coote to blow up the canal from Bruges to Ostend. The purpose of this expedition was to interrupt the internal navigation between Holland, Flanders and France. Home Popham, the naval commander on the expedition, had advised that "transports [would] not answer for so active a service which experience [had] often proved" and suggested that frigates be used instead. About twelve frigates were employed each with its own flatboat for disembarkation.² They left England on 14 May and anchored near Ostend five days later. After a successful bombardment on the 20th the troops were not able to embark because of the shallowness of the water. By the next morning the army was surrounded by the enemy and Coote had to capitulate.³ The expedition was successful but the ministry wondered whether the object gained was worth the loss of

1. NRS, Spencer, St. Vincent to Spencer, 26 Oct. 1798, vol. II, 484.

2. GP, 1382 a-b; 1458, Popham to Grey; 1476; 1471.

3. PRO, W.O.1/177, Coote to Dundas, 20 May 1798; GP, 1476.

so many troops.¹

The diplomatic triumphs of the British government in the second half of 1798 perhaps made up for the humiliation of Coote's surrender. During the summer a military convention was signed with Austria whereby Britain guaranteed to Austria 60,000 soldiers in return for a promise of renewed operations against the French. Near the end of 1798 Russia signed a formal alliance with Britain promising 45,000 men in return for an advance of £225,000 and monthly subsidies of £75,000. French aggressions in Rome and Switzerland as well as Bonaparte's Egyptian expedition had aroused the fear of Austria and Russia and contributed to the formation of the second coalition. After 1798 with English naval supremacy firmly established a period of offense is substituted for one of defense.

The British army returned to the Continent in considerable strength when the expedition to North Holland was executed in the autumn of 1799.

The expedition to the Helder was stated by Dundas in the House of Commons to have had three definite objects. It was to act as a diversion in favour of the Austrians and Russians in Switzerland and Suabia; to expel the French from the United Provinces and restore the Stadtholder; and to disarm the Dutch by the confiscation of their Navy, thus preventing them from continuing to give assistance to the French at sea.²

1. Fortescue, op. cit., 589.

2. NRS, Spencer, vol. II, 133.

It was a combined British and Russian military operation with Britain supplying about 30,000 men and Russia about 16,000. Sufficient transports had to be obtained for both (since the Russian contingent could not be moved without British troopships) at a time when increasing commercial prosperity in Britain made it difficult for the Transport Board to hire tonnage. The scarcity of shipping was to delay the embarkation of the second and third divisions of British troops since they had to await the return of transports from the Helder. It also was to complicate the withdrawal of the forces from Holland.

Preparations for the expedition to the Helder began in Britain in June 1799. Earlier, Captain Home Popham had been sent to Russia to arrange about troops and if possible to obtain ships to transport some of these soldiers. By 13 June Tsar Paul had agreed to furnish 17 battalions.¹ A week later Popham was able to inform Spencer that he also obtained from the Tsar 6 battleships, 3 large frigates and two smaller ones and two storeships as transports. He then undertook to have them fitted at Cronstadt and aimed to have the troops embarked by 20 July.² On 1 July Spencer informed Popham that he was pleased with the progress that Popham had made so far and he added "You are so well aware of our difficulties here in respect of transports, that I have no doubt of your continuing to use every possible exertion to find a sufficient tonnage where you are; in the meantime we shall

1. NRS, Spencer, Popham to Spencer, 13 June 1799, vol. III, 138.

2. Ibid., 20 June 1799, 139-40.

send you some of our troopships which can best be spared both as a part of the supply necessary for your purpose, and as a specimen of the mode of fitting, which I hope will be imitated by the Russian government and if it is, the whole supply will be completed without difficulty."¹

Between 25 June and 10 August Popham hired 11 ships with a total tonnage of 4,203 tons in the Baltic to be used as transports.² In the autumn he hired four more neutral ships in the Baltic to transport provisions to the Russian army,³ though experience showed that the hiring of neutral ships did not prove economical for the purposes of an expedition. The Hamburg ships hired by Popham to send foreign troops to the West Indies had involved the government in immense expense and led to disappointment. Not one of those ships went further than Portsmouth though many were hired by the month and according to their charter parties could have been sent anywhere. The Baltic ships also proved a disappointment. They were procured at a high price and there is evidence that at least four of them would not go further than Yarmouth. William Huskisson, Under-Secretary-of-State, writing of transporting troops from the Baltic, said:

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1. NRS, Spencer, Spencer to Popham, 1 July 1799, 142. *vol. III.*
 2. PRO, 30/8/252, 3 Dec. 1799. T.1/831.
Six were hired for 4 months certain; five for 6 months certain.
 3. PRO, T.1/825, 8 Feb. 1800.

The Empire of Russia does not possess a single transport or merchant vessel. The Ships to be procured in the Ports of Baltic go from England or other countries on freight. To direct them from their commercial object they must be given in addition to the price of transports here, a premium calculated upon the probable loss of their commercial speculation and if you succeed in this you derange the general operations of a trade most essential to the supplies and interests of this country.

He then wrote specifically ^{of} ~~to~~ the Hamburg and Baltic ships that were used in expeditions.

such ships were navigated and commanded by neutrals (most of them enemies at bottom) who had no idea of the service were under no subordination, and had nothing of the necessary activity, exertion or seamanship for services of this description; These qualities might perhaps be found in the Americans, but they are not disposed or at liberty to engage in any such services.¹

Huskisson noted that these observations about neutral ships also applied to ships that might be hired and sent from the ports of the Crimea and from the ports of Italy.

The Russian troops were embarked at Revel on board British transports sent there in July and on board the ships Popham was able to obtain in the Baltic.² The first division of Russians sailed from Revel on 26 July and the second division followed eight days later. Cruisers had been despatched to wait for them at the mouth

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1. GP, 2252, Huskisson to Dundas, 30 Nov. 1799; see also, ADM/108/20, 30 Oct. 1799. The government paid the pilotage of the ships hired by Popham in the Baltic. This was usually not paid to the owners of British transports. ADM/108/66, 27 Feb. 1800. The freight of the ships hired in Russia was also paid without the usual vouchers required in cases of the hire of regular transports. Ibid., 1 March 1800.
 2. PRO/30/252, 3 Dec. 1799; ADM/1/3738, 29 July 1798.

of the Baltic.¹

The fact that Britain had to furnish tonnage to transport many of the Russian forces from the Baltic greatly hindered her arrangements for conveying her own troops to the Helder. Dundas first applied to the Transport Board for tonnage for the expedition on 28 June when he requested 20,000 tons of infantry transports to be hired at 4 months certain, with a power reserved to the Board to discharge them at the end of two, if it should be thought necessary.² On 1 July Dundas asked for 400 tons for a hospital ship and 9 days later a request was made for 16,000 tons for the cavalry. Later he asked for 8,137 tons more for the conveyance of the infantry. Dundas requested 44,537 tons in all for the expedition. However subsequent applications for tonnage were made to the Transport Board throughout July, August, September and October from the Ordnance (25,071 tons), and Victualling (4,830 tons) departments, as well as from the Commissary (10,490 tons), the Quarter Master General (669 tons) and the Inspector General of Hospitals (250 tons). Altogether applications for a total of 85,847 tons were made to the Transport Board in preparation for the expedition to the Helder.³

The first troopships were hired on 1 July and as soon as they were ready they were sent to the Baltic for the conveyance of Russian

1. W.O.1/182, f.245.

2. W.O.1/181, 28 June 1799.

3. W.O.1/182, f.303.

soldiers.¹ Smaller warships fitted for troops were also appropriated for that service. By 4 July the Transport Board had at its disposal 10,984 tons of transports, 3,223 tons having just come from the West Indies.² On 16 July the Transport Board requested the chairman of the East India Company to lend to the transport service for the remainder of July, all of August and September their ships on the understanding that they would not be sent on any service to the northward of the Firth of Forth or to the westward of the Kingdom of Ireland and that they would be discharged from the public service on 1 October.³ To hire East India ships for a short haul to the Continent was an unprecedented step in the history of the transport service during this war; it showed the lengths to which the Transport Board went to obtain tonnage during the great commercial prosperity of 1799.

The East India Company complied with the Board's request and by 23 July the transport service had 42,400 tons of transports at its disposal.⁴ The Board wrote to Dundas three days earlier that they "never saw more exertion and good conduct then is now used at Deptford by Captain Rains and Mr. Boyce."⁵ 1,000 tons of shipping was ordered home from Lisbon at this time and the Transport Office was making use of warships and revenue vessels.⁶ 26 warships

1. W.O.1/181, 2 July 1799.

2. Ibid., 4 July 1799.

3. Ibid., f.151.

4. Ibid., 23 July 1799.

5. Ibid., 20 July 1799.

6. Ibid., f.200.

accommodating 10,950 men were employed by the Transport Board. On no previous expedition had so many warships been used.¹

Among the War Office papers is found this exposition of the meticulous preparation that went into the expedition of 1799.

The smallest circumstance of delay beyond the time appointed, even in a single transport, or in any other branch, was constantly and minutely enquired into, so that every executive department was left constantly upon the Qui Vivre - and it is but justice to them to declare they were able as often as called upon to account² for any such event in the most satisfactory manner.

And on 20 August 1799 commissioner George communicated to the Board particulars of a conversation he had with Dundas on the subject of the Helder expedition in which conversation the secretary of state, in the presence of Lord Spencer, expressed his full satisfaction at the conduct of the Transport Board, on the occasion and said "that everything, which depended upon this Board, had been accomplished."³

Abercromby went to Woolwich in June to observe at first hand the preparations being made by the Board of Ordnance for the expedition. Having commanded many expeditions in this war he knew only too well the failure of the Ordnance Board to supply sufficient ordnance stores and artillery to the field of battle. He also knew the reputation of the Ordnance Board for failing to keep to time

1. PRO, 30/8/252, 5 Dec. 1799.

2. PRO, W.O.1/182, f.40-1.

3. PRO, ADM/108/62, 20 Aug. 1799.

schedules.¹

Abercromby was also aware of the difficulty there would be in landing the troops. The island of Walcheren was small and flat and at that season of the year every movement was easily observed. Therefore, the disembarkation could only be effected with support from the fleet. Abercromby made sure that Admiral Mitchell who was to command the squadron co-operating with the army was given explicit instructions on this head.²

Near the end of July Abercromby's troops assembled at Barham Downs and then marched in different columns towards Deal, Ramsgate and Margate for the embarkation on board transports and warships. There were 59 infantry ships fitted at a ton and a half per man and victualled for one month, (However according to Treasury records the period for which provisions had been provided was five weeks.) 18 cavalry ships, 26 ordnance ships, 2 ships belonging to the Quarter Master General and one hospital ship.³ With warships, some of which carried infantry, the entire fleet consisted of 175 sail.⁴ The troops were embarked by 9 August and when the wind was favourable on the 13th the whole fleet put to sea. The sailing had been delayed

1. NRS, Spencer, Abercromby to Dundas, 21 June 1799, vol. III, 140-1. The greater part of the ordnance stores were prepared at the tower and at Woolwich.

2. For these instructions see: NRS, Spencer, Admiralty to Mitchell, August 1799, vol. III, 145-6, 148.

3. PRO/30/8/252, 3 Dec. 1799.

4. GP, 2250a; PRO, W.O.1/182, F.227.

by a shortage of troops (on 1 August Abercromby's force had still been short of its estimated strength of 20,000);¹ and by a scarcity of tonnage for victuallers and commissary stores; no victuallers sailed with this first division. Sir John Moore who sailed with the first division to the Helder has this note in his diary. "The expedition has undoubtedly been hurried beyond reason, but the country having been put to the expense of assembling it, it is necessary that we should be sent to attempt something. We are now upon a voyage of adventure."² By 18 August the fleet was off the Texel and was waiting for a change of wind before it could do anything. The troops had been on board twelve days and nearly half their supplies had been consumed.³ It was not until the 27th that the army was able to disembark about 6 miles south of the Helder. The disembarkation was performed with difficulty and confusion because enough flatboats had not been provided. The army had to be rowed ashore in the boats of the warships which could not carry more than 3,000 troops in one wave.⁴ Battalions were intermixed and had to be rearranged when on shore. In February 1800 the Transport Board questioned Captain Patton (the transport agent at Portsmouth) about this negligence.⁵

1. PRO, W.O.1/181, f. 285.

2. Moore, op. cit., 340.

3. PRO, T.1/825, 24 Jan. 1800.

4. GP, 2250a; see also; Fortescue, op. cit., 651.

5. PRO, ADM/108/66, 12 Feb. 1800.

The boisterous weather which affected the arrival of the British and the Russian troops gave the enemy an opportunity to collect a force sufficient to impede the advance of Abercromby's first division and by that means also gave the French time to bring up powerful reinforcements which ultimately were able to defeat the Anglo-Russian army.¹ The fleet was blown off the Texel on 21 August by a storm and the lack of its support immediately destroyed any chance of the army obtaining control of North Holland.

The army was immediately attacked upon landing but nevertheless took possession of the Helder on the evening of the 28th.² On the 30th warships pursued the Dutch fleet up the Zuyder Sea and by evening the Dutch Admiral Story had surrendered to the British.³ Thus, the first phase of the expedition was a great and speedy success. Meanwhile part of the second division, about 5,000 men, under command of General Don arrived on 28 August. They sailed from England three days before on board 12 infantry and 3 cavalry ships. On 2 September the army moved forward and were reinforced on the 4th by the arrival of the rest of the second division, the 11th light dragoons, on board 20 cavalry ships.⁴ With these reinforcements the army was successful in repulsing three separate attacks of the enemy; but the commanders would not begin the offensive until the third division arrived. The third division which consisted of most

1. PRO, W.O.1/182, f.64.

2. PRO, W.O.1/179, Abercromby to Dundas, 28 Aug. 1799.

3. GP, 2250a.

4. PRO/30/8/252, 3 Dec. 1799; GP, 2250a.

of the cavalry on board 29 ships, as well as more infantry on board 11 ships sailed with the Duke of York from England on the 11th and 13th September; and arrived in Holland between the 12th and 15th. They had waited at Barham Downs for the transports of the first division to return from Holland to take them to the Helder. On 11 September Abercromby, anxious for the third division to arrive, had written to Dundas. "What a saving would it make! If you had twenty 44 gun ships to act as transports. They would carry 10,000 men with their artillery and baggage."¹ So many army commanders would have been pleased if the navy had an excess of warships to be used as transports during the war against revolutionary France. On the 14th part of the first division of Russians numbering about 7,000 men arrived,² and two days later more Russian troops came bringing their contingent to 12,000 men.³

The Zype afforded not the smallest shelter for the troops whose camp equipage had been left behind for want of means of conveyance. In fact many necessary articles had been left behind because of the scarcity of tonnage and in the haste to despatch troops from England.⁴ The army could not rely on the Dutch who offered very little assistance in providing horses and waggons.⁵ There was difficulty also in sending provisions and supplies forward

1. GP, 201c, Abercromby to Dundas, 11 Sept. 1799.

2. GP, 22051; PRO, W.O.1/180, 13 Sept. 1799.

3. PRO, W.O.1/180, 16 Sept. 1799.

4. PRO, W.O.1/182, f.243.

5. Ibid., f.249.

due to the interrupted navigation of the Zuyder Sea. This impeded the offensive campaign of the Anglo-Russian army which began on 19 September. On that day Abercromby met with success at Hoorn; but the Russians retreated miserably from Bergen and the moral success of the day went to the French.¹

On 24 September Abercromby's invading forces received assistance when more troops arrived including 3,000 to 4,000 Russians.² The army was again in a situation to move at the end of September and they moved toward Bergen. However the Russians were soon surrounded and lost about 3,000 men.³ During the next week the British tried unsuccessfully to drive in the French outposts. The uncommon bad weather, roads, canals, and bridges made it impossible to proceed. This plus the "bad conduct of the Russians on every occasion" as well as the lack of assistance offered by the people of Holland themselves, decided the British to abandon the campaign.⁴ On 18 October a capitulation was agreed upon between Britain and France whereby 8,000 French and Dutch prisoners in England were yielded up to the French but the Dutch fleet was left in the hands of the British. Abercromby was given to the 30th of November to remove his army.⁵

1. Fortescue, op. cit., 676-681; PRO, W.O.1/182, f.267, 280.

2. Fortescue, op. cit., 682; PRO, W.O.1/180, 25 Sept. 1799.

3. GP, 2250a.

4. Ibid.; PRO, W.O.1/180, Duke of York to Dundas, 20 Oct. 1799; see also, E. Walsh. A Narrative of the Expedition to Holland in the Autumn of the year 1799 (London, 1800), 93-4.

5. Fortescue, op. cit., 700; GP, 2250a.

The evacuation of the allied army from Holland presented a new set of problems to the Transport Board for there was a deficiency of tonnage at the Texel. On 12 October Popham informed Huskisson that there were 126 sail of transports at the Helder; that he was then embarking the wounded which would take up all 28 infantry ships and that no other ship was unappropriated.¹ By 17 October it was decided to accommodate about 8,000 soldiers on board cavalry ships that had between decks. By 21 October about 11,000 more were accommodated on board the warships under the command of Vice Admiral Mitchell, the Russian squadron under Admiral Breyer, the Dortrecht, Trusty, Brakel and Roebuck troopships, and 24 ordnance store ships. 1,500 horses were able to be transported on board the cavalry ships that had no between decks. Independent of these means at least 1,500 British and Russian wounded and sick together with all the Dutch under the Prince of Orange had been accommodated. By 21 October there were no ships available at the Texel for transporting the remainder of the British and Russian forces, about 25,000 soldiers and 1,000 horses.² Using every exertion at home, the Transport Board was able to send 51 sail of transports. They arrived at the Helder on 29 October and the whole force was embarked by the appointed day.³ The captured Dutch fleet was the one gain from the expedition

1. NRS, Spencer, Popham to Spencer, 17 Oct. 1799, vol. III, 205-6.

2. PRO, W.O.1/180, Duke of York to Dundas, 21 Oct. 1799.

3. Ibid., 30 Oct. 1799.

of 1799 which had been projected on a great scale and from which great results had been anticipated.¹ Though the Helder enterprise was not a success militarily it was a tremendous transport achievement. 46,000 troops were successfully brought from England and the Baltic to the shores of North Holland. Warships accommodated more than 10,000 men and transports adeptly made three successive trips to the Continent with troops. It is impressive that the Transport Board in less than three months collected and equipped over 90,000 tons of shipping for the transport, ordnance and victualling services of this extensive military operation. This could not have been done without the services of the East India Company and without the Board's refusal to allow the ships already in the employ of the transport service to leave.

In December 1799, when the Helder operation was over and when preparations for the next campaign were being discussed and put under way, Dundas asked to be relieved of his position. In his opinion there was little use of a separate War department for several reasons. A commander in chief had been established at the head of the army, with authority and confidence adequate to the situation;² all the foreign possessions of Britain's enemies were subdued; and England's distant and colonial possessions were in a state of safety and tranquillity; the internal defence of the kingdom was amply provided for and a large and efficient army was in the process of being collected

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1. The cost of the transport service for the expedition to Holland was £465,335.19. PRO, W.O.1/182, 30 Nov. 1799.
 2. Since the evacuation of the Continent in 1795 the quality of the army had been much improved by the Duke of York's administration.

adequate to every exigency.¹ Pitt did not acquiesce, however, and Dundas remained as Secretary of State for War until February 1801 when he resigned with Pitt on the Catholic question.

While the Helder expedition was in progress Pitt was already discussing with Spencer the tonnage requirements for the next campaign, an invasion of France with the intention of attacking Brest and finally destroying the naval power of the Republic.² Again it would be a combined operation of British and Russian forces with over 70,000 troops taking part. The Brest project continued to be discussed between Pitt, Spencer and Dundas and in December preparations were begun. It was soon discovered however that the maritime resources of Britain were not adequate for transporting such a large body of men, (the maritime resources of Britain had been stretched to the limit for the Helder operation) and in January 1800 the project was dropped. An investigation into the plans for this abortive project revealed the difficulties of obtaining transports in Britain in 1799 and early 1800 and of procuring shipping in foreign ports.

For this military operation the ministry had to be assured that the means were available for transporting at once from Britain and Ireland a British army of between 50,000 and 60,000 men with a proportionate corps of cavalry, officers, horses, draught horses for artillery, commissariat etc., together with the necessary supply of

1. Add. MSS., 40,100, Dundas to George III, f. 241-2, printed Aspinall, George III, vol. III, 303-4. (no. 2087).

2. NRS, Spencer, Dundas to Spencer, 5 Sept. 1799, vol. III, 126.

ordnance, and every other requirement for active operations by an army of this size.

The Transport Board had at its disposal enough armed transports to accommodate 16,000 men. This could be easily increased to accommodate 25,000 men.¹ To transport the remainder of the army 100,000 tons of British shipping would have to be diverted from normal commercial activity. The ordinary services of the Victualling Board and other departments would require at least 60,000 tons more; and for carrying on the service of such an army, and for the other operations in contemplation, this would have to be increased to 100,000 tons at least.²

The Russian forces would also have to be transported. Experience showed that Britain could not supplement her transport tonnage with neutral vessels; they were expensive, difficult to procure and only led to disappointment. Even with part of the captured Dutch fleet which was in the process of being fitted out as transports the ministry found the difficulties of obtaining tonnage insurmountable and the proposal to attack Brest had to be abandoned.³

It should be noted that Sir Charles Grey had a very unfavourable opinion of the project even if the tonnage was available. It

1. GP, 2252, Huskisson to Dundas, 30 Nov. 1799.

2. Ibid.

3. NRS, Spencer, Spencer to Dundas, 26 Dec. 1799, vol. III, 209-10.

was his opinion that the strength of the post was underestimated and that the French Chouans, who were to assist the invaders, could not be relied on.¹

With the Brest project abandoned the remaining major undertaking was Abercromby's expedition to Egypt in 1801. In the meantime the Transport Board was engaged in conveying to the Baltic the Russian forces stationed on the Channel Islands ever since the disappointing Helder expedition; in sending in May, June and July 1800 reinforcements to the army stationed in the Mediterranean² (This is the army that would go with Abercromby to Egypt.); and in transporting a small expedition (about 6,000 men) to Bellisle in May and June 1800 to assist the Royalist insurgents. The maritime resources of Britain were equal to these services. Tonnage difficulties arose only when a large expedition was in operation. At no time during 1800 was there a scarcity of shipping. In fact in the spring of 1800 transports in the Mediterranean were discharged from service provided they loaded with cargoes of wheat for England.³

The Russian soldiers who fought with the British in the campaign in North Holland had been stationed in the Channel Islands ever since the evacuation of that country. After the proposal to

1. NRS, Spencer, Pitt to Dundas, 11 Jan. 1800, 130. *vol. III*.

2. E. g., PRO, ADM/108/67, 10; 20; 26; 30 May 1800; 30 June; 17 July 1800.

3. NMM, Keith/1/24, 29 April 1800; see also Keith 9281/1, Transport Office to Keith, 8 March 1800, f.143-4.

attack Brest was abandoned Britain had to begin operations to transport the Russians home.

In May and June 1800 preparations were made to embark the Russian troops on board British transports and on board Russian warships.¹ The Russians who sailed home on board their own warships were brought from the Channel Islands to England in small British transports in order to be re-embarked.² The British transports on this service were fitted at the rate of three men to four tons and victualled for three weeks full allowance of provisions and water; since it was a very short passage a blanket and pillow instead of a bed was put on board for each soldier.³ All of them were trans-shipped by their own boats from the transports to their own warships.⁴

On the other hand the Russians who were accommodated on board English transports for their journey home were embarked at the Channel Islands on board these ships which then proceeded under convoy of a Russian frigate directly to their destination. They were fitted also at the rate of three men to four tons, but were victualled for one month at whole allowance;⁵ a bed was fitted in for each soldier. The first division of Russians (6,000 men) were

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1. E. g., PRO, ADM/108/67, 10 May; 13 June 1800; PRO, ADM/1/3739, 21 May; 10; 20 June 1800.
 2. E. g., PRO, ADM/108/67, 5; 13 June 1800; PRO, ADM/1/3739, 14; 28 June 1800.
 3. PRO, ADM/108/67, 5 June 1800.
 4. Ibid., 13 June 1800.
 5. Ibid., 20 June 1800.

embarked at Guernsey and Jersey on board British transports under the command of transport agent, Lieutenant Norris and sailed on 18 July under convoy of the Riga and Constantine Russian frigates.¹ An odd episode followed their disembarkation at Cronstadt on 17 August.²

Because of the reports of ill-treatment of Russian soldiers while in the service of Britain, the British transports were seized on 5 September and their masters and crew imprisoned by the Tsar's order. Lieutenant Norris informed the Transport Office that the ships' hatches were all sealed up, a guard put on board, and their colours struck. Four rooms were prepared for the masters of transports, about forty in number. On 12 September the ships and seamen were liberated when the Tsar was satisfied that the reports of ill-treatment were only rumours. After fitting out the regular transports for the homeward voyage, Lieutenant Norris returned to Deptford by the first convoy.³

The British army in the Mediterranean in April 1800 totalled over 10,900 men. There were over 3,500 at Gibraltar, over 6,000 at Minorca (Charles Stuart's army that took the island in 1798), and about 1,360 at Malta.⁴ The force at Minorca was soon increased when 5,000 troops under Major General Pigot arrived in May.⁵ Abercromby,

1. PRO, ADM/108/67, 18 July 1800.

2. PRO, ADM/1/3740, 22 Oct. 1800.

3. PRO, ADM/1/3740, Lieutenant Norris to the Transport Board, 19 Oct. 1800.

4. PRO, W.O./1/289, 21 April 1800, f.65.

5. see NLS, Melville MS. 3601, McNair to Graham, 18 May 1800, f.216.

who shortly before had become commander in chief of all the forces in the Mediterranean, arrived at Gibraltar in June and sailed to Minorca and Malta during that month and in July. In late July the garrison at Minorca was increased once more by six battalions (6,000 men) taken from under the command of General Maitland, the commander of the expedition to Bellisle. That expedition was launched in May and June and abandoned before a landing ever took place, Dundas having decided the troops could be better employed elsewhere.

In August Abercromby's new set of instructions directed him to dissuade the Russian commanders from landing on Malta and impress on the inhabitants of Malta the advantage of a British connection. He was also instructed to attack Ferrol, Vigo and Cadiz and destroy the Spanish naval forces and arsenals. To assist Abercromby's attack upon the Spanish ports, reinforcements amounting to about 11,000 men were sent under command of Sir James Pulteney.¹ The Transport Board had no difficulty obtaining tonnage for this service. Pulteney and his forces assisted by a naval squadron under Sir John Warren, detached from St. Vincent's fleet, appeared before Ferrol on 25 August. The next day after a landing and a skirmish they were re-embarked and the attack upon Ferrol abandoned. The garrison had proved too strong; Pulteney was to receive much abuse at home because of this withdrawal. After re-embarking his troops he sailed to Gibraltar where he met Abercromby with a force of 10,000

1. PRO, ADM/1/3740, 30 July 1800.

men from Minorca. The combined forces of Abercromby and Pulteney joined by Lord Keith's fleet sailed for Cadiz the first week of October. The attack upon this Spanish port also was soon abandoned; but this time because of plague which swept the city and because of the violent weather which made it almost impossible for the fleet to be of any assistance. Meanwhile Malta had fallen on 5 September¹ after a blockade of 12 months. This was the one substantial gain of the British campaign in the Mediterranean in 1800.²

The force that Abercromby took with him to Egypt in 1801 was already in the Mediterranean on transports in 1800. He brought with him 15,000 of the 20,000 troops then on foreign service.³ All the troopships that the Transport Board had at the time were accommodating these men.⁴ The expedition, when it was finally assembled in the eastern Mediterranean, consisted of 14,144 infantry, 1,063 cavalry and 630 artillery in 138 ships of all types. It was ill-equipped without wagons, landing craft, interpreters or even a good map. And it was in a very poor state of morale due to the

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1. PRO, W.O.1/292, 5 Sept. 1800.
 2. Fortescue, op. cit., 769-798. In June 1798 the Knights of St. John had surrendered the island of Malta to Bonaparte on his way to Egypt.
 3. In October 1800 the other 5,000 were first ordered to Lisbon with Pulteney; then all but one battalion was ordered home to preserve order in England and Ireland, where the failure of the harvest for the second year in succession was causing a disturbance. The one battalion was sent on to Minorca. Fortescue, op. cit., 806; Add. MSS., 40102 3 Oct. 1800, f. 87.
 4. NLS, Melville MSS. 1075, Sept. 1800, f. 110.

successive failures in Holland, at Ferrol and Cadiz,¹ not to mention the fact that most of the troops had been serving in the Mediterranean for at least one year and part of that time on board transports. On 16 February 1801 Abercromby was to write from Marmaras Bay, on the coast of Asia Minor: "I never went on any service entertaining graver doubts of success, at the same time with more determination to encounter difficulties. The Dutch expedition was walking on velvet in comparison with this."²

The plans for sending a British force to expel the French from Egypt were finally formulated in September 1800 and the joint commanders in chief, Sir Ralph Abercromby and Admiral ~~John~~ Keith were given their instructions in October.³ Keith, who also acted as principal agent for transports on this expedition, was to concert with Abercromby on the best mode of conveying the army to Egypt. They were to select those troopships and coppered transports that would be best adopted to the service, keeping in mind the advanced season of the year and the prospect of boisterous weather particularly on their reaching the coast of Egypt. Those ships selected were to be supplied with as much stores and provisions as they could possibly contain. The warships were to assist in the conveyance of troops and

1. NRS, Keith, vol. II, 228.

2. James Lord Dunfermline. Lieutenant-General Sir Ralph Abercromby K.B. 1793-1801, A Memoir by his Son (Edinburgh, 1861), 267; see also, NRS, Keith, vol. II, 229.

3. For extracts from the instruction from Dundas to Abercromby and from the Admiralty to Keith see: NRS, Keith, vol. II, 6 Oct. 1800, 240-3. For instructions to Abercromby see also: GD51/774/20, 6 Oct. 1800.

stores as far as might be in their power.¹ The commanders were to receive from Sir Sydney Smith, commanding in the Levant,² any information concerning the enemy or for adjusting with the officer commanding the Turkish troops the plan of operations.³

A short time before Keith and Abercromby received their instructions Captain Popham was appointed to H.M.S. Romney, in command of a small squadron which was to carry troops from the Cape of Good Hope and from India up the Red Sea, to co-operate with the army in Egypt.⁴ A force of 4,000 to 5,000 men under Major General Baird was to be sent from India, to take possession of all the ports and coast of the Red Sea which were then occupied by the French army.⁵ In October 1800, the Admiralty was requested to fit out a warship and three armed troopships for the conveyance of 800 men of the 65th regiment to go on the service with Popham. Popham went to the Cape of Good Hope, there disembarked the 65th regiment, received on board the 61st and then proceeded to the Red Sea.⁶

Keith, as transport agent for the expedition, chose the principal agent for transports at Gibraltar, Captain Young, to be assistant captain of the fleet because Young was so familiar with the

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1. SRO, GD51/774/19, Dundas to Abercromby, 6 Oct. 1800.
 2. On 3 March 1799 Captain Sydney Smith had taken over the small squadron which had remained after the Nile in Egyptian waters.
 3. NRS, Keith, Admiralty to Keith, 6 Oct. 1800, vol. II, 241.
 4. NRS, Spencer, Spencer to Dundas, 28 Sept. 1800, vol. IV, 128-31. For a more detailed description of Popham's instructions see: NRS, Keith, vol. II, 248-9.
 5. NRS, Keith, Dundas to Abercromby, 6 Oct. 1800, vol. II, 243.
 6. Ibid., Admiralty to Popham, 1 Nov. 1800, 248.

transport service and had been so much accustomed to embark and disembark troops.¹ Abercromby informed Keith that he expected him to feed the army and supply them while on board, and even afterwards, eventually to furnish small vessels for attending on the different departments, and landing or embarking men and stores and many other objects Keith was totally unprovided for. Keith was surprised the responsibility for transports fell on him but endeavoured to accomplish all that Abercromby asked.²

Many of the troopships having been in the Mediterranean since 1799 and others since 1800 were unfit for service and needed overhauling. Some of them went to Minorca and others to Malta in order that repairs could be done faster; while the ships were under repair the troops were landed and refreshed.³ The troops on board these transports were ill-clothed and some did not receive new clothing until the expedition was over. For example, General McNair at Minorca and later at La Villedelle waited for clothing for his troops from May 1800 to January 1802.⁴ The men also were so long embarked

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1. On 12 Feb. 1801 the Admiralty informed Keith that the appointment of Captain Young from the transport service to be assistant captain of the fleet was irregular and could not be confirmed; but that if Keith thought fit to employ Young in the capacity of agent for transports he would be paid accordingly. NRS, Keith, Keith to Admiralty, 10 June 1801, vol. II, 317.
 2. NRS, Keith, Keith to Admiralty, 11 Nov. 1800, vol. II, 252.
 3. PRO, W.O.1/344, Abercromby to Dundas, 10 Dec. 1800; SRO, GD51/774/30, Abercromby to Dundas, 13 Dec. 1800.
 4. NLS, MS. 3601, McNair to Graham, 26 May 1800, f. 276-7; MS. 3604, McNair to Graham, 14 Jan. 1802, f. 116.

on transports fitted out for a short haul, that is, at one and one half tons per man that sickness prevailed among them though there was no considerable mortality.¹

During preparations in October and November Keith conjured up a supply system from the meagre resources of the Mediterranean and looked forward to further supplies being received from England and from the Turkish magazines.²

Abercromby and Keith were supposed to rendezvous first at Mahon, then at Malta, and afterwards at Rhodes, at which port they were to find Sir Sydney Smith with whom their future operations were to be concerted.³ Smith was the officer most knowledgeable about the coast of Egypt, about the countries in the Levant, about whom to trust, where to get supplies, transports, small vessels etc. The navy was short of small vessels having only four cutters at Gibraltar; in October Keith requested some from the Admiralty because the shallowness of the water near Egypt would prevent the large ships from approaching in winter nearer than six miles.⁴ On 19 November 1800 Sydney Smith answered several queries of Abercromby about these topics and the General abided by Smith's advice throughout the expedition. Abercromby was particularly interested in procuring 10,000 tons of shipping for the transport of horses, stores and provisions

1. PRO, W.O.1/344, Abercromby to Dundas, 2 Nov. 1800.

2. See below, pp. 304-5.

3. NRS, Keith, Keith to Admiralty, 27 Oct. 1800, vol. II, 244-5.

4. Ibid.

and for assisting in the debarkation of the troops. Smith answered that the captain Pasha could alone furnish the necessary number of transports as Governor General of the Coasts and island of the archipelago. Smyrna, Rhodes and Constantinople were the best places where they could be fitted with the least delay; Hydros would furnish the best transport to hire. It is interesting that for debarkation purposes Smith said that the small vessels of Egypt, such as germs, kirlangitches, and kaiks, should be seized for they were absolutely necessary. It was also necessary that they have a port on the coast secured to them in the first instant or the first gale of wind would drive them all on shore.¹

At the end of November Keith's fleet and Abercromby's force were collected at Malta. Repairing transports and collecting provisions and stores delayed the sailing of the expedition; then it was held up because of unfavourable winds.² It finally put to sea on 20 December and anchored in Marmaras Bay on the coast of Asia Minor on 29 and 30 December.³ At Marmaras Bay Abercromby hoped to procure horses for the service of his artillery, as well as for the remounting of the dragoons who were expected from Lisbon (the 12th and 26th regiments of dragoons arrived from Lisbon by 24 January 1801); and hire vessels for their conveyance to the coast of Egypt. With much difficulty he mounted 400 cavalry and procured for the artillery about 150 horses. 180 were purchased in the neighbourhood

1. NRS, Keith, Queries proposed to Smith at the request of Sir R. Abercromby, 19 Nov. 1800, vol. II, 249-50.

2. Add. MSS. 40102, 21 Nov. 1800, f. 92; SRO, GD51/774/32, Abercromby to Dundas, 20 Dec. 1800.

3. The senior Naval officer left in charge of the western Mediterranean

of Marmaras Bay and were "tolerable;" the rest were bought by Lord Elgin¹ by contract at Constantinople and were "generally of the worst kind." 500 mules were contracted for at Smyrna as well as transports for the horses.² The transports and mules hired at Smyrna did not arrive until the middle of February and without them the army could not move.³

Much to Abercromby's and Keith's disappointment the Turks were very backward in giving assistance whether from the intrigues of the Russians, or because it was their religious season, the period of Ramadan. The Turkish gunboats at Rhodes were not manned or fit for sea and provisions had not been procured. Keith sent agents to ports in Asia Minor to procure provisions and to Cyprus to bring back such small vessels as could be found there. By 11 February Keith was well provided with small vessels for the navigation of the coast but he still lacked germs which would be required for the navigation of the Nile when that river was open to the British troops. Since the Grand Vizir had promised Keith twelve germs, the Admiral informed him on 11 February that he was depending on his assistance on that important point.⁴ The Grand Vizir, however, never fulfilled his promise and germs had to be confiscated from the Egyptians.⁵

when Keith sailed east was Sir John Borlase Warren in command of 3 line of battle ships and 2 frigates off Cadiz. NRS, Keith, vol. II, 361.

1. Lord Elgin was Ambassador to Constantinople at the time.
2. GD51/774/37, Abercromby to Dundas, 16 Jan. 1801.
3. Fortescue, op. cit., 811.
4. NRS, Keith, Keith to Admiralty, 21 Jan. 1801, vol. II, 259-60; Ibid., Keith to Abercromby, 11 Feb. 1801, 262-3.
5. Ibid., Cochrane to Keith, 10 March 1801, 273.

At Marmaras Bay Abercromby informed Keith that he would rely on him for the army's supplies of provisions, artillery, ammunition and stores of all descriptions when the army debarked at Aboukir Bay.

With your aid everything will go on well; without it, the business must stand still. I ask for no stipulated assistance: let the necessity of the service determine it; such has been the rule in all combined expeditions during the war, even to the extent of half of each ship's company. At Martinique Lord St. Vincent carried up and supplied with ammunition seventy heavy pieces of ordnance, and where I have been concerned myself I have only had to say what I wanted. I do assure your lordship that I shall make no unnecessary demands.¹

Keith replied that he would comply with Abercromby's wishes

to the greatest possible extent, while it can be consistent with the safety of the ships committed to my care. I am unacquainted with the proceedings at Martinique; but they can beare no analogy to what can be done in this country, where the ships must anchor on a dangerous coast till the port of Alexandria is opened for their reception. No dependence is to be placed on men except from the ships of war; and I enclose a state of their strength, to show your Excellency how low they will be reduced by the necessary employment of that part of their complements intended to co-operate with the army. The crews of the troopships are so short, and their anchors and cables so heavy in proportion to their strength, that Your Excellency must be sensible, when their boats are employed in transporting provisions, water etc. few, or no men, can be drawn from them; and from the transports and victuallers, nothing more can be expected than crews for their long boats, and others to tow them after which many of them will not have four men left on board. Any greater supply of seamen than the number specified cannot with certainty be depended upon; but Your Excellency may rest perfectly assured that it shall be considerable as circumstances will warrant, for I never was employed on any service which more anxiously occupied my mind, or which² I more ardently wished to see brought to a desirable issue.

1. NRS, Keith, Abercromby to Keith, 4 Feb. 1801, vol. II, 262.

2. Ibid., Keith to Abercromby, 262-3.

After a stay of 53 days in Marmaras Bay the expedition sailed for Alexandria on 22 and 23 February and reached Aboukir Bay on 2 March. Because of the prevalence of strong westerly gales the Turkish gunboats and caiques went to Macri and Cyprus. A succession of northerly gales, attended by a heavy swell made it impossible for Abercromby's forces to disembark before the 8th. There were only enough small boats to land 6,000 men at one time; they were debarked from flatboats, cutters and launches under heavy enemy fire.¹ After the first landing was made the boats returned without delay for the second division; and before the evening of the 8th the whole army with few exceptions, was landed together with the most urgent articles of provisions and other stores.² During and after the debarkation 6,000 men from the ships were employed night and day in the service of the army; they underwent great fatigue especially since some of the ships were seven miles from the shore because of the shallowness of the water. Uncommonly bad weather followed the debarkation and it was the 11th before horses and supplies could be landed. "If we are successful" Keith wrote, "it has been owing to our nation; we have not a Turkish flag in the Bay and have been disappointed in every request we made and every promise made by that government."³

1. NRS, Keith, vol. II, 231.

2. Ibid., Keith to Admiralty, 10 March 1801, 274-5.
The seamen and marines who were landed with the troops in Egypt became part of the army. NRS, Keith, Keith to Coote, 22 June 1801, vol. II, 322.

3. NRS, Spencer, Keith to Spencer, 11 March 1801, vol. IV, 148-9.

Abercromby praised the navy's assistance in the landing of the troops and supplies when he wrote to Dundas saying, "The Honorable Captain Cochrane, those other captains and officers of the Royal Navy who were entrusted with the disembarkation, not only of the troops, but of the artillery, ammunition, provisions and stores of all kinds, have exerted themselves in such a manner as to claim the warmest acknowledgements of the whole army."¹ Nevertheless, Abercromby's troops, whose strength was weakened after being on board transports for several months, had to drag up artillery, supplies and provisions since there was no means of land transport. In January Abercromby had requested that reinforcements be sent from England since he knew the strength of his troops would not hold up to a long stay in Egypt.²

The French army in Egypt were about 25,000 men in contrast to Abercromby's invading force of 15,000 British soldiers and a few foreign regiments, altogether numbering under 20,000. The French troops, however, after three years in Egypt, were scattered, lacked provisions and were home sick. This gave success to the British expeditionary force in Egypt in 1801. Aboukir castle surrendered to the invading forces on 18 March and a decisive action against the French was won on 21 March during which Abercromby was mortally wounded. He was succeeded by Major General Hutchinson. After the

1. PRO, W.O.1/345, Abercromby to Dundas, 16 March 1801.

2. Ibid., Abercromby to Dundas, 15 Jan. 1801.

action of 21 March, it was just a matter of time before the British became masters of Egypt. They had to seek out the French in their scattered positions and force them to surrender. Throughout the campaign, however, the British army laboured under a shortage of provisions and were prevented from disaster only by the exertions of Admiral Keith in conjuring up a supply system in the Mediterranean.

On 25 March ^{the} Captain Pasha arrived with about 4,000 Turkish troops;¹ less than one month later Rear Admiral Blankett, who sailed from Bombay at the end of December, after having taken on 300 troops under Colonel Lloyd, reached Suez on 21 April.² Blankett had been stationed off the east coast of Africa for nearly three years to counter the French threat to India. At the end of April the British army was reinforced by the arrival of 3,000 men from England.³

From the nature of the country it was necessary for the British to become masters of the Nile in order to seek out the French and command Egypt. The army advanced along the Nile in germs, yawls, cutters, flatboats, armed launches and long boats and British and Turkish gunboats (each about 50 tons).⁴ Troops, provisions and supplies were also transported across lakes Maadieh and Mareotis by these means.⁵

1. PRO, W.O.1/345, Hutchinson to Dundas, 3 April 1801.

2. NRS, Keith, Hutchinson to Keith, 13 May 1801, vol. II, 300.

3. Sir John M. Burgoyne. A Short History of the Naval and Military Operations In Egypt from 1798 to 1802 (London, 1885), 121.

4. NRS, Keith, Keith to Hutchinson, 29 April 1801, vol. II, 228.

5. Ibid., Keith to Hutchinson, 31 July 1801, 340-1.

On 27 June Cairo surrendered. The terms agreed upon were almost exactly the same as those embodied in the convention of El Arish;¹ the French with their arms and artillery were to be shipped to France in British ships. Keith soon began measures to carry out those terms and the embarkation of the Cairo garrison was completed by 8 August. The warships and transports on which the French were embarked proceeded to sea by divisions. The Braekel with the first division sailed on the 4th; the Inflexible, Dolphin and Ulysses with the second on the 6th; and the Experiment and Pallas with the last on the 10th, carrying with them between 13,000 and 14,000 of the enemy.² Meanwhile reinforcements from England and the Mediterranean were sent to Egypt in July and August.³

On 17 August the siege of Alexandria began. During the siege 5,000 men under Major General Coote were transported by the Mareotis to the westward of Alexandria in order to divide the enemy's force and attention. The men were accommodated on board all the boats of the warships and transports with as many germs as could be collected from the Nile.⁴ On 2 September the French at Alexandria capitulated on the same terms as the French garrison at

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1. A convention signed between the French General Kleber and Sir Sydney Smith in 1800 by which the French were to leave Egypt provided they were transported back to France in English ships. The convention, which was never authorized by the British government, was broken when Kleber was assassinated by a Muslim fanatic on 15 June 1800.
 2. NRS, Keith, Keith to Admiralty, 27 Aug. 1801, vol. II, 346-7.
 3. E. g., W.O.1/345, 19 Aug. 1801; NMM, Keith/L/22, 21 July 1801; 5 Aug. 1801.
 4. NRS, Keith, Keith to Admiralty, 27 Aug. 1801, vol. II, 346-7.

Cairo.¹ Two days earlier General Baird arrived at Rosetta with his troops from India having marched his army across the desert from Kosseir on the Red Sea to Keneh on the Nile and then having passed them from Keneh by divisions in germs.² He arrived after a five months journey too late to be of any assistance.³ The garrison of Alexandria had now to be transported back to France. It consisted of 10,528 soldiers and 685 members of the Institute and other civilians.⁴ Keith needed all the troopships to accommodate the British and French soldiers; but the empty victuallers and store ships and any transports that were not absolutely necessary he urged the Admiralty to recall to England.⁵ After acting as principal agent for transports for several months Keith was well aware of the great expense of transports; earlier, he had given positive orders at Mahon for all transports not needed for the public service to be sent home.⁶ In the ensuing weeks many English and French troops left Egypt.

On 1 October, the day before the news of the final surrender reached London, the preliminaries of the Treaty of Amiens were signed between Lord Hawkesbury and M. Otto, the French Commissioner for

1. NMM, Keith/l/22, 2 Sept. 1801.

2. Wilson, op. cit., 129, 159.

3. PRO, W.O.1/345, 19 Aug. 1801; Fortescue, op. cit., 863.

4. NRS, Keith, vol. II, 238.

5. NRS, St. Vincent, Keith to St. Vincent, 4 Sept. 1801, vol. I, 223.

6. NMM, Keith/l/22, 8 Oct. 1801.

Prisoners. One month earlier Keith had praised the men of the transport service for their efforts during the expedition to Egypt in a letter to the Admiralty.

The nature of this expedition has demanded from most of the officers and seamen of the fleet, and particularly from those of the troopships, bomb vessels, and transports, the endurance of labour, fatigue and privation far beyond what I have witnessed before and which I verily believe to have exceeded all former example; and it has been encountered and surmounted with a degree of resolution and perseverance which merits my highest praise, and gives both officers and men a just claim to the protection of their Lordships, and the approbation of their country. The number of the officers to whom I owe this tribute of approbation, does not admit of my mentioning them by name; but most of the captains of the troops ships, have been employed in the superintendence of these duties, and I have had repeated and urgent offers of voluntary service from all. — The agents for transports have conducted themselves with laudable diligence and activity in the service of the several departments to which they are attached, and displayed the greatest exertion and ability in overcoming the numerous difficulties with which they had to contend.¹

1. NMM, Keith/L/22, 2 Sept. 1801.

CHAPTER VIII
THE PROVISIONING OF THE KING'S FORCES
DURING THE WAR AGAINST REVOLUTIONARY
FRANCE

Throughout the war against revolutionary France the Treasury was responsible for provisioning the King's forces and that department hired the army victuallers, as the ships that carried provisions to the army were called, for the first seven months of the war. In August 1793 the duty of hiring army victuallers together with the duty of contracting for army provisions was delegated by the Treasury to the commissioners for victualling the navy. (The Navy Board who had acquired the duty of hiring navy victuallers during the American war very often assisted the Treasury and then the commissioners of victualling by hiring ships to be used as army victuallers.) The Victualling Board hired army victuallers until the establishment of the Transport Board when that duty together with the hiring of troopships and ordnance vessels was transferred to the transport commissioners. Then, the Transport Board was responsible only for hiring the tonnage for the provisions; how much and what kind of provisions was laden on the ships was still the responsibility of the Victualling Board.

Army victuallers were hired through brokers in the same manner as troopships and ordnance vessels and were fitted out as victuallers by the method described in chapter three. Regular victuallers hired for six months certain with capture and sea risk at the expense of the government were always used to victual the navy since they could serve as depots for the stores, till the ships

could clear them; following the fleet under such orders as the commander in chief might give. Regular victuallers, however, were not generally used to victual the army when there were storehouses on the station and particularly when a British merchant fleet traded with the area. Thus, regular victuallers were not generally sent to the West Indies though several accompanied Grey and Abercromby. The government found it more convenient and less expensive to hire West India ships at a certain rate per ton with the risk of capture and the danger of the sea falling wholly upon the owners than to send regular transports with loadings only to return empty. After delivering the stores they were discharged from the transport service.¹ The same method was employed in provisioning the garrison at the Cape of Good Hope. Since that station was on the trade route of the East India Company, regular army victuallers were never sent to the Cape. Employing victuallers by the run was thought to be the best way of transporting army provisions on the short haul to the Continent during the campaigns of 1793 and 1794; and the garrison at Gibraltar, which had plenty of storehouse room, was generally provisioned by victuallers on freight. On the other hand it was necessary to send regular victuallers to Lisbon since there were no storehouses there. Regular victuallers also accompanied expeditions, such as the Grey and Abercromby expeditions

1. E. g., PRO, T/27/44, 31 Dec. 1793; T.1/790, 12 Aug. 1797; T.1/812, 20 Nov. 1798.

to the West Indies, the expedition to the Helder in 1799 and Abercromby's expedition to Egypt in 1801. Thus, provisions were transported mainly by freight to the Continent, Mediterranean, West Indies and Cape of Good Hope during the war against revolutionary France.

The practice of sending provisions by freight to the army abroad, though convenient and less expensive to the Transport Board, met with criticism from the commissary department which preferred to have regular victuallers at their disposal. The Commissary General in the West Indies, Valentine Jones, was severely critical of the usual custom of sending provisions to the West Indies on West India ships hired on freight. Food supplies sent to the forces stationed in the West Indies were consigned to Jones on the island of Martinique, where a central depot was established from which the provisions were distributed to the other islands. Because there was a central depot small ships had to be hired for the purposes of distribution. In a letter to the Treasury of 5 May 1797 Jones proposed the mode of apportioning the provisions to distinct islands, by which method the new freights in small vessels would be for the most part if not wholly avoided.

In the present instance, the ships and cargoes are thrown upon me at once in this island, to be unladen with great delay and trouble and again shipped in smaller vessels for general distribution and speculation for homeward freights on the part of the Masters put their moving further out of the question. The

expense of new freights necessarily follows; and is effected so tediously, that several garrisons at once may be in want, whilst the greatest plenty prevails at headquarters.¹

Jones did not prefer transport vessels for the victualling service but recommended taking up particular West India men whose ultimate destination would admit their being engaged to deliver provisions at different islands; although the general rendezvous for them could still be known to him officially at Martinique.²

The Treasury investigating the subject asked the Transport Board commissioners why they forwarded provisions to the West Indies by merchant ships instead of by victuallers upon monthly pay. On 12 August 1797 the Transport Board gave this explanation. "If we employed regular transports for this duty, we must not only greatly increase our stated and constant tonnage, and especially for the West Indies, but also be under the necessity of engaging them, with the risque of capture, for four or six months certain, to carry out the Stores, and have them to return crippled and empty."

The Board thought it would not have been beneficial to the service,

if the chartered transports were used as depots for provisions under the direction of the commissaries, instead of the commanders in chief of His Majesty's Ships, and were sent from Island to Island, or remained in Port; because no expence of small

1. PRO, T.1/790, 5 May 1797 as enclosed in 29 Aug. 1797.

2. Ibid.

vessels [could] be equal to the charge of heavy victuallers; to say nothing of the ruinous state of the vessels themselves from long detention; and the complaints [which] always [arose] from such delays.

As to the destination of the several ships to particular islands, this, the Transport Board conceived was "fully in the power of the Victualling Board without having recourse to more difficult or expensive measures;" for the Transport Board hired, examined and appropriated the tonnage for victuallers but left the method of lading, the qualities of the stores to be laden, and the consignment of the whole and every part to the direction of the Victualling Board. The transport commissioners then instanced the station in question, stating that the Victualling Board required of them at that time 2,700 tons for the leeward islands generally. The Board engaged "the vessels, with that unconfined expression, to proceed to any of the islands under that denomination not to the Leeward of Martinique, but including that Island." It appeared to the Transport Board extremely easy for the Victualling Board to apportion the provisions, according to Mr. Jones' plan, to distinct islands, to consign them accordingly, "by which method, the new freights in small vessels, concerning the expence and delay of which Mr. Jones complained would be for the most part if not wholly avoided." The Transport Board then proposed that the Victualling Board confer with them on the subject.¹

1. PRO, T.1/790, 12 Aug. 1797.

In March 1800 the Victualling Board tried to put a clause into the bills of lading of victuallers which would have empowered the West Indian commissaries to order the vessels where they might have thought best. However, this clause never went into effect because the owners of the ships hired to convey provisions to the West Indies refused to sign the bill of lading which put them under the command of the commissaries. The ships in the West India trade were usually bound to one port only and the ports to which they were bound were those where the King's victualling stores were situated.¹ The minutes of the Transport Board reveal no change in the charter parties of victuallers and reveal no change in the method of the Transport Board in forwarding provisions to the army in the West Indies for the remainder of the war.

After a ship was hired and fitted out as a victualler the contractor who provided the provisions loaded the vessel under the supervision of a victualling agent and at the same time ordered the master of the victualler to take a receipt for its cargo. After the establishment of the Transport Board, when a victualler was laden the master signed a bill of lading at the Victualling Office. Freight was not paid by the Transport Board until this certificate was produced from the commissioners of victualling showing that the masters had duly accounted for the provisions put on board their respective ships.² The Transport Board had no direct control over the victuallers

1. PRO, T.1/838, 29 March 1800.

2. PRO, T.1/790, 30 Aug. 1797; T.1/789

until they were laden and ready to sail and then they gave the necessary orders to their agents to take them in charge.¹ Upon reaching their destination the victuallers were unloaded under the supervision of the commissary general or one of his deputies who took charge of the cargo and gave the proper receipts for it; provisions once delivered were regularly charged to the commissaries in the books of the Victualling Office.²

Generally the kinds of provisions laden on victuallers were flour, beef, pork, butter, rice, pease and oatmeal, since the field ration of a British soldier consisted of one pound of bread or flour and twelve ounces of pork, or in lieu thereof twelve ounces of beef per man per day plus a half a pint of oatmeal per week and a ration of pease and rice.³ The army in the West Indies received during the campaign half a pound of bread extra per day.⁴

It was not necessary to lade rice or much butter on victuallers going to the West Indies because rice could be procured on reasonable terms in the islands as could sugar and cocoa oil, a substitute for butter.⁵ The substitution of oil for butter as proposed by the commissioners of victualling was not acceptable to the troops on the Continent and was never put in force.⁶

1. PRO, T.1/812, 20 Nov. 1798.

2. PRO, T.1/727, 27 Jan. 1794; T.1/790, 30 Aug. 1797.

3. PRO, T/27/44, 17 Dec. 1793.

4. PRO, T/29/67, 4 Nov. 1794.

5. PRO, T/29/65, 28 March 1793; T/29/66, 14 Nov. 1793.

6. T/29/67, 17 July 1794.

A quantity of spirits was always issued to the King's forces and rum was given to the troops in the West Indies for the first year of the war. Soon after Grey arrived in the islands, he suggested that the merchants employed at Teneriffe to supply wine for the navy should send an equal quantity to the West Indies for the use of the army; experience had proved that wine served in place of spirits to the seamen was better for their health.¹ The Treasury approved Grey's suggestion in May 1794² and contracts were made with the merchants at Teneriffe and Madeira. As a result the army was served wine in lieu of spirits, in the same manner as the fleet. One pint of wine was considered equal to half a pint of spirits. By 1801 it had become the practice to issue wine to the troops three days in the week in lieu of rum.³ Victuallers were sent to Portugal to forward Madeira, Teneriffe and Port of Spain to the army in the West Indies. Later in the war the government had an agent at Lisbon for the purpose of supplying the forces in the Mediterranean with Portuguese wines, and the agent was generally provided with vessels for that purpose.⁴

It was necessary to get the victuallers to their destinations as soon as possible since provisions for the use of the troops might be unfavourably affected by being so long on board ship. However,

1. PRO, T.1/28, 13 Feb; 6 March 1794.

2. PRO, T./29/66, 20 May 1794.

3. PRO, T.1/854, 26 Jan. 1801.

4. NMM, Kei/L/26, 7 Nov. 1800.

victuallers, like troopships, suffered from delays of contrary winds, waiting for convoys and impressment.¹ At the other end of the journey the ships carrying provisions to the Caribbean were often stopped and inconvenienced when entering the ports of the West Indies by customs officials since transports and victuallers did not clear out at the customs houses in England.² In 1798 one victualler, the Intrepid, was seized by the customs at Martinique and resold because the master had not reported to the customs like other vessels.³ After several complaints concerning customs officials had been referred to the Treasury from the Transport Board, the Treasury gave directions to the customs officers in England to forward monthly returns of the arrival and sailing of transports at the several ports. To render the returns useful the Transport Board notified several transport agents in the British ports to instruct the commanders of all vessels under the control of the Transport Board to answer the questions of the customs officials. Thus much interference from customs officials was eliminated for the duration of the war.⁴

The Transport Board rarely lacked the tonnage necessary to forward provisions to the troops in the Caribbean since there was a

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1. The delays resulting from the mutinies in the fleet in the spring of 1797 were very destructive. In April and May mutiny delayed the sailing of the convoys for the victuallers, PRO, ADM/108/45, 8; 10; 11; 13 May 1797; in June seamen at the Nore plundered all ships of provisions and whatever else they chose detaining nearly 40 sail of merchantmen. PRO, ADM/108/46, 3; 6 June 1797.
 2. PRO, T.1/34, 12 Aug. 1794.
 3. PRO, T.1/809, 24 Aug. 1798.
 4. PRO, ADM/108/52, 10 March 1798.

merchant fleet sailing continuously between Britain and the West Indies. The one exception was 1796, a year when a rise in cost, provisions and wages made it extremely difficult for the Transport Board to provide shipping on any terms. After the freight rate was raised from 13/- to 15/- per ton per month in the spring of 1796 the Transport Board was able to hire enough vessels for this service.¹ Provisions, however, were held up from reaching the West Indies for other reasons. Besides the usual delays of prohibitive winds, waiting for convoy and impressment, there were: the occasional capture of victuallers on freight to the West Indies;² the poor wheat, corn, and pease crop in Britain in 1794-5 which resulted in a shortage of provisions; the severe winter of 1795-6 which prevented many ships from getting out to sea.³ The troops in the West Indies, however, never suffered from a scarcity of provisions even when the supply was delayed far beyond what was expected because the commissary general would either purchase food supplies in the islands or open ports to foreign vessels particularly those from America.

The war in the West Indies was only three months old when Lieutenant Governor Home of Grenada recommended to Dundas opening West Indian ports to American vessels for the importation of food

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1. PRO, T.1/773, 15 Oct. 1796; see above, p. 78.
 2. E. g., PRO, T/29/66, 2 July 1793; T.1/803, 12 March 1798; T.1/818, 28 March 1799; T.1/839, 4 April 1800.
 3. Between October 1795 and April 1796, nine victuallers, one half of those that sailed, arrived in the West Indies. PRO, ADM/1/3730-3731, Oct. 1795-May 1796.

supplies and lumber from the United States; under such restrictions as the government might suggest. At the time, however, the ministry directed the governor to make up any deficiency in provisions by purchasing them in the islands rather than importing them from America. The Treasury soon found it necessary, however, to relax the navigation laws by opening some West Indian ports to American vessels in order to adequately supply the British army in the Caribbean. Grey was instructed in October 1793 to permit provisionally the importation of provisions, cattle, and grain of all sorts into one of the conquered West Indian islands from the United States. The food supplies could be transported in American vessels of one deck for so long as it was "necessary for the re-establishment and subsistence of the said Island, or until proper measures were taken for putting it upon the same footing in that particular, and in all others relating to commerce," with other British islands in the West Indies.¹ By December of the same year in order to insure a regular supply of fresh meat to the forces on Grey's expedition, the ministry allowed Spanish American vessels to carry cattle (oxen) to the islands. Besides the oxen, the vessels were permitted to bring in lumber, staves, hoops, flour and salted beef and pork; they were allowed by the commissioners of customs at the islands, to carry back mollasses, rum, sugar and coffee in return for their cargoes to the amount of the net proceeds of the articles of merchandise before enumerated. This arrangement with the Spanish American vessels was made by Thornton

1. GP, 175b.

and Company, contractors for furnishing the troops.¹

There were instances when supplies were purchased in America but brought to the islands in British ships. In March 1794 Thornton and Company contracted for four shiploads of livestock and other provisions to be purchased in America for Grey's forces;² two months later the Treasury approved the purchase of flour in America for Canada and the West Indies.³ St. Domingo which also experienced a scarcity of flour purchased a fresh supply in America that year.⁴ Flour and beef, when sent from Britain, could not remain long in the Bahamas without being unfavourably affected by the climate; these were the victuals most frequently purchased in America.

In 1795 and 1796 the ministry was forced to widen the suspension of the navigation laws by opening other West Indian ports to American vessels when the scarcity of wheat in Britain and the delay in sending provisions to the troops occasioned by a want of vessels made the situation at Martinique alarming. Governor Vaughan at Martinique opened the ports to the Americans and allowed them, as an inducement to enter, to take off a certain quantity of island

1. PRO, T/27/44, 21 Dec. 1793; T.1/725, 6 Dec. 1793.

John Thornton, the founder of the company, was the biggest English merchant trading to Russia in the second half of the 18th century. His three sons, Samuel, Robert and Henry, all entered the business and also became members of parliament. Robert was a director of the East India Company throughout most of the war against revolutionary France.

2. PRO, T.1/29, 7 March 1794.

3. PRO, T/29/66, 3 May 1794.

4. PRO, T.1/771, 13 July 1794.

produce in payment.¹ Flour could be had in the West Indies in 1795 but at not less than \$16.00 per barrel. Therefore, it was less expensive for government to purchase flour in America.²

If the system of plunder was not so prevalent in the West Indies and the risk of capture not so great, more commercial intercourse might have been carried on between the islands and the West Indian ports would not have had to be opened to the Americans. For a very considerable time no trade was carried on between the island of Jamaica and the merchants from other islands. Consequently the commanding officers were obliged to permit the landing of goods from the Americans in order to supply the absolute wants of the army. When circumstances altered and the army was assured British goods might easily be obtained from Jamaica an order was issued prohibiting the importation of dry goods from America.³

The British army in the West Indies never suffered from a shortage of provisions because of the availability of victuals in the islands, from America or from England. Abercromby wrote home in October 1796 "It is fair to say that the supplies have been regular and there has scarcely been a complaint."⁴ Abercromby's statement sums up the provisioning of the King's forces in the West Indies for the duration of the war.

1. PRO, W.O.1/31, 13 Jan. 1795.

2. PRO, T.1/755, 7 Sept. 1795.

3. PRO, T.1/755, 8 Oct. 1796.

4. PRO, T.1/733, 19 Oct. 1796.

The King's forces at the Cape of Good Hope also were adequately supplied with provisions since the Transport Board did not find it difficult to hire East India ships on freight to forward food supplies to them. The Transport Board tried to keep up a supply of provisions for three months at the Cape as it had in the West Indies. As with the garrisons in the Caribbean, the poor grain harvest in Britain¹ affected the provisioning of the garrison at the Cape; a quantity of flour had to be sent to the Cape from India.¹ Victuallers were not sent to the East Indies since the articles needed to provision the army there were purchased in the East.

Unlike the forces in the West Indies and the Cape of Good Hope the British army on the Continent laboured under the greatest difficulty for want of provisions. This resulted from a scarcity of tonnage to serve as army victuallers occasioned by the ambitious military policy of the ministry; the failure of some provision contractors for the Continent to fulfil their contracts and the consequent difficulties of procuring provisions on the Continent; and an insufficient supply of land transport to forward provisions to the troops.

The vessels hired as army victuallers for the Continent were generally taken up on freight at about 20/- a ton and were employed for about twenty days running, after that they received demurrage.²

1. PRO, T.1/788, 26 July 1797.

2. E. g., PRO, ADM/108/158; ADM/1/3730, 3 Oct. 1794; 6 Nov. 1794.

The transport service discovered that vessels of about 100 tons with a draught of under fourteen feet made the best bread and hay ships since they would be able to go from Ostend by the canal to Bruges.¹ By the end of 1794 the Victualling Board judged it necessary to have at least eight vessels employed in receiving meal and bread for the Continent.² By these means the transport service was able to convey only a partial and temporary supply of army provisions to the Continent because of the exhaustion of the freight market by other military contingencies.

The store of food supplies for the army in Flanders was reduced further when some provision contractors for the Continent, in particular Mr. Eckhardt, did not fulfil their contracts and the army had to try and provide for themselves at any rate. Supplies were ordered to be procured through magistrates of towns and villages. The orders not being understood, were little attended to, and this occasioned great expense, confusion and difficulties, especially since a monopoly had been made of those articles.³ The frost of 1794-95, which shut up the transport by water, by which those articles might have been brought from distant parts, added to the difficulty of keeping down the prices.⁴ The procurement of provisions on the Continent was also impeded by the "impolitick" and "inimical" measures

1. PRO, T.64/204, 3 May 1793.

2. PRO, ADM/108/34, 19 Dec. 1794.

3. PRO, T.1/42, 6 Jan. 1795.

4. Ibid., 6 Jan. 1795.

of the Prussian minister, who laid a strict prohibition upon the meal and forage purchased for the army, which was only removed by the repeated instances of Lord Henry Spencer.¹ Nor was the situation helped by the temporary embargo laid upon all provisions for the British army in East Friesland. Fortunately the embargo was raised to prevent disaster.²

The third factor that contributed to keeping the British army on the Continent dangerously low in provisions was the insufficiency of land transport throughout the two campaigns. At the beginning of the campaign of 1793 the Commissary General at Ostend, Mr. Duncan, with much difficulty had to buy waggons and horses to clear the victuallers since there was not enough land transport sent by the Ordnance.³ Since waggons were also necessary to convey provisions to the outposts, the difficulty of procuring them on the Continent resulted in many soldiers in forward positions being short of victuals.⁴ On 6 January 1795 General Harcourt wrote from Amerongen of the shortage of provisions and waggons.

Tho' we have never wanted bread none of the magazines are in any state of forwardness. We are obliged to forage from day to day and that in addition to all these circumstances we are almost without the means of transporting the sick, the ammunition, cloathing and other supplies for the army.⁵

1. PRO, W.O.1/172, 11 Feb. 1795.

2. Ibid., 17 Feb. 1795.

3. PRO, T.1/721, 7 Aug. 1793.

4. PRO, W.O.1/172, 17 Feb. 1795.

5. Ibid., 6 Jan. 1795.

Three weeks later he wrote to General Walmoden. "It is impossible to remain on the Yssel, as we have now neither bakeries,¹ meal, forage or carriages to supply the wants of the army in that position."² By March Harcourt found himself obliged to order the assistant commissaries and even the commanding officers of regiments, to pay ready money (without waiting for the usual official examinations of receipts and papers) for meal and forage to prevent the men and horses from starving;³ the subsistence which might have been drawn from the rear was consumed by the corps of Hanoverians.⁴ The scarcity of provision and forage made it impossible for the British army to remain longer on the river Ems; the victuallers that were available were sent to the city of Bremen to be of service to the retreating troops.⁵

The poor grain harvest in Britain in 1794 which resulted in a scarcity of those products in 1795 and 1796 did not affect the provisioning of the British soldier on the Continent since the campaign in Flanders was coming to an end. In December 1794 General David Dundas at Tuil had complained of a scarcity of bread;⁶ but this was occasioned more by the shortage of land transport than by the poor grain harvest. In fact in March 1795 when he moved his corps to Emden, six victuallers were sent there to relieve him.⁷

1. Portable baking ovens were used on the Continent.
PRO, T.1/764, 4 April 1796.

2. PRO, W.O.1/172, 28 Jan. 1795.

3. Ibid., 14 March 1795.

4. Ibid., 12 March 1795.

5. Ibid., 7 March 1795.

6. Ibid., 31 Dec. 1794.

7. Ibid., 11 March 1795.

Diplomatic and military events determined the outcome of the campaigns of 1793 and 1794; but if the army on the Continent had been more adequately provisioned the soldiers' existence would have been more comfortable, ^{their} ~~his~~ retreat less hasty and the minds of the commissaries more at ease.

Army victuallers generally taken up on freight were sent to Gibraltar and the Mediterranean in large fleets though there is evidence of groups of two or three victuallers being sent from time to time. About thirty army victuallers reached Gibraltar and the Mediterranean in 1796; all arrived after April because of the severe winter. Only twenty army victuallers arrived in 1797, the year in which the Mediterranean was evacuated by the British army and navy and 6,000 men were detached from the Mediterranean force and sent to Portugal with General Stuart. A mere twelve are recorded as reaching Gibraltar in 1798. As a result of the re-entry of the British fleet and forces into the Mediterranean in 1798 and the subsequent occupation of Minorca there is evidence of twenty five army victuallers reaching their destination in the Mediterranean in 1799. At least half as many more were sent to the Mediterranean in 1800 to victual the garrisons of Gibraltar, Minorca and Malta and in preparation for the expedition to Egypt.¹

Though the corn and wheat scarcity in Britain did not effect the provisioning of the troops on the Continent it did effect those

1. PRO, ADM/1/3730-ADM/1/3742, Oct. 1795 to Dec. 1801.

stationed in the Mediterranean. When the shortage of flour in Britain raised the price the government tried to buy flour for the troops elsewhere. Orders were given for the purchase of wheat and flour at ports in the Mediterranean particularly at Leghorn and on the coast of Barbary.¹ Since there were no means at Gibraltar for grinding or dressing wheat or barley the wheat was first brought to England in transports and in warships;² then flour was sent to that station generally in ships taken up on freight. To assist in bringing wheat to Britain the Transport Office in December 1795 recommended that transports in the Mediterranean be loaded with corn or flour, by persons appointed by government and after rendezvousing at Gibraltar for a general convoy homewards, to consign such cargoes to the commissioners of the victualling, or their agents at the out-ports.³ The scarcity of flour was to effect the quality of wheat sent to the troops for several years.⁴

The army in the Mediterranean suffered from a shortage of pease when there was a scarcity of that article arising from the small quantity sown the year before occasioned by the high price of the seed;⁵ but the Treasury and transport service made sure that

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1. PRO, T.1/751, 20 July 1795; T.1/755, 27 Oct. 1795; T.1/754, 10 Oct. 1795.
 2. PRO, T.1/759, 16 Jan. 1796.
 3. PRO, T.1/759, 31 Dec. 1795.
 4. PRO, T.1/780, 1 March 1797.
 5. PRO, T.1/757, 28; 29 Dec. 1795.

they did not suffer from a want of meat. (The poor corn crop resulted in a scarcity of pork since pigs feed on corn.) Pork and beef were purchased in Ireland to be shipped to the Mediterranean garrisons.¹ Ireland had also supplied cattle and the vessels in which they were shipped for the expedition to Quiberon.² For the remainder of the war Ireland and the Barbary Coast supplied meat for the army in the Mediterranean.³

The force under General Stuart in Portugal was provisioned from England and from the provinces of Portugal. The provisions from England were generally forwarded in regular army victuallers to the troops in Portugal since there were no storehouses in Lisbon. However, a shortage of regular tonnage at home in September 1798 resulted in some victuallers for the Lisbon service being taken up on freight.⁴ Cattle, bread and barley were procured in the provinces of Portugal for the King's troops.⁵

When the British army returned to the Continent for the expedition to North Holland in 1799, they and their Russian allies were provisioned from England, Bremen, Hamburg and St. Petersburg.

The provisions from England were forwarded to the army at the Helder on board troopships, transports on freight and on regular

1. PRO, T.1/759, 4 Jan. 1796.

2. PRO, ADM/108/36, 6 Aug. 1795; see also, p. 232.

3. PRO, T.1/823, 10 April 1799.

4. PRO, ADM/108/55, Sept. 1798.

5. PRO, T.1/828, 14 Sept. 1799.

army victuallers. Though no victuallers sailed with Abercromby's first division on 13 August, the troopships contained victuals for 12,000 men for 5 weeks and after disembarkation on the 27th three weeks provisions remained on board. The second division under General Don arrived at the Texel one day later, after having been embarked only two or three days. There must have remained on board their transports provisions for 2,000 men for five weeks. The third division, a cavalry division, was victualled for 650 men for six weeks and not embarked more than ten days. The fourth division which sailed on the 11th and 13th September consisted of twenty one infantry ships containing 5,500 men victualled as above and were not embarked for more than a week.¹ Therefore the transports that carried the troops to the Helder in 1799 carried a large supply of provisions in surplus to what was needed for the passage.

Besides the food supplies on board the troopships the Transport Board sent several transports on freight with provisions for 40,000 men at soldier's allowance of all species for five weeks. These several transports, first delivered three and one half weeks' provisions, then returned to Ramsgate where they took on board another one and one half weeks and brought them to the Helder. Since there was very little storeroom at the Helder and no materials for building most of the provisions for the army in Holland were forwarded by regular army victuallers not exceeding one hundred tons each.²

1. PRO, T.1/825, 24 Jan. 1800.

2. PRO, T.1/829, 30 Sept. 1799; ADM/108/63, 11 Oct. 1799; W.O.1/181, 29 July 1799.

By these means a proportion of bread, pork and spirits for 40,000 men (bread 10 weeks, spirits 5 weeks, pork 2 weeks) were sent in six separate sailings between 25 August and 22 October. The sailings were 25 August (sailed with the second army division under General Don); 15 September; 19 September, 26 September, 15 October, 22 October.¹

The preceding calculation is exclusive of the provisions brought in the transports from Russia, of supplies which were obtained from the King's ships and armed transports; and of such quantities as the commissary procured on the Continent.²

There was no actual want of supplies at any one time during the expedition but on several occasions there was a fear of shortage since the victuallers sent to the Helder were slow in arriving (there was a lapse of three weeks between the 1st and 2nd sailings) and the resources of Holland did not offer much to the army.

On 31 August, three days after the first fleet of victuallers arrived with the second army division under General Don, Commissary General Henry Motz sent orders to Hamburg and Bremen for meal and oats since he thought there would be a shortage of supplies before the next fleet of victuallers arrived. He was probably aware of the Transport Board's difficulties in obtaining tonnage in Britain at this time;³ and his experiences as a commissary general during

1. PRO, T.1/825, 24 Jan. 1800.

2. Ibid.

3. PRO, T.1/829, 10 Oct. 1799.

the campaigns of 1793-94 must have added to his apprehension. His anxiety was renewed on 9 September when still no victuallers had appeared; there were only eight days supplies left.¹ On that day he informed the Treasury of an immediate want of bread. The Duke of York's anxiety over the supply of provisions was expressed through Colonel Brownrigg in a letter to the Treasury of 13 September.² Just at this time large quantities of bread and spirits were about to leave England. The second fleet of victuallers with enough supplies to furnish the army for twenty days left from England on the 15th.³

In the meantime Commissary Motz sent two empty victuallers to Messrs. Thornton and Power at Hamburg to bring back meal as quickly as possible. He also sent eleven transports (probably empty ordnance or troopships) into the Weser to bring back meal and oats from Bremen.⁴ This was necessitated by the fact that the contractors on the Continent found shipping extremely scarce and neutral vessels refused to sail under British convoy. Commissary Motz hoped that convoys from Hamburg and Bremen could be dispensed with so that the vessels could arrive at the Helder more quickly.⁵

While Motz was contracting for provisions on the Continent, Home Popham at St. Petersburg, was attempting to hire vessels to

1. PRO, W.O.1/182, 7 Feb. 1800.

2. PRO, T.1/834, 18 Oct. 1799.

3. PRO, W.O.1/182, 7 Feb. 1800.

4. PRO, T.1/829, 30 Sept. 1799.

5. Ibid.

transport rye meal and biscuit for the use of the Russian troops. The four victuallers on freight which he hired with much difficulty did not arrive until 31 October, when the plans for evacuating North Holland were in operation.¹ These victuallers were sent along with the Russian troops to Guernsey and Jersey.² Since the Russians landed no provisions with them they were victualled during their stay at the Helder from the magazines of the British army; they required one and a half pounds of biscuit and three pounds of bread per day,³ a half pound more of biscuit per day than a British soldier.

Shipping from the Elbe and Weser, after being held up for five weeks because of the weather, arrived on 20 October, two days after the British capitulated to the French.⁴ They brought to the armies in Holland about forty days wheatmeal for 30,000 British and twenty two days rye meal for 10,000 Russians plus oats for 5,000 horses.⁵ These provisions were used by the armies until their complete withdrawal from the Continent at the end of November. In the meantime all victuallers and vessels entering the Texel were told of the evacuation and then were sent back to England.⁶

1. PRO, T.1/825, 8 Feb. 1800; T.1/830, 31 Oct. 1799.

2. PRO, T.1/830, 29; 31 Oct. 1799.

3. PRO, T.1/828, 14 Sept. 1799.

4. PRO, T.1/829, 10 Oct. 1799; W.O.1/182, f. 68.

5. PRO, T.1/830, 24 Oct. 1799.

6. Ibid., 29 Oct. 1799.

It is most probable that the experiences of the commissary department on the Continent during the campaigns of 1793 and 1794 made them over-cautious about the problems of provisioning the army at the Helder. But they need not have been so apprehensive for the transports that arrived in England with the wounded men from the expedition had three, four, five and even seven, and eight weeks provisions on board them for the number of troops they were intended to receive.¹

Keith and Abercromby had reason to be apprehensive about provisioning the British expeditionary force in Egypt because the government's comprehension of the supply problem for that expedition was very vague indeed. Keith's exertions in Egypt in conjuring up a supply system out of the provisions available at Minorca, Sicily, Tunis and Algiers plus the assistance given to the invading forces by a former British consul general in Egypt in obtaining supplies from the Arabs saved the army from starvation.

When the plans to expel the French from Egypt were first formulated the King had his doubts about the capability of the British government to adequately provision an Egyptian campaign and he expressed them in a letter to Henry Dundas in October 1800.

It is with reluctance I consent to the proposal of sending 15000 troops under the command of Abercromby to Egypt; as that service must probably prove a burial ground for them to as great an extent as St. Domingo;

1. PRO, W.O.1/181, 23 Oct. 1799.

for unless the army be supplied from home as amply and as regularly as that in America was by the Treasury in the time of Lord North nothing but famine can attack it. As to any part of it being afterwards fit for service that cannot be expected. I am therefore not surprised that Lord Grenville and Mr. Wyndham have dissented from the measure.¹

Dundas assured the King that the government could undertake such a campaign by stating that he relied "with just confidence on the continuance of the same exertions which had so successfully contributed to the supply of His Majesty's troops in all the various and complicated services of the present war." Relative to the dissent of Grenville and Wyndham Dundas asserted that "the extent of the Force sent on the expedition, and the want of provisions for the army were none of the grounds of their dissent."²

The government planned to provision the Egyptian expedition from the resources available at Gibraltar, Minorca and Malta, from friendly ports in the Mediterranean, and from regular army victuallers sent out every two months.

Gibraltar, Minorca and Malta were generally provisioned from England but those provisions were usually supplemented by articles purchased in the Mediterranean. Transports and cruisers, under convoy, brought fresh provisions and corn to the garrisons from the coasts of Italy and Barbary and from Leghorn; live bullocks were also

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1. Add. MSS., 40,100, 5 Oct. 1800, f. 293, printed Aspinall, George III, vol. III, 424. (no. 2256).
 2. Ibid., 6 Oct. 1800, f. 295.

purchased at Leghorn for the army and transported in warships.¹ Minorca and Malta, unlike Gibraltar, had mills capable of turning wheat into flour; therefore wheat was purchased in Barbary and Sicily and sent directly to those islands.² The government also had an agent at Lisbon for the purpose of supplying the forces in the Mediterranean with Portuguese wines.³

Though the garrisons in the Mediterranean could generally rely on receiving provisions from England and from Mediterranean ports there was no depot in the Mediterranean to serve them in case of an emergency. Therefore, in May 1800 Abercromby as commander in chief of the Mediterranean forces recommended the establishment of a depot in Minorca to serve the whole Mediterranean army (then 10,000 men). He suggested that six months salt and dry provisions (biscuit, flour, salt, pork and spirits) be sent to Minorca, one third every two months until countermanded. He also recommended that the vessels hired for their conveyance be hired for six months certain in order that they could be detained or sent to other destinations, as the service might require. Abercromby wanted at least half of the six months supply to be set apart in case of an emergency.⁴ An emergency occurred when the troops were in Egypt

1. NMM, Kei/L/26, 13 Aug. 1800; PRO, T.1/841, 18 May 1800.

2. PRO, T.1/848, 1 Nov. 1800.

3. See above, p. 283.

4. PRO, T.1/841, 10 May 1800.

and these provisions were sent for.

The government followed Abercromby's suggestion and by the third week of September they had established depots at both Minorca and Malta. There were six months provisions for 6,000 men in Minorca and three months provisions for 6,000 men in Malta. Since the articles of flour, biscuit, and salt meat were perishable in their nature, the commissary general was directed constantly to issue part of them nearly in the following proportion always taking the oldest or least likely to keep - salt meat three days in the week or half and half with fresh meat according as this could be procured. Biscuit was issued two days in seven or eight.¹ Deputy Commissary Burgman on 19 September had been ordered to keep up his stock by requisitions from the Treasury at home.

At this point the ministry made their decision to send Abercromby to Egypt. From then on all the regular victuallers which the Victualling Office said were to be sent out every two months were assigned to Abercromby's army.² These victuallers proceeded to Gibraltar first and there awaited orders.³ By the first week of November seventeen victuallers had arrived at Gibraltar for the use of the army; very little of the stock was consumed previous to 1 October. Therefore the force under command of Abercromby appeared

1. PRO, T.1/848, 24 Sept. 1800.

2. Ibid.

3. PRO, ADM/108/68, 11 Sept. 1800.

to be supplied to 11 February 1801 except for the biscuit which was to last only one third of that time and requests were to be made for some to be sent out from England.¹ The consumption of Abercromby's army at Gibraltar was 25,000 rations per day and a proportion of the provisions had been carried off by the force under Lieutenant General Sir James Pulteney. Therefore, as limited a supply of every article as possible was to be left at Gibraltar so that the army would be supplied at least to 11 February 1801.² The army hoped to receive a succession of supplies from England until August of the following year. The army was to rely also on the depots at Minorca and Malta; the commissary general by Abercromby's order had applied to the Treasury that the permanent stock at Malta be six months instead of three.³

Thus during the preparations of October and November there was a sufficient supply of provisions in stock in the Mediterranean for the army; but this was not so for the navy which had to rely on the army's magazines for salt provisions bread and flour.⁴

Before the expedition sailed Keith purchased biscuit, flour, fresh meat, vegetables and wine in the Mediterranean. A kind of market was held on shore in Morocco for cattle⁵ and vegetables;

1. PRO, T.1/849, 29 Oct. 1800.

2. PRO, T.1/849, 19 Oct. 1800; T.1/854, 7 Nov. 1800.

3. PRO, T.1/854, 7 Nov. 1800.

4. PRO, W.O.1/344, 21 Nov. 1800, Abercromby to Dundas.

5. Butchers sailed with the fleet to cut up the cattle. A private on board the Dictator. A Faithful Journal of the Late Expedition to Egypt (London, 1802), 22.

every article bought was dipped in salt water before being taken on board the ships.¹ (The army could no longer rely on Sicily as a source of corn since an embargo was placed on the export of that article by the Sicilian government; the Sicilians themselves were under the necessity of importing corn.)² Nevertheless the army victuallers sailed with a deficiency of rice, pease and sugar since neither Gibraltar nor Minorca could furnish an adequate supply of these articles. Keith purchased besides provisions in the Mediterranean, cordage and shoes in Sicily; ropes, canvas, spars, fuel, candles, medicines and other necessities in Lisbon and Naples; he hired small vessels and paid pilots to transport these supplies.³

After many weeks of repairing and provisioning troopships and victuallers and after a delay of contrary wind the expedition finally set sail on 20 December. Fresh provisions, fruit and vegetables were acquired at the different ports where the fleet stopped,⁴ especially during the long stay of fifty three days in Marmaras Bay.⁵ However the provision supply was not replenished anywhere near the rate that it was consumed. As a result, the army which had been subsisting since 1 October on provisions set aside for the expedition, landed in Egypt on 10 March with three days

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1. A private on board the Dictator, op. cit., 22; see also, Moore, op. cit., vol. I, 384.
 2. PRO, T.1/850, 11 Nov. 1800.
 3. NMM, Kei/L/22, 19 Sept. 1801.
 4. Ibid.
 5. PRO, T.1/857, 11 Jan. 1801; see also: A private on board the Dictator, op. cit., 27.

provisions. This dangerous situation was partly relieved when the supplies from the warships and transports were landed bringing the total amount of provisions for the invading forces (both army and navy) up to seventeen days.¹

The supply of provisions was soon added to through the efforts of a former British consul general in Egypt who accompanied the expedition. George Baldwin obtained sheep, poultry and other refreshments from the Arabs at a cheap rate; and there was never any want of water.² The supplies provided by the Arabs looked like an abundance at first and did prevent the soldiers from starving; but the victuals were quickly diminished and there was little more to come.

The situation also changed as the army advanced. The perennial problem of an insufficiency of land transport made it difficult to bring food supplies to the army in Egypt as it had to the army on the Continent. On 2 June ^{St. Johnstone} Huskisson wrote to ^{Lord Hobart} Dundas, "Our chief difficulty is provisions of all kinds, which tho they abound in the country, we do not find it easy to get at; indeed the present state of the bar at Rosetta (which is almost impassable) and the low state of the river, render the carriage of bread and spirits, which we are obliged to get from the fleet, tedious to a

1. PRO, T.1/859, Motz to Treasury, 15 March 1801.

2. G. Baldwin. Political Recollections relative to Egypt (London, 1802). Letter to John Baldwin. Baldwin was consul-general in Egypt 1786-1793; lived in Egypt as a merchant 1775-1779, 1786-1798.

degree, and renders it impossible to advance with that degree of rapidity" that the army wished.¹ Even if land transport were available the provisions on the fleet were being reduced rapidly and victuallers arrived from England only at rare intervals. In April the expedition was joined by victuallers from England; and by the armed transports with troops from Lisbon. But these provisions were being consumed at a rapid pace by both the army and navy. The optimistic reports received from the invading forces soon after they landed in Egypt obviously led the ministry to believe that there was an abundant supply of provisions in the country. It is over this business of supply that Keith's difficulty with his captains arose and a quarrel ensued which in Keith's eyes amounted to a conspiracy to challenge his authority.² In May, when the sick were suffering extremely for the want of fresh provisions, many lives would have been lost but for the humanity of Keith's captains in supplying them out of their private stock.³

Another difficulty that impeded the provisioning of the army was the fact that the expeditionary forces were in the greatest distress for money. There was plenty of wheat in Egypt but little could be purchased because of the shortage of currency.⁴ Keith sent the wheat that was purchased to Malta and Mahon to be manufactured

1. PRO, W.O.1/345, Hutchinson to ^{Lord Hobart, 2 June} Dundas, 3 April 1801.

2. NRS, Keith, vol. II, 234-5.

3. Ibid., Captains of the Fleet to Keith, 11 May 1801, 296-7.

4. PRO, T.1/859, 17 May 1801.

into biscuit; he also sent supplies of rice for the whole station as it could be procured in Egypt at a low rate.¹ Keith also sent warships to Tunis, Algiers and Sicily to bring back food supplies;² without the warships it would have been impossible for Commissary Motz to feed the army.

Throughout the summer and autumn of 1801 victuallers, troop reinforcements and money were sent to Egypt. The troopships carrying reinforcements also brought supplies with them. It was Keith's exertions, however, during spring and early summer 1801, in creating a supply system from the Mediterranean to Egypt to supplement the infrequent arrival of victuallers from England, that kept the British expeditionary force alive in Egypt in 1801.

As has been discussed in chapter seven the expedition to Egypt was a success in spite of the failings of the provisioning department. The failure did not lay with the transport service, as there was plenty of tonnage available; but lay with the government which did not comprehend the problems that were involved in provisioning an army of 15,000 men in Egypt. Dundas in October 1800 was very confident that this could be done, as is recorded in his reply to the King on this subject.³ In all fairness one must point out, however, when plans for an expedition to Egypt were formulated in September 1801 the ministry thought that the army

1. NMM, Kei/L/22, 15 June 1801.

2. NRS, Keith, vol. II, 229.

3. see above, p. 301.

would be in Egypt by November and under normal circumstances it would have. What the government failed to foresee were the long delays at Minorca and Malta resulting from the poor condition of the troopships; what the government could not foresee was the prolonged stay on the coast of Asia Minor occasioned by the uncooperative spirit of the Turkish government.

CHAPTER IXCONCLUSION

By the time the Treaty of Amiens came to pass in March 1802 a number of important developments had taken place concerning the transport system. It had changed considerably since the American war of independence having benefited greatly from the experiences and weaknesses of the transport service as conducted during that war. The most important and radical change was the establishment of a separate board to handle the freight and victualling services of the transport system. The lack of centralization in the administration of the shipping employed in support of the British army overseas was a serious problem during the American revolution which was discerned and discussed by Charles Middleton at the time. During the American war the Ordnance and Victualling Boards chartered shipping in direct competition with the Navy Board. Since there was a shipping shortage throughout the war this had very damaging results particularly after 1780 when the Navy Board was constantly outbid for ships by other boards. Only the coming of peace in 1783 saved the transport service from a tonnage disaster. With the creation of the Transport Board in July 1794 the competition in the engagement of shipping, which had before existed among the Navy, Victualling and Ordnance departments, was eliminated. By the elimination of competition in the engagement of shipping the transport service also was saved from additional enormous expense during the French war because tonnage on account of the immense extension of trade had been scarce and dear

beyond example. Except for the transference from the Treasury to the Navy Board in 1779 of the task of conveying army provisions overseas, there had been very little cooperation between the departments concerned with the transport service during the American war resulting in almost no coordination of their activities and in endless confusion. This same problem existed for the first eighteen months of the war against revolutionary France before the establishment of the Transport Board. It was not as acute, however, because the need for cooperation had been revealed by the American war and as a result the Navy Board on several occasions hired ships for the Victualling and Ordnance Boards before July 1794. During this eighteen-month period the Navy Board was successful in hiring and fitting out the tonnage needed for the conveyance of the King's forces and their equipment overseas but the Victualling and Ordnance Boards met with difficulty in hiring the ships they needed. The whole process also was slowed down, less organized and less efficient because the Navy Board was a subordinate administrative office and had to work through the medium of the Admiralty. With the establishment of the Transport Board the secretary of state as well as the heads of other departments concerned with the transportation of the British army corresponded directly with the Transport Office. Inter-departmental communication was cut in half and the whole process was speeded up.

Other benefits to the public and war effort arose simply from

the establishment of the Transport Board itself. Since the Transport Board was set up to deal specifically with transport affairs it gave undivided attention to them, whereas, the Navy Board with its duties and obligations to naval affairs had not. This is best evidenced by the minutes of the Transport Board which averaged ten pages per day. When the transport service was under the auspices of the Navy Board the minutes devoted to that service averaged a half a page daily. Many of the dockyard abuses revealed by the naval enquiries of the 1780's especially those respecting the commissioners of the Victualling Board who superintended the department of the Hoytaker were eliminated when the duty of hiring the victualling and ordnance vessels was given to the Transport Board. Also eliminated were the chances of having excess tonnage hired by three boards instead of one.

Besides the special benefits inherent in the establishment of the Transport Board there were improvements made in the transport system by the Board after its creation. The service and the public derived immense advantage from the fact that the Board used many brokers thus eliminating a price fixed by one or a few. When the Navy Board was in charge of the transport service it employed vessels tendered by not more than a dozen persons and two thirds of the vessels tendered were in the hands of one broker. By the close of the war the Transport Board held contracts with between 300 and 400 different people many of whom were the actual owners of the vessels.

A major change was made in the transport system when the Transport Board adopted the plan recommended by Captain Bowen of taking up ships by their registered instead of measured tonnage. By this means great expense and inconvenience was avoided since the owners would not see the surveyors of the customs to make their vessels larger than their real tonnage and the delay of placing the ships on the ground or going into dock was eliminated. The whole saving to the public since Captain Bowen's plan was adopted up to 1815, amounted to the enormous sum of £1,221,816.¹ The Board did not employ inferior officers over and above the superintendence of the shipwright officer; and an agent of the Transport Board, besides being a commissioned officer in the navy, had to pass under the particular examination of one of the naval commissioners of the Transport Board, and had to be approved by him. The changes made by the Board in the charter parties particularly the regulations governing the behaviour of masters, and the initiation of a register showing the deficiency in men and stores were notable advantages to the transport system which developed from the experiences of the Transport Board after its establishment. These things could not have been accomplished with equal advantage and efficiency if left to other departments with other and various duties.

The Transport Board was able to meet tonnage requirements during the war against revolutionary France faster than the Navy

1. NLS, Melville, MSS. 1044, f. 111.

Board in the American war. Because of the centralization of the administration of the shipping employed in the transport service the Transport Board was able to hire all the shipping needed for a particular expedition and then let its survey team designate the vessels that could best be used as troopships, victuallers, and ordnance ships. The efficiency established by this coordination of activities between the Transport, Victualling and Ordnance Boards enabled the transport service to produce ships more quickly. It was also possible for the Transport Board to deal more adequately with a shipping shortage because the competition among the various boards in the engagement of shipping had been eliminated. The existence of a regular trade between Britain and many of the areas where the army was being sent during the French war enabled the Transport Board to hire many ships on a short-term basis to convey troops, provisions and stores and thus, satisfy its shipping obligations within a relatively short period. Hiring space on merchant ships that traded between Britain and the destination of the King's forces was an advantage the transport service had during the war against revolutionary France which the Navy Board did not have during the American war because a merchant fleet did not sail regularly between Britain and North America. Ships could be hired on freight only at a great expense during the American war because of the danger of capture. Therefore the Navy Board had no choice but to hire regular transports which were not easy to obtain. This impediment

delayed the dispatch of forces and supplies overseas throughout that war. The transport service during the French war met its shipping obligations also, by using warships whenever possible to accommodate troops. For these reasons the Transport Board was able to collect and prepare vessels to convey the King's forces overseas faster than the Navy Board during the American war. For example, the biggest overseas enterprise of the American war was the dispatch of 27,000 troops in the winter and spring of 1776. The ships that conveyed the men, their provisions and ordnance stores from Europe to North America were hired, fitted out and sent to their destination in at least four separate sailings over a period of nine months. The Navy Board, Treasury, and Ordnance Boards with little cooperation and no coordination of their activities each had to provide its own ships. The Treasury found it difficult to hire victuallers and had to raise the freight rate in order to do so. Delay in sending provisions delayed the entire operation. The November sailing of the Abercromby-Christian expedition of 1795 consisted of 27,000 troops and therefore compares favourably in size to the dispatch of troops in 1776. Arrangements for this military operation were begun the previous August and by the middle of November the 27,000 troops had sailed from Portsmouth and Cork. All the tonnage requirements for troopships, victuallers and ordnance ships had been met by the Transport Board by the middle of October or in less than three months. In preparing the 1776 campaign the Navy Board in

three months had hired 33,806 tons of shipping in Britain to be used as troopships. This was only one third of the amount of troopship tonnage needed for the operation.

Arrangements for the expedition to the Helder is another example of how the Transport Board was able to collect, fit out and prepare vessels in a relatively short time for a large-scale military enterprise. Preliminaries for the expedition to the Helder which involved the transportation of 46,000 men from England and the Baltic to the shores of North Holland were begun at the end of June 1799. Four weeks later the Board had over 44,000 tons of transports at its disposal; about one fourth of these ships were already in the transport service. By the end of September the Board had collected, fitted out and sent off to their destination over 90,000 tons of transports. This was accomplished in a period of little more than three months and at a time of great commercial prosperity when it was more advantageous for the merchant to put his ship to a trade than to lend it to the government. This could only have been accomplished by a board set up to deal specifically with transport affairs; one that could give undivided attention to them.

During the American war tonnage was needed continually to maintain and provision an army conducting a campaign 3,000 miles away over an eight-year period; there was a shortage of vessels throughout the war and it was only the coming of peace that saved the transport service from a shipping catastrophe. On the other

hand there was no such sustained activity during the French war because that war was conducted through a series of short campaigns and expeditions. However, the scale of shipping needed at peak periods was greater during the war against revolutionary France than it was during the American revolution. The dispatch of 27,000 troops to North America in 1776 had been the one large-scale expedition of the American war and the Abercromby-Christian expedition of 1795 was equal to it in size. Other infantry regiments and recruits destined for North America were sent throughout the American revolution in much smaller divisions. On the other hand there were several military operations executed on a great scale during the French war, and at a time when shipping was difficult to procure because of the vast increase in every branch of trade. Therefore the Transport Board handled bigger problems for short periods during the war against revolutionary France than the Navy Board handled during the American war.

Several measures were taken by the Transport Board in order to meet its great shipping obligations at these peak periods. At different times during the war the Transport Board with the approval of the Treasury raised the freight rate in order to entice the owner of a merchant ship to lend his ship to the government instead of putting it to a trade. The freight rate had been raised from 12/- for all vessels in 1793 up to 19/6 for copper sheathed vessels in 1800. The first rise in the freight rate came in 1795 as a result

of the acute tonnage difficulties the Navy Board experienced in 1793 and 1794 in sending over 16,000 men and their equipment each to the Continent and to the West Indies. Because of the precedence given by the ministry to the West Indian operation the arrival of the King's forces and their equipment on the Continent was delayed.

Even with the new rise in the freight rate the Transport Board experienced tonnage difficulties during preparations for the Abercromby-Christian expedition to the West Indies because of the size of the enterprise. It met the shipping requirements for this military operation by taking advantage of the regular trade that existed between Britain and the West Indies and sending to the Caribbean 14,000 of the 27,000 troops on East and West India ships hired on freight.

There was a lax period of about three years from 1796 to 1799 when there were no large-scale expeditions and therefore little tonnage was needed. This period gave the Board an opportunity to discharge many ships and agents from the transport service and thus lower expenses during a time of increasing costs and wages. Shipping problems arose again in 1799 during the preparations for the expedition to the Helder because of the vast increase in every branch of trade. The Helder enterprise involved more men than the Abercromby-Christian expedition or the '76 campaign but the tonnage requirements were less because of the short passage and the fact that some of the troopships conveying the British army made three successive trips to

North Holland. The Transport Board successfully met the shipping requirements for this military enterprise by not allowing vessels already in the service to leave, by utilizing warships as troopships, and by hiring many ships on a short-term basis.

The Transport Board did not experience tonnage difficulties when sending Abercromby's army to Egypt to expel the French in 1801 because the 15,000 men employed in that operation were already on board troopships sent into the Mediterranean throughout 1800. The Board's efforts to meet its shipping requirements in 1800 had been facilitated by the fact that there were no large-scale expeditions planned and by the fact that early that year the freight rate had been raised 2/- for sheathed vessels and 2/6 for those sheathed with copper.

The Transport Board hired more ships on freight during the war against revolutionary France than had been hired in any previous war. They were used often to supplement regular tonnage in the conveyance of troops especially to the West Indies; but more significant was the fact that ships hired on freight carried the bulk of the provisions to the King's forces abroad. Only ships on freight were used to convey troops, provisions and stores to the Cape of Good Hope and the East Indies, and they carried the major part of the provisions to the West Indies, Gibraltar and the Continent. The Transport Board found it more economical to hire ships on freight to convey food supplies to the British army overseas than to send out

victuallers on freight with loadings only to return home empty. This practice of the Transport Board resulted from the fact that a regular trade existed between Britain and many of the areas where the British army was being sent during the French war, and to the experiences of the Treasury and Navy Board during the American war. There was a large armed force overseas during the American revolution which at the end of 1779 numbered 63,000 effectives¹ that had to be equipped and victualled over an eight-year period. There was no escape from the necessity of provisioning the British forces in America from Europe because of the lack of a regular trade between Britain and America during the war and because of the danger of capture. The King's troops could not get provisions locally since they rarely had control of more territory than the ground upon which the forces stood. Also, there was the problem of the victuallers being detained overseas throughout the American war and the efforts of the Admiralty, Treasury and Navy Board could not bring about a prompt return of ships. It was the coming of peace in 1783 that saved the army in North America from a fatal provision crisis.² At no time during the war against revolutionary France was there a body of men overseas as great in number as that which had to be provisioned during the American war. The greatest number of men the Treasury had to maintain overseas during the French war was the 46,000 British and Russian troops in North Holland in 1799. The

1. Syrett, op. cit., 191.

2. Ibid., 269.

provisions the Transport Board sent over on troopships, regular victuallers and ships hired on freight were more than adequate for the three-month stay at the Helder. There was never a shortage of provisions in the West Indies during the war against revolutionary France because the transport service took advantage of the regular trade existing between Britain and the Caribbean and sent most of the victuals by freight; also food provisions could be obtained locally or from America. Provisions were successfully brought to the King's forces at the Cape of Good Hope on East India ships hired on freight and there was never a want of victuals among the British army in the East Indies because food supplies were procured for them there. In 1793 and 1794 the British army on the Continent suffered some discomfort from a lack of provisions because of a shipping shortage occasioned by the West Indian campaigns and because of the failure of the Ordnance Board to provide enough waggons and land transport to convey the victuals to the troops. Abercromby's expedition to Egypt would have experienced a provision disaster but for the exertions of Keith in conjuring up a supply system from the Mediterranean. But this want of victuals in 1801 resulted from a lack of cooperation from the Turks and the subsequent long stay of fifty three days in Marmaras Bay and not from transport failure. Because of the Transport Board's wise and practical provisioning policy the British forces never suffered from a provision crisis during the French war as the King's troops had during the American war.

During the war against revolutionary France the transport service under both the Navy and Transport Boards suffered from the government's failure to equate its military policy with the realities of the military and maritime resources of Britain; it also suffered from the inefficiency of the Ordnance Board on innumerable occasions. Because of Dundas' ambitious military policy there was a shortage of men and equipment which held up the expeditions to the West Indies and contributed to the failures on the Continent. Nevertheless during the first four years of the French war the transport service was successful in bringing to the Caribbean over 58,000 men with their necessary camp equipage and baggage and in supplying them with stores, medicines and provisions; and as a result Britain succeeded in conquering many of the colonial possessions of France, Holland and Spain. Since most of the tonnage available had been used for the West Indian operation it was with considerable effort that the Navy Board transported about 16,500 men to the Continent during 1793 and 1794 and were successful for the most part in conveying their victuals and stores. But there were not enough men to conduct a successful Continental campaign especially with the disheartened support of Prussia and Austria in 1794. Therefore, the lack of success in Flanders in 1793 and 1794 which enabled a new order to take a firm hold in France and in Europe cannot be ascribed to transport failure but must be attributed to the conflicting war aims of Britain's allies and to the failure of the ministry to estimate the military

strength of Britain or to concentrate on a single object instead of many.

The disorganization and inefficiency of the Ordnance department from the very beginning of the French war was an obstacle to success in every theatre of that war. The Master General of the Ordnance was slow to replenish the ordnance magazines and stock from the inferior state to which it had sunk after the American war. He did not even attend cabinet meetings until 1795. The campaigns of 1793 and 1794 on the Continent suffered considerably because of the disorderly state of the Ordnance department and because of the department's negligence in collecting and distributing supplies. There was a shortage of artillery, artillery men and artillery drivers throughout the campaigns as well as a shortage of waggons which greatly hindered the provisioning of the troops. In 1796 the Transport Board came under fire from the ministry for the first time because of the slowness in getting the Abercromby-Christian expedition out to sea. It was the Ordnance Board's failure to act promptly so that the ships could be ready to sail when the wind was fair. The Transport Board had appropriated the ordnance vessels rather quickly but time was lost in preparing them for service, a responsibility of the Ordnance Board. By 4 November, two weeks before the expedition's departure only half the ordnance vessels were completely laden and ready to sail. Since Abercromby refused to sail till everything was complete the inconvenience and delay in shipping the stores for the West Indies held up the entire expedition.

And by this detention the fair wind for sailing was lost. As a result, the Portsmouth and Cork fleets which finally sailed with a deficiency of ordnance stores twice tried unsuccessfully to reach the Caribbean during the stormy winter months of 1795-6. It was not until the following spring that the expedition greatly decreased in strength finally reached its destination.

As a board the Transport Board did its work efficiently and effectively but there was no outstanding personality like Middleton during the American war. Two of the original commissioners, Hugh Christian and Philip Patton left the Transport Board within two years after its establishment to take their flag in the Royal Navy. However, the transport agents and dockyard officers most experienced in naval and transport affairs and many of whom worked for the Navy Board when the transport service was under its jurisdiction, remained with the Transport Office throughout the war. A separate Transport department was an innovation in the transport system that was greatly needed and which considerably benefited the public and the war effort. The fact that the Transport Board was able to meet the shipping requirements of Dundas' ambitious policy in the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, the Continent, the Cape of Good Hope and the East Indies during a period of increasing commercial prosperity when tonnage was scarce and dear beyond example was a tremendous transport achievement.

APPENDIX

26 George III, c.60

An Act for the further Increase and Encouragement of
Shipping and Navigation.

III. And whereas it is highly expedient that the provisions made for the Registry of Ships and Vessels by an Act, made and passed in the seventh and eighth Years of the Reign of his late Majesty King William the Third, intituled, an Act for Preventing Frauds, and regulating Abuses in the Plantation Trade, should be altered and amended, and that the same should be extended and applied to Ships and Vessels other than those which are therein particularly described; be it therefore enacted, that all and every Ship or Vessel, having a Deck, or being of the Burthen of fifteen tons, or upwards, belonging to any of His Majesty's Subjects in Great Britain, or Guernsey, Jersey, and the Isle of Man, or of any of the aforesaid Colonies, Plantations, Islands, or Territories, shall, from and after the respective times herein after expressed be registered in Manner herein after mentioned; and that the Person or Persons claiming Property therein shall cause the same to be registered, and shall obtain a certificate of such Registry from the Collector and Comptroller of His Majesty's Customs in Great Britain or the Isle of Man, or from the Governor, Lt. Governor, or Commander In Chief, and Principal Officer or Officers of His Majesty's Revenue of Customs, residing in the Islands of Guernsey or Jersey, or in any of the said Colonies, Plantations, Island or Territories, respectively, in Manner herein after directed; and that the Form of such Certificate shall be as follows; videlicet:

In pursuance of an Act, passed in the twenty-sixth year of the Reign of King George the Third, intituled, An Act (here insert the Title of the Act, the Names, Occupation, and Residence of the Subscribing Owners), having taken and subscribed the Oath required by this Act, and having sworn that he (or they), together with (Names, Occupation, and Residence of Non-Subscribing Owners), is (or are) sole Owner (or Owners) of the Ship or Vessel called The (Ship's Name), of (Place to which the Vessel belongs), whereof (Master's Name) is at present Master, and that the said Ship or Vessel was (when and where built, or captured, and Date of Condemnation); and (Name and Employment of the Surveying Officer) having certified to us that the said Ship or Vessel is (whether British, Foreign, or British Plantation built), has (Number of Decks) Decks, and (Number of Masts) Masts; that her Length,

from the Forepart of the Main Stem to the Afterpart of the Stern Post aloft is (Number of Feet and Inches), her Breadth at the broadest Part, whether above or below the Main Wales (Number of Feet and Inches), her Height between Decks (Number of Feet and Inches), if more than one Deck, and if not, then the Depth of the Hold (Number of Feet and Inches), and admeasures (Burthen) tons, that she is a (Kind of Vessel, and how built), has (whether any or no Gallery) Gallery, and (Kind of Head, if any) Head; and the said subscribing Owners having consented and agreed to the above Description and Admeasurement, and having caused sufficient Security to be given, as is required by the said Act, the said (Kind and Name of the Vessel) has been duly registered at the Port of (Name of Port).

Charter Party of the 27 Ships from the Elbe to England or Ireland

The present Charter Party is convened, concluded and agreed upon, this nineteenth day of August, in the Year of our Lord, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Ninety Five, between Messrs. Parish and Co. of this City Merchants, and Captain Home Popham, on the part of the Commissioners for conducting His Britanic Majesty's Transport Service——

Messrs. Parish and Co. engage to freight and let to Captain Home Popham, Ten Thousand Lasts, or, Twenty Thousand Tons of Shipping, to proceed on a voyage from the River Elbe off Stade to a Port in England or Ireland or the Limits of Ireland on the following Terms.——

1. The Ships to be all examined by Capt. Popham or his Officers, as none will be accepted of, that are not teight and staunce, well tacked, apparelled, and provided with everything else necessary for the performing the said Voyage. After they are examined and approved of, they are to be considered as chartered.

2. Captain Popham promises to get shipped in the said vessels off Stade, as many Horses, as he may think proper, with Provisions, Stores etc., and One Man for each Horse, who are however to carry no Arms, nor Ammunition.— Each Captain is obliged to take one Cabin Passenger.

3. The Expence of fitting up the Stalls for the Horses and what other charges may attend this Cargeo to be for Account of Captain Popham.——

4. Captain Popham is obliged to pay for each Last of shipping thus engaged, Six Pounds Sterling, and fifteen percent Primage and Average. The Size of the Vessel is to be ascertained by our Sworn Harbour Master. Each Ship is to be provided with Combuses, Potts, Pans and firing sufficient for the Men to be put on Board, for which Messrs. Parish and Co. are to receive Thirty Shillings Sterling per Man. Messrs. Parish and Co. are to pay all Port Charges at the port of delivery, except the fire and Light money, which is to be paid by Capt. Popham, as also all Port Charges, Pilotages, and other Expences incurred by the Different Vessels, if obliged to put into any other Port than the Port of discharge by the Commodore of the Convoy, on Certificates produced, by Bills as specified on the Commissioners of the Transports.——

5. For the fittment and loading of the Vessels twenty days, and for the discharging the Cargo Ten days, are in all agreed upon, beginning the day marked opposite each Ship underneath, which is the day the Ship was approved of By Capt. Popham. If detained longer then shall be paid unto Messrs. Parish and Co. Two Shillings Sterling per day Demurrage for each Last of shipping. The number of days the Ships may be detained at Stade or any Port they may be ordered into are all to be considered as laydays, and to be deducted from the above Number, or paid for at the rate Specified.

6. Messrs. Parish and Co. are to forfeit the hire of as many tons as are not ready by the Twenty Fifth of August, Capt. Popham has leave to stop their Progress by giving Twenty Four hours notice, provided the Ships are not approved as Messrs. Parish and Co. immediately hire them on the Approval of Capt. Popham.—

7. One half of the Freight Money to be paid to Messrs. Parish and Co. on the day the last Ship is chartered and the Charter party concluded, by Bills on the Commissioners of Transports at Thirty Days Sight, the other half, One Month after Transports leave Stade, by bills of the same date.—

8. Messrs. Parish and Co. are to pay all the Bills of outfit and on producing their Bills certified by the British Consul and a respectable Merchant, to have a Commission of Two per cent, and the whole to be paid by Bills at thirty days Sight as above said.—

9. The Transports are to proceed under Convoy of such of His Britanic Majesty's Ships as may be appointed for such Service— Should they however happen to be burnt, Sunk, or taken by the Enemy, in and during the performance of the aforesaid Service, and it shall appear to a Court of Enquiry that the same did not proceed from any fault and neglect or otherwise in the Master and Ships Company, the Value of her shall be paid for by Capt. Popham according to an appraisement to be made before they leave this Port by Alderman, Captains and Carpenters.—

10. Should any Deviation that may be made from the above Agreement cause any Dispute, both parties agree to have it settled hereby arbitration.

This Charter Party is made from the preliminaries signed at Bremer Lehe the Second day of August, and is concluded the Nineteenth day of August, when Capt. Popham declared before our Notary that he would not have any more Tonnage on these Conditions.

Johann Andreas Liiders
Johan Herman Langhans

Home Popham
Parish and Co.

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